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Translation, Politics, the Actor

Translation of the musical

“Cabaret”

Tatyana Shestakov

A Thesis

in

The Department

of

Études Françaises

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Master of Arts in *Traductologie* (Translation Studies)

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ABSTRACT

Translation, Politics, the Actor
Translation of the musical “Cabaret”

Tatyana Shestakov

This thesis is dedicated to theatre translation. The main aspects of my research are: the relationship between the translated text and the final production and the similarities which exist between the tasks of the translator and the actor in the process of creation of the theatre text and the final production. I intend to prove that the translator’s/actor’s erudition, creative project and horizon, and the perception of the target audience often dictate changes performed in the theatre text, which can to some extent reflect the political and social situation of the target society. To illustrate my ideas, I will use the musical “Cabaret” as the corpus of my research. I will analyze its different versions in the source country: America and then in two target societies: Germany and Quebec. Using the English and the German texts, I will prove that in the practice of the modern theatre the actor’s influence on the original and translated texts can be quite significant and at the same time justified by his (or her) contextual knowledge, project and awareness of his (or her) target audience. I will also insist on the importance of the understanding of the particularity of the theatre text as opposed to the non-theatre one, because the “oral publication” of the text, that is the theatre production dictates different laws of analysis and perception.

DEDICATIONS

To **my Dad**, the most loving, supportive and loyal person, the best parent one could ask for and... the first reader of this thesis.

To **Georg Preuße**, an Actor and a Man of Genius,

whose art initiated my understanding of the importance of the actor's voice in creating theatre and my interest toward Berlin, Germany, German culture, and –
- subsequently – “Cabaret”;

who made me discover the genre of female impersonation in its perfect form;

whose ideas helped to shape this thesis;

whose generosity in sharing his time, knowledge and energy goes beyond imagination;

who taught me to see many things from a different perspective;

and whose experience and personality helped me to get through difficult times of my life.

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Theatre translation is the mirror that reflects the most and the most intensely.

Antoine Berman

INTRODUCTION

In the present thesis I will discuss the interdependence between the translated theatre text and the final production. The term “theatre translation” constitutes the basis of my approach, for it implies a combination of two disciplines: translation and theatre studies. Every theatre play has been originally written for the theatre: “The greatest dramatists – such as Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Molière, Shakespeare – did not intend to write literature; they were writing for actors” (Zuber 1980: 92). This practice didn’t stop at Shakespeare. Theatre plays can be published and exist in a book form. However, the way they are presented to the reader reveal their original purpose: the author’s remarks indicating the change of decor, scenes, appearance of the characters clearly show that he (or she) was aiming for the theatre.

Following the logic of the above-mentioned quote, I will prove that actors often become co-authors of the translated text. I will dedicate a significant part of my thesis to the subject of collaboration of the theatre translator and the actor in the process of creating a translated drama text for the future production.

I will start my comparative analysis by studying two original (English) texts which both constituted the basis for future translations/interpretations/adaptations. I will show how by comparing two texts written and performed in the same country but in the

different epochs we can draw some conclusions about the social and political changes in the society.

I will continue by comparing two German texts, which are separated by the same time difference as the two English texts. I will show how the political, social situation and the history of the target society affected the interpretation of the text for the theatre. Comparison of these two texts will illustrate the idea of the importance of the actor's input in the process of the adaptation of the translated play.

Finally, I will use the French-Canadian version of the same play as an illustration of the inner collaboration of the translator/actor inside one person.

CHAPTER 1.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

1. INTRODUCTION

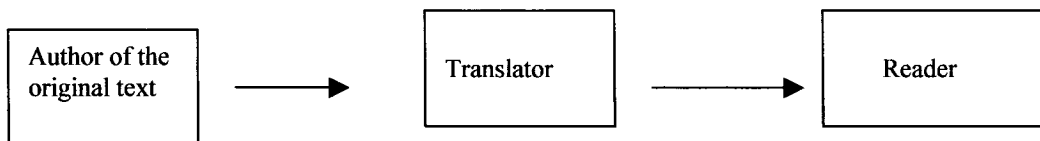
In this chapter I will present the theoretical framework for my analysis. Theatre translation is a multidisciplinary activity, which requires a multidisciplinary approach. As I will explain further, not many theatre translation theoreticians examine drama texts¹ considering non-textual aspects of the final production as equal elements of their analysis.

In search of the theory which I will base my research on, I realized that I would need not one, but two theoretical approaches, which would allow me to discuss the topic of drama translation from different angles. That's why in this chapter I will mainly concentrate on Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt's works on theatre translation, but will also incorporate some elements of Antoine Berman's theoretical vision on the way an analysis of the translation text should be performed.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

A translated text is always a collaborative creation of two people: the author (even if he (or she) is dead) and the translator. The translator becomes the mediator between the source text and the target audience.

¹ For the purpose of this research, I will use terms "theatre translation" and "drama translation" interchangeably.

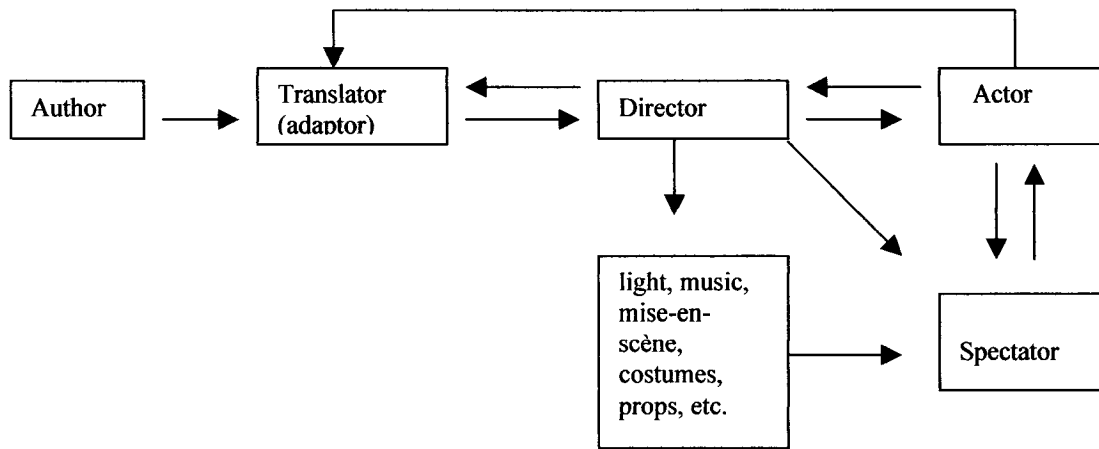


This diagram indicates two aspects of literary translation which differentiate it from theatre translation:

1. there is no mediator between the translated text and the target reader: nobody can emphasize or paraphrase the text for him (or her);
2. there is no interaction between the translator and the reader. For the time being the translation is “ironclad” in the form of a book or publication, and the reader has no influence over it.

In the theatre, however, this schema becomes much more complex, because the translated text does not go directly to the audience. The translated text becomes the beginning, the ground of the whole process of transposition: from the translated text to the director’s interpretation, to the actors’ contribution, design, costumes, light, music (these are only the most obvious elements of each theatre production) and only then - to the spectator, who “consumes” the result of translation “from page to stage”.²

“Readers are tenants who move into texts and occupy them for a while. In the theatre there are many tenants, and just as many meanings to be taken of texts. Theatre audiences and scholars then construct their readings of the translators’, directors’, actors’, light and sound technicians’, costume and set designers’ readings of the author’s reading of the world – meanings upon meanings upon meanings” (Aaltonen 2000: 29).



This diagram illustrates a multifaceted and at the same time interactive system. Indeed, the spectator is never alone with the translated text. He (or she) is influenced by many factors which constitute the body of a theatre production and – particularly – by the actor. The spectator’s and the actor’s reaction and interaction are immediate and can influence the translator’s choices: if the actors realize that the text is to some extent incomprehensible for the audience or the audience doesn’t react in the predicted manner, they quite often have an opportunity to discuss this matter with the translator and the director and agree on necessary adjustments.

Sometimes the physical setting and the *mise-en-scène* can determine the extent to which the theatre text penetrates the spectators’ minds. If the actor who is about to pronounce the most meaningful words or passages of the play comes to the apron stage and stands there alone, supported by lighting effects, starts his monologue and talks directly with the audience, the spectators’ inner reaction to his words will be immediate, intense and straightforward. However, if the same actor utters exactly the same

² This term: “translation from page to stage” was used by O.Zuber-Skerritt and served as a title of one of her books.

monologue standing in the darkness of the back stage surrounded by other actors, the audience won't respond as intensely as it would have in the first case. So, as we can see, almost every element of the theatre production can significantly change the meaning, the power, the influence of the text, the audience's response and – possibly – the critics' reaction.

It can also happen that the director and the cast adhere too strongly to the text, significantly diminishing their own role as co-creators of the performance. This “excessive loyalty”, although sometimes complimentary to the author and the translator of the text, can lead toward a complete failure of the final production. The performance becomes an “illustrated radio play. Words [are] more important than images, more important than action.” (Carmody 1984: 96). Spectators feel deceived because instead of watching a creative interpretation they have to listen to mere declamation of the – often quite familiar – text.

One of the most prominent examples to illustrate the above-mentioned ideas is the hundred-year-old story of the failure and success of Anton Chekhov's plays. His play “The Seagull” was a total failure in 1896 in Saint-Petersburg's Alexandrinsky Theatre. Chekhov nearly abandoned playwriting, and only the revival of the play performed in the Moscow Art Theatre in 1898 created a sensation and established Chekhov's reputation in Russia. Konstantin Stanislavsky³, the director of the second – successful – production didn't change a word in the original text. He only applied an intense psychological

³ Konstantin Stanislavsky, Russian director and actor, who founded the Moscow Art Theatre and first developed the principles that were later adopted as the basis of the METHOD theory of acting. He produced a famous version of Chekhov's “The Seagull”, in which he pioneered an intense psychological approach and a new naturalism in terms of acting, setting, and costume. A celebrated series of Chekhov's works followed, all characterized by subtle control of atmosphere and simplicity of delivery. Other productions included plays by Shakespeare, Ostrovsky, Gorky, Hauptmann. (based on The New Penguin Dictionary of the Theatre 2001: 572).

approach to it, and the audience and critics recognized the deepness and the value of Chekhov's work. Chekhov's plays became increasingly popular: first in Russia and later in Europe where the Moscow Art Theatre presented systematically its productions. His plays have been translated and re-translated after his death in 1904 into all major European languages making him one of the most celebrated and often-staged-and-researched dramatists in the world.

Chekhov's text did not change from one stage version to another. The setting and *mise-en-scène* changed though, and they turned failure into international success but to be so widely renowned, this play had to be first accepted by the "source audience", then start traveling with the Moscow Art Theatre, then get noticed by the target (European) theatre directors, which led toward the "necessity" to be translated and subsequently re-translated into different languages. The worst-case scenario is easily imaginable: Stanislavsky wouldn't have directed "The Seagull". Chekhov would have quit playwriting instead of creating "Uncle Vanya", "Three Sisters", "Cherry Orchard". Translators all over the world wouldn't have a chance to translate these masterpieces.

Antoine Berman argued that translation is born out of a project, supposedly the translator's project. In the theater, however, it has to be the director's project first, then he (or she) transmits his (or her) ideas to the translator. If we go back to the above-mentioned example, the translation of Chekhov's plays and the performance of them outside of Russia first became the project of the theatre director, then – the translator's. Without a successful production of this play in 1898 in Moscow, the world would probably not know about his existence, and the translation of his plays would never become anybody's project. "It is not surprising therefore that Chekhov's fortunes as a

playwright were so closely intertwined with those of Nemirovich-Danchenko, Stanislavsky and the Moscow Art Theatre generally” (Carmody 1984: 99).

3. RATIONALE FOR THE CHOICE OF THE THEORY

Theatre translation being a distinct part of the translation theory and practice requires its own theoretical basis. It needs the theory, which will be able to consider the theater text (the source and the target) as an important, original, however, not autonomous, element of the theatrical and – more generally – cultural process in the source and the target society.

In fact, the title of this “offshoot” of the main translation theory and practice dictates hybridism, for it is a composition of two genres: translation and theatre. By definition, a hybrid is – “something of mixed origin or composition”⁴ and composition means: “the arrangement of artistic parts so as to form a unified whole”.⁵ Indeed, theatre translation becomes whole only when both its elements are represented in the outcome of their collaboration. This means that the theatre translator has to know and respect the laws of both of these genres: translation and theatre. Otherwise the linguistic or theatrical side of his (or her) work will inevitably suffer. Perhaps we cannot call it a coincidence that many translators working in the genre of theatre translation never translate non-theatrical oeuvres. This is not to say that all theatre translators deal exclusively with dramatic pieces; however, both translators whose translations constitute the corpus of the

⁴ American Heritage Dictionary 1994: 410

⁵ (ibid. 179).

present thesis work(ed) solely in this genre. One of them, Yves Morin⁶, declares that he cannot imagine translating a non-theatrical text. Another one, Robert Gilbert⁷ proved the same occurrence by his work: he translated only theatre plays, more precisely – only musicals.

“L’hybridité se situe, dans le roman, le cinéma, le théâtre, dans la rencontre inhabituelle des signes culturels, dans la juxtaposition de répertoires habituellement tenues séparés”. (Simon 1999: 44). As if following this practice, many theatre translation scholars see the theatre text as an independent work of art which doesn’t necessarily interact with the final production, and prefer to keep translation and theatre studies separated. One of the few authors who focuses her research “not on the drama as literary text, but on the final production of the play on the stage and the authenticity of the play and its effectiveness on the audience (Zuber-Skerritt 1984: 1), who agrees to see theatre translation as a combination, cooperation, hybrid, and to admit the relevance of their “*rencontre*”, is Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt.

Being an avid theatergoer myself, having seen numerous different interpretations of the same plays in the same country in the same language, I understand how remarkably different the same text can sound in different stage productions. Thus I find O.Zuber-Skerritt’s words that “drama does not only exist as a literary work of art expressed in written language and to be appreciated through reading, thinking and discussing; but drama lives in its theatre performance, the total experience expressed in oral and non-verbal language and appreciated by all physical senses as well as the intellect and

⁶ Yves Morin is the French-Canadian translator of “Cabaret”. During my interview with him, he expressed his views on different aspects of theatre translation and translation of “Cabaret” in particular. In this thesis, I will often refer to his words. I will talk about him and his translation more in the following chapters. Our interview was conducted on May 3, 2004 in Montréal.

emotions.” (Zuber-Skerritt 1984: 5) very important to my thesis. One of the key words of this citation is “senses”, for the ultimate goal of the theatre production is to “make the spectator **feel**, rather than merely understand, the message of the play” (Preuße⁸).

In an attempt to develop her theory, Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt gathered her collaborators in the understanding of the translated drama text being not the final, but – rather – the starting point of the theatre production, and published two books – in fact, collections of articles written by scholars, translators, theatre directors, playwrights. All these people with different backgrounds are united by the idea that theatre translation is always on the crossroad of the translation and the theatre studies, that one cannot exist without another, for every theatre production is a collaborative effort.

4. COMMENTS ON THE THEORY

Although the ideas expressed by O. Zuber-Skerritt and her coauthors are innovative for the theory of drama translation, because they agree to consider “non-verbal, verbal and cultural aspects as well as staging problems” (Zuber-Skerritt 1980: xiii), there are still some additions which could be made and which will be based on her theory. Introducing her book, O.Zuber-Skerritt states that she intends to demonstrate “the complexity of drama and theatre, and the necessity for co-operation between playwright, translator, dramatic advisor, producer and scholar” (Zuber-Skerritt 1980: xiv). The word “co-operation” is operative for her work; however, the list of collaborators seems to be

⁷ Robert Gilbert was the first and the only German translator of “Cabaret”. I will discuss his work further.

⁸ Georg Preuße is a German actor, female impersonator, director, and also a co-author of the German text of “Cabaret” performed in Theater-am-Kurfürstendamm in Berlin in 1999. Further I will discuss his creative work in the following chapters. I conducted two interviews with Mr. Preuße in Berlin in May and

incomplete without one of the main participants of each theatre production: the person whom the theatre text is spoken, performed and interpreted by - the actor. Further I will explain why I find that the actor's point of view is important for each attempt to discuss or evaluate a translated drama text.

5. COMPARISON OF THE TRANSLATOR'S AND THE ACTOR'S MISSIONS AND TASKS

The interaction between the theatre translator and the actor(s) should constitute an important part of theatre translation studies. I will try to prove this affirmation by comparing the translator's and the actor's tasks and goals.

Their tasks are united by the notions of **interpretation** and **mediation**. Only the translator is the mediator between the source and the target texts, and the actor – between the target text and the target audience. Describing the task of the theatre translator, scholars argue that he (or she) has to face a challenge of:

1. bringing out “different levels of cultural meaning”;
2. reconstructing “the identities of the characters”;
3. achieving “emotional intensity”;
4. motivating “the dramatic action”

(Gounaridou 2000: 1).

December, 2003. In this thesis, I will often refer to his words and opinions, for I found them crucial for my research.

If one tries to identify the actor's goals, one shall come to the same, or almost the same, list. It is interesting to note that discussions on the role of the translator and the actor usually concern the same sides of these two creative professions:

1. importance of the translator's / actor's erudition
2. translator's / actor's project
3. translator's / actor's/ horizon
4. profound knowledge of the target audience

5.1. Erudition

Antoine Berman argued that “traduire exige des lectures vastes et diversifiées. Un traducteur ignorant – qui ne lit pas de la sorte – est un traducteur déficient. On traduit avec des livres”. (Berman 1995: 68). We might only add that books don't have to be the only source of knowledge for a theatre translator: traveling, extensive theatergoing, meeting with theatre directors and actors are also very useful “tools” of the theatre translator, for his (or her) “contextual knowledge, and within that general category, knowledge about the world” (Round 1996: 3) can play a crucial role in his (or her) work.

Like a translator, an actor uses the original text as the starting point of his (or her) research and creative work, interprets it and then transforms it into another work of art. Konstantin Stanislavsky who first developed the principles that were later adopted as the basis of the METHOD theory of acting, insisted on the irreplaceable importance of the detailed research on the character and the epoch. Georg Preuße shares the same ideas and

describes the process of the preparation for the roles as an extensive reading on the epoch, visiting historical places related to the scene of action, recreating the biography of the character (Preuße).

Yves Morin, musician, actor and theatre translator insists on the importance of collecting information about previous productions (and their particularities) of the play he is about to translate, about its previous translations and interpretations, and about the time and place of the scene of action (Morin). His position seems especially interesting, for his vision includes both of the perspectives: that of the actor and the theatre translator.

5.2. Project

Antoine Berman declared that every translation is – or should be – born out of a project, the translator’s project. In the case of drama translation this is not necessarily true, or, at least, this truth is slightly modified, because the origin of the translation is often the decision of a theater director/ producer to direct a certain play. Then the director needs a “proper” translation. “Proper” means in this case that this translation will match the director’s ideas. “Le projet [de traduction] ou visée sont déterminés à la fois par la position traductive et par les exigences à chaque fois spécifiques posées par l’oeuvre à traduire”. (Berman 1995: 76). The reality of drama translation adds some modifications to this statement, for « les exigences à chaque fois spécifiques » are imposed not only by the “oeuvre” itself, but by the needs of the given theatre production as well. In this respect it seems logical that such a theatre “mogul” as Antoine Vitez who

was the Artistic Director of *Comédie Française* and also a brilliant translator, often re-translated famous drama texts for his future productions. It is also well-known that Peter Brook, another theatre director recognized worldwide, often orders re-translations for his theatre. In the same way that the theatre director has his (or her) own idea what he (or she) wants the theatre translation to be, “[...] a translator must have a clear idea of how to direct the play when translating it. It’s not just a word-for-word exercise” (Pulvers 1984: 27). In an ideal world the director and the translator always have to have kindred ideas and visions, in a real world, the drama translator has to be able to make concessions, to find a compromise between his (or her) project and the director’s / actors’ point of view.

At the same time, it is important for the translator not to forget that his (or her) text should still be *playable* and *speakable* for the actors. In this case the actors, who are the first to be exposed to the audience’s reaction should have a right to alter the translator’s decision about “disturbing strangeness” (Peter Kwiecinski) of the drama text.

It might seem strange to those who are not familiar with theatre practice that actors sometimes have a right to interfere with the translator’s work in the theatre. But the explanation is rather simple: the actor has to be comfortable with the main elements of the theatre production. There is no doubt, for example, that the actor cannot wear a costume two sizes smaller and feel comfortable on the stage. And since the “text of a theatre play is incredibly important for the actor” (Preuße) “in the contemporary Western text-based theatre” (Aaltonen 2000: 13), it cannot be “disturbingly strange”.

To be suitable for the final production, the text has to possess important qualities of *speakability*, *playability*, and *performability*. “[...] *performability* is not an extra element but something that appears when the written and the oral texts are worked

through simultaneously. Thus, the process of translating includes a series of questions directly related to the *mise en scène*, such as different theatre conventions and styles of presentation of the source – and target milieu” (Upton 2000: 57). The *performability* of the theatre text is an extremely subjective category, is very difficult to define, and often depends on the actors’ experience and opinion. Yves Morin, trying to “guarantee” *performability* of his translations, usually asks actors to “try” the “freshly translated” piece and to tell him if any adjustments are necessary. Georg Preuße always works closely with the author and the translators, discusses different aspects of the text and asks for changes in order to make the text suitable to his project.

5.3. Horizon

Once the translated drama text has been handed over to the actor, he (or she) ideally has to share the same ideas, or project, as the theater director and the translator. Only then the character and - subsequently - the whole production – will grow and develop into a harmonious creation. Following A.Berman’s logic, the translator’s vision (or project), as well as - we should add - the actor’s, depends on his (or her) **horizon**. “ On peut définir en première approximation l’horizon comme l’ensemble des paramètres langagiers, littéraires, culturels et historiques qui « déterminent » le sentir, l’agir, et le penser d’un traducteur” (Berman 1995: 79). The translator’s and the actor’s horizon is the starting point for determination of their **goal**. A translation, as well as a theatre performance, can be challenging and educating or merely amusing and relaxing, or – sometimes – both. Friedrich Schleiermacher proposed two models of translation: “Either

the translator leaves the author in peace, as much as possible, moves the reader towards him; or he leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author towards him “ (Qtd. in Venuti 1994: 101). In the same way the theatre translator, director and the actor can decide either to challenge their target audience with painful, disturbing topics or to let the spectators relax “in peace” enjoying the show. These decisions will inevitably affect the translation and the directing process. We can often hear that these decisions are made intuitively. I think that in reality they always depend on the creators’ horizon, i.e. vision, experience, knowledge of the past and the present of the society the production is aimed for, political and historical tendencies of this society, etc.

5.4. Target audience

To be able to choose the approach, the translator and the actor should know their target audience. Another feature that unites them is that they usually **belong** to the target audience, they **are** the target audience. “[...] the nationality of the translator becomes, apparently, a major criterion for legitimizing translations of plays staged in Quebec and for ensuring their acceptance” (Brisset 1996: 192). This point of view seems rather radical, but the knowledge of the target audience is indispensable for a theatre translator. “[...] in the given society [...] translation turns the aesthetic text into a persuasive text. The themes and images of the original text are given a new motivation, in the Saussurian sense of the word; they assume an ideological content designed to bring about a particular response” (Brisset 1996: 159). But to be able to predict “a particular response”, the theatre translator has to have a very clear idea of who his (or her) target audience consists

of. It is a very common practice in the modern theatre that the director doesn't have sufficient expertise whenever his (or her) potential audience is concerned. The examples are numerous. Peter Brook, Peter Stein, Giorgio Strehler, Yuri Lubimov, Roman Viktuk have directed theatre productions all over the world coming for a very limited period of time to the "target country ". Do they possess more knowledge of their target audiences than the translators and the actors who are themselves members of the target society? Hardly - can we argue -, especially if we don't forget the fact that they seldom speak or even read the target language and have to direct through an interpreter. Can they say *a priori* whether the text will please or irritate the audience? The answer to this question seems to be self-evident: they need the translator's and the actors' perspective in order to be able to predict the spectators' reaction. In these cases – even more than usually – the translator and the actors should become equal participants of the directing process.

6. THE CONNECTION BETWEEN THE THEORY AND THE SUBJECT OF THE PRESENT THESIS

Analyzing the theatre texts (original and translated) which constitute the corpus of the present thesis I will apply the principles described in this chapter to my analysis. I will show further how the translator's/actor's deep erudition, clear project, wide horizon and detailed knowledge of the target audience have affected the interpretation of the play. It should be mentioned that not every drama text initiates application of these principles of theatre translation/interpretation/adaptation. Indeed, if the translator has to translate and the actor – to perform the title song of the musical "Singin' in the Rain":

I'm singing in the rain⁹
Just singing in the rain
What a glorious feelin'
I'm happy again.
I'm laughing at clouds
So dark up above
The sun's in my heart
And I'm ready for love.
Let the stormy clouds chase
Everyone from the place
Come on with the rain
I've a smile on my face.
I walk down the lane
With a happy refrain
Just singin',
Singin' in the rain.

the interpretation of this verse doesn't demand that the interpreter possess an intense cultural, political, intellectual baggage and perspective, to take a personal stand or to read between the lines, for these lines contain no controversy or message. The text is light, superficial and straightforward and therefore it doesn't give scholars an opportunity for deep observations and reflections.

My analysis will be based on the play which is charged with linguistic, political, social, sexual, historical issues. Translation/interpretation/adaptation of this play requires extensive and deep work from all its creators and can subsequently become a valuable subject for academic research.¹⁰

⁹ <http://libretto.musicals.ru>

¹⁰ It should not be forgotten, though, that not all theatre translators or actors actually have a cultural, political, historical horizon. Some of them merely transpose the words written by another person without putting their personality and position into the process of interpretation. This thesis will not be based on these examples. It will be dedicated to the work of those who have put their thoughts, heart, soul, imagination, knowledge and creative power into the process of rendering the play written in one language, belonging to one culture, to the audience which constitutes a part of another society, another culture, speaking another language. Those whose life, previous experience, "*historische und politische Verantwortung*" (political and historical obligation) (Preuße) motivate them to become co-creators of the final production of the translated play.

CHAPTER 2

CRITERIA FOR THE CHOICE OF THE MUSICAL “CABARET” AS THE CORPUS

1. INTRODUCTION

In the first chapter, I presented the theoretical framework for my thesis and compared the work of the translator and the actor, declaring that one is to some extent identical with the other. I based my analysis on four aspects of this work: their erudition, project/horizon, and awareness of the particularities of their potential target audience.

It is difficult to argue that every translation is a creative work. There are those which do not really give a chance to the translator or the actor to express his (or her) erudition, and do not require any particular project and horizon. And there are those which are so rich in themes and subjects, so historically, socially, and politically charged that they urge the translator and the actor to perform an extensive research or to have inside knowledge, force him (or her) to take a personal stand, which – in turn - grows out of his (or her) project and horizon, and do not leave him (or her) and – consequently – his (or her) audience indifferent.

In this chapter, I will explain my choice of the musical “Cabaret” as the corpus of this thesis, because “Cabaret” belongs to the *élite* group of musicals and – more

generally – theatre plays which touch eternal and controversial topics and therefore allow various interpretations. This richness permits different readings to its creators and spectators and thus represents a challenge for researchers, for only a controversial and multi-faceted text can be interpreted in completely opposite and contradictory manners which will, however, be “legitimate”.

2. CRITERIA FOR THE CHOICE OF THE MUSICAL “CABARET” AS THE CORPUS

2.1. IT HAD TO BE A VERY POPULAR THEATRE PLAY

The word “popular” has different meanings:

1. liked or admired by many people;
- 2a. of or carried on by the general public;
- 2b. prevalent among the general public;
3. adapted to the understanding, taste, or means of the people¹¹.

The play of my choice had to conform to all the definitions of the word “popular”, for otherwise the antagonists of the topic of theatre translation being a particular and autonomous offshoot of the “main” translation studies would argue that the “readership” (or “spectatorship”) of this play is not sufficient for any kind of generalization.

¹¹ The Canadian Oxford Dictionary, ed. By Katherine Barber 1998: 1128

2.1.1. What can possibly confirm the fact that this play is “liked or admired by many people”? And then, how many is many?

The history of the musical “Cabaret” refutes any accusations of insufficient spectatorship. According to Joe Masteroff, the author of the original libretto, from November 20, 1966 (premiere of “Cabaret” at Broadhurst Theatre in New York) till 1998, he had seen 8,436 productions of this play, which equals something around 263 per year. Six years have passed since 1998, and at risk of sounding presumptuous, we might assume that the number of productions of “Cabaret” has already overpassed 10,000.

In Germany and Austria alone it has been produced at least at 32 theatres in 32 different cities in the last eight years.

The following chart¹² will prove the substantiality of this claim¹³:

Season	City	Theater	Sitting capacity
1996/97	Hagen	Hagen Theater	230
1997/98	Nordharzer	Städtbund Theater	500
	Koblenz	Stadttheater	
	Dessau	Stadttheater	1096
	Brunswick	Stadttheater	903
1998/99	Freiburg	Stadttheater	315
	Augsburg	Stadttheater	975
	Annaberg-Buccholz	Eduard-von-Winterstein	300
1999/2000	Annaberg-Buccholz	Eduard-von-Winterstein	300
	Wiesbaden	Stadttheater	1041
	Berlin	Theater-am-Kurfürstendamm	806

¹² These data are published on: <http://eur.com/theatre>

¹³ (the names of the theatres which performed “Cabaret” for more than one season are printed in bold).

2000/2001	Wiesbaden	Stadttheater	1041
	Linz	Stadttheater	756
	Kassel	Opernhaus	953
	Bielefeld	Stadttheater	775
	Baden	Stadttheater	702
2001/2002	Linz	Stadttheater	756
	Würzburg	Mainfranken Theater	756
	Plauen-Zwickau	Voigtland Theater	467
	Graz	Opernhaus	1267
	Freiburg	Stadttheater	850
	Eisenach	Stadttheater	501
	Darmstadt	Stadttheater	956
Bremen	Theater-am-Goetheplatz	989	
2002/2003	Würzburg	Mainfranken Theater	756
	Plauen-Zwickau	Voigtland Theater	467
	Graz	Opernhaus	1267
	Eisenach	Stadttheater	501
	Bremen	Theater-am-Goetheplatz	989
	Schwerin	Mecklenburgisches Staatstheater	640
	Dortmund	Opernhaus	1170
	Bonn	Oper der Stadt Bonn	1038
2003/2004	Schwerin	Mecklenburgisches Staatstheater	640
	Münster	Stadttheater	955
	Mannheim	Opernhaus	1154
	Chemnitz	Opernhaus	720

As we can see from this chart, some theatres with quite impressive sitting capacity performed “Cabaret“ for two and more seasons, which obviously proves its success.

- The first American version of the play won eight Tony Awards, and the second – four.
- Both English texts of the two versions (1966 and 1998) of the play were published in a book form. Not many musicals have been honored with this kind

of recognition (“Hairspray”, “The Phantom of the Opera”, “The Producers”, “Les Misérables”).¹⁴

2.1.2. of or carried on by the general public...

“Cabaret” is a musical, and this genre is conventionally associated with music and dance and therefore is accessible to all social groups. As opposed to tragedy traditionally reserved for intellectual élite, the target audience of the musical is quite broad, even though in the last several decades it “[...] showed itself capable of addressing all the subjects previously reserved for legitimate drama [...]” (*The New Penguin Dictionary of the Theatre* 1988: 418). “Cabaret” was one of the first Broadway musicals which opened the door for “seriousness” on musical stage and yet did not lose its appeal as a part of the “light entertainment”. This duality of “Cabaret”, which we will discuss further in this and following chapters allowed its creators to transmit important messages (that the plot of this musical inevitably evokes) to different social and age groups and nationalities and helps to illustrate again the importance of collaboration between the text and the production in the theatre.

2.1.3. Another definition of the word “popular” involves adaptation “to the understanding, taste, or means of the people”.

In case of the theatre production “people” means “spectators” or – in translation studies - “target audience”. In this thesis, I will concentrate on two different versions of

¹⁴ It should also be mentioned that the way the text of the second version is presented only confirms one of the main ideas of the present thesis: that a theatre text and – consequently – the theatre translation is not autonomous, separate from the production. In this book, the text is accompanied by pictures, reviews, and – not less importantly – by the extracts from the diary of Alan Cumming who played Emcee. His

“Cabaret”: German (performed at the Theater-am-Kurfürstendamm in Berlin in 1999) and French-Canadian (performed at the Théâtre du Rideau Vert in Montréal in 2004). These two interpretations give a chance to see what the words “understanding” and “taste” of the target audience mean in different countries and different times. In case of the theatre translation, “understanding” and “taste” can be interpreted in two different ways: “understandable “ can mean “fluent”, and thus conforming to the audience’s linguistic taste, or it can also mean “understanding of the message”, whether pleasing the audience’s taste or not.

“Cabaret” by its nature is unpleasant, for it shows the beginning of the Nazi era in Germany, and unless played as a simple love story of Cliff and Sally, it has to be disturbing. Linguistically speaking, it also contains elements (linguistic duality) which, unless completely eliminated, inevitably break the fluency of the translated text and disrupt the reader’s/ spectator’s peace.

2.2. IT HAD TO BE A PLAY, WHICH WOULD BE UNIQUE IN MANY RESPECTS AND THUS WOULD REPRESENT A CERTAIN CHALLENGE FOR ITS TRANSLATORS, INTERPRETERS AND – CONSEQUENTLY - RESEARCHERS

2.2.1.Linguistic duality and cultural particularities

2.2.1a. Linguistic duality of the source text and the reverse sense of the notions of *foreignisation* and *domestication* in translation of “Cabaret” into German

The history of translation of “Cabaret” into German reminds one of the story of one of the world’s most famous composers Frédéric Chopin who was born in Poland

observations, ideas and textual suggestions which were accepted in the final version constitute an integral part of this book.

from a French father and a Polish mother, spent most of his adult life, became famous and later died in France but in his will asked to bury his heart in Poland.

“Cabaret” was written and became famous in the United States. It is one of the most prominent symbols of Broadway and Hollywood but it found its way home, i.e. to Germany, because its spiritual motherland is Germany and more precisely – Berlin. From a linguistic point of view “Cabaret” is quite unique because it was written about Germany in English by Christopher Isherwood, a British-born writer who spent the greatest part of his life in the USA. Thus, “Cabaret” can be called a **cultural hybrid** which becomes a mirror of two completely different cultures: American and German.

“Cabaret” gives researchers a chance to see translation from a different point of view, and even reverse, when translation from English into German is concerned. Piotr Kwiecinski defines *foreignisation* as “the introduction into the target text of concepts and language forms that are alien to and/or obscure in the target language culture” (Kwiecinski 2001: 14). Echoing this concept, Roger Pulvers who is a playwright, producer and drama translator states that “one country’s naturalism is another country’s surrealism”. (Pulvers 1984: 23). Usually it means that the source-culture’s naturalism becomes surreal for the target audience. “Cabaret” refutes this rule: in fact, the seedy, raucous, sexually permissive atmosphere of the Kit Kat Klub can shock the American audience whereas it seems historically normal for German spectators who grew up watching “*Der Blaue Engel*” / “Blue Angel”, listening to Kurt Weil’s songs and viewing Otto Dix’s paintings.

When American spectators hear one of the key songs of this musical, hot and sultry “*Bye-bye, mein lieber Herr*” one third of which is written and performed in

German, they can probably find it strange and even alien unless they speak, or at least understand, German. To them, this song with its hedonistic meaning represents foreignness of the given performance, especially performed by a woman:

The continent of Europe is so wide, mein Herr.
Not only up and down, but side to side, mein Herr.
I couldn't ever cross it if I tried, mein Herr.
But I do – what I can – inch by inch – step by step –
Mile by mile – man by man. [...]

Bye-bye, mein lieber Herr.
Auf wiedersehen, mein Herr.
Es war sehr gut, mein Herr, und vorbei.
Du kennst mich wohl, mein Herr.
Ach, lebe wohl, mein Herr.
Du sollst mich nicht mehr sehen, mein Herr.

For German viewers this number is nothing more than just a paraphrase of a popular in the 30-s, 40-s and still well-known song “*Ich bin von Kopf bis Fuß auf Liebe eingestellt*” written by Friedrich Holländer and performed by Marlene Dietrich's character in “Blue Angel”.

Männer umschwirr'n mich, wie Moten um das Licht.
Und wenn sie verbrennen, ja dafür kann ich nichts.
Ich bin von Kopf bis Fuß auf Liebe eingestellt,
Ich kann halt lieben nur und sonst gar nichts.

Men cluster round like moths round a flame
And if they burn, I'm not to blame.
From head to foot, I'm made for love
For that is my world and nothing else.
(Appigannesi 1975: 128)

These two songs written in two different countries and in different epochs but dedicated to the same period of time and the same place sound like a celebration of devotion to pleasure and only pleasure which was one of the important characteristics of Berlin of the Weimar Republic.

The original text of “Cabaret”, written mostly in English but generously filled with German words, couplets and expressions, reads like a translation. And not even a typical English translation, for, as Lawrence Venuti argues, the Anglo-American tradition is based on *domestication* (Venuti 1995: 23). *Domestication* is defined by Piotr Kwiecinski as “the accommodation of the target text to the established TL/TC concepts, norms and conventions” (Kwiecinski 2001: 13). While watching the performance in New York, the viewers could be easily “spiritually relocated”¹⁵ from Broadway to Berlin just by listening to the text, the text which from the famous beginning:

Willkommen, bienvenue, welcome,
Fremde, étranger, stranger!
Glücklich zu sehen, je suis enchanté,
Happy to see you.
Bleibe, reste, stay...

Meine Damen und Herren, Mesdames et Messieurs, Ladies and Gentelmen! Guten
Abend, bon soir, good evening! Wie geht’s... Comment ça va? Do you feel good? [...]
Ich bin euer conférencier, je suis votre compère... I am your host! [...]

denies any notion of fluency which, according to Lawrence Venuti, is the symbol of Anglo-American Canon. **This** - original - text could need to be domesticated for the majority of the viewers who are unfamiliar with German language. **This** text is constantly “interrupted” by the presence of German words, but regarding the history of the genre of cabaret these words are not intruders, they are *chez eux* in this play and the exoticism of the source play can be easily justified by the history of the genre.

16. Developing the topic of the interdependence between the theatre text and the final production, we should note that American spectators were “spiritually relocated” from Broadway of the 90s to Berlin of the 30s not only by the power of the text. During the performance of the openly nationalistic song

2.2.1.b. History of the genre of cabaret as one of the reasons and justifications of its linguistic and cultural duality

“Cabaret is a theatrical form using a mixture of small forms; the term is derived from a divided serving plate of hors d’oeuvres tray, offering a little bit of something for everybody. Accordingly, a cabaret program is a series of individual numbers, including dances, poems, songs, comic monologues, impersonations, sketches, and one-acts” (Laureau 1995: 2).

The history of cabaret is impossible to imagine without Germany. Born in Paris in 1881, cabaret started traveling East: to Berlin, Prague, and Moscow. The German society was strongly affected by the First World War. It was the time of instability but also of liberation from the behavioral norms forced onto people in the 19th century. Audiences in all these countries, having survived the terror of the war, were not ready for serious performances in the theatres and therefore were delighted to recognize this relatively new form of entertainment which did not demand the constant attention from the viewers and allowed a certain freedom to them. “Cabaret’s application of literature and music to a wide public was supposed to infuse a new spirit of vitality into its audience” (Jelavich 1993 : 28). German public enjoyed the diversity provided by cabaret : diversity of genres and topics discussed in the performances of conférenciers : sex, fashion, culture, politics.

“Some cabaret artists addressed the growing strength of the Nazi party but they continued to misjudge the magnitude of the threat. Despite the brutality of the street violence in 1931, some responded by continuing to dismiss Hitler as a buffoon who had little chance of success” (Jelavich 1993: 237).

“Tomorrow Belongs to Me”, the doors of the auditorium got locked with a very characteristic loud sound, which only reinforced the impression the audience had of the text.

German interwar cabaret became a mirror for the national catastrophe of this country. When Hitler took power in 1933, cabaret was one of the first victims. Several writers, performers and *conférenciers* were arrested and taken to concentration camps; others left Germany for America or other parts of Europe. Cabaret was destined to be destroyed (or almost destroyed) by the Nazis, “for most of the entertainers had been liberal, leftist, or Jewish” (Jelavich 1993: 228) or gay. And these people were first to be persecuted by the Nazis. In 1937, Goebbels banned all political themes from German stages. In 1941, he went even further signing an “Order Prohibiting Masters of Ceremonies and Commentary from the Stage” in which he stated that “Any and every so-called *conférencier* performance or commentary is immediately and fundamentally forbidden for the entire public. It makes no difference whether it means to deal with matters of politics, economy, culture, or any other concerns of public or private life” (Senelick 1993 : 282).

2.2.1.c. Triple-language and triple-cultural translation of “Cabaret” into French

“Cabaret” is also quite a unique musical because it helps introduce the notion of the impact of the bilingualism of the original text on the translation into the third (other than English or German) language. A most notable example of such a phenomenon was Leo Tolstoy’s incorporation of long passages in French into “War and Peace”. However, this example cannot parallel “Cabaret”, because Tolstoy did not use this technique while writing for the theatre and he did not try to make the original text sound exotic. He used French passages only because Russian aristocracy of the XIXth century was more

familiar with French language than Russian. However, the purpose of incorporation of a large number of German words into English text in case of “Cabaret” purposefully emphasizes place and the epoch.

Although the usage of German words, sentences and couplets in the English text doesn't seem unjustified, it still can represent a significant challenge for a non-German translator. The translator will have to choose between perfect fluency of the translated text and thus a complete understanding of it by the audience, and preserving the German flavor of the original text. The first way is “safer” because not only will the audience understand the text better but the translation will also become more *speakable* and thus *performable* for the actors. “[...] *performability* is not an extra element but something that appears when the written and the oral texts are worked through simultaneously. Thus, the process of translating includes a series of questions directly related to the *mise en scène*, such as different theatre conventions and styles of presentation of the source – and target – *milieux*” (Upton 2000: 57). The second way might seem more dangerous because it will demand an extra effort from the target audience and the performers but will let the third-language translation sound as *Germanized* as the original (English) text does.

Whether the third-language translator decides to make his (or her) translation completely fluent in his (or her) target language or not, he (or she) undoubtedly has to possess a profound knowledge of the epoch described in this play. And since Berlin is another, and very important, character of this musical, it as a “full and equal” character ideally has to be interpreted into the third language, heard and felt by the target audience.

Further in this thesis we will see how the French-Canadian translator faced the challenging task of adapting the “disturbing language” and ”disturbing strangeness” of “Cabaret” for the French-Canadian audience of Montréal Théâtre du Rideau Vert, using his deep and “multifaceted” understanding of the target audience, on one hand, and his detailed research on the source epoch and society on another.

2.2.1.d. Textual duality (narrative vs. lyrics)

Unlike numerous other musicals, a fairly large part of the text of “Cabaret” belongs to narrative. There are many prominent examples of world-famous musicals (“Cats”, “Notre Dame de Paris”) which mainly, or almost exclusively, consist of songs, and the narrative is used as a short and insignificant passage from one song to another. In the case of “Cabaret” the role of narrative should not be underestimated. “Cabaret” tells a story of people of Berlin, and this story is told in prose. Songs and musical numbers are used to liven the dialogues, to stress out the main ideas, but only as **one** of the elements of this play. From the translation studies’ point of view, it is important because it gives a chance to compare the translator’s treatment of both: songs and the text written in prose.

2.3. SOCIAL, POLITICAL, AND HISTORICAL CONTENT OF THE PLAY

It had to be a play which would give an opportunity to reflect upon the importance of the translator’s / actor’s erudition, political awareness and historical competence.

2.3.1.. Thematic variety of the play

Any discussion on the translator's / actor's visibility, erudition, project and knowledge of the target audience can become well-grounded **only** if the play itself gives enough material and contains enough controversy for different interpretations. And in that respect "Cabaret" also poses itself as a perfect example.

The main topics of this musical are:

- Nazism
- Anti-Semitism
- Political blindness in the face of danger.

Nazism might seem unambiguous to the point that the interpreters of the play will not have anything new to say. Thousands of books have been written about the Hitler era, fascism and the Second World War. Till recently, one could argue that the topic of the Second World War is always treated in the same serious, even tragic, manner and doesn't allow any contradictions in understanding the Second World War as a catastrophe. However, after April 19, 2001, the opening night of the musical "The Producers", one had to reconsider, because one of the key songs of this musical "Springtime for Hitler" clearly indicates that, unfortunately, not everybody understands that the subject of Nazism cannot and should not leave any place for farce, even though the authors, obviously, considered it appropriate to use this text as a parody. This outrageous song and the musical of the same title become a huge success, according to the plot of "The Producers":

Germany was having trouble
What a sad, sad story
Needed a new leader to restore
Its former glory.
Where, oh, where was he?

Where could that man be?
 We looked around and then we found
 The man for you and me.
 And now it's...
 Springtime for Hitler and Germany
 Deutschland is happy and gay!
 We're marching to a faster pace
 Look out, here comes the master race!
 Springtime for Hitler and Germany
 Rhineland's a fine land once more!
 Springtime for Hitler and Germany
 Watch out, Europe
 We're going on tour!
 Springtime for Hitler and Germany...
 [...]

Winter for Poland and France.

[...]

Don't be stupid, be a smarty, come and join the Nazi party! [...] ¹⁶,

which only proves that the society still needs to be reminded about the seriousness of the threat fascism represents by the means of the theatre ¹⁷.

The creators of "Cabaret" understood though that the subject of the Nazism cannot be treated lightly.

In 1987 upon working on a revival of "Cabaret" on Broadway, the director Harold Prince insisted on the actuality and the graveness of the topics incorporated in the musical. He brought a photo of a group of protesters.

"I asked the cast to identify where and when the photo was taken, and everyone naturally assumed it was Berlin in the early thirties because that's the time and place of our show. They were surprised when I said it was taken in Little Rock, Arkansas, in the mid-fifties: these aren't Hitler Youth but blond white kids snarling at black kids entering an integrated school, an image that is still relevant today, unfortunately. We've come a long

¹⁶ www.musicals.ru

¹⁷ Beside its inappropriate way of representation of the subject of Nazism, this song clearly indicates the fact that the authors haven't really performed a thorough research on the history of Germany under Nazis. Otherwise they wouldn't have allowed "Deutschland is happy and gay" into their writing. This line contains double historical perversity: first, numerous historians and witnesses of this epoch stated that German population was not really "happy", and second, the word "gay" has become "[...]" standard in its use to refer to the homosexual community [...]" (The American Heritage dictionary 1994: 349). To state

way since 1966, and since 1930 for that matter, but human nature doesn't change: what happened in Berlin at the time of Cabaret **can** happen here [...]" (Qtd. from Hirsch 1989: 40).

2.3.2. Actuality of "Cabaret"

The above-mentioned quote by Harold Prince focuses attention on another important side of "Cabaret": its **actuality**. The question "How can people be blind in the face of danger?" is still applicable to the most recent events: the war in Iraq, creation of cult of personality in Russia. "[...] at the end of the republic, many intellectuals still would not take Hitler seriously; they thought he was good material for jokes. Most believed that if Hitler were to come to power, he would make a fool of himself, and then order could be reinstated" (Lareau 1995: 153). And like in the 30s in Germany, people are still able to make jokes about the most dangerous issues. Like Germans, they think that their political leader is a clown. Adam Ferrara, American comic said: "Our president is crazy, have you picked up on that? It's like we all fell asleep and when we woke up crazy Uncle Tex had the remote control" (*The Gazette*, July 26, 2004 D3). So, "Cabaret", unfortunately becomes a mirror of political and social life not only of the Weimar Germany but the contemporary world as well.

that Germany was gay means to go against the historical truth, for thousands of German homosexuals were sent to concentration camps during the period of the Third Reich.

2.3.3 “Cabaret” as a reflection of the political and social life in the source and the target societies

The previous examples prove that this musical is heavily charged with major political and social issues. And thus it gives its creators – the author, the translator, the director and the actor boundless opportunities for different interpretations. It can be read as a political statement, historical overview, simple love story, superficial musical piece. Unlike many musicals (“Cats”, for example) the interpretation of “Cabaret” depends on how prepared the given society is to all the debatable issues incorporated in it. Beside the three major ones, “Cabaret” also explores some ugly social phenomena, typical for economically and psychologically “troubled” societies and unusual for a Broadway musical: prostitution, sexual permissiveness, ménage à trois, black market, abortion, violence, unemployment. Much depends on the interpretation, on how seriously its interpreters want to concentrate on one or several themes, which proportion between drama and “show” they will choose. These interpretations mirror the target society and therefore different versions of this play help understand the ways and directions of the development of the contemporary society in both, North America and Europe.

2.3.4. “Cabaret” as one of the examples of the “interpenetration” of the American and German cultures

As we have already stated, “Cabaret” is a cultural hybrid, existing between two cultures: American and German. Germans agree that one of the most important songs of

this play “Tomorrow belongs to me” sounds like a real German folk song (Preuße), whereas in reality it was written by Kander and Ebb for the 1966 Broadway production. Not only the music dictates this resemblance. When we read/hear the line “The branch of the linden is leafy and green” (Masteroff 1998: 78), we realize that the author could have used the term “lime tree” (which is more conventional in English and perfectly fits the rhythm) instead of “linden”. However, the word “linden” sounds more German, because first it is originally German, second, the most well-known and most distinguished street of Germany is called *Unter-den-Linden* and leads almost directly to *Reichstag* (German government), and third – because linden is very common in Germany (like maple tree in Canada or birch in Russia).

Trying to understand the origins of the cultural hybridism of “Cabaret”, we should look for the genesis of this occurrence not only in the plot itself and the biography of the author (Christopher Isherwood) but also in the history of cultural relationship between Germany and the USA. Like Cliff Bradshaw and Christopher Isherwood himself, as well as Robert Gilbert (German translator of “Cabaret”), many Germans decided to flee the country in the beginning of the 30s. Among them were: Marlene Dietrich, Josef von Sternberg, Erich Maria Remarque. They were born in Germany (except J.von Sternberg who was born in Austria, but became known in Germany), but their world-wide fame came to them in the United States. So, willingly or not, American culture has already incorporated German influence which was only developed further in “Cabaret”.

In 1957, Elvis Presley performed a song “Wooden Heart” and included two stanzas of Bavarian folk song “*Muss i’ denn*” in the original, German, version. This

example might seem insignificant, but in reality, because of Elvis Presley's extraordinary world-wide popularity, it helped to "legitimize" German texts and German language in the English-speaking world for the first time after the end of the Second World War. From 1958 till 1960 Presley was doing his military service in Germany and probably wanted to pay his tribute to this country. This example allows us to illustrate (once again) that quite often a written text can be powerful and weak, influential and unknown. But with the actor's/ performer's "interference" it can become even more powerful and influential and, like in the last example, can to some extent change the perception of the language caused by historical, social and political reasons.

As we can see from these examples, Joe Masteroff and Fred Ebb were not pioneers in intermarrying English (American) and German languages and cultures but they did it to an extent unseen before them.

Conclusion

The number and nature of the topics contained in "Cabaret" and discussed above cannot leave its interpreters (the translator, the actor, the director) indifferent or invisible. They **have to take a stand** - political, social, historical, personal. However, treating these delicate subjects, the translator, the actors and the director have to base their position not only on their personal intuition. The responsibility which is laid on them is too high, for – ideally – this play has to educate the audience, to warn it against committing the same mistakes, to teach it to resist the danger of neo-Nazism, national intolerance and political indifference. Therefore, the interpreters of this musical have to possess necessary historical knowledge, political awareness and a personal view of the subjects of the play.

CHAPTER 3.

THE PERSONALITY OF THE AUTHOR IN RELATION TO “CABARET”

1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, I explained why the musical “Cabaret” is unique and why it becomes a perfect subject for a research in drama translation studies. As has been stated before, theatre translation is a hybrid of translation and theatre, it’s a combination of two different and equal disciplines, practices and approaches. “Cabaret” itself is also a hybrid: it belongs to a conventionally light genre of musical, yet it tells a tragic story; linguistically, it’s dual because although conceived and written in English, it has undergone a “massive” interference of German language; historically and culturally, it belongs to two countries: America and Germany; textually, it consists of narrative and lyrics; and, finally, it contains politically and socially touchy topics.

In this chapter I will show, how many of the features distinguishing “Cabaret” from other theatre plays were dictated by the personality of its author: Christopher Isherwood.

2. Christopher Isherwood

The story told in “Cabaret” is based on Christopher Isherwood’s “Goodbye to Berlin” and the play “I am a Camera” which was inspired by it. The score of “Cabaret” evokes the Berlin of the 1930-s. **The duality of “Cabaret” is mainly caused by the duality of Christopher Isherwood’s biography.** “ A novelist, unlike a poet, needs a lot of hard information: it is difficult to write good fiction without actually knowing a

considerable amount about the external world, and this is especially true if the writer's powers of invention are weak, as Isherwood's certainly were" (Page 1998: 37). This observation by Norman Page only intensifies the importance of understanding how closely C. Isherwood's biography is related to his works.

Christopher Isherwood was born on 26 August, 1904 in Britain. In 1929, he came to Berlin, as he explained: "I'm looking for my homeland and I've come to find out if this is it" (Page 1998: 121). He could not accept the traditionalism of his parents and was trying to reject his past by going to Berlin. "...one of his great advantages was knowing very little German. For turning his back on England had set him free not only from family and background but from language and culture. In using a language in which he was still inexpert and in which words were stripped of nuances, implications, connotations and indications of class he felt "a marvelous freedom". (ibid: 41).

In 1929, Christopher Isherwood arrived to Berlin and left it in 1933, when Hitler came to power. In 1930 Isherwood moved to Nollendorfstrasse, where he met an English girl Jean Ross, who became the model for Sally Bowles.

"In the Weimar Berlin of the 1920s and early 1930s, Nollendorfplatz was the centre of the city's large gay and lesbian community. Even by contemporary standards, Berlin's gay scene in those days was prodigious: there were around forty gay bars on and near this square alone, and gay life in the city was open, fashionable and well organized, with its own newspapers, community associations and art". (Holland 2001: 147).

The territory and timing of his life were exactly the same as his famous characters': Cliff Bradshaw and Sally Bowles. To demonstrate the strong connection

existing between him and the main male character of “Cabaret”, Isherwood gave him the last name “Bradshaw” which was in reality his own second Christian name. Like Cliff, he came to the Weimar Berlin, lived in *Nollendorfplatz*, visited seedy Berlin night clubs and cabarets, was acquainted with a cabaret singer, was homosexual, and later went to the USA.

There is a part of Christopher Isherwood in his other famous character, Sally Bowles. Sally is also British, like her creator. “Like Isherwood himself, Sally has come to Berlin to escape the constraints of a conventional family, and to some extent she acts as a reflector of late Weimar social and sexual mores”. (Page 1998: 195).

Like Cliff, Christopher Isherwood saw Germany and its upcoming tragedy as a foreigner, who, unlike his other characters: Emcee (Conférencier), Fräulein Schneider and Herr Schulz, could leave this country at any moment without feeling uprooted. However, unlike many others who left Germany in the 1930-s, escaping the fascism, Isherwood, although coming back to this country in his oeuvre, never really went back to Berlin after his departure in 1933 (he visited Germany briefly in the 60s).

I think that “Cabaret”, and especially its finale, is a symbol of the pain and compassion that Isherwood - once again as a foreigner - felt for Germany, the country of an extraordinary culture which it had been before the Third Reich and which it became again in the process of its political, economical and cultural Renaissance after the end of the Second World War. I cannot, obviously, compare myself to Christopher Isherwood; however, I must say that I can relate to this feeling of pain for the country which possessed - and still does - a gigantic cultural and scientific potential and yet became the symbol of evil, of tragedy.

Upon fleeing the country, Cliff urges Sally to look the reality into the eyes and recognize the potential danger. Unfortunately - for Christopher Isherwood and all of us - Sally and the whole country with her were not ready to understand that their future would be cathartic and they would be able to purify themselves only through suffering.

A musical, or a play which leads its readers and spectators toward the state of catharsis, in this case, political catharsis, needs interpreters who share the author's vision and who are able to understand and to share the author's pain.

CHAPTER 4.

“CABARET” IN AMERICA: COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE ENGLISH TEXTS OF THE MUSICAL

1. Introduction

The uniqueness of the musical “Cabaret” does not stop at the characteristics listed in the second chapter of this thesis. “Cabaret” is also exceptional because it has undergone changes not only in the process of translation and retranslation into other languages, but also while being re-actualized or – rather – translated from English into... English in course of its stage life in its mother culture – American. There are not many theatre plays in the world which were rewritten (by the original author in cooperation with theatre director with the “actor’s interference”) according to the changes in the epochs. Comparing different versions of this musical, even within the same culture, one can (upon performing a meticulous analysis) come to important conclusions about political, social, cultural changes and at the same time about some traditions characteristic to the target society. Is the society ready for the unpleasantness of this musical, how far is the audience able to go in understanding the horror of the beginning of the Nazi era? Will the spectators/ readers accept a homo/bi-sexual man as one of the main characters (the author’s *alter ego*)? Is the society too cowardly to discuss anti-Semitism?.. or sexual permissiveness? How open-minded is the public to enjoy a love story of an aging couple? Will the audience tolerate presentation of all these serious topics in a musical?

2. Comparison of different textual versions of “Cabaret” in relation to interdisciplinarity of translation studies

All the questions listed above may be answered by a detailed comparison of two original texts and their translations. This comparison will, beside answering these questions, illustrate the idea that translation studies, like any cultural studies, ideally are never monodisciplinary. It might happen though that a translation researcher decides to reduce his (or her) analysis to a simple statement of the differences between the texts, based on one or several formal parameters which do not and cannot lead toward any kind of generalization, observation or conclusion about social, historical, political, cultural motives, standards and norms of the given societies. In this case translation studies become a monodisciplinary branch of cultural studies. However, this is not the purpose of the present thesis and the following comparative analysis of original and translated texts of the musical “Cabaret”.

Examination of different textual versions of this musical will enable us to go beyond a simple comparison and to begin to answer the above-mentioned questions and several others which – in turn – will allow us to better understand source and target societies, their historical, political and social development and prove that the theatre text doesn’t exist autonomously, that the word “theatre” is not of less importance than the word “text”, for they can make each other successful as well as contribute to each other’s failure.

3. “Cabaret” in America

The musical “Cabaret” directed by Harold Prince with music by John Kander,

lyrics by Fred Ebb, and a book by Joe Masteroff premiered in the United States on November 20th, 1966 and ran for a total of 1,166 performances in its first reincarnation. Like any politically and socially charged piece, “Cabaret” was a reflection not only of the society it described but also the one that produced it. So, what can we say about America of the 60s? Why did Harold Prince want to show “the parallel between the spiritual bankruptcy of Germany in the 1920s and [the U.S.] in the 1960s” (Qtd. Garebian 1999: 28)?

“ [...] there was no real Nazi power in America in the sixties, but the country had the Ku Klux Klan and where Germany had its gay bars and clubs where drugs and sex could be negotiated from table to table, each conveniently equipped with telephone, America discovered that cocaine, marijuana, and LSD were just around the corner, and free love almost as prevalent as rock’n’roll. The Berlin of the twenties and thirties and the United States of the sixties were both riddled by the deepest social and political problems, often based on race and the arrogance of power. Berlin seethed with unemployment, malnutrition, stock market panic, hatred of the Versailles Treaty, and anti-Semitism. In the U.S. there was bubbling racial unrest following the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Medgar Evers. Black Americans were being murdered in the South, but the civil rights movement refused to be stopped”. (Garebian 1999: 28).

For its time, “Cabaret” was audacious and provocative, for it dared talk about unpleasant, even frightening topics, teasing the audience, reminding it of dark moments in human history. All of that is true to a certain extent, and only in comparison with the first version (text) of this musical to its second Broadway production, and then to its German and French-Canadian interpretations can we track and understand the development of the American society and its morale.

4. Comparison of the texts of two Broadway versions of “Cabaret”

Thoroughly comparing these two versions, one can notice many significant differences, which can characterize the ways of development of the American society. Further we will see and analyze numerous examples, which will illustrate the changes in the people’s mentality. Overall we can say that the second text (and the stage version as well) is much more liberated, straightforward, blunt, violent, homosexualized, Germanized, more truthful to the historical reality than the first one, and edifying. In the 60s, “[the audience was] certainly not ripe for exposure to the full flavor of Weimar cabaret. Although great art is always ahead of its audience, no art can flourish without audience acceptance” (Garebian 1999: 55). In other words, the audience was too modest to hear and digest the reality of Weimar republic. According to the second version, by 1998, the audience has lost this quality, for the creators were not afraid anymore to expose it to the following expressions:

(further while comparing two versions or two translations I will highlight the differences in bold)

EXCERPT # 1:

“And now – presenting the Cabaret girls! Each and every one a virgin. You don’t believe me? Well, don’t take my word for it. Go ahead. **Ask her!**” (Masteroff 1967: 4).

as opposed to:

“And now, presenting the cabaret girls! **Rosie, Lulu, Frenchie, Texas, Fritzie and Helga.** [...] Each and every one – a virgin. You don’t believe me? Well, don’t take my word for it. Go ahead – **try Helga!** [...] **And now presenting the cabaret boys! Here they are... Bobby [...]** **Victor [...]** **Or is it Victor [...]** **Bobby [...]** **There’s really only one way to tell the difference... I’ll show you later”** (Masteroff 1998: 20).

First of all, it is interesting to notice how the author has chosen the names of the “girls”. They are hardly accidental. From the very beginning of this famous play: “Willkommen, bienvenue, welcome! / Fremde, étranger, stranger./ Glücklich zu sehen, je suis enchanté, /Happy to see you, bleibe, reste, stay” (Masteroff 1998: 19), “[the] lyric signals the false cosmopolitanism of Berlin” (Garebian 1999: 69). This expression “false cosmopolitanism of Berlin” can be debatable, because

“for an all-too-brief moment, Berlin democratically embraced all comers: expressionist artists and comintern agents, nudist dancers and sexologists, embezzlers and black marketeers, drug addicts, transvestites, pimps, courtesans, homosexuals, prophets vegetarian, magical and apocalyptic. The city became a harbour for a variety of Eastern European refugees: Russians fleeing the revolution, Balkan conspirators, Jews escaping Ukrainian pogroms, Hungarians, Viennese, Poles”. (Appignanesi 1975: 94).

So, from this point of view, there is nothing “false” in this trilingual approach. However, if we go beyond the obvious and look further into the history of Germany in the 30s and 40s, we will immediately realize that in 1930, when the action took place, it was almost too late to talk about Berlin’s multinationalism, for quite soon Berlin would become an “inappropriate” place to stay for even some “unorthodox” Germans, much less was it appropriate for “Fremde, étranger and stranger”. So, when it came to choosing the names of the “girls” for the second version, the author used the same approach: English (Texas), French (Lulu) and German (Helga). Right from the beginning, he is

implying the finale of this musical: these people, as well as the whole city of Berlin, or – rather – the country are doomed, for they are “Fremden” to the upcoming regime.

The second difference is in the M.C.’s invitation to “try Helga” instead of simply “asking” her. He invites the spectators to lose their innocence, but what kind of innocence? Does he mean physical? Not only, we might argue. Considering the whole idea of “Cabaret” as a warning against committing the same mistakes Germans had made in the 30s, the M.C. urges the people to lose their political innocence and naiveté and stop blindly trusting any orator, be it the M.C. or Hitler.

The frivolous nature of the text is much more explicit in the second than in the first version. It reproduces the atmosphere of German cabaret of the 20s and 30s with higher loyalty than the first one:

EXCERPT # 2:

“And now the Kit Kat Klub is proud to present a **beautiful** young lady from England. She is **so beautiful**, so talented, so charming **that I have asked her to marry me. And now there is only one thing standing in our way: my wife!** I give you: the toast of Mayfair – Fraulein Sally Bowles!!” (Masteroff 1967: 18)

“...and now the Kit Kat Klub is proud to present a **most talented** young lady from England. **Yes – England!** She is so talented, so charming, **so woo-who-who. Only yesterday I said to her, “I want you for my wife.” And she said, “Your wife? What would she want with me?” Thank you! I give you – and don’t forget to bring her back when you are finished with her – the toast of Mayfair – Fräulein Sally Bowles!!**”

These changes, which might probably seem insignificant, in reality not only render the text more faithful to the spirit of Weimar cabaret, but also give a threatening feeling of what Alexandr Pushkin called “The Feast during the Plague”, and the “brown

plague” (one of the terms widely used to describe Nazi invasion) was obviously coming to Germany and later to the whole Europe.

Another important difference between the first and the second English-language versions of “Cabaret” becomes evident right from the beginning: treatment of the topic of homosexuality. After all, Eldorado, the real Berlin club which served as the prototype for the Kit Kat Klub “during the 1920s and 30s [...] was a hang out for lesbians, homosexual men, transvestites, transsexuals of both sexes, tourists even celebrities such as Marlene Dietrich [who, according to numerous sources, was bisexual – T.S.]. The Club featured cabaret shows, dancing and drinking in a stylish manner. The Eldorado was only one of many such establishments to spring up in Berlin but she was the most popular.” (<http://www.the-sisterhood.net>). Obviously, the “historical reality” doesn’t necessarily mean that the atmosphere of the real club had to be reproduced to the letter. However, it is well-known that in the 20s and 30s Berlin was one of the world-wide centers of homosexuality. And since on the one hand Christopher Isherwood was homosexual and on the other his “powers of invention [were] weak” (Page 1998: 37), it seems fair that this aspect of Berlin life will be discussed in the play.

In the first version of the musical, there was no direct textual indication of the presence of the issue of homosexuality. The only person “in question” was the M.C. whose sexuality was rather uncertain. The leading male character, Cliff was exclusively heterosexual. His only sexual interest was Sally Bowles, and thus this character seemed “sexually orthodox”. However, considering the fact that Cliff was C.Isherwood’s alter ego, the question of his sexuality may be important.

“In the original production, Cliff was totally sexless. You couldn’t have a gay leading man in those days. [...] In the 1987 revival, as we traveled around the country, he was sort of

bisexual. When we got to New York, we said, what the hell, let's make him a homosexual.” (Masteroff 1998: 21).

The question of the male character's sexuality and the extent to which the society is ready to accept his alternative sexual orientation can illustrate the degree of the society's liberation and tolerance. Totalitarian regimes traditionally persecute homosexuals, and so did Hitler. Even now in North America, political candidates are being judged by their attitude toward this problem. Describing the attitude of the American society in the 60s, Donald L. Loeffler quotes an article “Homosexuality” published in 1967:

“As to whether society is tolerant, it is probably nearer the truth to say that society is uncertain and confused about what its attitude toward homosexuality should be and what it should do. [...] Thus society looks upon homosexuality with mingled feelings: punitively, disapprovingly, contemptuously, repugantly, bewilderedly, and sometimes amusedly” (Qtd. in Loeffler 1975: 132).

No author or theatre director wants his (or her) public to look at his (or her) creation “punitively or disapprovingly”. On the other hand, being already “confused” about this issue, the spectators of “Cabaret” would have been even more perplexed, because Cliff could not be exclusively homosexual, for his love story with Sally is one of the main elements of this musical. Therefore, for the time being, he had to be completely heterosexual.

But with time American society started accepting homo/bi-sexuals as main characters. One of the important landmarks on this way was production of the musical “*La Cage aux folles*” on Broadway in 1982. This musical won six Tony Awards, one of which for “The Best Book”, banned some taboos about representation of homo/bi-sexual character on Broadway and to some extent opened the door for textual changes in

“Cabaret”: “[...]. On peut considérer que La Cage aux folles a levé un tabou: les homosexuels peuvent devenir des personnages principaux, et non plus des apparitions anecdotiques et douloureuses” (Trong Thanh Than, www.regardencoulisse.com)

The transition from the sexlessness of the male character and sexual ambiguity of the M.C. toward their homo/bi-sexual assertion had another important meaning: it indicated their fate. In the Third Reich, all people had to be “mainstream”. Any outsider was to be persecuted and sent to a concentration camp. So, from the very beginning of the play, any educated spectator knew that these characters whom he (or she) “grows to love or like” (Preuße) would be “exterminated”, and this awareness of their fate cast a tragic pall on the whole play.

The examples of the changes which concern the sexuality of the male characters performed in the second text are numerous. Beside the already-quoted one, which clearly indicates M.C.’s homosexuality, there are those which concern Cliff and the whole atmosphere of the Kit Kat Klub:

EXCERPT # 3:

“We begin tonight – New Year’s Eve – the Kit Kat Klub! The hottest spot in Berlin. Telephones on every table. Girls call you. You call them. Instant connections. (Masteroff 1967: 8).

“We begin tonight – New Year’s Eve – the Kit Kat Klub! This is hottest spot in the city. Telephones on every table. Girls call you – **boys call you** – you call them – instant connections” (Masteroff 1998: 24).

EXCERPT # 4:

(Bobby enters with Victor)

Bobby (to Cliff): That was never a good color for you. Cliff, this is Victor, he is sharing my apartment.

Victor: Hello.

Cliff (to Victor): How do you do?

Bobby: He's heard all about you.

Victor: All about you.

Bobby: I can't stay. But will you ring me?

Cliff: Of course.

Bobby: You better had!

Victor: Bobby – come!

Bobby (to Cliff): Ja! Happy New Year! (He goes to kiss him, Cliff backs away).

Come on, Cliff, this is Berlin. Relax. Loosen up. Be yourself.

(Cliff and Bobby have a real kiss). (Masteroff 1998: 33).

This scene didn't exist in the first text, for it doesn't leave any doubts about Cliff's sexual orientation. There is also another character whose sexual ambiguity had to be clarified in the second version. And in **this** case the text stayed almost the same, only the stage interpretation changed completely, transforming M.C. into an openly bisexual man and proving that the drama text is never autonomous: it exists only in relation with the final production. Whenever the M.C. in the second production pronounced the legendary "Meine Damen und Herren, Mesdames et Messieurs, Ladies and Gentlemen", he made a long pause before saying "Gentlemen" and looked seductively at the audience as if trying to flirt with the whole male population. This "stunt" was performed in order not only to define the M.C.'s sexual orientation but to bring the audience closer to the action as it usually happened in the real German cabaret:

“Along with the fact that its smallness is to a certain extent the mark of its independence, the cabaret has other intrinsic qualities which make it a perfect medium for hard times. The live contacts between artists and public inherent in the form permits a continuity of artistic activity, innovation, and community. The performer’s ability to contradict or give additional nuance to verbal utterance by gesture enables criticism, satire, or simply laughter to emerge where it would otherwise be impossible, such as in print”. (Appignanesi 1975: 161).

This quotation not only identifies the rightfulness of an attempt to define the authenticity of the second Broadway production but also proves the statement that theatre text exists in a direct relation to the manner of presenting it on the stage: one pause between the words “and” and “Gentlemen” turned M.C. into a homosexual without changing the text even slightly.

In the song “Two ladies” performed by M.C. the original idea was to show the sexual permissiveness of the Weimar society, for it was representing a *ménage à trois*. However, in the second version, one of the ladies becomes a man in drag, “and the trio retires behind a scrim to perform a shadow play not to be described in a family newspaper. This kind of unbridled license is what *Cabaret* **always seemed to aim for but, in more circumspect times, only imperfectly achieved** (my emphasis – T.S.)” (Qtd. in Masteroff 1998: 56).

The next climatic theme of “Cabaret” is anti-Semitism, which was “imperfectly achieved” in “more circumspect times”. One of the most striking and the most risky numbers of “Cabaret” is a “Gorilla Song”, which M.C. performs with a “nice-looking” gorilla. The M.C. introduces her as his partner and explains his choice also complaining about the people’s reaction to this strange duo:

EXCERPT # 5:

[...]

How can I speak of her virtues?
I don't know where to begin
She's clever, she's smart, she reads music
She doesn't smoke or drink gin (like I do).
Yet, when we're walking together
They sneer if I'm holding her hand.
But if they could see her through my eyes
Maybe they'd all understand.
[...]

The importance of this song (which in reality is not a farce, as it originally seems)

is to be explained only in the last strophe:

[...]

I understand your objection.
I grant you the problem's not small.
But if you could see her through my eyes...
She wouldn't look **Jewish** at all.
(Masteroff 1998: 87)

In the first version of this text, the last line was printed as “alternate”. Steven Suskin, the author of “More Original Nights on Broadway” explains this occurrence: “Director Prince kept the song; producer Prince, with regrets, self-censored the tag line to help keep *Cabaret* comfortable for its audience and, therefore, successful” (Suskin 1997: 128). But even this, “accommodated” version offended the audience:

“At the opening performance, the audience first laughed at the spectacle of the M.C. romancing a gorilla in a tutu, but then some people realized what they were laughing at and stopped in embarrassment. When the song concluded, they clapped with nervous politeness. But towards the end of the Boston run, the producers started to receive letters of protest. One was from a rabbi who (according to Ebb) said that “the graves of six million Jews were pleading for us not to do this” (Garebian 1998: 132).

If the 1966-version without the explicit “Jewish” could irritate the audience so, we can imagine how risky it was to return this word in 1998. However, it also shows how different and less-tabooed had become the society by 1998. This story is an amazing example of how only **one word** in a politically charged text can change the tone of the whole song (or poem), transforming a light comedy into a disturbing tragedy, breaking the “fluency” of the performance. Trying to emphasize the message of this song, the authors added a spoken piece:

Meine Damen und Herren, Mesdames et Messieurs, Ladies and Gentlemen – Is it a crime to fall in love? Can we ever tell where the heart truly leads us? All we are asking is ein bisschen Verständnis – A little understanding – Why can’t the world “leben und leben lassen” – “Live and let live”? (Masteroff 1998: 87).

Since intolerance is one of the main features which characterizes any totalitarian regime in the world, M.C. addresses his audience in two languages, as if trying to point out the universality of this phenomenon.

We have already mentioned that the second Broadway version was textually much more *Germanized* than the original one. This *Germanization*, however, exists on two levels: purely linguistic and contextual. On the linguistic level – there are also different examples of *Germanization*: first, the author uses significantly more (than in the first version) words, expressions and even whole stanzas in German, sometimes without translating them into English; and second – the spectator can feel through the text in the way it is presented on the stage and in the book much more respect to Germany in the 30s. It is also worth noting that watching the second version, one can receive substantial additional information about the German capital, and knowledge usually leads toward better understanding; therefore, we can state that with help of textual additions

performed in the second version American audience was allowed by the authors into the world of German cabaret and the city of Berlin much further and deeper than it had been in 1966.

Right from the second scene of the play, the moment when Cliff meets his landlady Fräulein Schneider, we can see a difference in textual presentation:

EXCERPT # 6:

Fraulein Schneider: An author! A poet! You have the look!

Cliff: A novelist.

Fraulein Schneider: And you will be most famous. **There is no doubt. You will have this room. Here is your clothing. Look – there is even a table for writing. Come... sitz. Good? You need a cushion... Besser?** A novelist! It is like – years ago – when in all my rooms – persons of real quality...

Cliff: But I can still pay fifty marks.

Fraulein Schneider: The room is worth one hundred. More than one hundred.

Fifty? **Sitz!**

and the second version of this dialogue reads:

Fräulein Schneider: An author! A poet! You have the look!

Cliff: A novelist.

Fräulein Schneider: A novelist! And you will be most famous. It will be like years ago – when in all my rooms – persons of real quality... this is your room. Here is for you to write. **And look – your window! You can see the whole of the Nollendorfplatz! And there – that little – house – the U-Bahn station. What you call the Metro. Ja? In ten minutes, you are anywhere in Berlin!**

Cliff: **Subway...**

Fräulein Schneider: **Such a desirable window for a novelist!**

Cliff: I can still only afford fifty marks.

Fräulein Schneider: The room is worth one hundred. More than one hundred.

Fifty?

Just by comparing these two extracts, we can observe several striking differences in these texts existing on both, linguistic and contextual, levels. First of all, we can notice that in the second text the authors eliminated the word “*sitz*”, because, in our opinion, it sounds more like an order than a nice and polite invitation, which is supposed to be accompanied with the word “please” or “*bitte*”. It has become conventional to think of Germans as people who willingly give and follow orders, so in this respect the command “*sitz*” sounds logical. However, following this popular perception will inevitably simplify and diminish the meaning of the whole play. As we have already stated, one of the most important themes of “Cabaret” is an attempt to show and analyze how the whole nation could be manipulated into Nazi ideology and lead toward the catastrophe of the Second World War. Stereotyping the character, the authors would have eliminated the eternalness of “Cabaret” turning it into a purely historical piece.

Christopher Isherwood said about Fräulein Schneider: “If the Berlin which is here described can be said to belong to any of my characters, then surely it belongs to her, the most genuine Berliner of them all”. (Isherwood 1975: 1). So, if we present Germans through the character of Fräulein Schneider who is the only “real German” (not a foreigner or a Jew or sexually-ambiguous) as a banal order-giving-and-receiving symbol who by the end of the play will also reject Herr Schultz’s love following the “advice” of the member of the Nazi party, we will follow an assumption that Nazism could take place exclusively in Germany, and then “Cabaret” will lose its eternal meaning. It will mean

that the reasons of the catastrophe of the Third Reich can be explained by the particularities of the German character and therefore the political side of this musical can be attributed only to Germany. It will refute Harold Prince's quotation that we presented earlier in this chapter and – more importantly – the reality, for, as we know, national, racial, religious intolerance and extreme animosity and brutality are not exclusively German phenomenon.

The excerpt #6 also elicits an observation, which might seem insignificant, but, in our opinion, is still worth specifying, because it illustrates a higher level of respect toward the German language and culture in the second version in comparison to the first one. As we have already mentioned, both versions of “Cabaret” exist in a published form. Unlike the second text, the first one completely disrespects the rules of German grammar and spelling. It is a matter of common knowledge that all German nouns should be capitalized and also, on the level of spelling, German contains four letters: *ä*, *ü*, *ö* and *ß*, which don't exist in English. All these particularities of the German language are respectfully preserved in the second interpretation: the words like „Fräulein“, „Urlaubsreise“, etc. look perfectly German as opposed to English-German (“Fraulein”, urlaubsreise) as they did in the book published in the 60s.

The third difference, which is quite obvious, is mentioning of the actual places and realities of Berlin life, for example, *Nollendorfplatz* (by the way, written in one word, as it should be in German) and *U-Bahn*. Even though the word “*U-Bahn*” is immediately translated into English by first “Metro” and then “Subway” and doesn't interrupt the fluency of the English text, it gives a certain flavor to the play. The word “*Nollendorfplatz*” is “*chez lui*” in this text, because, first of all, it is the place where

Christopher Isherwood lived in the prewar Berlin, and second – it was “the centre of the city’s large gay and lesbian community.” [...] Under the Third Reich, homosexuality was quickly and brutally outlawed: gays and lesbians were rounded up and taken to concentration camps [...]. [Now a] red granite plaque in the shape of a triangle at Nollendorfplatz U-Bahn station commemorates the thousands of men and women who were murdered in the camps” (Holland 2001: 147). Mentioning *Nollendorfplatz* immediately reminds us that Cliff Bradshaw is directly “related” to Christopher Bradshaw Isherwood. So, it won’t irritate a lazy reader/spectator, but will still give a chance to a curious reader/spectator to learn more about Berlin, its tragic and controversial history, and thus to broaden his (or her) horizon. In the same way, when in the second version Sally Bowles mentions the most famous hotel in Berlin “the Adlon”, it cannot irritate the audience, because it becomes clear from the immediate context that “Adlon” represents luxury, and yet adds historical credibility to the English text.

Comparing the two English texts, we cannot overlook the fact that two songs of this show: “Bye-bye, mein lieber Herr” and “Married” are partially written and performed in German. The first song is very important for an understanding of the character of Sally Bowles, so the meaningful part of the song is performed in English, however, several stanzas are written completely in German. Introducing a popular hedonist morale, it partially explains political blindness, for when Sally who lives in Germany in the beginning of the 30s explores Europe “man by man” completely disregarding the political situation in the country, it doesn’t seem surprising that she and numerous people of her kind will be blind toward the growing danger of the Nazis.

Writing a text partially in non-English is not completely innovative on Broadway. For example, in the before-mentioned musical “*La Cage aux folles*”, Harvey Fierstein who created the English text, decided to leave several dialogues, long passages in the original – French – language preserving the atmosphere and original flavor of St.Tropez-based cabaret called “*La Cage aux folles*”. He won a Tony Award for this libretto, which proved that critics and public didn’t reject the presence of foreign words in the musical. So, Fred Ebb and Joe Masteroff only followed the same, already-beaten path. However, this comparison of German and French is not completely legitimate, for, unlike French, the German language introduced a quite negative connotation given the history of the Second World War. So, incorporating it so generously in the second version of “Cabaret” represented a certain risk for the authors.

It was a risk from both sides: textual and historical. Textual, because, according to L.Venuti, the English canon represents an attempt to eliminate all non-English elements of the text, avoiding any irritation for the reader (in our case – spectator/reader). Historical, because even in the present time, “people tend to reduce Germany to Hitler’s legacy and often disregard the new Germany” (Gerke, *The Gazette*, October 3, 2003) and, following this logic, the German language is still associated with the role that Germany had played in both world wars. This intentional foreignisation (Germanization) reminds us of the ultimate goal of the productions of “Cabaret”: to warn people, to urge them to beware and not forget the past. Even though it was a risky approach, it was not as risky as it would have been in 1966, when the generation of the soldiers of the Second World War was still alive and well and could have felt offended by using German language extensively on Broadway stage.

Another difference between the first and the second texts and interpretations is a strong edifying tendency of the latter. The authors added lines, which had not existed before and which become – to some extent – the quintessence of the play:

EXCERPT #7

Fraulein Schneider: I saw that one can no longer dismiss the Nazis. **Because suddenly they are my friends and neighbors. And how many others? And – if so – is it possible they will come to power?**

Schultz: And you will be married to a Jew.

Fraulein Schneider (**frightened**): I need my license to rent my rooms! If they take it away...

Schultz: They will take nothing away. I promise you. I feel such tenderness for you. It's difficult to express. [...]

In the second version Herr Schultz's words received a different, edifying meaning:

Fräulein Schneider: I saw that one can no longer dismiss the Nazis. They are my friends and neighbors. And how many others are there?

Schultz (**Impatiently**) **Of course – many. And many are Communists – and Socialists – and Social Democrats. So what is it? You wish to wait till the next election – and then decide?**

Fräulein Schneider: **But if the Nazis come to power...**

Schultz: You will be married to a Jew. **But also a German. A German as much as anyone.**

Fräulein Schneider: I need a license to rent my rooms. If they take it away...

Schulz: They will take nothing away. **And, Fräulein Schneider – it is not always a good thing to settle for the lowest apple on the tree – the one easiest to reach. Climb up a little way. It is worth it! Up there the apples are so much more delicious!**

Fräulein Schneider: **But if I fall?**

Schulz: **I will catch you.** I promise. I feel such tenderness for you. It is difficult to express. [...].

Herr Schultz's words sound like a spiritual testament in the second version. We know that his fate is sealed if he decides to stay in Germany, because he is Jewish, even if he, like many other German Jews, naively thinks that Nazis will see him as "a German. A German as much as anyone". Although his words sound idealistic for the particular place and time, he still tries to pass us his wisdom, which makes him sound like a tragical figure in a tragic country and in a tragic musical.

"Tragic musical" used to sound like an oxymoron on Broadway before 1966, the premiere of "Cabaret". However, its second interpretation brought it to a higher level of tragedy, sharpening the dialogues, generalizing the problems of a pre-totalitarian society, defining the disastrous nature of Germany in the 30s. From the point of view of theatre translation studies, this – second – version allowed us to reflect upon the equal importance of the text and the performance. Only when they collaborate, work toward (not against) each other, do we receive a masterpiece like the second "Cabaret" which was successfully performed on Broadway for almost six years.

5. CONCLUSION

Summarizing the ideas evoked by comparison of two Broadway versions (texts), we may observe the directions in which American society was developing. First, it

became more open-minded and accepting toward liberation (sometimes even excessive), frivolousness, and sexual permissiveness. Second, it changed its attitude toward bi-/homosexuality: it opened the doors and the hearts to bi-/homosexual characters. And – finally - the difference of 32 years “softened” the society, making it accept a certain “amount of *Germanness*” in the second text, even though it turned the text into the sometimes rather **unfluent** piece and contradicted the English canon.

Both versions of “Cabaret” on Broadway serve to illustrate a discussion of the role of the actor in creating the final theatre text. In the first production, the first character to be cast was... Fraulein Schneider. It would seem strange considering the common practice to cast the main characters first, but not in case of “Cabaret”. Fräulein Schneider was played by Lotte Lenya, who was “the unrivalled interpreter of [Kurt] Weill’s music, [and who] personified the spirit of the European artist of the 1920s and 1930s” (Garebian 1999: 83). The creators of the first “Cabaret” trusted Lenya. Masteroff told her: “If anything on that stage isn’t right, tell us, you’re the expert, you were there”. (Qtd. in Garebian 1999: 100). And she answered: “When I walk out on stage and sing those songs, it is *Berlin*” (ibid.) The tradition of the actor’s participation was carried on to the second production. Alan Cumming who played the M.C. in London in 1993 and in New York in 1998 wrote in his diary: “The book has been extensively rewritten and seems a lot less clunky than before. Cliff’s bisexuality is much more focused on. Also the Fräulein Schneider/Herr Schultz scenes are incredibly moving and much wittier than I remember. [...] I’ve **made up lots of new lines, which I know I won’t be able to progress with until I do them with an audience** (My emphasis – T.S.)” (Qtd. in Masteroff 1998: 103). This quotation not only restates the ideas expressed in the first

chapter of the present thesis that some actors should be allowed to work on the text with the writers/translators/directors, but also puts an emphasis on the fact that the theatre text exists in a direct relation with the final production and the audience. As if trying to confirm it, three weeks later, after the beginning of the previews, Alan Cummings writes: “[...] I feel the show is really powerful in that the audience is really shocked by the outcome, and how they had in some way contributed to it, too.” (ibid.) It is also important to note that the second published in a book-form version of “Cabaret” (in 1998) was the first to allow the actor’s voice on its pages thus acknowledging the role of the Actor.

CHAPTER 5.

“CABARET” IN GERMANY

1. Introduction

In the previous chapter I was comparing two English versions of the musical “Cabaret” trying to see the textual and scenic changes performed from one version to another as a reflection of the changes in social and political life of the American society. In this chapter I will discuss the history of translating “Cabaret” into German, i.e. returning it to its historical origins. Germany has a long history of interpreting Broadway musicals for the German stage. However, the translation and interpretation of “Cabaret” deserves a special attention, because of the duality of its nature (American and German).

A composition of languages, cultures, and problems incorporated in the original text and multiplied by the epochal jet lag (indeed, “Cabaret” was created in the 60s and still continues its triumphant parade through the decades into the next century), by political and social changes, represents a substantial challenge for its interpreters. It is especially noticeable when compared to other musicals. Even prominent ones, for example, “Cats”, which is written about yearly gatherings of street “Jellicle” cats who are voting which one of them will go to their “cat paradise”. The plot doesn’t seem multi-problematic, and that’s, probably, why every new interpretation looks and sounds almost like a carbon copy of the previous ones. In this case the personalities, biographies, and projects of its interpreters, i.e. the translator and the actors don’t seem as much pertinent.

In case of “Cabaret”, its interpretation is very much dependent on the vision of its creators, which – in turn – is dictated by their biographies (personal and creative), their nationalities, experiences, the societies they are living in, - everything that constitutes the

“horizon”, according to Antoine Berman, and on their perception of their target audience. That’s why I will dedicate some part of this chapter to a deep analysis of the personalities of those who were responsible for composing, translating, interpreting and re-actualizing “Cabaret” for the German society. “[...] a translator, though beginning with a fixed set of words where the poet began with none, still does in a sense begin where the poet began and follow a similar track” (Felstiner 1980: 3). This citation is relevant not only to the case of translating poetry: “Every text can be read in the literal sense of the term, that is, uttered and enunciated in an infinite number of ways – the dramatic text even more so, since it needs a voice and an interpretation [...]” (Pavis 2001: 158). So, to be able to track the way the creators of the German versions took, and to understand those who gave the text their “voice and interpretation”, we should know where the author, the translators, and the actors began and what and whom they aimed for with this work.

It is also interesting to note that both “characters” of this chapter: Robert Gilbert (German translator) and Georg Preuße (German actor and the author of the new, re-actualized version) share to some extent the biographic, linguistic, cultural duality and complexity characteristic for the musical “Cabaret” and for its author, Christopher Isherwood.

2. The personality of the German translator

Robert Gilbert

The Musical “Cabaret” with its linguistic and cultural duality which seems logical considering the history of the play and the genre of cabaret required a translator who

would to some extent have the same “split personality” and “split nationality” that the original play has. Robert Gilbert was that perfect interpreter who, as a German, as a man of the theatre, operetta, cabaret and the author of cabaret texts himself and also a soldier of the First World War, could become Christopher Isherwood’s and Joe Masteroff’s German-language voice.

Robert Gilbert was born in 1899 in Berlin as Robert David Winterfeld. Only 24 years old, he wrote his first “*schlager*” (hit) “*Kathrin, du hast die schönste Beine von Berlin*” (“Kathrin, you have the most beautiful legs in Berlin”). After the success of this song, he started writing politically engaged texts. Being in the middle of his prosperous career and fame, Robert Gilbert left Germany in 1933 and went to Vienna, then Paris and finally New York. In 1944, he became an American citizen, but in 1950, only five years after the end of the Second World War, he decided to come back to Germany.

In 1954, Robert Gilbert started a new career as a translator and had translated twenty American musicals, among which: “Cabaret”, “My Fair Lady”, “Annie, Get Your Gun”, “Hello, Dolly!”, “Oklahoma”, and “Man of la Mancha”. He died in 1978 in Minusio (Tessin).

It seems impressive how involved in German cabaret and German political art Robert Gilbert was and therefore how knowledgeable about the subject of his translation had his career as a cabaret songwriter made him. Like Christopher Isherwood, he realized the immensity of the threat the Nazis represented and decided to immigrate to the USA. However, unlike Isherwood, he came back to Germany as soon as it became possible.

The duality of Robert Gilbert’s position was dictated by his biography. German and Jewish. Writer and translator. German and American citizen. Like Christopher

Isherwood and his *alter ego* Cliff Bradshaw, Gilbert lived for several years of his life far away from his motherland and even had a dual citizenship. Like both of them, he divided his time between writing and other linguistic activities. Like Herr Schulz from “Cabaret”, he had to learn what it meant to be Jewish under Nazis, but unlike him, he realized the danger quite soon and decided to flee the country. Like Sally Bowles, he was fascinated by the world of cabaret, but - unlike Sally - his sense of danger became stronger than this fascination. Thus, he appears kindred not only to Christopher Isherwood but to his characters as well.

The “relationship” between Christopher Isherwood and Robert Gilbert can be seen from different points of view. The best word that comes in mind is “affinity”. This term used Robert Wechsler while describing the relationship between John Felstiner - the translator and Paul Celan (Antshel) – the author. Felstiner reportedly “spent seventeen years of his life translating Celan’s poetry, researching his life in great depth, and writing article after article that culminated in the 1995 book *Paul Celan: Poet, Survivor, Jew*” (Wechsler 1998: 44). It would be going too far to presume that Robert Gilbert conducted research as deep as Felstiner’s. But did he need to? No, we would argue. He **knew**. The country, the source society (American), the target society (German), the epoch of the beginning of the Nazi era, the world of cabaret, and, of course, Berlin who became the main character of one of his most beautiful, poetic and most touching songs “*Wie habe ich nur leben können ohne dich*” (“*How could I have ever lived without you*”)¹⁸ in which he talks to Berlin as to a beloved person.

¹⁸ This song and its authors (Friedrich Holländer and Robert Gilbert) are still well-known in Germany. Georg Preuß performed it for many years in his highly successful show “*Mary in Berlin*”.

Although Robert Gilbert has translated twenty American musicals into German, “Cabaret” is the one which is related to **his** past, **his** own history. And therefore he translates from the **inside**. He is not a side observer of the events described in the original text nor is he a scholar who needs a research. He could have become one of its main characters and could have shared their fate. It helped him avoid the problems usually attached to the translation of the political pieces. In the previous chapter we have seen one of the most tragic songs of the musical “Tomorrow Belongs to Me”. Here we will see it as an example of the situation when “language is used dishonestly” (Wechsler 1998: 60).

The branch of the linden is
Leafy and green,
The Rhine gives its gold to
The sea.
But somewhere a glory
Awaits unseen
Tomorrow belongs to me.

Oh fatherland, fatherland,
Show us the sign
Your children have waited to see.
The morning will come when
The world is mine.
Tomorrow belongs to me.

This short extract of the song might seem quite innocent if we don’t understand the real meaning of “somewhere a glory awaits unseen” as a representation of the Germans’ wish to take a revenge after the defeat in the First World War and Versailles Treaty. More importantly – the refrain “Tomorrow belongs to me” sounds threatening, because if tomorrow belongs to the straight “real” Germans as the primary – or domineering – race, it doesn’t necessarily belong to those who are - geographically, nationally, sexually, politically – outsiders. The translator has to have firsthand

experience or to conduct an extensive research on the political situation, cliché, and common allegories of the given epoch.

In connection to the above-mentioned example, we would like to refer to one of the documents of the same time: signed by Joseph Goebbels in 1941 *Order Prohibiting Masters of Ceremonies and Commentary from the Stage*. The paragraph #3 states that “The press is most vigorously advised to avoid as punctiliously as possible dealing with questions irrelevant to life, which might trouble or upset the German people unnecessarily” (Senelick 1993: 282). Only those who like Robert Gilbert (and me) have lived under the totalitarian regime or have done a research and learned to feel the “particularities” of this time period, can understand the sadistic perversity of the words “trouble or upset the German people **unnecessarily**” (my emphasis – T.S.). What could possibly “upset” German people more devastatingly and unnecessarily than an exhausting war against humankind? But Goebbels uses this manner of speech to justify the persecution of German conférenciers, masters of ceremonies and *cabarettists*. So, if a politically innocent translator starts translating this document, he (or she) risks making it sound innocent as well, unless he (or she) understands the illustrative cynicism of the author and the power he represents.

Robert Gilbert lost his “political innocence” (as other Germans did) on March 15, 1933, when Hitler proclaimed the Third Reich. From that time on, whenever the subject of the Third Reich and the Second World War has been concerned, Germans have their own particular insight which inevitably affects the translation, adaptations and interpretations of “Cabaret”.

“Ich habe als Deutscher natürlich eine klare Idee, was Rechtsradikalismus oder Nazionalismus betrifft [...]. Ich habe als Deutscher ganz spezielle Aufgabe”. (Preuße).

“As a German, I, of course, have a clear idea what the words “*Rechtsradikalismus*” (right wing radicalism) and nationalism mean [...]. I have, as a German, a very particular mission” (My translation – T.S.).

3. The First German Translation (Robert Gilbert)

The German translation performed by Robert Gilbert is *passend und schlüssig*¹⁹ (the German word “*passend*” has four major English translations: “fitting, matching, suitable, right”, (www.dict.leo.org) and it seems amazing that all four of them perfectly fit, match, and suit the idea of this thesis: that theatre translation exists in its intermarriage with the theatre production, and thus it has to fit, match, suit, and be right for this production), to such an extent that even after approximately 35 years and several dozens of productions in German-speaking countries, the idea of retranslation of “Cabaret” never occurred to German-speaking theatre directors and actors. Nevertheless, it was adapted to different theatres, countries, epochs, because the musical itself has undergone different interpretations, and so did the text.

Robert Gilbert had to face a challenging task of bringing back the musical, “*parce que c’est l’Allemagne vue par des Américains*” (Morin). His work would be difficult to analyze to those who discuss translations from the *domestication vs. foreignisation* point of view, because it is hard to define, what is domestic and what is foreign in this musical **for the German target audience**. In reality, he took a bicultural and – sometimes bilingual - musical and let it sound bicultural and bilingual in German.

He didn't completely eliminate English language, for after all "Cabaret" is an American musical. In Gilbert's translation, English is seen as a legitimate second language. This occurrence can be also explained by the fact that the author (C. Isherwood) and two main characters (Sally Bowles and Cliff Bradshaw) are foreigners, and particularly, English-speaking.

However, R.Gilbert "cleaned" it of some linguistic symbols, which serve as stereotypes of Germans and Germany to the American audience. First, he almost completely eliminated numerous "Ja", so generously planted into the English text. Second, he replaced offensive "Sitz!", which we have discussed in the previous chapter while comparing two Broadway versions, and replaced it with "Setzen Sie sich" making it sound softer and more polite. Third, in the scene where Fräulein Schneider presents Herr Schultz to Cliff, she says in the English versions:

EXCERPT #8

Fraulein Schneider: [...] Herr Schultz has been kind enough to invite me to join him for a glass of **schnapps** for the New Year. (Broadway versions)

Schultz: And a little fruit.

Fraulein Schneider: And – after all – why not? **Otherwise I am in bed with a hot-water bottle.**

and in German version R.Gilbert writes:

¹⁹ http://www.musical-world.de/Theater/T-Cabaret/body_t-cabaret.html

Frl.Schneider: Ich ziehe mich jetzt um. Herr Schultz war so freundlich, mich einzuladen auf ein Gläschen **Cognac** zu Sylvester heute Abend.

Herr Schultz: Und ein bisschen Obst.

Frl.Schneider: Ja, warum denn nicht?

The name of the drink is the one of the differences between these two texts.

It is significant, for it strips the text of its stereotypes: Germans must drink schnapps, Russians – vodka, etc. Obviously not everybody in Germany, and especially not a woman of a certain age, would drink schnapps. So, cognac in this context sounds more feminine, less of a cliché, and also more universal (Germans themselves have a word *Weinbrandt* which also signifies “cognac”). This excerpt also allows us to see the difference in R.Gilbert’s treatment of the aging couple. In both American versions (as well as French-Canadian), these two people (Fräulein Schneider and Herr Schultz) are seen from a slightly comical perspective, as if the author was trying to make fun of the people who at this age are planning to get married. In this respect, it sounds important that R.Gilbert decided to give their relationship more serious status and eliminated the embarrassing sentence about Frl.Schneider’s boring life with a hot-water bottle in bed.

Earlier in this chapter, we maintained the affinity existing between Christopher Isherwood and Robert Gilbert, affinity caused by the likeness of their biographies. However, analyzing the translation performed by R. Gilbert, we can state the similarity of their approaches too. C. Isherwood didn’t invent much in his “Berlin Stories”. Most of his characters, places, and plots had exact prototypes. It seems logical in this respect that while adapting Isherwood’s stories for the theatre, John van Druten chose to call his play “I Am a Camera”. His main character, Christopher, Isherwood’s *alter ego*, later

transformed into Cliff Bradshaw for the musical “Cabaret”, writes: “I am a camera, with its shutter open, quite passive. Some day all of this will have to be developed, carefully printed, fixed.” (Druten 1983: 10). It was “fixed” one day and became the world-famous musical, but Isherwood himself is more of an interpreter than a writer: he translates the German world that he knows first-hand into a text written in English. Robert Gilbert also chose to be a “camera”. Beside the changes mentioned above, he stayed as close to the original as possible. Isherwood brought Germany to America, Gilbert did the opposite: he translated an American musical into German. Unlike Georg Preuße or Sam Mendes (with Joe Masteroff) he didn’t try to adapt “Cabaret”: he rendered it exactly as it was and at the same time managed to make it “*passend und schlüssig*”.

Trying to reconstruct his image as a person, translator and citizen from the biographical data that we have, we can state that at the time when his country was still mentally, economically, physically recuperating after the Second World War, Robert Gilbert didn’t consider it necessary or possible to make significant changes rendering his text more aggressive, or edifying, or politicized, or cynical than it originally was. He knew his target audience: he was one of them. His target audience mainly consisted of the soldiers and victims of the war or their children who were born during or right after the war. So, these people hardly needed him to rub salt into their fresh wounds, maintaining their guilt. However, he didn’t soften the text either. As a Jew and a cabaret author, he could have shared the fate of the victims of the Nazi regime, he could have been sent to a concentration camp and could have ended his life in a gas chamber. He had no compassion or forgiveness for the Nazi who had destroyed his country. Considering his “productivity” as a writer and a poet, we cannot suppose that he wasn’t creative enough

to modify or adapt the text: he was. He obviously **chose** to be “a camera”: to faithfully translate the text for the German audience. However, as a German, he didn’t want to create and preserve an inaccurate image of his people: that’s why he performed changes underlined above.

4. Georg Preuße: actor, writer, interpreter, theatre director, citizen²⁰

As we have already stated in the first chapter, not all the actors have a capacity and deepness to creatively participate in the adaptations and interpretations of the theatre play. But there are also those who are not “only” actors, who have a “multiple creative personality”. They write, direct, adapt and then perform in the theatre. And they should – in our opinion – be allowed to co-work on the theatre text, for their vision is combined of their artistic and personal experiences, their knowledge of their target audience and the target society.

The person who co-created the German version of “Cabaret” performed from 1993 to 1998 in different cities of Germany and Switzerland and then – finally, in 1999 – in Theater-am-Kurfürstendamm in Berlin, has had a long history of his own writing, *conférence*, performing solo in self-conceived and self-directed shows, and political fight against nationalism, anti-Semitism, right wing radicalism, and political blindness. These are all the themes which characterize his work and the musical “Cabaret”.

Born after the end of the Second World War, he still recognizes his political and historical responsibility for the past of his nation. At the time when Germany is trying to

²⁰ This part of the third chapter is partially based on my interviews with Georg Preuße conducted in Berlin in 2003.

come to terms with its past and at the same time is fighting against any “shoot” of neo-Nazism, he uses every opportunity, every show he performs to warn his people against making the same mistakes and “reproducing” the past again.

Georg Preuße is the most famous female impersonator in the German-speaking world. Unlike others who work in this genre, he is seen by his public and media not as a typical female impersonator, whose main “mission” is to imitate prominent women. He has managed to change and develop female impersonation, transforming it from light entertainment into a serious genre. His public comes to his shows to laugh **and** cry, to hear - often unpleasant - words of truth, to reflect upon political and social problems in Germany and in the world, and to share the actor’s feelings.

Because of his appeal in Germany, his decision to play *Conférencier* in “Cabaret” in 1993 became pivotal for the history of this musical in Germany and also seemed as a logical continuation of his way as an actor. Spectators came to see the man who had never lied to or disappointed them, that’s why the text he pronounced from the stage, this time as a male character, acquired a new, deep and symbolic meaning. After several thousands of imitations of Joel Grey in the role of Emcee (later transformed into *Conférencier*, or political *Cabarettist*, by the creative power of Georg Preuße and his author Charles Lewinsky who participated in textual adaptation of Robert Gilbert’s translation for this production) the people of Germany needed a “Germanized“ (as opposed to “Americanized”) version of this musical dedicated to **their** history. „Germanized“ means among others that the *Conférencier* (or *C(K)abarettist*) acquired his original status in German cabaret :

Der Kabarettist [...] ist [...] der amüsante Unterhalter, der witzige Kommentator, der bitere Satiriker, der tollkühne Aggressor, er kann auch alles zusammen sein in einer Person.

(Cabarettist is a comic entertainer, witty commentator, bitter satirist, bold aggressor, he can also be all of that together in one person).

(Werner Finck in the foreword to “So weit die scharfe Zunge reicht” by Klaus Budzinski)

“In the 90s, people suddenly turned back to nationalism, we had to be very careful while interpreting “Cabaret”, because we had to move away from the “show-side” of this musical toward political warning” (Preuße). When we compare two Broadway versions of this musical, we can notice the same tendency: to sharpen the text, to make it sound more cynical and thus more threatening than it originally did. However pointed and raucous, it was still not harsh enough, in Georg Preuße’s opinion, for Germany. Unfortunately, Robert Gilbert had been dead for two decades, and could not participate in rewriting of the German text. His translation was performed in the end of the 60s and although it was “*passend und schlüssig*” – suitable and convincing (Drewianka 2000: 2)²¹, it obviously could not take into consideration the target audience of the 90s. Georg Preuße, on the contrary, had been performing his solo shows in front of the very same target audience and therefore had an inside profound understanding of his potential spectators.

Being bilingual (German and English), he had a direct access to the original texts and didn’t have to rely exclusively on translators. He found both English texts not explicit enough for the German audience, especially for the young generation who had no first-hand knowledge of what the word “Nazism” represented and who suddenly felt a

http://www.musical-worlde.de/Theater/T-Cabaret/body_t-cabaret-html

nostalgic wish to recreate the past. With “Cabaret” there are always at least two possibilities of interpretation: either to make it sound more like a musical or turn it into a cabaret-style performance. Georg Preuße chose the latter. His *conférencier* became the carrier of political ideas, as opposed to a “plain entertainer”. To add more credibility to this character, Georg Preuße created his history as a former soldier of the First World War who turned into a pacifist as a result of his inside knowledge of the horror of the war.

Georg Preuße (together with Charles Lewinsky) added new lines and scenes to the German text, basing his choice on the authentic pieces written by real German *conférenciers* of the 30s. Further we will see how the texts co-written by him directly correspond to the reality of the German prewar Cabaret.

It was his wish to accentuate the truth, the reasons of the catastrophe of the Third Reich, to explain to young people that there are two main reasons of the appearance of the regime as terrible as fascism: political, national, social **intolerance** and *Wegschauen* (looking into a different direction; overlooking the reality) of the population. Unlike Sam Mendes who revised the original (English) text with Joe Masteroff believing that one “[...] can’t act the beginning of Nazism with a knowledge of the ending”. (Qtd. in Masteroff 1998: 65), Preuße’s character, like many soldiers of the First World War (and for example, Robert Gilbert) knew the outcome, for he had a baggage of knowledge and pain.

In his determination to make “Cabaret” function as a caution against Nazism, he created a text which sounded sometimes excessively harsh even for Germans, harsh to the point of becoming ruthless to the spectators and even irritating. However, the purpose (or

the project) of Georg Preuße was to irritate people bringing them to the state of catharsis, purifying them. His interpretation worked as a surgery: the text, sometimes even exasperating for the audience, multiplied by Georg Preuße's presence and artistic history made his target audience get rid of the hatred or indifference and therefore become more sensitive to the arising danger of the right wing radicalism.

This interpretation provoked a wide variety of responses, for after all, even if Georg Preuße aimed for young people, his audience was not homogeneous, and some spectators who belonged to the older generations could see this version of "Cabaret" as an attempt to accuse them of their political blindness in the 30s. But his goal was **not** to create a canonized "user-friendly" version: he did **not** want the public to relax and enjoy the fluency of the text and the whole production: he wanted to shock people and to make them think and – more importantly – feel - the immensity of the possible danger.

5. "Cabaret" in Theater-am-Kurfürstendamm in Berlin

Almost 30 years separate the first translation of "Cabaret" into German and the production of this musical in Theater-am-Kurfürstendamm. This interpretation was remarkably distinct, and that's why I have chosen it out of dozens of different German productions of this musical. Further I will explain, what made it so different, both textually and theatrically.

In the 90s, Germany and some Western-European countries entered a difficult stage of their development.

"As European politics shift to the right, we should look at not just the right, but at what lies beyond: the ultra and extreme right, as well as right-wing populism and the neo-Nazi

movement. In other words, the issue is not simply the increase of conservative governments in Europe, which would not be grounds for panic, but rather the rise of those forces and people behind them that belong to the above-mentioned categories”. (Bedrich 2003: 37)

Neo-Nazism became the reality in Europe; however, Germany, because of its past, is particularly sensitive to any resurfacing of the neo-Nazism. But despite increased efforts by the German government to control neo-Nazi skinheads, “Germany remains the flashpoint for extreme-right activity with its high rate of violent hate crimes [...]” (ibid.).

“According to Germany’s Office for the Protection of the Constitution, about 150 neo-Nazi groups are active in Germany with more than 10,000 members. But neo-Nazis don’t just march down German streets. They harass and terrorize Germany’s many new immigrants and scrawl Swastikas [...] and other symbols of hate on synagogues” (Spiegel 2001: 2).

Such was the political setting for the new interpretation of “Cabaret” in Germany, in Berlin in 1999. 54 years after the end of the Second World War had passed, and two generations of people, who couldn’t witness the war had appeared. These people studied the history of their country in school and were perfectly aware of the horrors of their past. However, they needed a shock therapy which would make them **feel**, rather than understand, what makes Nazism so awful and un-humane. Reading historical books, studying, watching documentaries can shape human mind, art – and particularly theater as one of its most powerful means – reaches the heart.

Erika Mann, daughter of the novelist Thomas Mann and actress in cabaret “*Über die Pfeffermühle*” (“The Peppermill”) explains:

“Naturally, the question arises when a person has over 1,000 performances of this sort of thing behind her what sense is there in a show like this? Was this enormous exertion

worth the effort? [...] I personally have been lucky enough to get at least a partial answer. And that was in London in 1940, when the German troops were ready to invade everywhere, and London was full of exiled governments and a great many fugitives from these countries, and these people [...] would say to me: “You know why we fled?” I would say, “Because the Nazis occupied your country.” And then they’d explain, “Yes, or course, that’s why. But we fled at the right time. Because we went to your Peppermill every year, and because no newspaper and no report made it so vivid, clear and expressive to us what it meant to live under the Nazi regime.”

(Qtd. in Senelick 1993: 255)

And this was the project of the actor who became the heart and soul of the 1999-Berlin production – Georg Preuße. Obviously, he didn’t intend to make people flee their country, but he wanted by the power of the performance to make it “vivid, clear and expressive“ what the word “Nazi“ meant to Germany and to the world.

The text pronounced by Georg Preuße’s Conférencier made clear the outcome from the very beginning: right in the first scene he said: “Meine Damen und Herren! Mesdames et messieurs! Ladies and gentlemen! Guten Abend. Bon soir. Good evening. Wie geht’s? Comment ça va? Do you feel good? **Aber nicht mehr lange!**”²² (But not for long – T.S.). This line doesn’t exist in either original Broadway version, but it clearly sets the tone for the whole production, the tone of the “Feast during the Plague”. This man **knows** what will happen, and doesn’t want us as spectators/readers to develop any illusions. As a prophet he tries to warn us and the characters of the musical against the upcoming danger. But should we believe him? Georg Preuße found an answer to this question by adding his character’s biography to the text. This man was a soldier of the First World War. Sally Bowles says about him with a mix of mercy and contempt:

²² All the quotes highlighted in bold don’t exist in the English versions or in the original R.Gilbert’s translation.

EXCERPT #9

„Armes Schwein. Knieschuss im 1. Weltkrieg. Karriere im Arsch. Jetzt verdient er sich hier sein Gnadenbrot“. (Poor thing. Shot in the knee at the First World War. His career went down the tubes. Now he has to earn his living here” My translation – T.S.) .

Like Robert Gilbert, this Conférencier cannot stay indifferent in the face of the Nazi danger, and he cannot do much against it either. But Georg Preuße can.

This character doesn't leave us alone, he wants us to understand the immensity of the danger. He welcomes Cliff to Berlin: **“Willkommen in Berlin. Uns ist jeder recht. – NOCH!”**(Welcome to Berlin. Here everything goes. Still.) With this strong emphasis on the word **“NOCH”** he tells us that soon enough most of us will be NICHT RECHT for this city and this society... and he continues: **“[...] marsch, marsch – morgen sind wir sowieso im A---“** (tomorrow we will be doomed – T.S.).

As the play is progressing, his warnings, or prophecies, become more and more explicit. At the New Year's Eve performance in Cabaret he says:

EXCERPT #10

Meine Damen, das ist Ihre letzte Chance, sich noch schnell einen neuen Ehemann zu angeln, aber passen Sie auf, dass er das richtige Parteibuch hat“. (Ladies, this is your last chance to catch a new husband, but make sure that he is the member of the right party. – My translation - T.S.).

And then he continues the “celebration” appearing as a baby who represents a new, 1933 year (the year when Hitler proclaimed the Third Reich – T.S.). and says:

[...]

Kann mal einer raufkommen und meine Windeln wechseln? Mir stinkst hier!

(zieht die Windel) **Ich hab’ Windeln wie ‘ne moderne Weltanschauung:**

Guckt mal, man kann sie wechseln so oft man will,

am Schluss sind sie doch immer braun. (dreht die Windel rum: Hakenkreuz).

Ich bin das Jahr 1933: Lasst mich nicht in der Scheisse sitzen.

Es könnte bald die Eure sein!

Can somebody come and change my diaper? It stinks!

(shows his diaper). My diaper is like a new ideology:

Look, you can change them as often as you want,

But in the end they will be brown anyway. (he turns his diaper: Swastika)

I am the year 1933. Don’t let me sit in the shit.

It can be yours soon.

The previous abstract might shock with its excessive bluntness and even crudity. However, after performing research on the history of Weimar cabaret, we can conclude that this abstract has a historical prototype: one of the most famous Berlin conférenciers, Werner Finck, who was later sent to Esterwegen concentration camp, portrayed “the Nazi salute; with his right arm up in the air, [and made a remark]: “That’s how deep we are in the shit”. (Senelick 2000: 276).

This scene highlights a very important particularity of this production: usually “Cabaret” takes place in 1929-30, i.e. three years before Hitler proclaimed the Third Reich. Creators of the Berlin production relocated it in 1933. This change of the dates puts an edge on the whole production, for in this version spectators are literally entering the Nazi era with the characters of the performance.

To logically finish this line of political statements, Georg Preuße invents new closing lines for this performance: his Conférencier concludes the play:

EXCERPT #11

Der Wind weht von rechts und die Halme beugen sich. Auf Wiedersehen. – À bientôt.
– **Gute Nacht. – Schlafen Sie wohl.** (“The wind is blowing from the right, and the stalks are bending. Good night. Sleep well”.)

His words are full of bitter sarcasm when he wishes people of Berlin to “sleep well”. He pronounces these words and limps to a gas chamber. It is a very powerful example of the impressive interaction existing between the theatre translation (in this case also adaptation) and the theatre itself. There is nothing unusual in wishing the public “to sleep well”. Many actors end their performances with this particular line, but these words don’t have any political subtext. They are completely politically innocent. In Georg Preuße’s version, where these words were fortified by the view of a man slowly and obediently moving toward the gas chamber, these words sounded like his last attempt to wake up the people of Berlin.

Trying to concentrate the audience’s attention on political issues incorporated into “Cabaret”, creators of this version eliminated or diminished some topics, which made part of the scattered nature of this musical. They thought that the political side is much more important for German public, especially, its young members, than discussion of Cliff’s sexuality. The aspect of homosexuality was completely erased from the text performed in Theater-am-Kurfürstendamm. The only time the issue of homosexuality

arises is when Conférencier greets the guests of the Kit-Kat Klub with the line, which doesn't exist in either English text:

EXCERPT #12

Meine Damen und Herren! Mesdames et messieurs! Ladies and gentlemen! **Und alles, was dazwischen liegt.** (...Ladies and gentlemen! And everything that is in-between – T.S.).

This is the only instant when any allusion to the homo-/bisexuality is made. In the “Two Ladies” number, where Conférencier was originally (on Broadway in 1966) involved in a ménage à trois with a woman, and with a man in S.Mendes's production, in Berlin he has to choose between a woman who is a typical Russian and another one, typical German:

EXCERPT #13

Conférencier: **Ja, da sind sie. Links habe ich Olga, die hat eine so rote Gesinnung, dass sie nicht einmal mehr erröten kann.** (Here they are. On my left, there is Olga, her mind is so red that she cannot even blush.)

[...]

Rechts habe ich Gertrude. [...] Also, Gertrude is blond. Naturblond. Ein deutsches Herz, ein deutsches Weib, [...]. Und einem Kreuz – oh- das hat ja einen Haken. (On my right, there is Gertrude. She is blond. Naturally. She has a

German heart, she is a real German woman [...] She wears a cross with a “catch” (this is a word play, because “*Hakenkreuz*” written in one word means “Swastika”).

This passage doesn’t exist in any other version of “Cabaret”, although it is quite symbolic and therefore deserves our attention.

Like very often in the texts performed by German Conférenciers and by Georg Preuße’s in his own shows, these lines contain at least two meanings: the first is obvious: Berlin is a quite immoral place, and the performer is not ashamed to admit that he sleeps with two women. But are they just women or symbolic figures?

We can find the answer in Conférencier’s monologue, which directly precedes this passage:

EXCERPT #14

[...] Ich habe dort zwei Portraits bekommen: Eins von Hitler und eins von Stalin. Hab’ aber nur einen Bilderhaken. Jetzt weiss ich nicht, soll ich den Hitler aufhängen und den Stalin an die Wand – oder?

(I got two portraits: one Hitler’s, another one Stalin’s, but I have only one frame. I don’t know what to do: to hang Hitler and to leave Stalin stand at the wall...?)

This poor man is “caught” between two dictators, both of whom represent danger. So, whom must he choose? And is it only his personal choice? Looking back into the history of the Weimar Republic, we learn that the people of Germany had to choose between the communists represented by Ernest Thelman (so, the allusion to Stalin is not

accidental) and the national-socialists represented by Hitler. We know what choice they made and what were the consequences of their decision to vote for the Nazi party.

So, returning to the previous passage, the Conférencier must choose between Olga (a traditional Russian name), who “has a red state of mind” (red is conventionally a color of Russian October Revolution) and wears a military outfit, which reminds us of Stalin, and Gertrude, who is German and wears a German folk dress. On the stage, the Conférencier tries to maneuver between them both, like later in the play *Fräulein Schneider* who says: “...if the Nazis come – I will survive. And if the Communists come – I will still be here [...]”. And both, Conférencier and *Fräulein Schneider* come to a disastrous end: Conférencier is sent to a gas chamber, *Fräulein Schneider* loses the only man she loves.

In this number, where traditional (for this musical) representation of Berlin’s sexual permissiveness is replaced by a political song, we can see again that even slight changes of the text combined with theatrical effects can transform an almost textually empty piece (mainly consisting of “didel-dididi-di” and sexually explicit gestures) into a sketch of the political situation of Germany in the beginning of the 30s.

In an attempt to make this production work as a powerful political statement and for that purpose to eliminate the homosexual context, the authors replaced Cliff’s address at homosexually suggestive *Nollendorfplatz* (as it was in the second English-language version) by *Knesebeckstrasse*. The choice of the street is not accidental. *Knesebeckstrasse* is located directly across the street from Theater-am-Kurfürstendamm and, according to a travel guide published in America, there are “quite a few places to find **English-language** books [in Berlin], most of them situated in or around

Knesebeckstrasse, the street with Berlin's highest concentration of bookstores" (Holland 2001: 302). Considering the fact that Cliff Bradshaw is an American writer, this street seems like a perfect place for him. It also brings the audience closer to the scene of action, forcing the spectators to identify themselves with the characters.

The words "English language" were highlighted by the authors of the travel guide, but for the purpose of this thesis they also have to be emphasized. The text of "Cabaret" performed in Berlin in 1999 brings forth a reflection upon the role of the English language in Germany. I have stated before that this text was re-actualized in many respects. One of them is the use of English words, stanzas, expressions and whole songs and paragraphs on different occasions. Sally Bowles and Cliff Bradshaw are both English-speaking, so it seems natural during their first encounter that Sally who lives in Berlin for a while asks Cliff who just arrived to Berlin to say something in English, and he recites Shakespeare: "All the world's a stage...". The second English linguistic interference takes place when Cliff teaches Ernst Ludwig (member of the Nazi party) English. The beginning of their dialogue performed completely in English didn't exist in the English or earlier German texts. E.Ludwig is proud to be able to speak English, even though he is a German nationalist. And when Cliff uses the word "*Schüler*", Ludwig willingly replaces it by "pupil" in his speech.

Further in the play, English interference becomes more and more prevalent. When two main female characters: Sally Bowles and Fräulein Schneider find their happiness (or at least think so), they sing two songs side by side, Fräulein Schneider performs her song "*Heirat*" ("Married") in German and Sally "Maybe this time" in English. Comparing these two women, the authors gave them a chance to sing in their

mother tongues, but they didn't consider it necessary to translate or explain in any way Sally's text. By the end of this number, Sally stands alone on the stage, in front of the curtain and continues singing in English.

By the end of the performance, Sally sings two numbers: "Bye-bye, mein lieber Herr!" and the title song "Cabaret" almost completely in English. These songs are the quintessence of Sally's world and mentality and therefore are important for the understanding of her character. However, the authors didn't hesitate to leave them completely untouched.

The "percentage" of the use of English in this performance is higher than in others. In the relation to translation studies, we should ask ourselves what are the reasons of such extensive usage of English in this Berlin production.

Translation theoreticians often argue that the way translation is performed can characterize the target audience. But how can **non-translation** characterize the target audience? In our case, what can we deduce from the fact that the authors of this production were not afraid to leave such a large amount of text in the original English? Can we conclude that the German audience is ready to understand English? Or do Germans have a certain fascination toward America where this musical comes from? What is the status of the English language in Germany? This is another case when theatre translation can help us answer numerous questions about the society it is produced for. The term "theatre translation" is important, for the target audience's reaction is direct and immediate. Peter Brook wrote: "Theatre only exists at the precise moment when the two worlds of the actors and the audience meet: a society in miniature, a microcosm brought together every evening within a space" (Qtd. in Mudford 2000: 100). Watching the tapes

of this performance, we can observe how lively the audience's reaction was when Sally Bowles stood on the fore-stage and performed her numbers almost **completely in English**. So, what is Germany's relationship with America and its language?

"Angst over English has never been a German trait" (Atkins 1998: 1). Even though there are those who strongly oppose creation of *Denglisch*, Gerhard Stickel, the professor of The Institute for German Language has to admit that "'language purism" in German does not have a good tradition and even the institute is unwilling to follow France's examples of laying down laws against Franglais" (ibid.).

"The [...] culture minister, Julian Nida-Rmelin, a former professor of philosophy, says that Germany has no need of a language police or a language-protection war; the state should not intervene in a process to which every living language is subject. Besides, says the minister, today's globalised world needs an international language." (Qtd. in Atkins 1998: 2).

Academic data confirm these statements: "English is now the language most widely taught as a foreign language – in over 100 countries, such as China, Russia, **Germany** (my emphasis – T.S.), Spain, Egypt and Brazil – and in most of these countries it is emerging as the chief foreign language to be encountered in schools, often displacing another language in the process. (Crystal 1997 :3).

So, linguistically speaking, English is becoming more powerful in Germany because of combination of the school education and the tradition of accepting this language. But does it mean that politically the country and the people are ready to accept a part of the original, American, production in its original form?

In the article “Europe: Is it Rejection or Seduction?; Germany and America” the author argues: “Both anti-Americanism and the opposite have deep roots in Germany”. (The Economist, Jul.31, 2004). However, if anti-Americanism were so powerful, it would be difficult to imagine that people would accept “Americanism” of the theatre text so willingly. The answer comes in the same article, where the author states:

“Just as Germans feel quite a deep anti-American impulse, they also have a strong streak of the opposite sentiment – that very streak which is “seduced” by American dynamism and flexibility. In many of their tastes, Germans may well be the most American-oriented of all European nations. They love American music and films [...]; and the United States remains the most popular destination for German tourists and academics”. (ibid.)

As though echoing the author’s ideas another journalist, Paul Widmer, states:

“Hostile feelings toward other nations or races have emerged several times in European history. One has only to recall anti-Germanism in France or anti-Frenchness in Germany during the first half of this century. Compared to these pernicious examples, anti-Americanism obviously is not the right word. Aside from a few fringe groups on the extreme left and the extreme right, such visceral hatred toward Americans does not exist anywhere. On the contrary, there is a new phenomenon, the wide appreciation of American culture. [...] But if anti-Americanism has virtually vanished in the cultural field, it has not done so in the political arena. Many of those who are among the most slavish followers of American cultural leadership criticize the political behavior of American government most severely. For instance, the leftist German highbrow magazine *Transatlantik* consciously patterned its layout after the *New Yorker*, reviews in its arts sections the latest plays and exhibits in New York and San Francisco – and criticizes U.S. policy on the political pages with predictable regularity” (Widmer 1984: 4).

In fact, the translation (interpretation) of “Cabaret” in Theater-am Kurfürstendamm itself enabled us to come to the same conclusions (and not merely to formulate questions). The articles only confirmed the facts that were already deducible.

This particular interpretation of “Cabaret” evokes another set of questions and to answer them one should perform a detailed research on the history of the genre of cabaret in Germany. The text used in Theater-am-Kurfürstendamm contains numerous lines, paragraphs and stanzas, which don’t exist in the original (English-language) or German texts. These verses and passages were being performed mostly by Conférencier played by Georg Preuße and also initiated by him. If we only consider his star-status in Germany and negligently leave a research on German cabaret of the Weimar Republic out, we might assume that the purpose of the changes done was only to make his role sound more meaningful and thus to please a famous actor. However, if we, once again, connect the theatre text with the history and reality, we will come to entirely different conclusions.

“The role of conférencier was a complex and manifold one. Not only was he, like a master of ceremonies, to introduce acts and set the tone for performances [...]; but he also had to be able to draw the audience into the spectacle and provide a quick repartee to any challenge it might make. Besides this, the best conférenciers had to be well versed in literature, masters of improvisation, and antennae for the next day’s news. Witty forecasters of tomorrow’s events, critical journalists who could provide a running satirical commentary on the state of the world, these conférenciers were the essence of the Kabarett. Of the many who developed an individual style and rose to prominence in the heyday of the cabaret, a few achieved such mastery of the conference form, that it became in itself a satirical act which could be incorporated into cabaret programmes. Although satire was proved to be a weapon too weak to launch a victorious assault on Nazism, the wit of the conférenciers emerged as a survival tactic in the early days of Hitler’s power”. (Appignanesi 1975: 153)

In numerous other interpretations of “Cabaret”, the role of Conférencier is reduced to the M.C. (Master of Ceremonies) or *Pausenclown*, as Georg Preuße himself calls it. But an “ordinary” M.C. cannot become a carrier of a political message, for his role doesn’t contain enough textual material to propagate his ideas. Paul Nikolaus, another prominent German conférencier “felt that the role of the conférencier was to be

less of a humorist than **an investigator of contemporary reality** (My emphasis – T.S.)” (Appignanesi 1975: 156). And that’s what Georg Preuße’s *Conférencier* is doing.

Under politically unstable, and especially totalitarian regimes, the only public place, where people can hear the words of truth, is theatre. Because of its direct connection with the audience, theatre manages sometimes to say the things which would be tabooed in the written form or in the media. Even though after the end of the Second World War Germany became a democratic country, the status of the theatre in Germany (as - for the same reason - in Russia) is still much higher than in historically and politically more stable North America. That’s why the importance of the text of the role of *Conférencier* should not be underestimated. In the original, *Conférencier*’s text lacked **intensity**, it was more entertaining than warning. In the German production, “Er geistert als Warner und Mahner durch das Stück, schokierte das Publikum durch Conferenzen, die nur eben grade an Mary erinnern”, (He wanders like a warning and reminding ghost through the play, shocks his public through his *Conferenzen*, which remind us of Mary [Mary is the name of the female character played by Georg Preuße for 30 years].)” wrote one of Berlin critics about this *Conférencier*. (Kaden 1999: 1). In this sentence, we can see the quintessence of the interpretation of the role by Georg Preuße and also an explanation why the text of this role had to be rewritten, because in order to become a *Warner* and a *Mahner*, he had to have enough textual basis to express his warnings and reminders.

Georg Preuße is extremely visible on the level of textual changes. Whenever the question of the translator’s/interpreter’s/adaptor’s visibility arises, the next question that seems logical is legitimacy of this visibility. As we have already observed, it can be

partially “justified” by the historicity of the Weimar cabaret, by the high visibility of the real conférenciers. However, there is another side of this question, which should be emphasized.

The choice of Georg Preuße for the role of Conférencier was not accidental. First and foremost he is a creator/author/adaptor/lyricist/writer of his own shows and only second, is he an actor. Therefore, when he was offered the role, he refused it in the beginning, for there was not enough textual material for him to create a complete, credible, real character. It was his condition that he be allowed to rewrite the text, and not only for Conférencier, based on his vision, understanding and knowledge of the target audience and political situation in Germany. He had enough to say to Germans, but he needed a text to support his ideas. He has a very direct connection with the audience: thousands of Germans write him letters, expressing their opinions and ideas and their gratitude for his honesty and fearlessness on stage, asking him to continue creating and playing his shows. Therefore, we can conclude that he had a right to adapt the existing text to the present moment, especially if we consider the fact that the practice of the re-actualizing theatre texts has become common in Germany in the last 20 years..

“Indeed, in the past few years in Germany there has developed a strong tendency to modernize classical plays. [...] Literary personages as well as those connected with the theatre have participated in this trend. These changes – whether radical or moderate, successful or unsuccessful, whether implemented by literati or by producers – are quite legitimate, provided that the author of the original is deceased” (Zuber 1980: 94).

This citation perfectly illustrates the story of re-actualization of “Cabaret” in Berlin in 1999 and confirms the legitimacy of the changes initiated by Georg Preuße.

CHAPTER 6.

“CABARET” IN QUEBEC

Introduction

In the two previous chapters I was comparing two versions of the musical “Cabaret” in America and Germany. By the means of this comparison, I was drawing some conclusions about tendencies and changes in the source and the target societies.

With the means of the two texts of “Cabaret” I have shown that between 1966 and 1998 American society had undergone important changes in its morale and social convictions: it became more accepting toward linguistic interference of other languages (in our case – German) on the stage; it had accepted a bi/homosexual character and the leading one; it had somewhat overcome its fear of the subject of anti-Semitism. At the same time the texts presented in the forth chapter emphasized the topic of the actor’s interference in the process of creation of the theatre text and the final production.

Comparison of two German texts allowed me to sharpen the discussion of the actor’s interference and visibility on the level of the textual changes, for the second version of “Cabaret” performed in Berlin in 1999 manifested a strong influence of its leading actor. The differences between the two texts have also enabled me to illustrate the idea of the importance of the contextual knowledge of the theatre interpreters and the relationship between the theatre text and the target society.

I will dedicate this chapter to slightly different issues, for the translation which I will concentrate on and the personality of the translator dictated a different approach.

In case of the Quebec production, the translator, Yves Morin whom I will talk about further, combines in his creative personality two visions: that of the actor and the

theatre translator. I will try to let him “speak” on the pages of this chapter, because I had a unique opportunity to be able to talk to him about his work on the musical “Cabaret”. I will also illustrate his ideas by the examples of his translation.

I will show how his bi-professional (actor and translator) approach and his profound knowledge of the target audience have affected his translational work.

2. Yves Morin: translator, musician, actor.²³

Like Christopher Isherwood, Robert Gilbert, and Georg Preuße, Yves Morin also has a “split creative personality”. He is a musician, an actor, and a theatre translator. The exactness of the last term “theatre translator” is extremely important to him, for he states: “Ce n’est pas de la littérature, c’est du théâtre. Je ne traduirais pas probablement un roman, à moins que le sujet du roman soit très-très proche de moi. Mais du théâtre... je peux le faire, parce que j’ai déjà joué et parce que j’ai déjà chanté. Et je sais qu’est-ce qui se chante bien et qu’est-ce qui se joue bien” (Morin). This quotation seems significant in the understanding of the role of the theatre translator. He (or she) is not only a mediator between two languages and two cultures, he (or she) is also a mediator between two theatres, two target audiences. He (or she) takes a play which supposedly conforms to the tastes and norms of the source-language target audience and makes it conform to the target-language target audience. However, spectators are not his (or her) only “consumers”. He (or she) has to make it suitable and “comfortable” for the actors

²³ This part of the present thesis is based on my interview with Yves Morin conducted in Montréal in May 2004.

who will have to pronounce this text from the stage. “ Je suis comédien et surtout musicien. Mais mon côté comédien faisait que je parlais beaucoup à mon ordinateur, quand j’écrivais, parce que je voulais voir que ça disait bien. *Speakability* et *performability* sont importants pour moi” (Morin).

Yves Morin shares the vision expressed in the first chapter of the present thesis and supported by the example of Georg Preuß that sometimes it is important - and even crucial for the success of the drama translation and the final production – to hear the actor’s voice, his (or her) ideas about the translated text and to adjust the text to the wishes and needs of the actors: “ [...] ils [acteurs] ont des idées au niveau littéraire qui marchent très bien [...]”. (ibid.) To make his translations become speakable and performable, Yves Morin invites actors to “taste” his fresh translation and to advise him about necessary changes.

Combining two visions, those of an actor and a translator, Yves Morin still doesn’t forget about his target audience. “ Ce qui est important pour moi – c’est l’intelligibilité : il faut que les gens puissent comprendre l’histoire très bien. J’ai choisi de mettre un peu d’allemand et d’anglais, mais je m’arrangeais à peu près tout le temps pour que le public puisse comprendre : ils ont déjà eu soit la traduction de ce qui était dit, sinon ils vont l’avoir immédiatement après. Il ne faut pas prendre pour acquis que les gens sont trilingues” (ibid.). This quotation clarifies Yves Morin’s point of view on the translational approach: he tries to make the translated text as comprehensible as possible. Using Schleiermacher’s expression, Y.Morin leaves the audience “in peace”, allowing it to avoid making a substantial intellectual effort in attempt to understand the meaning of the foreign words.

Yves Morin's words also evoke an important issue of trilingual and tricultural translation, for "Cabaret"[...] c'est un drôle de cas, parce que c'est l'Allemagne vue par des Américains. [par exemple, la chanson "Tomorrow Belongs to Me"] a été écrite pour que les gens se posent des questions si c'est une vraie chanson allemande folklorique » (ibid.). He compares his version of this song to the one used in the Paris-based production of "Cabaret" (under the direction of Jérôme Savary in 1996), where this whole piece was performed in German (without the following translation). Expressing his overall impression, Yves Morin states that " "Cabaret" est un *show* noir. En général, je trouve que la plupart de traductions que j'ai vues sont très légères. [...] Il faut que le public soit dévasté à la fin de ce spectacle. " (ibid.).

3. "Cabaret" in Quebec

Yves Morin faced a demanding task of rendering an American musical written about Germany to Quebec audience. We have previously observed that the original – English – version is not in fact entirely homogenous in its Englishness so the translator had to erase the linguistic differences and at the same time preserve the German flavor and English origins of this musical. According to his words, he didn't want to take for granted that his audience would be necessarily trilingual, but at the same time he managed to preserve "quelques bribes d'allemand et d'anglais, ce qui a pour effet de rappeler les origines de l'oeuvre et d'installer une ambiance plus authentique", (Dumas, *La Presse*, 16 avril 2004).

“Cabaret” in Théâtre du Rideau Vert is, obviously, not the first attempt to bring a Broadway production to Quebec reality. But in the past, it often happened that “many American plays [were] not translated but adapted, and [...] these adaptations can go as far as substituting the name of the Québécois adapter for the American author” (Brisset 1996: 50). The translation of “Cabaret” for Théâtre du Rideau Vert follows to a certain extent the old practice but with new modifications: the names of the authors appear on the title page, as well as the name of Yves Morin who is called “translator and adapter”.

This version of the famous musical rendered in Quebec is extremely successful. Many Montreal newspapers gave high praise to many elements of the final production including the actors’ performance. As I have already stated in the first chapter of this thesis, it is necessary for the actor to be able to perform a text which is speakable and performable. So, I think that the fact that Montreal critics find the actors’ work remarkable can be also seen as an acknowledgement of the translator’s work, for he “provided” them with a “comfortable” text.

4. The French-Canadian translation of “Cabaret”

By the means of the comparison of the English and the French-Canadian text I will show the theatre-translational tendencies, which Yves Morin highlighted in his interview and which he applied to his work on “Cabaret”:

From the very beginning of the play, we notice that the translator is trying to make his text sound comfortable for the target audience:

EXCERPT #15

in the original text the M.C. sings:

Willkommen, bienvenue, welcome
Im cabaret, **au** cabaret, to cabaret!

and the French text reads:

Willkommen, bienvenue, welcome
Im cabaret, to cabaret, **au** cabaret!

This almost invisible difference immediately makes this text “French-user-friendlier” than the original version, for in the song, according to Yves Morin, “the last word is always heard and memorized the most”(Morin).

This tendency of domesticating the text will continue to persist further when Sally Bowles and Cliff Bradshaw, both English-speaking, meet for the first time at the Kit-Kat Klub. It might seem natural that even in the French text their first sentences would be performed in English (as they were in Berlin in Theater-am-Kurfürstendamm where Cliff even started citing Shakespeare). However, the translator decided to render their English dialogue completely in French:

EXCERPT # 16

Sally: Oh, you're American. But you speak **English** beautifully, darling. I'm up here.

Cliff: Oh, hello.

Sally: Hello. Will you just keep talking, please? You can't imagine how starved I've been.

Cliff: Okay, let's see: **"Somewhere in this favored land the sun is shining bright. A band is playing somewhere and somewhere hearts are light. And somewhere men are laughing and somewhere children shout. But there is no joy in Mudville, might Casey has struck out!"**²⁴

Sally: Oh, yes – don't stop, please.

and in the translation it reads:

Sally: C'est pas vrai, t'es américain... Mais tu parles **ma langue**. Tu la parles merveilleusement. Pourrais-tu – continuer de parler – s'il te plaît? Tu ne peux pas t'imaginer combien ça me manque!

Cliff : D'accord. Laisse-moi réfléchir. (Il récite)

La mer est calme ce soir,

La marée est pleine, et la lune trône doucement

Au-dessus du Pas de Calais : - sur la côte de France,

La lumière miroite et s'enfuit ; les falaises de l'Albion se dressent,

Pâles et vastes, autour de la baie tranquille.

Viens à la fenêtre, les effluves de la nuit sont si tendres.

Sally : Oui – oui – n'arrête pas – s'il te plaît!

As we can see from this excerpt, the presence of English is completely eliminated from the text, even the word "English" is replaced by « *ma langue* ». So, Sally's Englishness is linguistically minimized. It is not completely erased though: M.C. calls her "*la beauté de Mayfair*". It is easy to imagine that in the times described by Annie Brisset, Mayfair would have been replaced by a name which would sound more French and Sally Bowles' name would have been *francisé* as well.

The next example of an almost complete domestication of a bilingual text is the song "*Mein lieber Herr*", performed in two languages: English and German in New York and Berlin. In Quebec it becomes almost entirely French. The only English element of

²⁴ "Casey at the Bat" by Ernest Lawrence Thayer, http://www.baseball-almanac.com/poetry/po_case.shtml

this song is the word “Bye bye” immediately translated as “*Adieu*” in the next line.

German-language interference is not much more noticeable: one stanza (out of seven) is

performed in German:

EXCERPT # 17

Essayez de comprendre' comment j' fonctionne, Mein Herr.
Je ne suis pas un' brebis, mais un' lionne, Mein Herr.
Vous aimiez une vamp, pas une nonne, Mein Herr.
Moi je suis c' que je suis.
Quand j' m' ennuie, c' est fini.
Et je m' ennuie.
Bonne nuit!

Bye bye, Mein lieber Herr,
Adieu, Mein lieber Herr,
C' était pas mal, mon cher,
Mais c' est du passé.
Vous avez su me plaire,
Maint' nant j' ai besoin d' air,
C' est mieux comm' ça pour nous deux, Mein Herr.

Ne pleurez pas, Mein Herr,
Pas de pourquoi, Mein Herr,
Vous me saviez bohême,
Et j' n' ai pas changé.
Ne broyez pas de noir,
Vous n' auriez pas dû croire
À cette histor' de « nous deux », Mein Herr.

L' Europe est un continent tell' ment vaste, Mein Herr.
Un monde de variétés, de contrastes, Mein Herr.
Devant tant de choix, comment rester chaste, Mein Herr ?
Moi je suis mon chemin,
Pas à pas, peu à peu,
P' tit à p' tit,
Mâle par mâle [...]

In an attempt to domesticate the text, the translator eliminates a short passage where (in the Broadway version) Sally reads an extract from her future part in a German movie in German which she doesn't understand:

EXCERPT # 18

Cliff: What's it about?

Sally: I haven't the foggiest. It's in German!

Listen: (*Reading with great bravura*)

“Guten Tag. Ich heisse Penny und ich bin Engländerin”.

In the French version it becomes:

Cliff: Ça parle de quoi?

Sally : Je n'en ai aucune idée. C'est en allemand!

Cliff : On ne te l'a jamais traduit?

The above-mentioned examples manifest a strong domestication tendency and an attempt to make the translated text sound fluently. They illustrate Y.Morin's idea that the theatre text has to be intelligible. He argues that theatre and literary texts don't follow the same rules: the theatre text is primarily written to be pronounced, not read.

“A play is written for a performance and must beactable. The audience must accept it as an organic piece of work”, stated Ortrun Zuber writing an article “Problems of Propriety and Authenticity in Translating Modern Drama”.²⁵ Yves Morin's and Ortrun Zuber's ideas complement each other. The audience has to understand the translated text first and only then “accept it as an organic piece of work”. That's why intelligibility of the translated text is so important for Yves Morin. A reader can go back to the pages or words that he (or she) didn't understand, but in the theatre, because of its immediacy, going back is impossible. Therefore, according to Yves Morin, the translator has to provide the spectator with such a text that the spectator won't have a need or a wish to look in a different direction.

²⁵ Zuber, Ortrun “The Languages of the Theatre”, 1980: 92.

Yves Morin has not completely eliminated German linguistic presence: the words “*Ja*” and “*Prosit*” are still allowed into his translation, but these are the words which first, do not change much the meaning of the speech, second, are conventionally attributed to German language and, third, – easily understandable. He also decided to preserve the names of the places, which characterize Berlin: hotel “*Adlon*” and *Nollendorfplatz*, added to the second English version.

Being familiar with the historical context of the pre-war German cabaret, Yves Morin gives an exact rendering of the atmosphere of the Kit-Kat Klub and its leading singer Sally Bowles. The first song that Sally performs on the stage is “Don’t Tell Mama”, and this song immediately helps spectators to understand this eccentric, extravagant girl and frivolous and careless ambiance of the Klub. So, rendering this song into French, Y.Morin generously uses elisions:

EXCERPT # 19

[...]
Mama ne saurait même imaginer
Que je travaill’ dans un night club
En jarr’telle et en bustier.
Alors, m’sieur, si jamais vous voyez maman,
Ne lui dit’s pas mon p’tit secret.
Une fill’ doit bien travailler.
[...]
Je voudrais qu’ell’ soit toujours si fièr’ de moi.
C’est un peu délicat mais puis-j’ vous demander ça?
[...]
Maman croit qu’je fais le tour de l’Europ’,
À visiter les grands musées
Avec des copin’s d’école.
Maman ne saurait même imaginer
Qu’je préfér’ les visit’s guidées
De tous les débits d’alcool.
Alors, m’sier, si jamais vous voyez maman,

Ne lui dit's pas mon p'tit secret.

[...]

However, as the play progresses and gradually turns into a tragedy, Y.Morin almost completely eliminates elision, for his purpose is to interpret the story of the characters as faithfully and understandably as possible. In the first stanzas of the title song “Cabaret”, which illustrates Sally’s philosophy of hedonism and pleasure, the translator tries avoiding elisions:

EXCERPT # 20

[...]

Pourquoi endurer les froids de novembre?

Ici, c'est toujours mai.

Tout n'est que cabaret, mon vieux,

Viens donc au cabaret.

[...]

Pourquoi écouter tous ceux qui prétendent

Qu'le travail, c'est la santé!

Tout n'est que cabaret, mon vieux,

Viens donc au cabaret.

And suddenly, Sally’s voice breaks when she tells the story of her girlfriend Elsie, who died when they “shared four sordid rooms in Chelsea”; Sally starts to speak almost hysterically. To emphasize her state, the translator fills her speech with “broken” words:

J'avais une bonn' copin' qui s'app'lait Elsie.

On s'partageait un' piaul' dans l'coin de Chelsea.

C'n'était pas exactement une enfant d'chœur :

Disons tout simplement qu'on pouvait la louer à l'heure.

Le jour de sa mort, tous les voisins disaient :

“Rien d'étonnant quand on sait tout c'qu'elle prenait.”

Mais dans son cercueil tout de blanc vêtue,

C'était l'plus gai des cadavr's qu'j'ai jamais vu.

[...]

According to Yves Morin’s interpretation Sally knows that her life is doomed as is the whole city of Berlin. When she tells Elsie’s story, she predicts her own future, and it makes her monologue sound tragically.

Et moi aussi, moi aussi,
Quand j'devrai dire adieu à la vie,
Croyez-moi, j'le ferai comme Elsie!
(*Sally commence à craquer*)
Allez, mais cessez de toujours attendre!
Une vie, c'est vit' passée.
Tout n'est que cabaret, mon vieux
Seul'ment du cabaret, mon vieux,
Et moi j'aim' le cabaret.

Trying to associate the translated text with the final production, we can state that Yves Morin's translation of the songs performed by Sally Bowles perfectly fits the personality and the voice of the actress – Sylvie Moreau. “Sa voix un peu nasillarde et sa sculpturale présence physique, devenues deux de ses marques de commerce, s'accordent bien au répertoire” (Dumas, *La Presse*, Apr.16, 2004) and the translated text, we can argue. “Lorsque (Sylvie Moreau) entonne *La vie est un cabaret* d'une voix qui traduit à la fois espoir et la désillusion, on réalise à quel point sa rencontre avec Sally Bowles était prédestinée”.²⁶ Such a harmonious intermarriage between an actor and a character wouldn't be possible if the actor felt uncomfortable within the translated text. “In the process of translating a play, it is necessary for him [the translator] to mentally direct, act and see the play in the same time” (Zuber 1980: 93). Therefore, I think that it will be fair to say that the author of this review praises not only Sylvie Moreau but the translator who “provided” her with a “fitting” text as well, because, obviously, Y.Morin was envisioning the actors' work as a translator and a director at the same time.

Being less preoccupied with political issues incorporated in “Cabaret”, Yves Morin concentrates more on the humane side of people's relationships. Even though his

translation is mainly based on the second Broadway version of the musical, he chooses to return to the first one translating the last dialogue between Sally and Cliff, in which Sally opens up to Cliff and to the spectators.

EXCERPT # 21

Cliff: As-tu été malade hier? C'est pour ça que t'es pas rentrée?

Sally : *Hals und Beinbruch*. Ça veut dire “se casser le cou et la jambe“. On le dit pour empêcher que ça arrive. Mais ça m'étonnerait que ça marche. Ça m'étonnerait qu'on puisse empêcher quoi que ce soit d'arriver. Pas plus que d'arriver à changer les gens. Je veux dire...

Cliff : Qu'est-ce que tu veux dire ?

Sally : Je veux dire – je ne suis pas parfaite. Loin de là ! Je rencontre quelqu'un et lui fais toutes sortes d'énormes promesses. Et puis je me rend soudainement compte que je ne pourrai jamais tenir toutes ces promesses – jamais au grand jamais ! Parce que je suis encore moi !

Beside the examples shown above, Yves Morin's translation manifests faithfulness to the original text. His approach is much less aggressive than that of Georg Preuße. He renders the text as closely as possible, but at the same time he doesn't forget that

“[...] the translator of a play should not merely translate words and their meanings but produce speakable and performable translations. In the process of translating a play, it is necessary for him to mentally direct, act and see the play at the same time” (Zuber 1980: 93).

²⁶ Voir (Qtd at <http://www.rideauvert.qc.ca/2004-2005.program.asp>

5. The interdependence between theatre translation and the final production

Using the Quebec-based production of “Cabaret” as an example, we can also reflect upon the fact that theatre translation is not autonomous: it is directly related to the final production.

In the following example, we will see, how dramatically the perception of the character by the audience can be changed, when the translator/director/actor work together, towards each other. Even a supporting character can turn into a real tragic figure, the symbol.

In this version of the musical the character of Fräulein Schneider, who is traditionally performed as a simple, sometimes desperate older woman, received new colors. After performing her first, introductory song:

EXCERPT # 22

[...]

Quand j'étais enfant, j'passais mes étés à la mer, et puis?
Et j'avais une bonn' qui s'occupait de tout' mes affaires,
Et puis?
Maint'nant, j'lav' les planchers et je nettoie les murs,
Je joue mêm' les madam's pipi!
Si ça d'vrait être comm' ça,
Bien tant pis, c'est comm' ça.
On en f'ra pas un cas : tant pis!

[...]

Car les jours défilent et les années passent,
Et vous apprenez à faire c'qui s'brasse.
Tout va continuer avec ou sans nous,
C'est comme ça, et puis?
C'est comme ça, tant pis!
Les années passent.
C'est comme ça. Et puis?
Et puis? Tant pis!

the actress (Véronique Le Flaguais) makes an indecent gesture. This gesture changes our perception of this woman: she hasn't accepted her new life, she just cannot find the solution. In her monologue, Y.Morin again, (as in the songs performed by Sally at Kit-Kat Klub) uses numerous elisions. They give the character liveliness and energy. In the other productions, her character seemed lifeless. In the French-Canadian version, the translator textually supports the interpretation of this character by the director and the actress. So, her gesture doesn't look like a complete shock to the public: she obviously is not refined: her manners and the text that the translator wrote for her convince us of the opposite.

Fräulein Schneider's introductory song, or rather its interpretation at Théâtre du Rideau Vert makes the audience notice the transformation of this character toward the end of the play: in the beginning she was a woman who, even admitting her failure in life, still manifested a certain strength and intensity. In the end she is devastated by the danger which comes from the Nazi and by her own fear and breaks off her engagement with Herr Schultz losing her last chance to be happy.

6. Conclusion

Yves Morin's translation is "user-friendly" for both users of the text: actors and spectators. He skillfully combines his three important missions: staying faithful to the original text, concept and context; making the text *speakable* and *performable*; and maintaining the fluency of the target text. He pays respect to the original German flavor of the Broadway production; however, he manages not to overload his audience with

excessive use of German and English words and notions. As an actor, he, with the means of translation, advocates the actors' right" to an "undisturbing" text. As a drama translator, he manages to become a real textual and cultural mediator between three cultures, (English, German and French-Canadian) between two worlds, (of the actors and of their public) and between two texts.

CONCLUSION

Summarizing the main ideas of the present thesis, we can argue that theatre translation constitutes a distinct part of translation studies and therefore dictates its own, particular rules and principles of analysis of the translated text. Theatre translation is always located on the crossroad of translation and theatre and thus requires a bi-disciplinary approach. The interaction between the theatre text and the final production is too strong to be neglected, for the original purpose of the playwriting and theatre translation is producing a text which will – immediately or eventually – serve as the starting point of a theatre production.

Applying a bi-disciplinary approach to my research, I proposed to compare the tasks of the theatre translator and the actor. I based my comparison on the similarity of the key elements of their mission: interpretation and mediation, which could become impossible without a clear understanding of the target audience and deep erudition. Using the example of different interpretations of the musical “Cabaret” in America, Germany and Quebec, I demonstrated the importance of the interaction between the translator and the actor in the process of creating theatre. This perspective has not been foregrounded sufficiently in Translation Studies and needs to be better integrated into the concepts of translations studies.

A strong connection between the theatre text, the final production and the target audience allowed me to show how the translation or (in some cases) non-translation of the theatre text can become a reflection of the social, political, cultural tendencies of the target society. It also gave an opportunity to state and prove that the translated theatre text

is not autonomous: it exists in a direct interaction with the theatre as a microcosm of the target society.

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