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Theatrical Multilingualism and the Translation of Culture

by

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Dedication

For my mum and dad, who always knew I could,

but especially for Karol who helped me get ‘er done.

Abstract

Multilingual theatre offers aesthetic and socio-political outlets for theatre-makers to interrogate linguistic conventions in performance as well as to challenge social identity constructions based on language. However, a polyglossic play text poses particular challenges to translators whose goal exceeds the literary exchange of words in one language for those in another. In performance, the semantic value of speaking in an 'other' language is carried in language itself; this is a translation problem if the target culture does not understand the socio-political conditions that determine the value of a speaker's language choice. This subject is here addressed via an interrogation of the meaning of language itself. An analysis of code-switching theory, paired with an examination of post-colonial and theatrical translation theories, provide the necessary framework for an analysis of how Martin Kevan translated Ne blâmez jamais les Bédouins in an effort which is sensitive to the cultural context of its performance.

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Introduction

Advanced communication technologies and increased international travel mean that we are all in ever more regular contact with different cultures. Consequently, rates of contact between different language communities are also increasing. In Canada, as in many countries today, it is not uncommon for people to have command of more than one language, and to use those languages regularly. Accordingly, multilingual communication shapes many people's understanding of their own identities, as well as their relationship with the communities in which they live, work, and play. Theatre artists are responding to this reality by employing multilingualism as a strategy in their work, with two dominant trends of polyglossic performance emerging. The first can be loosely categorized as post-colonial. This first category of multilingual play responds to imbalances in power, cultural hierarchies, and unjust social stratifications that have resulted from one cultural group having dominance over another. In many cases, these plays are actually the product of cultural and linguistic communities that were, in fact, colonized, and serve to directly address that specific historical injustice. The artists who create this work understand that language has a huge signifying capacity and therefore can be used to subvert dominant social ideologies within the confines of a play. In Canada, for example, when a character in a multilingual text speaks in English, she or he is likely working within the world that has been thrust upon them, making any utterance in another language a sign of resistance. The use of a language other than English to signal belonging inside of an othered community within the Canadian frame recurs

often, off and on stage. The second breed of multilingual theatre is more typically, although not exclusively, the product of theatre artists who work internationally. This is the kind of polyglossia which Hans-Thies Lehmann describes as having the destabilizing effect of creating postdramatic theatre. Although his purpose is to demonstrate the ways in which contemporary theatre often challenges the authority of the text, Lehmann explains that polyglossia can be employed in performance to do exactly that. Not only does multilingual theatre "dismantle national languages," but it works "on several levels, [by] playfully showing gaps, abruptions and unsolved conflicts, even clumsiness and loss of control" (Lehmann 147). In these plays, there are often more than two languages being used regularly, and the changes in languages serve to implode the narrative structure that might have otherwise emerged, rather than pointing to extra-theatrical social conditions. Robert Lepage's Lipsynch, a nine-hour long polyglossic epic, is a recent example of this kind of critical explosion of language in theatre. Although postdramatic multilingualism does not explicitly use language to challenge cultural authority – its subjects are rarely post-colonial – the use of more than one language on stage inherently creates tensions which can inform the world of the play, the characters speaking, and challenge the audience as well. It bears note that these two trends are not always mutually exclusive: there can be significant play between both postcolonial and postdramatic polyglossia inside a single play text.

The matter of an individual speaker's language choice is foregrounded in plays which feature the regular use of more than one language. In heteroglossic

theatre, the languages spoken themselves take on signifying value and can inform our understanding of the play text and even the performance. Because language and accent are linked with identity, both in terms of group and cultural belonging, an individual speaker who is revealed to be a polyglot is immediately destabilized. The character's identity is fragmented, with each language or accent pointing to a different belonging. Further, the way in which our hypothetical polyglot employs each language can unveil details about the world of the play, and, by extension, the assumed cultural and linguistic makeup of the intended audience. If each change in language is used to either assert or deny authority, by creating community or excluding a speaker, the politics of the world within the play are exposed. If these politics in any way mirror the real world, regardless of the degree of accuracy, we are often given access to an understanding of the playwright's sentiments about her or his circumstances. Although it is certainly risky to essentialize a text in this manner, the relationship between theatrical polyglossia and its everyday equivalents can signal the author's point in writing the play, laying bare meaning, point of view, and even intention. Given that so much information can be drawn from a text in which more than one language is used, the strategic use of polyglossia in theatre can prove a powerful discursive strategy.

Naturally, some of the more interesting multilingual play texts are chosen for translation in order to expand the potential audience for a given work. This task proves highly problematic because a spectator or reader's understanding of the value of a language choice is often context-specific. Consider this excerpt

from the French-Canadian play Ne blâmez jamais les Bédouins by René-Daniel Dubois:

LUTIN VERT:	Freins de secours parés. Tout va?
PÈRE NOËL:	Everything checked.
TOUS:	(très lentement) Fistiac gousti niop taïne viop troupni. Ne blâmez jamais les Bédouins.
LUTIN VERT:	Trentes secondes sur avis.

(Dubois *Blâmez* 137)

This four-line passage includes only three of the many languages and accents employed in the whole text, and already the hurdles to translation are apparent. Any potential translator would first need to decide if and how this text fits into the Quebecois canon in order to determine the value of language changes throughout the text. Then, the larger problem becomes one of determining how it could possibly become anything else without losing the essence of what Dubois' text is about. If we understand all changes in language as having semiotic value, the task of discovering equivalent values for another linguistic context is daunting. However, Martin Kevan has quite admirably crafted an English-language version of Bedouins, one which was conceived for Anglophone Canada but which includes enough flexibility that it can be adapted for different English-speaking communities, without compromising on the transmission of the essence of the original.

Kevan's skill in the translation of this play can be analyzed in order to draw some conclusions about the process of translating multilingual theatre. It should be emphasized here that my intention in this document is a textual analysis and not a rigorous examination of Dubois and Kevan's work as performed on stage. Broadly, then, the success of Kevan's work lies in his sensitivity to the gap between the politics of language in French and in English Canada, as well as to the gap between theatrical conventions in both linguistic communities. To understand the subtlety of his work, however, we need to ground ourselves in those domains which inform the choices that he made in his translation. A firm understanding of the place of language in the fabric of Canadian society, and indeed Canadian identity, is foundational for Kevan's work. This information helps to elucidate the motivation behind language choice in Dubois' text, with further detail being accessible through a foundation in some of the theories exploring the linguistic analysis of conversational language alternation, or code-switching. Both language politics and code-switching inform post-colonial translation theories, which demand an understanding of the potential for the oppression of language and culture in the rewriting of a text. When post-colonial translation meets theatre translation, the emergent concepts allow for an analysis of Dubois' original text and the choices that Kevan made in his work. It bears note that there are libraries filled with translation and linguistic theories that I have not included in my analysis. However, despite the fact that there are ideas which are more contemporary than those I have included, I chose my references because of their absolute relevance to the analysis of Kevan's work.

Chapter 1 – Code-Switching and Language Choice on Stage

The linguistic analysis of multilingual theatre necessarily begins with a need to understand the semantic value of language within the culture of the playwright and her or his audience, and subsequently the motivations behind language choice within that same social frame. Socio-political determinants play significantly in conversational language choice, and swell in importance as the frequency of language alternation increases in any given exchange. Complexity is further multiplied when the conversation occurs inside the frame of a piece of theatre. Off-stage, the socio-political implications in language choice are only being negotiated between those parties involved in a discussion; however, those spectating a piece of theatre constitute a third party whose role is both separate from the action and is usually passive in that audience members rarely join in any dialogue taking place on stage. Further, even were a spectator to engage a performer in a conversation, she or he might not have experience with the socio-political reality of the characters on stage. An audience's engaged listening, then, is a fundamentally different kind of participation in a dialogue than a private discussion between polyglots. In the scholarly analysis of a play which features the conversational use of more than one language, it becomes vitally important to understand the motivation behind language choice in order to appreciate the complexity of meaning that language weaves into a text. Given that the focus of this analysis is Canadian theatre, the socio-political motivators of language choice are clear: a distillation of relevant information about the politics of language in Canada gives footing to an understanding of how language informs identity in this

country. These facts offer a framework which facilitates the clarification of language choice in a multilingual conversation, which in turn provides the basis for an understanding of code-switching, a linguist's systemic understanding of the motivations behind a polyglot's language choice.

Given the federal government's heavy involvement in shaping the linguistic character of this country, any analysis of language needs to begin with the Official Languages and Multicultural Acts. The idea of Canada as a bilingual nation goes hand-in-hand with the country's self-construction as multicultural, an ideal that is broadly, though admittedly not unanimously, supported both at the level of public discourse and through legislation[1]. It is unsurprising, then, that matters of language recur regularly in discussions about our collective sense of identity. Though the history of linguistic debate in the country can be traced back at least as far as the "conquest by the British in 1759 – 1760," it is only since the second half of the twentieth century with "the French-origin share of the population [...] once again on the decline," (Castonguay 36) that language has become a matter of overt political discourse. Canada's legislated linguistic duality stems from the Official Languages Act, passed by the government of Pierre Trudeau in 1969, in response to nationalist sentiments in Quebec. "Clearly, Quebec's position was a threat to the legitimacy of the Canadian state, as well as to the powerful position of English-speakers" (Heller "Globalization" 50), so something had to be done. The resulting concept of re-envisioning the country as valuing "[p]ancanadian bilingualism," and favouring "an expression of ethnocultural belonging concurrent with the formulation of pluralist multicultural

policies" (Thériault 257), was a coup for the Liberal government. Their idea had a much broader base of support than the two nation structure espoused by Conservatives at the time and was well backed by rigorous academic study. The idea was that "as a nation, Canada would be defined by its two official languages, English and French, whose purpose [...] would be to unite the country into one political community" (Cardinal 483). Although the success of this policy is and will remain a subject of continuous debate, there is no doubt that it shapes how Canadians construct their shared sense of national character.

The simple act of legislating language is a risky business, at least in part because the manner in which we communicate is deeply rooted in individual history and so is intensely personal. That which is deeply individual has the capacity to provoke smouldering debate. "When properly managed, the image of Canada's bilingual character resonates positively in the Canadian psyche as a potent symbol of Canada, and as such it has potential to strengthen the nation" (Magnet 187). Get it wrong, however, and "official languages policy allows language conflict to smoulder too long, igniting passions that contribute to national destruction" (Magnet 187). Though official bilingualism was intended to be a unifying act, it was indeed considered intrusive by some, based on false demographic information by others, and frequently as reinforcing hegemonic British narratives of conquest and power. "While the conquest [of New France] happened a long time ago [...], it laid the groundwork for an ethnic division of labour which has informed Canadian society ever since" (Heller "Globalization" 49). Further, from our contemporary vantage point, having witnessed the

administration of forty years of bilingualism policy, the effects today are undeniably negligible. Law professor Joseph Magnet asserts that "[t]hroughout the course of the policy's operation, the weaker French minorities have continued to decline at brisk rates" (Magnet 197). In fact, official languages have become progressively more territorialized, with sites of contact between unilingual Anglophones and Francophones occurring most frequently at the geographic borders between the province of Quebec and its Anglophone neighbours and only rarely elsewhere. This means that linguistic minorities are becoming much less common.

> The decline in Quebec's English-speaking minority is not only the result of out-migration, but also of inadequate fertility. That of the French-speaking population in the rest of Canada is caused not only by anglicization, but also by insufficient fertility and the drying up of Francophone out-migration from Quebec.
>
> (Castonguay 48)

Castonguay's linguistic map of Canada, based on an analysis of 1991 census data regarding language use as well as declared mother tongue, establishes that this country's still-existing relationship with multilingualism is sharply asymmetrical.

The uneven nature of language distribution in this country is often reflected back to us in our theatre. English-Canadian drama very rarely employs polyglossia because Anglophones very rarely have cause to push back or resist against oppression or assimilation by other linguistic communities. French-Canadian theatre, on the other hand, often employs English as a second language

for exactly those reasons. Consider Larry Tremblay's play The Dragonfly of Chicoutimi in which a Quebecois man who suffers from aphasia after a childhood trauma rediscovers speech following forty years of silence, but can only express himself in English. At the end of the play he explains what it meant for him, a French man, to wake up as an Anglophone:

> The night I had
> that dream in English
> my mouth was a hole of shit
> I mean
> full of words like
> chocolate cake beloved son
> son of a bitch popsicle sticks your lips taste wild cherries
> a dragonfly fixed on a wall by a pin
> when the sunlight reached
> my dirty sheets my eyes filled with sweat
> my mouth was still spitting
> all those fucking words
> like rotten seeds
> everywhere in the room
> I was not
> as they said
> aphasic

anymore

I was speaking in English. (Tremblay)

Throughout the play, in order to communicate, he patches together pieces of English, like the above, using adapted French idioms and grammatical structures, but is consistently frustrated by his inability to recover his French voice. The result in English is so grammatically fractured that it is almost poetic; however, it is quite clear, particularly given that this play was conceived for a French-speaking audience, how Tremblay feels about language. There is nothing diffident in his use of English – his language choice has a meaning that is a direct result of the politics of language use in this country.

The staging of French/English linguistic polemics are, however, only the beginning of polyglossic theatre in Canada. The repercussions inherent in official bilingualism are further problematized when multiculturalism is considered in the formulation as well. The result in theatre is a collection of multilingual plays which respond more directly to the post-colonial experience of cultural minorities than of long-lived linguistic battles between French and English 'founding' nations. Though social stratification based on ethnicity has been common throughout the country's history (Hoerder 528), Canada's multicultural policy[2] is only two years younger than the Official Languages Act[3], and both pieces of legislation tend to be discussed together as though multiculturalism were only possible as an evolution of bilingualism. Psychologist John Berry, however, situates the turn to multiculturalism two decades earlier. He explains that from the establishment of British colonies in what was to become Canada, there was a

concerted effort on the part of the Brits to assimilate the culturally diverse population of this country to English cultural norms. However, "by 1956 the federal government's view was that assimilation had not worked anywhere in the contemporary world, and that it was impracticable as a general policy" (Berry 84). Berry carries his analysis further by assembling and unpacking some of the chief criticisms against Canada's multicultural policy. He first suggests that the very act of giving attention to ethnicity serves only to "perpetuate ethnic stratification in Canadian society," and further that "multiculturalism may serve only to keep particular groups in their place in the 'vertical mosaic'" (Berry 86). His next concern is that there is an inherent contradiction in situating multiculturalism within a French/English bilingual framework, "since language is such an essential component of culture" (Berry 86). Berry implies that a nation can, according to official policy, be bilingual or multicultural, but not both. A law that insists on bilingualism negates the overwhelming significance of language to any other cultural group; conversely, a law demanding multiculturalism trumps and so negates the significance of a bilingual policy which singles out two linguistic groups. Finally, he questions who the policy is aimed at and suggests that public opinion favours the notion that the policy is "for the non-British and non-French portions of Canadian population. From this perspective, it is seen by some as a crude attempt to attract the 'ethnic vote'" (Berry 86).

Problematic though it may be, legislation treating language and multiculturalism is endemic and fixed in the fabric of Canadian society. For the foreseeable future, to be Canadian is to be multiple, to have more than one

identity, to not be absolute. Joseph Yvon Thériault has offered an analysis of the cultural evolution of this kind of plurality:

> A true understanding of the historic development of diversity in contemporary societies cannot be reduced to the question of whether or not ethnicity is considered in a pluralist or cosmopolitan dimension [...], but should also consider whether the state is capable of recognizing the existence of national minorities.
>
> (Thériault 256)

He also offers a useful model for examining this kind of multiplicity, suggesting that "[i]n discussions about nationalism and multiculturalism, at least three different types of groups need to be distinguished: national groups, minority nationalism, and ethnic groups" (Thériault 256). To put his notion into context, the national group in Canada is the federalist character which is articulated by the central government, something which we are all meant to be able to identify with to some degree. The best example of minority nationalism is presented by Quebec, though there are certainly other provinces or groups within the national frame which have articulated the belief that they are unique and autonomous. Ethnic groups abound across the country and will often remain tightly-knit communities, bolstered by the arrival of new immigrants, but are differentiated from minority nationalisms because they do not seek the rights or privileges of nationhood.

These last two groups are most likely to create polyglossic theatre because regionalisms and individual heritage tend to trump any cohesive sense of

'Canadian-ness' which might otherwise emerge via the practice and output of the nation's thinkers, artists and engaged citizens. More often than not, anything that might be labelled as an expression of the Canadian experience exists in the exploration of gaps between hegemonic Western – that is to say British and American – customs and those of geographic or cultural communities that survive within the larger national frame. Perhaps because of the politically enshrined linguistic duality of Canada, multilingualism, where language is a symbol of otherness, emerges over and over again as a discursive strategy to investigate the plural dynamic of identity in this country. Language is a well-suited mechanism for this investigation because it is frequently mimicked in the creation of community, and often cultural, borders: "[a]s Canadian experience has shown, two or more languages within the same state will tend to be concentrated in territorially defined centers of dominance" (McRoberts 147). In this way, language, and indeed accent, become place-markers which attach a speaker, whether on stage or not, to a particular community. Further, multilingualism in performance proves a powerful dianoetic tool because language can be used both by the dominant culture to oppress others and by a subjugated group to subvert prevailing ideologies:

> Those who seek to oppress, exclude and humiliate often use language to do so because of its power to injure [...]. Attempting to destroy a language has been a common form of oppression. [...] In turn, language can be used as an instrument of resistance;

> reclaiming or subverting language can also be employed for defiance and challenge. (Burck 19)

Louise Ladouceur, in her article "Write to Speak," does a masterful job of explaining how these tensions play out in theatre created by and for specific minority Francophone Canadian communities by employing multilingualism to express identity. She uses a number of examples to explain how the very specific iterations of French peppered with English that mark the geographic borders of Francophone communities across the country are mirrored by the playwrights who are affiliated with those communities.

From the perspective of the spectator, language is often considered implicit in the effective communication of ideas, feelings, and narrative in theatre and performance. However, "[a]s work in theatre semiotics has shown, the linguistic system is only one optional component in a set of interrelated systems that comprise the *spectacle*" (Bassnett Translation 120). French theatre theoretician Pierre Larthomas agrees and has specified that dramatic language constitutes "par nature, un compromis entre deux langages, l'écrit et le dit" (Larthomas 25). The inevitably fractured nature of meaning-making on stage, and indeed the splintered manner in which a spectator is, in spite of her or himself, likely to read a stage, necessitates that anything which exists inside of the theatrical frame can have meaning. If we allow that a spoken language can have signifying value, we, as audiences and readers of theatre, can look beyond the nouns and verbs spoken to consider and find meaning in the language choice itself, rather than simply considering it as a container for words. When language

is considered as a signifier, characteristics of the person on stage come to the surface: language, culture and nation are historically linked, implicating characters' cultural identity, group belonging, and even heritage in every speech act.

Further, multilingual performances can challenge the audience's assumption of stable character identity by playing the gap between ethnicity, class, gender and other identity signifiers. The tensions inherent in this gap demand that spectators deconstruct their conceptions of otherness. In a multilingual play there is no doubt that the playwright's choice of language, and more specifically their choice to multiply and switch languages, carries importance and substance that is meant to have particular resonance with the audience they are writing for. This brand of cultural and linguistic multiplicity is increasingly common around the world:

> The great migrations of post-colonialism have produced a new socio-demographic situation: all Western nations now have increasingly mixed populations. The ease and rapidity of global communication have created an international mass culture, which competes and interacts with local forms. [...] And so the idea of culture as a set of unchanging and coherent values, behaviours or attitudes, has given way to the idea of culture as negotiation, symbolic competition or 'performance.' (Simon 58)

If we are 'performing' our cultures in the everyday, then we are certainly, albeit selectively, performing them on stage as well. The reception of multilingual

performance is further complicated if and when the play is translated, adapted, or simply transplanted to a linguistically 'other' context in which assumptions about identity and language are different. The semantic value of a character who speaks French is assuredly different in Canada than in France.

This said, language as a marker for cultural identity is not without problems. Historically, language was considered, along with pseudo-sciences like phrenology, as a determinant of intelligence and physical capacity, and even as an evolutionary marker in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Indeed, "[l]anguage was only one feature of a broad array of concepts invoked to elaborate the idea of racial grouping and inheritance" (Ashcroft 42). The legacy of this earlier linguistic profiling is that we often understand a difference in language use, even when as subtle as a variation in accent, as indicating a stratification of power between speakers. Although this social stratification based on language is not empirical, it is the nexus of the lived experience of otherness:

> [T]he paradox of race is that the reality of racial experience centres, not in physical typology, or 'community of blood' or genetic variation, but in language. This occurs in two ways: the development of the concept of linguistic races which saw language and race as inseparable, and the figurative power of language in which chromatic signifiers performed the cultural work of racial 'othering'. (Ashcroft 40)

The associative power of language that Ashcroft describes, despite the social injustices that can mark linguistic-group affiliation, is central to the consideration

of the construction of new identities in performance because it is so packed with meaning. "Language can be used to mark boundaries, and where this is so, becomes considered a criterion of ethnicity" (Burck 22). In many ways, because of our historical relationships with language, the way we speak can carry even more meaning and value than semiotic structures alone would suggest.

This makes language as an identity signifier in performance less problematic because it is understood and employed as a symbolic referent to a particular community rather than implicating hard rules about physiological and intellectual capacity. In those cases where language is a symbolic referent, Ben Rampton provides us with a useful breakdown of what speaker expertise or fluency in a language can indicate and reminds us of the potential for shifting linguistic and group allegiances. He explains that people belong to many groups, and that rather than being permanent alliances, cultural and group allegiances can shift dramatically depending on social circumstances. Identity and belonging are constantly in flux, and a change in language can reflect this (Rampton 110). More often than not, in theatre and in the broader community, language used to associate a speaker with a particular cultural group works against dominant social forces because, especially in a post-colonial or nomadic context, "[t]he significance of language is accentuated when a country or community is threatened with extinction or has been territorially dispossessed," (Burck 27-8).

The experience of those who perceive their community as marginalized is also likely to produce new and highly individual narrative forms which reflect their unique circumstances by expressing the in-between space they inhabit via

play with multilingualism. This has much to do with the individual's journey to understand self: those "positioned in several languages construct different narratives of self in different linguistic contexts, related to differences of structure, conceptualizations of self, indexing, styles of presentation and available canonical narratives" (Burck 25). When attempting to express identity for more than one linguistic group, the process of making one iteration of narrative self fit into the accepted presentational styles of another group demands careful hybridization to express the tensions inherent in that dynamic. Much of the strain arises because "[i]ndividuals positioned in two cultures have often been negatively connoted in similar ways to those who are bilingual, and come under intense pressure to acculturate, while at the same time experiencing exclusion" (Burck 25). In drama, as in other art forms, the hybridized genres that surface in this discursive exploration are highly individual and speak to the specific experience of the artist. By extension, this suggests the limitless variety of hybridized performance genres that can emerge as creative output from those artists seeking to express the experience of living in more than one cultural community.

There are a few functional distinctions between the use of multiple languages which can inform how scholars and audiences alike might understand the performance of polyglossia or multilingualism. As a broad category, "[m]ultilingualism refers to the use or ability to use two or more languages," with bilingualism, "characterized by the ability to speak [only] two languages," (Salzmann 181) as the most commonly occurring variety. People who have

"complete and equal command of two [or more] languages in all situations" (Salzmann 181) can also be considered ambilingual. Colingualism has been suggested to describe an idealized and compensatory use of more than one language in which all languages used are understood and valued equally (Regan 257). A subtle variety of colingualism, dubbed diglossia, describes "those speech communities that have [...] two varieties of a language at their disposal, one colloquial (low) and the other formal (high)," which are used "for two distinct sets of functions" (Salzmann 183). For the purposes of a linguistic analysis of theatre, however, I will focus on the concept of code-switching, in which every language or language variety is simply termed a 'code' and all switches are equally relevant.

Our understanding of the link between language and identity has evolved drastically as we have moved into the twenty-first century. Aneta Pavlenko and Adrian Blackledge, both theorists of multilingualism, remind us that the effects of the digital revolution as well as shifting political and national boundaries and allegiances play significantly in how we conceive of linguistic identity today (Pavlenko 2). All of these factors have drastically shaped the context and implications of any sociolinguistic analysis. Before the 1970s, an individual who employed more than one language in conversation – when multiple linguistic codes are "tied together prosodically as well as by semantic and syntactic relations equivalent to those that join passages in a single speech act" (Romaine 121) – was considered to have a faulty understanding of all of the languages that she or he spoke. In an oft-quoted dictum, Ureil Weinreich, a scholar who was at

the forefront of research into multilingualism and second language learning, insisted in 1953 that polyglots should demonstrate their command of multiple languages by keeping them separate: "the ideal bilingual switches from one language to the other according to appropriate changes in the speech situation [...], but not in an unchanged speech situation, and certainly not within a single sentence" (Weinreich 73). The social stigma attached to Weinreich's erudite pronouncement was reflected in theatre as well – the occurrence of multilingualism on stage is very rare before the 1970s. Fortunately for polyglots everywhere, and often in acerbic response to this limited and limiting view of language use, researchers in the 1970s began celebrating code-switching as a demonstration of "not only virtuosity but also virtue: codeswitching [was] taken to enrich communicative potential" (Woolard 75). Since then, the nature of language alternation has been examined thoroughly and, as a result, innumerable strategies for the analysis and understanding of when, how, and why code-switching occurs have been proposed.

For our purposes, it is important to note here that much of the work of sociolinguists who research code-switching can be applied to understanding multilingualism in a performative frame since the same choices are involved in writing and in speaking more than one language. In fact, those choices are made more pronounced very simply because they occur on a stage, where semantic value is amplified. Our contemporary comprehension of polyglossia is traceable to the work of John Gumperz and Jan-Petter Blom who, in 1972, proposed a distinction between situational and metaphorical code-switching in their analysis

of language alternation in a Northern Norwegian town. Situational switching is largely circumstantial, dependent upon expectations attached to the conditions in which a conversation takes place, whereas metaphorical switching is more likely to occur intrasententially and will not alter the circumstances of a given speech act (Woolard 76). For example, an individual who speaks colloquially with colleagues at home or in social circles but formally at work would be demonstrating a situational code-switch. An individual who jumps between languages in the same speech act without fundamentally shifting the dialogic topos, however, would be demonstrating a metaphoric switch. The latter, also known as conversational code-switching, has been the focus of most of the subsequent research on multilingual conversation and is most transferable to the examination of multilingual theatre. The rules articulated by Blom and Gumperz, as well as others later on, in relation to conversational code-switching, specify that the conversation itself provides the frame of reference for scrutiny. This facilitates textual analysis in theatre because referents are most reliable when found inside the text itself.

A few examples drawn from the play Almighty Voice and his Wife by Daniel David Moses should serve to demonstrate conversational code-switching. The play capitalizes on the potential inherent in multilingualism to tell the story of an aboriginal couple in the early twentieth century who collide with Europeans. The first act offers a portrait of Almighty Voice and his wife, White Girl, as they flee persecution because Almighty Voice killed a settler's cow. Almighty Voice is, at the end of the first act, hunted down and killed by Mounties. In the second

act, Almighty Voice returns as a ghost and is made to perform in a twisted and parodic vaudeville act by White Girl, now playing the role of the "interlocutor" who runs the show. This second act is set up to subvert non-native expectations of the aboriginal experience, and it is in this second act that Cree is spoken to highlight the authentic aboriginal story. At the beginning of the second act, Almighty Voice has to be convinced to speak in English:

GHOST: *Nahkee*. *Kawiya-(ekosi). Ponikawin poko ta kisisimoyan*. [Stop. Let me alone. I have to finish my dance.]

INTERLOCUTOR: I'll break the other leg for you, Kisse-Manitou-Wayou.

GHOST: *Tansi esi kiskeyitaman ni wiyowin?* [How do you know my name?]

INTERLOCUTOR: Names, names, they're all the same. Crees all wear feathers. Dead man, red man, Indian, *Kisse-Manitou-Wayou*, Almighty Voice, *Jean Baptiste*! Geronimo, Tonto, Calijah. Or most simply, Mister Ghost.

GHOST: Ghost?

INTERLOCUTOR: Boo! Almighty Ghost, Chief. Now we're speaking English. (Moses 208)

It is not until the very end of the play that Almighty Voice recovers his language by naming the Interlocutor as his wife after a long journey of self-recognition:

GHOST: My fierce, crazy little girl. My wife. *Ni-wikimakan*. [My wife.]

[...]

Piko ta-ta-wi kisisomaoyan ekwo. [I have to go finish dancing now.]

INTERLOCUTOR: *Patima, Kisse-Manitou-Wayou.* [Goodbye, Almighty Voice.]

(Moses 235-6)

In both of the cited examples, the play's text demonstrates repeatedly that the use of Cree signals association with community and connotes a certain degree of authenticity which, therefore, constitutes the above examples as metaphoric or conversational code-switching.

Gumperz returned to the subject of his initial investigation ten years after his ground-breaking publication with Blom to further analyze the motivations behind conversational switching; his results are worth reiterating here because the work is very thorough and an understanding of it is foundational. He breaks down conversational code-switching into six groups, here explained by bilingualism expert Hugo Beardsmore:

i) *Quotations* where the code-switched passages are clearly identifiable either as direct quotations or as a reported speech;

ii) *Addressee specification* where the switch in code serves to direct the message to single out one of the several possible interlocutors;

iii) *Interjections* where the code-switch serves to mark an interjection or sentence filler;

iv) *Reiteration* where a message in one code is repeated in the other code, either literally or in a somewhat modified form – in some cases such repetitions might serve to clarify what is said but often they merely amplify or emphasize a message;

v) *Message qualification* where the switch in language serves to qualify constructions, as when sentence and verb complements or predicates follow a copula;

vi) *Personalization versus objectification* where code contrast seems to relate to such things as the distinction between talk about action and talk as action, the degree of speaker involvement in, or distance from, a message, whether a statement reflects personal opinion or knowledge, whether it refers to specific instances or has the authority of generally known fact. (Beardsmore 78)

Gumperz explains that situational code-switching, on the other hand, is frequently attached to examinations of identity and the individual's construction of self. "The fact that the dialect reflects local values suggests that it symbolizes

relationships based on shared identities with local culture" (Blom & Gumperz 125). By extension, the multiple and often fragmentary cultural conditions in which language is used necessarily position the speaker and accordingly can shape the interpretation of any speech act. It is important to recall that in addition to language itself, the accents, creoles and pidgins within a language have the same signifying capacity. "English has not only the several national varieties such as American, British, and Australian, but also regional dialects such as those of New England, the English Midlands, and South Australia, and a number of slangs peculiar to particular groups" (Salzmann 250). Despite claims that uniformity exists in language, there is no such thing as a standardized speech community. In French-Canadian theatre that is created outside of Quebec, for example, these modalities are staged to great effect and demonstrate Gumperz's situational code-switching. Varying degrees of 'franglais,' French peppered liberally with English and anglicizations, correspond to minority Francophone communities which are immersed in an Anglophone environment at different levels. The work of Franco-Ontarian playwright Jean-Marc Dalpé often demonstrates this tendency.

More recently, a number of theorists have been problematizing the relationship between culture and language that is implicit in Gumperz's analysis. The risk inherent in this association is one of essentialization: if a speaker makes a choice of language according to the circumstances of the speech act, and that choice signals a cultural group, the dangerous assumption is that the cultural

group is cohesive and singular enough to define the speaker, at least in part. Mark Sebba and Tony Wootton persuasively argue that

> [...] we cannot assume a fixed relationship between a social identity and the language of the utterance that evokes (or invokes) it; rather, such relationships are themselves negotiated and constructed in the interaction, drawing on cultural resources located both inside and outside the interaction itself. (Sebba 284)

The importance of this notion lies in that social identities can gain and lose relevance according to the speaker's circumstances in any given conversation. Notions of group belonging are destabilized by this idea because, Sebba and Wootton suggest, they only need be asserted on occasion but otherwise can be hidden or subjugated to other identity needs. The implication here is that though Gumperz's work is seminal, there is a need to expand it.

With these considerations in mind, sociolinguists have developed systems of analysing language choice which take the plural nature of identity construction into account. Peter Auer, a professor of theoretical computer science in Austria, has used his methodical analytical tools developed for diagnosing computer systems, to explore the motivation behind code switching in conversation. He classifies motivation into three categories. "The first is *discourse-related code-switching* [...], i.e. the use of code-switching to organise the conversation by contributing to the interactional meaning of a particular utterance" (Auer 4). A discourse-related code switch, for example, would occur when a speaker shifts language in order to announce mutual group belonging. "Similarly, *discourse-*

related insertions, [...] often evoke episode-external ('ethnographic') knowledge about interaction histories and cultural contexts" (Auer 6). This second category of multilingual conversation tends to hinge heavily on context; a speaker, in this case, will switch language when referring to something that is associated with the community around that second language. "A third code-switching pattern found in conversation which regularly indexes extra-conversational knowledge is *preference-related switching*," (Auer 7). This last and broadest category of language alternation is actualized when the speaker simply feels that another language is better suited to express an idea. The first two categories that Auer delineates are interactional and are thus quite useful in any analysis of code-switching in a play text; language choice in these cases tend to point at broader patterns of group identification, which recur, and can therefore greatly inform character construction. The latter of Auer's categories, although less useful in textual analysis, is important because it is almost unique in recognizing that sometimes a speaker will change language simply because they choose to.

On the other hand, Monica Heller, a scholar of ethnography and sociolinguistics, explains code-switching as a political practice which sees interlocutors adjusting the language they speak according to the shifting power structures inherent in any conversation. Given the power of language spoken on stage, Heller's investigation is particularly germane for textual analysis in theatre. Building on Bourdieu's notions of symbolic capital and symbolic marketplaces, she describes "code-switching as a means of drawing on symbolic resources and deploying them in order to gain or deny access to their resources, symbolic or

material" (Heller "Code-Switching" 159). For Heller, then, code-switching is not about tapping into a sense of cultural community in order to announce belonging, but about referencing and actively using a collective notion of community in order to "accomplish conversational purposes" (Heller "Code-Switching" 161). This view of multilingual communication emphasizes that language itself is political given that its role in relation to communication and culture is unique: "language interacts with [culture] in specific ways: [not only is] language [...] a transmitter of culture [but] it is [also] the main tool for the internalisation of culture by the individual" (Hamers 199). Although it is appealing to think of language as containing political power, the risk inherent in this notion when it is applied as a methodology is that it suggests that there is a winner and a loser in every polyglossic exchange. While this is certainly true in some cases, particularly in the examples she draws from exchanges in post-language law Quebec, not every conversation is about signalling and manipulating power structures.

David Rabe's play Sticks and Bones offers an excellent example of language used to underline power dynamics in a conversation. The play is about a Vietnam War veteran, David, who returns home, still a young man, to an inappropriately and wilfully oblivious America. He is haunted by the presence of a woman, Zung, who he had been with in Vietnam, though David's family do all they can to obliterate the memory of her. She is silent, but almost ever-present; it is sometimes unclear whether she is a ghost or has actually come from Asia to be with David. Near the end of the play, the family cannot ignore her any longer,

and for the first time she speaks, only to be fully acknowledged and cast down by David's father, Ozzie.

ZUNG: Chào ông! (Ozzie pivots, looks at her.) Chào ông! Hôm nay ông manh không?

OZZIE: Oh, what is it that you want? I'm tired, I mean it. Forgive me. I'm sick of the sight of you, squatting all the time. In filth, like animals, talking gibberish, your breath sick with rot [...] (Rabe 171)

Ozzie's speech is long and in it he builds up hate for Zong and ends by strangling her. As soon as she is 'dead,' the family's conversation returns to the status quo, as though nothing could possibly be wrong. It is significant that at this climactic moment Zung is finally given a voice; she emerges from the shadows of ambiguity and for a brief moment is almost as real as Ozzie. However, rather than attempting communication, Ozzie blocks the value of her utterance by immediately speaking English and denying that her words could have had meaning. Because she spoke in Vietnamese, she might as well have not spoken at all.

Another model for the analysis of code-switching based on negotiations of power was proposed by Carol Myers-Scotton, a widely-recognized specialist in socio-linguistics and language contact. Her approach, referred to as the markedness model, hinges on the understanding "that speakers make choices and others interpret them by considering their probable consequences. This process involves a consensus concerning the relative markedness of any choice for a

specific exchange and a view of all choices as indexical of a negotiation of rights and obligations between participants" (Myers-Scotton 160). In other words, she proposes that members of any given community share enough collective cultural experience to come to an understanding of the meaning behind and appropriateness of a code and respond to a code switch accordingly. A change in language that does not draw attention to itself would be considered unmarked; "[w]hen the speaker wishes more than one social identity to be salient in the current exchange, and each identity is encoded in the particular speech community by a different linguistic variety, then those two or more codes constitute the unmarked choice," (Myers-Scotton 146). A marked choice, however, occurs when a code switch breaks the unspoken rules of linguistic decorum:

> Because a marked choice is a violation, it is always disruptive, although it can be so in a positive or negative sense. That is, a marked choice can be positive by narrowing social distance if it is indexical of a relationship of solidarity, given the normative matrix of associations between varieties and social meanings in the community. Or, it can be negative in that it increases social distance because it encodes anger or the desire to make power differential salient (when it would not be salient ordinarily).
>
> (Myers-Scotton 150)

Rather than relying on more obvious political power distinctions, Myers-Scotton is correct to suggest a distinction between what is noticed and what is not in her

reading of multilingual communication. Later scholars have revised Myers-Scotton's model to emphasize the notion of indexicality rather than markedness because the former concept is more broadly applicable than the latter (Woolard 81). In the above example from Sticks and Bones, Zung's Vietnamese insertion is an unmarked choice because it is both anticipatable – she is Vietnamese so it follows that her language choice would match – and disregarded by the other characters.

Having now established some of the most salient social and political determinants of language choice, as well the more relevant models and strategies for understanding code-switching, it is possible to undertake a methodical analysis of polyglossic theatre. In addition to the socio-political implications of multilingualism in everyday communication, heteroglossia on stage intertextually points to added layers of meaning. The staging of active language choice gives occasion for reflection on what language itself says about society, both the social structure of the world on stage and that of the world outside the theatre, as well as how individuals construct identity by navigating between languages. When analysing a multilingual text, the process is the reverse of that which has been laid out in this chapter. A code-switch in drama should be first interrogated from the level of hierarchy, using both Heller's conception of the negotiation of power and the markedness model, at first within the beat, then the scene, and then at the level of the play in its entirety. If power is not overtly at issue in a give code-switch, Auer's model is subtle enough to account for a wider spectrum of language choice motivations. If a character's code-switch can be informed by any of the above

models, the circumstances around the choice will offer a deeper understanding of both the character and the world they inhabit. Finally, the world of the play is, frequently in polyglossic theatre, mirroring the real linguistic and political circumstances of the playwright and intended audience, which can further shape the reading of any play text.

Chapter 2 – Where Polyglossia and Translation Meet

The translation of a conversation replete with regular linguistic code-switching relies heavily on a profound understanding of the socio-political power of language as well as the motivations behind a speaker's language choice. This is equally if not more true when polyglossic conversation is included in theatrical performance; the significance of a language choice is more acute when presented on stage because it is, as concerns both the written and performed text, never casual. This kind of predicament becomes even more profound in translation work which negotiates between languages that, for different reasons, exist in a hierarchical relationship. A number of theorists and practitioners of translation in Canada affirm that this manner of linguistic stratification is absolutely a factor in this national context. "Language is not neutral," explains writer and translator Larry Shouldice.

> Each language carries with it a weight of cultural – and political – assumptions, so that problems arise even with apparently straightforward words like *Canadien*, which has undergone several distinct changes in meaning in the past hundred years.
>
> (Shouldice 76)

Importantly, in theatre and in some literature, the weight that Shouldice describes extends beyond the hard and fast categorizations of language – accent and dialect can carry an equal burden of meaning beyond semantic value. The revolution in Quebecois theatre brought about by Michel Tremblay's first works which had the audacity to stage the vernacular joual emphasizes the importance of accent.

Louise Ladouceur clarifies: "[i]ntransigeant marqueur d'origine, de classe et de statut social, l'accent est le terrain de luttes dont les enjeux matériels ou symboliques sont multiples" (Ladouceur 51). The complexity of the issues inherent in any discussion attempting to pin down the translation of multilingual theatre, then, necessitate a foray outside of the tight confines of theatrical translation theory and must begin with a more general approach.

For a translator to effectively tackle the translation of a multilingual text, she or he first needs to confront her or his own position in relation to both the text and the politics implicit in code-switching. British translator, Peter Bush, suggests an approach to this necessary self awareness which foregrounds and so deals immediately with cultural difference:

> Translatorly readings of literature provoke the otherness within the subject of the translator, work at a level not entirely under the control of the rationalizing discourse of the mind, release ingredients from the subconscious magma of language and experience, shoot off in many directions, provoked by the necessity of the creation of new writing. (Bush 25)

When a translator acknowledges her or his own otherness in approaching a text, she or he will become acutely aware of and sensitive to the distance between the source culture and target culture that she or he attempting to connect. This is particularly important because an increase in cultural distance proportionately increases the likelihood that "an environment [which] is commonplace in one culture [...] becomes exotic in the other" (Rabassa 509). There are an abundance

of very problematic issues implicit in any translation where the distance between source and target cultures is great, particularly in a post-colonial context. Lawrence Venuti effectively highlights the dominant trends of foreignization and domestication which emerge in the practice of post-colonial translation. The former strategy operates by emphasizing the otherness of the source culture in translation, and the latter by making it as similar as possible to the target culture. Though these approaches are most apparent when the distance between cultures is great, the same tensions exist when the translation occurs at close cultural or linguistic proximity. George Steiner describes this close-knit tension: "The delineation of 'resistant difficulty', the endeavour to situate precisely and convey intact the 'otherness' of the original, plays against 'elective affinity', against immediate grasp and domestication" (Steiner 405). Together, the notions of foreignization, which echoes resistant difficulty, and domestication, which echoes elective affinity, are particularly useful in analysing polyglossic text for the purposes of translation.

Another hurdle is set up for the translator because much of Canadian literature relies on regionalisms to lend specificity and local flavour to texts; however, Gregory Rabassa reminds us that regionalisms can be a trap that the translator must avoid. Rabassa discusses those commonplace atmospheric qualifiers which appear extraordinary to readers outside of the source culture: "[r]egional and local literature has a flavour that is immediately sensed in the original language [...] Just as words do not have real equivalents in other languages, neither do dialects or local patterns of speech" (Rabassa 508). If direct

equivalency is impossible, a very fluent translation, one which ultimately reads in the target language as though it originated in that tongue, seems a plausible solution. However, Venuti warns against this tactic as well. He argues that fluency is nothing more than a pretty veneer to hide what is, ultimately, a domestication strategy. Although domestication is the most common approach in translations into the English language, and has been since the seventeenth century (Venuti 549), Venuti compellingly argues that it is an ethnocentrically violent tactic which devalues the source culture and original author. "Fluency produces an individualistic illusion, in which the text is assumed to originate fundamentally with the author, to be authorial self-expression, free of culture and social determinations" (Venuti 551). Venuti favours what he dubs an *ethnodeviant translation strategy* – one which preserves and therefore celebrates the 'otherness' of the source text in the receiving culture. As an approach, this entails the preservation and transference via translation of everything which marks a text as belonging uniquely to the source culture with the exception of the language itself. These two poles, ethnocentricity and ethnodeviancy, necessarily exist on a sliding scale; wilful domestication tends to more often be violent in nature than domestication as a result of ignorance, and politically motivated ethnodeviant translations tend to be more completely accomplished than those in which the ethnodeviance is a result of aesthetic or pragmatic motivation.

David Fennario's play Balconville offers an excellent example of the kind of dilemma that a translator might face when tackling some of the above issues in theatrical translation, even though the narrative is relatively free from the more

problematic structural trappings of postmodern and postdramatic theatre. First produced in 1979 in Montreal, published in 1980, the play tells the story of eight neighbours, Francophone and Anglophone, who live in tight quarters in a working-class neighbourhood in Montreal. They cross paths in the play on their balconies where they discuss life of the most beautifully quotidian variety. Some characters' fluid use of both French and English at conversational levels in performance underlines that every switch is indeed a matter of choice and not of non-expertise. A fairly typical example of dialogue gives evidence of the Paquette's linguistic proficiency:

JOHNNY: Another fire last night, eh?

PAQUETTE: Ah, oui. What street?

JOHNNY: On Liverpool.

PAQUETTE: Liverpool encore. Tabarnac.

JOHNNY: Fuckin' firebugs, man. This block is gonna go up for sure.

PAQUETTE: Oui, that's for sure. (Fennario 27)

The translation of the above, while certainly not simple, is approachable using Auer's model because it affords an understanding of why Paquette chooses each language. For Paquette, in the above, affirmations and expletives exist in his native language while he communicates details in English for the sake of his Anglophone interlocutor. In Auer's terms, discussed in the previous chapter, both instances of the assertion "oui" would constitute discourse-related insertions because they signify his connection to the context of that neighbourhood in

Montreal. However, "tabarnac" is an exclamation that is better suited to his native tongue because he connects more closely with it and would therefore constitute, in Auer's terms, a preference-related switch.

However, the significance of code-switching in Balconville comes to a head at the end of the play when the neighbours frantically empty their houses as Johnny's earlier prediction of a major fire comes true. Paquette and Johnny, for the better part of the second half of the play, have been at odds with each other; to express his frustration, Paquette insists on speaking in French and Johnny, in turn, gives up on his feeble attempts to understand anything other than English. As they move a sofa downstairs, the following dialogue unfolds:

PAQUETTE: Tourne-le . . . . Tourne-le . . . .

JOHNNY: Yeah, yeah . . . tour-ney . . . .

PAQUETTE: A droite . . . .

IRENE: To the right.

PAQUETTE: Laisse-le slyer sur la rampe . . . . La rampe . . . .

JOHNNY: What???

IRENE: Slide it down the banister!

They slide the sofa down the banister. JOHNNY hurts himself when he and PAQUETTE put the sofa down at the foot of the stairs.

PAQUETTE: Okay, allez, Johnny . . . . We go move ton sofa . . . .

(Fennario 120)

As they struggle together to save their belongings, the sense of community that had been lost is reconstructed, making Paquette's last line very powerful. He chooses to speak in English, a discourse-related insertion in this case, in order to signify their unity in the face of crisis. Their earlier linguistic lashing-out, when they ceased their attempts to speak each other's language, is heavily coloured by the language politics of Quebec. It is reasonable to speculate that most French-Canadians, because they share the experience of linguistic subordination, would appreciate the significance of Paquette's language choice, of making a linguistic concession for an Anglophone. Though Balconville was has been played before both French and English language communities, the hypothetical problem with translation is abundantly clear. "Ne partageant pas l'inquiétude linguistique dont le texte francophone est porteur, le public anglophone conçoit mal que l'acte de parler puisse être le lieu d'un tel investissement, l'objet de tant d'insistance" (Ladouceur 50-1). What Ladouceur argues is that though words themselves can be translated easily enough, it is more difficult to elucidate through translation the historical and contextual linguistic burden implicit in a French-Canadian speaking English. In the Quebecois context of this play, an Anglophone speaking French is a matter of convenience, while a Francophone speaking English is acquiescing to centuries of colonialism which the simple swapping of words from one language to the other would fail to indicate.

The politics of language choice in Canada are also evident outside of the English-French dichotomy which often dominates discourse about language in this country. Betty Quan's play Mother Tongue offers another example of

onstage multilingualism which points to the difficulties inherent in translation. Published in 1996, the play was not staged until 2001 as a co-production between Toronto's Factory Theatre and Cahoots Theatre Project. In the play, we find three languages interacting: Cantonese, English, and American Sign Language are used throughout. The play is about communication across barriers and uses a Chinese folktale as a through-line metaphor to tie it all together. The script, as published, is written as a literary exercise which is intended to indicate for the reader what a performance might be like. Problematically for those wishing to produce the play, however, the text is written exclusively in English and is coded with *(C)* for Cantonese, *(E)* for English and *(ASL)* for sign language to indicate when each character uses which language. The difficulty that the Chan family has communicating is palpable and devastating:

> MOTHER: *(C)* I don't understand what you're talking about.
>
> *(MOTHER gestures towards STEVE again, wanting MIMI to ask him if he wants more dinner.)*
>
> MIMI: You have to learn English one day.
>
> MOTHER: *(C)* Ask Steve.
>
> *(MIMI touches STEVE to get his attention.)*
>
> MIMI: *(ASL)* Food more want you?
>
> STEVE: *(ASL)* Finish. Enough.
>
> MIMI: No – you tell her. She's right there. Go on.

(STEVE and MOTHER look at each other. STEVE shakes his head. A moment of silence. MIMI tries to conciliate, as usual.)

(Quan 18-9)

This example proves more complex than Balconville because non-expertise in a language seems to come into consideration. The Mother speaks primarily Cantonese, Steve uses American Sign Language and can speak some limited English, while Mimi acts as the primary functional agent of communication, mediating between the two and society at large. However, their lack of ability to communicate is in fact grounded more in family history than in linguistic barriers – the loss of their father, Steve's loss of hearing, and the process of immigration haunt their capacity to converse. We learn later that the Mother can indeed speak some English, and that Steve can lip-read in English and Cantonese. This makes their language choices more sharply about preference than inability; everybody in the family believes that they know best and are therefore entitled to their isolating choices.

Nearer to the end of the play, the Mother explains her circumstances to Mimi and much of her resistance to assimilation in the Anglophone context becomes clear:

MOTHER: *(C)* Who works hard, day and night? I put food on the table; you're going to an expensive university, and Steve needs special things. *(E)* Where do you think the money comes from? *(C)* Ever since your father died!

MIMI: I know, Mother! I know! But look at us. Look at you. When father died. . . And Steve. . . What are you afraid of?

MOTHER: *(She mimes the action of her words, of her fear. C)* In China, every night we would turn out the lights, draw the curtains. We waited for the knock at the door. It could be a friend, a neighbour – wearing a Red Army badge, ready to take everything away from us. To take everything away from me.

MIMI: You're not in China any more. The Red Army won't be knocking at the door. I'm here, Steve's here –

MOTHER: *(C)* Taking everything away from me. *(E)* And now they're taking you away from me too! (Quan 35)

This later exchange clearly indicates how the Mother makes her discourse-related code switches. For her, the English language represents all of the loss and suffering that she has endured; Cantonese, then, signals her sense of belonging to the community that she is no longer a part of. By speaking Cantonese, the Mother is holding on to a social structure that she knows and is comfortable with after having been forced time and again to give up the life she knows. Although the Mother quite clearly explains the political circumstances which motivate her hesitation in embracing her adopted Canadian culture – significantly, spoken in a language that the intended English audience would not necessarily understand –

the act of speaking English is tied for her to a submission to historical and cultural loss. Much of the Anglophone world today has no referent for the kind of loss that the Mother fears, and so translation is, once again, quite problematic.

To tackle this, a number of translators emphasize the first half of their work: the reading of the source text. Rabassa offers that "the ideal translator must be the ideal reader, a rare breed, for a translation ought to be the closest possible reading of a work" (Rabassa 508). However, Clive Scott, a British scholar, conceives of translation as intertextual and so problematizes Rabassa's notion by asserting that all texts are unstable. By extension, he suggests that a translator necessarily un-writes or deconstructs a text in their passionate reading of it. As an expert reader, the translator is equipped to pull apart the layers of meaning woven into a text, and does so reflexively because of their investment in the text. The translator, he further argues, engages in the "textualization of the pre-textual, the textual and the post-textual all in one." The deconstructed text, or "avant-texte" as he calls it, foregrounds for the translator the idea that "[a] text is always what it might be or what it might have been" (Scott 108). The potential instability of a source text is part of the reason that another school of translation theory focuses on the second half of the translator's work, the task of writing. Susan Bassnett correctly asserts that "it is absurd to see translation as anything other than a creative literary activity" (Bassnett "Writing" 174), and further that the literary skills required to translate a text are at least equal to those necessary to produce a text in the first place. In theatre, Bassnett's assertion is compounded because the translator, in addition to being responsible for the transference of textual codes, is

also implicated in the adaptation of those performance codes which define the theatrical event. Quite significantly, by emphasizing the creative task of the translator, the possibility of artistic license comes into play. This license to forego the literal translation of words in favour of an approach which retains meaning without absolute linguistic fidelity resonates with the conception of translation as an act that finds meaning between languages. Though this kind of translation is risky because it "is often designed precisely to push a given literature in a certain direction" (Lefebvre, André 436), it is integral to any attempt at translating a theatrical text.

It is worth adding at this juncture that, although it is absolutely problematic to assume an audience's reception, it is neither impossible nor inadvisable to consider characteristics of the intended spectator in a discussion on translation. Benjamin reminds us that though "the very notion of an ideal 'receiver' vitiates any theory of art," art itself "presupposes a physical and spiritual human presence" (Benjamin 298). In the act of translation we are, after all, purposefully trying to cater to a very specific linguistic audience from the outset; in this way, translation as an art, also presupposes a reader. Most theories of translation situate the translator between languages as an agent of "interpretative decipherment, an encoding-decoding function or synapse" (Steiner 401). However, Scott locates the reader in this in-between space as well. He argues convincingly that since translations are not final, as any source text can be translated into the same target language by different translators with greatly varying results, "the reader of translations, as an active participant in an

unfinished process, will seek to retrieve from the page the voice whose enunciation the page records" (Scott 113). The reader, in this sense, works with the translator in interpreting and understanding the source text, the author, and the culture that all originate from. The consideration of the reader as active in the process of meaning-making has echoes in theatre because the spectator is equally implicated in the decoding of a staged text. In fact, the theatre spectator is necessary for the theatrical event to take place, making Scott's observation absolutely fundamental to the analysis of a theatrical text. This compelling model necessitates the consideration of the means of understanding at the disposal of the spectator – that is to say a consideration of the socio-cultural referents which are common to the target audience and which the spectators can, therefore, draw upon in their reception – but thankfully stops short of dictating the manner of their response. Scott takes his argument further by defining translation as "intertextual by generical condition" (Scott 115), suggesting the inevitability of layers of meaning in a work that is translated. He thus concludes that translation, like everything intertextual, necessitates the participation of the reader.

The implication in translation as intertextual is one which Saussure would not have liked. Though the concepts of signifier and signified remain intact, the act of translation points at something akin to a Platonic ideal, a commonality in meaning which transcends language. If the signified in different languages could not be approached to one another, translation would be impossible. Gayatri Spivak agrees that "[t]he ways in which rhetoric or figuration disrupts logic

themselves point at the possibility of random contingency, beside language, around language". She goes on to locate meaning in the process of translation:

> [I]n translation, where meaning hops into the spacey emptiness between the two named historical languages, we get perilously close to [identifying the contingency]. By juggling the disruptive rhetoricity that breaks the surface in not necessarily connected ways, we feel the selvedges[4] of the language-textile give way, fray into *frayages* or facilitations. (Spivak 491)

Her argument suggests that meaning is something separate from any language and, notably, that it is something which we can approach in the process of negotiating between source and target text. Benjamin also locates translation as an in-between action, as something separate from both source and target languages: "[f]or the great impulse that charges the translator's work is the integration of the many languages into one true language" (Benjamin 303). In the analysis of translated work, then, the notion of translation as transient, or in transit between languages, strongly foregrounds the importance of understanding the translator's approach.

This debate is more problematic in theatre, however, because we typically set our audiences more complex goals than simply recognizing that the cultural referents being performed on stage are different than those which they live every day. Jane Koustas explains how English audiences in Toronto related to the first translated production of Gratien Gélinas' play Tit-Coq, which she classifies as having been ethnodeviant in translation:

> Even if the translator's work was largely unrecognized, the public was nonetheless aware of the play's Quebec origins and, in some cases, interpreted [the play] as a lesson in Quebec culture. Furthermore, theatre goers relied [absolutely] on the translator's interpretation. (Koustas 88)

Her concerns are valid. There is a risk that ethnodeviant translation, when staged, will be essentialized by the spectator and understood as representative of the source 'ethnicity' as a whole. Theatre is, after all, an expression of culture, and without an immersive understanding of that source, *pars pro toto* is an expectable mistake. This is doubly problematic because almost all translation is already the result of an interpretation in the voice of the translator who is infrequently a member of the source culture; translators, though very fluent in two or more languages, are generally trained to translate into their mother tongue and not the other way around.

Richard Giguère affirms the problematic nature of translation for theatre is unique and offers that: "en ce qui concerne le théâtre le modèle de traduction ne fonctionne pas, car la problématique n'est pas du tout la même que pour la poésie ou le roman. L'actualité du sujet et le succès auprès du public sont les deux grandes lois quand il s'agit de traduire du théâtre" (Giguère 56). Though few translators would agree that "le succès auprès du public" is a law in their work, there is general consensus that translation for theatre cannot be undertaken in the same manner as translation of a literary work. Susan Bassnett-McGuire agrees and offers a very thorough analysis of different extant strategies for the translation

of theatre. The first strategy that she identifies, the one which she pegs as being the most common, involves treating the theatre text as a literary work. "[T]he translator," she says, "pays attention to distinctive features of dialogue on the page," (Bassnett-McGuire 90) but misses many of the qualities unique to performed theatre that are already inscribed in the source text. The second strategy which she elucidates recalls Venuti's concept of foreignization; she explains that some translators will use the source-language culture as a frame for their translated text, often with unintentionally comic results because of a tendency to fall into stereotype and parody (Bassnett-McGuire 90). She then tackles the strategy that "performability" can be translated by "substituting regional accents in the SL [source language] with regional accents in the TL [target language], trying to create equivalent registers in the TL and omitting passages that are deemed to be too closely bound to the SL cultural and linguistic context" (Bassnett-McGuire 91). This strategy, like Venuti's concept of domestication, carries serious risks of stripping a source text of its cultural potency. The next strategy that Bassnett-McGuire unpacks deals with translations that attempt to conform closely to the formal qualities of a text, though she warns that "[t]he dangers of foregrounding form are all too obvious – frequently attempts to create translated verse drama result in texts that are obscure, if not downright meaningless, where the dynamics of the SL text no longer come across" (Bassnett-McGuire 91).

She ends up advocating cooperative translation as the strategy which "produces probably the best results" (Bassnett-McGuire 91). As the name

suggests, this method necessitates that more than one person work collaboratively to create the text in the target language. "This method parallels the way in which theatre spectacle is created collaboratively, and the translator becomes someone who produces a basic *scenario* that is then worked on by the company" (Bassnett-McGuire 91). Although this technique is certainly not always feasible because it implicates a prolonged, and therefore costly, rehearsal period, it is easy to understand why Bassnett-McGuire advocates it. The living and breathing particularities of theatre are often best discovered in the moment and are, therefore, more likely to prove powerful when staged. The collaborative translation approach has indeed been ventured by many individuals and companies and has proven itself effective. Much of Bassnett-McGuire's oeuvre works towards elaborating this tactic. She pins much of the value of collaborative translation for the theatre on the deictic nature of language in performance, suggesting that "dramatic text can be broken down into a series of deictic units, which give indications of where speech is to be directed" (Bassnett "Theatre" 560). She believes that trained performers can instinctively discover the sense of deixis in the scene that they are working on, which greatly facilitates translation. The negotiation of power, matters of tempo and rhythm, and ultimately what actually needs to be said can be discovered by actors on their feet.

Ladouceur discusses the same benefits, but in relation to bilingual creators who have the capacity to auto-translate their own work:

> Ces dernières [minority French-Canadian communities] offrent à la traduction des conditions fort avantageuses puisque le bilinguisme

> des auteurs et de leurs collaborateurs, ainsi que leurs connaissances des cultures d'arrivée et de départ, permettent une compréhension accrue des enjeux du texte source et une équivalence maximale dans l'économie esthétique et dramatique du texte cible et dans l'effet produit sur son destinataire. (Ladouceur 64)

What Ladouceur describes also responds to another of Bassnett-McGuire's concerns: culturally determined codes which are inscribed in a text, "the use of hyperbole in Renaissance English theatre, [or] of irony in French and English eighteenth-century comedy" (Bassnett-McGuire 92) for example, are more easily navigated in translation by those who are immersed in both languages, and by extension cultures, at once. She also catapults this notion into one of the most powerful performance creation practices of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries: "[i]t is possible to argue that [intercultural] theatre [...] does not have a source text at all, since the foreign text and culture are not taken as points of departure" (Bassnett "Theatre" 561). For Ladouceur, theatre artists who come from a minority language community necessarily live interculturally because an advanced knowledge of the majority's language and culture are indispensable for everyday living. She is suggesting that the translator of intercultural theatre should also be intercultural. The important notion to retain which recurs in all of the above ideas is that an immersive understanding of both source and target cultures gives the translator freedom, and indeed authority, to deconstruct the source text just enough to create anew with potency and artistic merit in the target language. Any translation which attempts to make itself invisible, in which the

translator avoids asserting her or his voice in the work, inevitably fails to address the foundational needs of the target audience.

Chapter 3 – The Translation of Multilingual Bedouins

With an understanding of some of the key concepts in language politics, code-switching, and translation theory in hand, the discussion can be brought back into the realm of multilingual performance. Any piece of theatre which constitutively includes more than one language to be spoken when staged is doing something quite different than a play which is conceived in a single language. In the first chapter, the socio-political power of speech was discussed to demonstrate how language choice can be used to subvert prevailing ideologies, resist hegemonic cultural legacies, and negotiate both personal and group identity. The first chapter also delved into different strategies for the analysis of polyglossic conversation in order to unpack some of the major motivations behind a given speaker's choice of language. Both of these domains of study are of vital use in the analysis of multilingual theatre for the purposes of translation. Ladouceur puts her finger on the dominant problem in the translation of polyglossic performance: "[l]'hétérolinguisme du texte de théâtre francophone pose donc un défi à la traduction anglaise, car sa transposition n'est possible que dans la mesure où elle respecte la visée esthétique de la pièce originale et n'entrave pas sa réception en représentation" (Ladouceur 58). Ladouceur is right to suggest that the aesthetic intention of the original is what should be retained in the translation of polyglossic theatre, although this is immediately problematic because only the playwright is likely to have any absolute certainty about the source text's purpose. Further, while Ladouceur's assertion about the quality marking a translation's success does indeed prove a good litmus test of accomplishment for the translator,

an analysis of whether the translation impedes the reception of the original play and takes into account its aesthetic vision does not address process, nor does it necessarily grant the translator agency to exert themselves in their work. This seems to suggest that there are perilously few anchors that a translator can fasten their new creation to, which leaves those undertaking the discipline without much guidance or certitude.

René-Daniel Dubois is no stranger to polyglossic theatre. One of his most widely recognized plays, a French text, is titled in English: Being at home with Claude. The English title points playfully and ironically at the circumstances of Francophone Quebec in its often tense relationship with Anglophone Canada. However, a few years before Being at home with Claude was created, Dubois was playing with language in a much more adventurous way. His play Ne blâmez jamais les Bédouins, translated into English under the name Don't Blame the Bedouins by Martin Kevan, unfolds in English, French, Italian, German, Russian and Mandarin, as well as in thickly accented iterations of each of the above languages. Because of its polyglossic complexity and because it has been translated, published, and produced in both English and French, it proves an excellent case-study which allows for an in-depth analysis of how multilingual theatrical translation can be carried out. However, before undertaking said analysis, some background information about the play and playwright will help to situate this work. It was created, in French, as a play for many voices which saw its first public reading in 1981, with the author reading all of the parts. Dubois then re-imagined his text as a one-man show, which was fully produced in 1984 at

the café-théâtre la Licorne in Montreal, with direction and stage design by Joseph Saint-Gelais, and, once again, performed by the playwright (Dubois *Blâmez* 28). Both French iterations of the play, the solo show and full cast versions, were published in one edition later that year. Dubois was awarded the Governor General's Award for best new play as a result of this publication, which undoubtedly brought the show much more attention from the non-French-speaking parts of Canada. Martin Kevan undertook the translation of the full cast version, brought it to the level of a public reading in 1986, and had it published in the same year as part of the anthology Quebec Voices (Dubois and Kevan 112). The show's English-language premiere was in 1987 at the Prairie Theatre Exchange in Winnipeg, directed by Kim McCaw. The play was transformed one final time into a solo opera by Pauline Vaillancourt and Alain Thibault in 1991 (Agence Goodwin). Both English and French full cast versions are still produced on occasion, the most recent staging having been a part of the 2009 Magnetic North Festival in Ottawa. However, there is little evidence of anyone other than Dubois taking on the solo version of the play in performance.

Dubois was born in Montreal in 1955 as the youngest of three. He trained as an actor, first at the National Theatre School from 1973 to 1976 and then at L'Institut Alain Knapp in Paris from 1978 to 1979. He took to writing almost immediately and had his first play, Panique à Longueuil, produced in 1980 (Dubois and Kevan 167). He is a separatist, but not one who immediately pins all of Quebec's woes on English Canada; for him, the debate about separation is tied to a broader political discussion on social spending, culture, and the way that we

live our social identity every day. He explains that "[f]or me, Canada is made up of two losers, face-to-face, feeling we count for nothing [...] It's a huge shelf on which two peoples were put and forgotten a long time ago. And there they are, preserved in ice. The question is, what are we going to do about it" (Dubois qtd in Fraser)? His questioning brought him to the point that he abstained from voting in the 1995 Quebec referendum on separation, causing a great deal of upset amongst other separatist artists and intellectuals in the province. After the referendum, he explained his unwillingness to publicly declare his position on the election in an interview for *Le Monde*:

> On nous a dit qu'on avait le choix entre deux options: le fédéralisme canadien ou le nationalisme québécois. A mes yeux, on nous proposait en fait deux façons de devenir des Américains. C'est le rêve qui habite les élites de chaque camp. Concrètement, elles ne nous offrent rien d'autre. La seule différence est la vitesse de l'assimilation proposée. (Dubois qtd in Jacot)

Dubois' politics situate him uniquely as a separatist who does not align himself with the separatist movement, making his work quite unique. Much of his oeuvre struggles with Quebecois identity, with the motif of a lost tribe, standing in for the Quebecois who he sees as "a people in the process of disappearing" (Dubois qtd in Fraser), recurring in his plays. Despite this, he has long resisted those who would have made him a standard-bearer for the separatist movement or Quebec culture, explaining that "when you put someone else in charge of your dream, then it no longer concerns you" (Dubois qtd in Fraser). He advocates for a society

which values art and is inclusive of all those who dare to voice their reasoned thoughts on the weaving of its fabric.

Not satisfied with pat generalizations about the state of Quebecois society, Dubois followed in his established path of identity interrogation in Ne Blâmez Jamais les Bédouins. "The central metaphor in [the play] is that of an Italian opera singer tied to a railway track in the desert, menaced by speeding trains approaching on either side. It pretty well sums up life in Quebec, [says Dubois]" (Canadian Press). The play has three protagonists: the aforementioned opera singer, Michaela; Weulf, a sporty and stylish fellow of Germanic origin; and Flip, a less-than-attractive eighteen-year-old student with a photographic memory. These three find their way into an Australian desert, "à la recherche d'une 'réalité'" (Huffman 560). The Diva is indeed tied to railway tracks, a compelling stand-in for the leading ladies of early American cinema, bemoaning her fate. She is spotted by Weulf, who expresses his desire to come to her rescue, but who is otherwise indisposed because he happens to be far away and hanging from a cliff at the time that he sees her. They both spy Flip, off in the distance, who is following the path of the railway track because he has decided to embark on his walk without wearing glasses even though he is otherwise nearly blind. Both the hero and the femme fatale take him for a terrible monster which is headed straight towards Michaela to tear her to shreds. In a concurrent storyline, two trains carrying nuclear weapons are racing towards each other on the same railway track that restricts Michaela. One train, an Anglophone, is manned by Santa Claus[5], and the other, a Russian, is helmed by Stalin. Backed up with military support,

their only purpose is to destroy the other. They are, not surprisingly, emblems for the economic and political systems of West and East, respectively; trapped on tracks, heading toward one another, their fates are inescapable.

As the trains thunder closer and closer to one another, the three protagonists find their way to where the Diva is bound and come to the realization: "[o]n m'a menti" (Dubois *Blâmez* 168). Their revelation is that their lives haven't been what they should have been according to societal rules. Michaela has worked long and sacrificed much in order to perfect her voice, but ends up living only for praise and hounded by Paparazzi who report on her every mistake. Weulf, the heroic athletic type, strings together short-term relationships with women and realizes abruptly that the wake of lovers that he has left behind are all broken, and ultimately that he too is ruined. He admits, softly, in the English translation that, "[i]f I vant to do gut, I need(t) zomeone who zuffers. I need(t) zomeone who zuffers" (Dubois and Kevan 147). The young Flip is coached by his Ethics Professor, again and again, that "le refus nie l'amitié" (Dubois *Blâmez* 118); he becomes so paralyzed by his desire to win friends that he compromises his sense of integrity and so feels abused and just as hollow as his co-protagonists by the end of the play. The larger message in their recognition is that, "[t]he dominant force in western society is exchange value – exemplified by the power of systems of signs and of money – to which Dubois opposes real or practical value – the individual valued for himself" (Lefebvre, Paul 13). Having realized their inability and, indeed, lack of will to live up to the world's expectations, all three merge into a new entity, La Bête, a corporealization of

what it is to be 'other' in society. La Bête is an "[ê]tre mythique, à six bras et six jambes" (Dubois *Blâmez* 104) that is at peace with its separation from civilization and so accepts the inevitable annihilation brought on by the ever-nearing trains. The trains and their respective forces have, in the interim, discovered La Bête and focus their attack on it; it stands defiantly apart and so must be exterminated in their world of order. The play's action stops short of staging the conflict, and ends instead in a Brechtian turn.

> After giving the world a new creature [La Bête] and delineating a soul for the inhabitants of America by restoring their rightful ambition and their heritage, René-Daniel Dubois is very careful not to restrain them. He allows this new myth to develop in its own way. He has respect for the life he has created. (Lelièvre 110)

The actors assemble and address the spectators directly to say that they know how the story ends, but will keep the ending to themselves. The implication is quite clear: the audience is tasked with sorting out what they have seen, and are meant to extrapolate their own conclusions.

A large part of the reason that this play can be successful at both the level of narrative and metaphor at once is because of the manner in which Dubois plays with structure in order to weave in layer upon layer of intertextuality, particularly on a linguistic level. "The text rejects linear narrative and, instead of adopting an immediately comprehensible order, seems on the surface to be simultaneously de-organizing and developing within a chaos from which it never emerges" (Lelièvre 108). On a generic level, the play is never 'just' theatre. Alvina Ruprecht, a

theatre scholar specializing in the Francophonie, astutely recognizes intermediality in the text. Not only does Michaela explicitly reference a canon of work that is exclusive to the world of opera, but it is suggested that she even breaks into song on a few occasions. More interesting, however, is the text's regular allusions to and use of the cinematic. "Un montage discursif donc, qui simule l'enchaînement des plans filmés d'une séquence entière avec des images cadrées et un plan hors-champ: la coexistance des codes théâtral et cinématographique qui intègre les deux préoccupations esthétiques" (Ruprecht 366). It proves quite destabilizing for the dominant codes of theatre to be intermingled so liberally with the rules governing cinema. The play also dabbles liberally in a variety of literary forms: "[t]he use of various types of discourse, ranging from passages from encyclopedias [sic] to poems and folk talks, contributes to the impression of the play as a microcosm of human experience" (Lefebvre, Paul 13). The result in this play is that intertextuality and intermediality combine to rupture the theatrical tendency towards narrative specificity; although this is at the most basic level the story of Weulf, Michaela, and Flip, the play's intention is more general.

Most compelling of all, though, is the manner in which Dubois manipulates language in this play. From the outset, in the dramatis personae, each character is placed in a cultural and linguistic context. Weulf is "d'origine teutonne," Santa Claus is explicitly labelled as "Anglophone," while Lénine is "sinophone" (Dubois *Blâmez* 103 – 4). Ruprecht suggests that the bewildering mix of languages on stage reflects linguistic heterogeneity characteristic of the

Quebecois cultural context, but importantly notes that "Dubois déjoue une certaine optique québécoise quand il refuse d'établir une hiérarchie des cultures" (Ruprecht 365). In much of French Canadian polyglossic theatre, each language is presented in its real-world context, making the stratification of linguistic power quite explicit; by refusing to play into societal linguistic relationships, Dubois is effectively subverting how we construct identity. Further, Huffman argues that this lack of stability "[met] en relief une identité linguistique hétérogène et plurielle qui échappe à une conception identitaire basée sur l'origine" (Huffman 564). Rather than relying on societal and historical constructions of the individual, the play's multilingualism renders simple assumptions about the connection between belonging and identity impossible. In this play, polyglossia necessitates that both characters and spectators build identity from the ground up inside the framing of the performance.

By transferring this understanding of how language and characterisation work together in Ne blâmez jamais les Bédouins to a linguistic analysis of the text, an understanding of code-switching becomes feasible. Although the play eschews the establishment or support of any hierarchical conception of languages, systems like those developed by Gumperz, Auer, or Myers-Scotton still apply because we are still, in most cases, looking at relationships inside the play. The following exchange between Lutin Vert, the central controller of Santa Claus and related forces, and Santa Claus, the train conductor, serves to demonstrate code-switching in an intratextual, or exclusively text dependent, relationship:

LUTIN VERT: Allô. Allô. Père Noël? Ici Lutin Vert. Père Noël? (...) Père Noël? Allô? Me lisez-vous? Allô?

PÈRE NOËL: Oh! Sorry guy. Oh! Euh... Yeah! Here's Santa Claus. I read you ninety percent... euh... What's his name again?... euh... Little Red Riding Hood.

LUTIN VERT: Pas Chaperon Rouge, Père Noël. Lutin Vert! Lutin-vert.

PÈRE NOËL: Oh! OK! OK! Little Green... euh... Music Stand.

[...]

LUTIN VERT: Raidi for de tchèque-liste?

PÈRE NOËL: Oué! Prête pour leuh check-out.

(Dubois *Blâmez* 133)

Lutin Vert's escalating frustration with Père Noël is quite clear, so we can easily make sense of his broken English version of 'Ready for the check-list?'. Père Noël, on the other hand, comes across as something of a blunt object, which is fitting given that his function is exclusively military. He is, however, endlessly good natured, so his switch to broken French reads as an accommodation of Lutin Vert.

Using the Myers-Scotton markedness model to look at this exchange, I would suggest that Lutin Vert's code switch is unmarked. The escalation that

precedes it renders it inevitable. Père Noël's switch, on the other hand, is quite marked because he's given no earlier indication that he is able to communicate in anything other than English. As a marked choice, then, we can consider Père Noël's French-language assertion that he is ready as a political move, aimed at mollifying his agitated controller. In Gumperz's model, conversely, Lutin Vert's code switch would likely constitute one of addressee specification, while Père Noël's French might be considered an attempt at personalization versus objectification. Finally, in Auer's understanding of code-switching, Lutin Vert's English fits into the category of discourse-related insertions because the change is context specific. Père Noël's French, on the other hand, is a preference-related switch because he knows that he could continue in English and be understood. He chooses to switch because his conversational purposes will be better served by the change. There are many other instances of code-switching in the play; some are conversational, like the above, and some occur in a monologic context like when Weulf corrects himself by saying, "Nein: rails!" (Dubois *Blâmez* 111) after having mistaken the German "raux" for his intended French. The applicable point in all this is that although the broader politics of language use are not as relevant in this text as they might be in society at large, the individual monologic and dialogic exchanges are tend to be coherent enough that we can make sense of language choice.

Having established that language politics and code-switching remain pertinent in this play, an analysis of translation becomes possible. Those segments of text in English which adhere absolutely to the French text are worth

noting for their literary accuracy, but the many instances in which translator Martin Kevan took liberties with the source text in his preparation of the play for his target audience are much more interesting. The moments of slippage between French and English point to the choices that Kevan made and so help to understand the process of translating polyglossic theatre. These moments begin early: the first notable difference between texts is in the dramatis personae. For example, Flip is described in the French text as, "[d]ix-huit ans. Étudiant: la 'bolle'... On nous le dit fort peu attrayant visuellement" (Dubois *Blâmez* 103). In English, Kevan has added detail after the ellipsis in the French: "[f]rom an ethnic minority of working-class background, accent changing depending on the place of production, e.g. in the United States, black; in Western Canada, native Indian" (Dubois and Kevan 113). This raises an immediate question about the purpose of such a degree of specificity. Much of the play serves to paint Flip as a misunderstood loner, and likely one who draws sympathy because he is abused so regularly by his peers. In French, he vacillates between a formal dialect when speaking with his professor and a casual joual when interacting with schoolmates: "[n]aow! Pus d'copiage su moi...! Pis arrêtez d'm'écoeurer avec ça!" (Dubois *Blâmez* 114). It is conceivable that his casual lingo would identify him as a plucky Quebecois youth when performed for a French-Canadian audience, making him into an emblem for the much maligned province. In English, however, he is instead othered by making him a member of an "ethnic minority," a choice which Venuti might recognize as an example of domestication, although it is not as simple as that. Not only is he a misunderstood loner, but he is a loner

who has worked hard in a context where the odds were stacked against him to achieve academic success. Ultimately, in English, his character takes on something of the tone of an urban, twentieth century hero, the archetype who makes it against all odds, rather than a stand-in for the downtrodden province. Although Kevan removes the geopolitical specificity of the character, it is arguable that his change offers the footing for an Anglophone audience to understand the character's social position, which might not have been possible were his identity preserved as Quebecois.

Moving into the text of the play itself, the dialogue of Weulf, the Germanic character, is modified considerably in different parts of the translation. He has an ongoing conversation with Greta, his last lover, who he embodies on occasion for the sake of the exchange. Early in the play, he acts out the break-up of his relationship with her, when he left because he was drawn to the desert. In the French text, he speaks in a pseudo-German peppered with common German words and expressions:

> WEULF: Greta! Nicht prectent dush! Eusberg kömm blimzermish leuf grafteum fellingstremeune uper gran(e)fishömm. Auf wiedersen, Greta. Prestimg desert. (Dubois *Blâmez* 116)

In the English translation, Kevan substitutes this text with some of the work from the first elegy in poet Rainer Maria Rilke's Duino Elegies. The text he uses supports the Casanova image we get of Weulf:

WEULF: Greta! Nicht sprechen. Ist es nicht Zeit, daß wir liebend uns vom Geliebten befrein und es bebend bestehn: wie der Pfeil die Sehne besteht, um gesammelt im Absprung mehr zu sein al ser selbst.[6] Auf wiedersehen, Greta. Ich gezoge in desert. (Dubois and Kevan 120)

The substitution is significant. Although he certainly is not as recognizable as Shakespeare, Rilke is a well-known poet, even among Anglophones. For any germanophile in the audience, this passage might prove recognizable, adding a layer of sophistication to Weulf that was not as evident in the French version. For those who would not recognize the passage, the speech is just as incomprehensible in both Dubois' original and Kevan's translation, so the change makes little difference. The question, then, is how this change serves an Anglophone audience better than the original might have were it translated word-for-word. I am persuaded that for those who would have the means to grasp the authentic German, Weulf is revealed to be more than just a well-dressed Arnold Schwarzenegger type. By reciting poetry as he ends a relationship, the rehearsed and repeated nature of the action is made abundantly clear. It further suggests that he is well-read and a much rounder character than is indicated in the French text. However, it is questionable that any significant component of any given audience would know German well enough to follow this line of reasoning.

Comparably, later in the play, the Russian and Chinese-speaking characters, Stalin and Lenin, enter into a dialogue. In Dubois' original, both languages are grammelots that sound like they might very well be authentic:

LÉNINE: Nistitio voumrou.

STALINE: Groupourr pork verg nan-probné; ié vorkneuh.

LÉNINE: Zniri. Yo. Snoï! (Dubois *Blâmez* 140 – 1)

The illusion is, like in the German example above, made more compelling because of the insertion of genuine vocabulary. However, Kevan transforms this exchange into:

LENIN: Cha yuen ti. Ki shay pas.

STALIN: Fsyo budyed. Shchaslivava puti. Mi vmyestye. Mi spisim. Iditye pryama. Dasvidaniya.

LENIN: Yi chie shun pei. Chow![7]

(Dubois and Kevan 132 – 3)

by substituting recognizable language for the original pseudo-linguistic utterances. Not only is Kevan again flexing his linguistic muscle in this passage, but he is creating the text himself rather than quoting like he did in the previous German example. Nevertheless, the analysis of this exchange follows in the same line of reasoning as the preceding analysis in that the significance of this linguistic correction will only be truly relevant for those with an understanding of the concerned languages. We are, however, again seeing Kevan add layers of specificity to the caricatures drawn from Dubois' work.

In an amusing homage to the conventions of English Canadian drama, Kevan makes a substitution in one of Michaela's speeches to lend geographic specificity to her lament. In French, she melodramatically offers: "Aloré, après za, devoir morir en(e) prière, à zénoux, les bras zan(e) croix... dévan(e) la déessé dé l'amor dé Phénicie ô de Laborre à Plouffé," (Dubois *Blâmez* 123). In a comparably hyperbolic speech pattern, Kevan has her say much the same thing. However, she ends her wailing with, "inna fronta di goddess of l'amore offa Phonecia or offa Moose(a)jaw" (Dubois and Kevan 124). The reference to Moose Jaw mimics the small-town in the original and is undoubtedly comic – an Italian diva is unlikely to know anything of a small town in Saskatchewan – but it also points to the heritage of theatre created in this country. Early English-Canadian drama could hardly call itself by that name if it did not situate itself in a small community in the untamed wilds where despair dominated the lives of all. The Diva's anguish parodies hardship like that seen in Denison's Marsh Hay, while signalling for the audience that Bedouins is indeed a text from here – that it is a Canadian play.

Kevan also indulges in his artistic license for purely pragmatic reasons. In the exchange between Père Noël and Lutin Vert, discussed earlier, the code-switching is removed in the English version because Lutin Vert is presented as a Francophone who speaks in English throughout the play, with a few exceptions. He has no need to switch languages for the benefit of his interlocutor because they are both already speaking in English. Although the fact that Lutin Vert is presented as a Francophone who agrees to speak in a second language in Kevan's

version could be read as a political statement, I firmly believe that it is more productive to understand Kevan's choice in terms of the markedness model. Given that Lutin Vert speaks French in the original, an unmarked language choice to be sure, it follows that he could speak in English in the translation. Kevan strives to resolve the matter of his linguistic and cultural identity by giving him a strong French accent. Père Noël, on the other hand, loses the edge off of his blunt character as well because the word games that are staged as he tries to understand Lutin Vert's name are more subtle; Father Christmas, although certainly not the brightest, seems genuinely to be struggling with choppy radio transmissions in Kevan's translation, as opposed to being simply slow to understand.

FATHER CHRISTMAS: [...] euh ... what's his name again? ... Euh ... Lootin' Where.

LUTIN VERT: Not 'Lootin' Where,' Fart'er Chreestmas. Looten Vair. Like a lepr(r)echaun. Ovair.

FATHER CHRISTMAS: Oh. Okay. Okay. Little Lepper ... eh ... Lepper Corn. Over.

[...]

LUTIN VERT: Raidi for de tcheque-leest? Ovair.

FATHER CHRISTMAS: Yea! Standin' by the check-out. Over.

(Dubois and Kevan 129)

If Lutin Vert's line, "[r]aidi for de tcheque-leest," had been switched into French in order to maintain the pattern of code switching from the original, his question would have become a marked statement. That line, in French, would have been

about defiantly putting Father Christmas in his place as an answer to his absent minded behaviour. By maintaining the line almost exactly as it was in the original, Kevan is doing a service to the maintenance of meaning in the scene.

Lutin Vert later revisits his frustration while tuning his radio, and again the translation proves an interesting elaboration on what is offered in the French version. It is clear that Kevan is playing with what most would recognize as the difficulties inherent in speaking a second language because of the inevitability of accent:

> LUTIN VERT: Mer-de. Not 'Lepper(r) K(h)orn.' Eez ze peemp deaf or somet'een? 'Looten Vair,' leek un Lepprracorn! ... No. Leek un leep ... Lek un leep ... Ayeee! Zees bores me steef.
>
> (Dubois and Kevan 137)

Not only is the language quite playful in its repetition of the long 'ē' sound, but the spectators are given an opportunity to commiserate over the challenge intrinsic to speaking, and indeed communicating, in another tongue. The playfulness of his translation also exists in the manner that he capitalizes on assumed border knowledge of French – almost every school system in the country insists on its students taking at least once course in the nation's second language. Lutin Vert lets loose his frustration on an overly bureaucratic official on the phone with the common phrase, "mêlez-vous de vos oignons" (Dubois *Blâmez* 174); in the English version, rather than substituting something like, 'mind your own business,' Kevan anglicises the expression: "meex your(r) own onyons"

(Dubois and Kevan 151). For this joke to work, a certain level of French language knowledge is assumed in the spectators, which proves a well calculated risk.

Many of Kevan's choices in his translation point to a desire to flesh out characters and lend them more specificity. He is certainly not hiding his voice in the translation of Dubois' text. The trend continues in his characterization of members of Patrol South Belvedere, a team of helicopters, and implicitly pilots, who are charged with ensuring that the rails in front of Father Christmas, the charging train, are clear. In Dubois' original, each of the ten helicopters is voiced in undifferentiated English. For Kevan, the two units of this team who speak as individuals, dubbed Minus One and Minus Seven, are given histories. So, in the French text, One says: "[r]eady to take off. Waiting for confirmation of flight indications" (Dubois *Blâmez* 135), which is quite flat when compared with the English, in which One says: "Prepahred fah take orff. Standing by fah ver(w)ification of flight co-awdinates. Ove-ah" (Dubois and Kevan 130). One is transformed into a British officer who draws out his vowels and shies away from voicing the letter 'r'. Rather than just being a voice in the crowd, he is set up as an archetype in which we see echoes of great British war heroes. Seven, however, is labelled as an American with a conscience by Kevan and so retains the unaccented speech given to him by Dubois. The French, "Sir, its [sic] a huge wall of red sand. It's coming to me. Rolling. And trembling" (Dubois *Blâmez* 190), is only corrected for minor grammatical variance in English. In translation, he says: "Sir, it's a huge wall of red sand. It's coming right to me. Rolling. And

trembling" (Dubois and Kevan 160). If One is the English hero of early war films, Seven is set up as Tom Cruise in Top Gun. Kevan, here, is capitalizing on the Anglophone spectator's knowledge of the more common variants of English to point at the types who make up this fighting force.

In a final move to ensure that he has succeeded in voiding the play of the expectable language politics in a Quebecois text, Kevan has the last beat of the play repeated in six different tongues, including the original French. As mentioned earlier, the play ends with a direct address to the audience, during which they are called to discover the play's message on their own. Dubois' original is spoken by all of the actors at once: "La vie est ce combat sur lequel le temps ne revient pas. Voyez. Entendez. Mais le train, lui n'arrête pas. Aussi... go home. Bonsoir" (Dubois *Blâmez* 197). This same line is spoken in Arabic, English, Mandarin, Russian, and Spanish in the English translation. Given that the entire play works to destabilize language, it seems fitting to end it with a perfectly clear message: "Life is a fight and time does not return. You see. You hear. But the train; it does not stop" (Dubois and Kevan 163). Kevan is announcing, quite unambiguously, that the play is addressing everybody, not just the Anglophones and Francophones in the audience.

At the level of translation, Kevan's work is admirable. He has absolutely succeeded in retaining the original's aesthetic vision without setting up any real barriers to the public's grasp of what Dubois was doing. Inasmuch as he avoided making the text too easy by anglicizing everything, he did not domesticate the text either. He also managed to play effectively with foreignization in that although

he removed some of what might have been constructed as overtly Quebecois, he replaced it with another 'other' recognizable in English Canadian society. His choices in translation, then, become very interesting. One of the large currents in his work is that of elaborating on character, at least to the extent that a recognizable archetype emerges. In his version, the small characters that were more or less flat in Dubois' original are given form by placing them geographically; a flat character from a specific place offers an audience just enough information to intuit many of the other salient details. The major characters are also plumped from the level of archetype in the French-language text, into something which might almost be called round. Kevan's small changes sow the seeds of psychological motivation. I suspect that these character modifications are largely there to serve the pathological desire amongst English Canadians for back-story and realism in their theatre. Kevan is offering an anchor so that Anglophones might dabble with an immersion into the narrative.

The other dominant trend in the translation of Bedouins, beyond that of the development of characterization, is socio-politically motivated. As a result of the relationship between French and English Canada, an Anglophone spectator is likely well-informed enough to recognize a piece of theatre which metaphorically deals with Quebec as oppressed in this country. Significantly, however, Dubois' play is not on this subject; as Huffman pointed out, it in fact works towards the negation of identity based on geography. Nevertheless, because there are Francophones in the play, there remains a risk that an English audience would read the polemics of provincial politics in a performance of the text, even though

the play's politics lie elsewhere. And so, to counter this risk in the English translation, Flip, the underdog, is anglicized and othered, while Lutin Vert remains Francophone. This choice is motivated by the fact that Flip, as one of the story's protagonists, has the signifying potential to stand in for something else. Lutin Vert, however, can be presented as French to an Anglophone audience without representing anything other than himself because he is not set up as the 'hero' for a group in the same way that Flip is presented. The polyglossic multiplication at the end of the text also serves to dilute the potentially highly charged socio-political character of the play. Despite this, the play's reception in English Canada has been spotty. At its premiere in 1987, although a moderate success, "[t]here [were] a number of walkouts during the run, phone calls of complaint to [Artistic Director] McCaw's office, and, on one [...] night, hostile mutters from some audience members apparently debating both courses of action" (Godfrey). Similarly, in other centres, reviewers applaud the show for its ingenuity but note that the story is "[c]lear as mud" (Drake) and that it can be difficult to sit through. It is quite possible that this unfavourable response is at least in part a reflection of the full cast version of the play; the solo version, as performed by Dubois, was roundly applauded for its virtuosity. However, although the play has yet to see a resounding success when staged in English, it is clear that Kevan has set up the text with every advantage in its favour.

Conclusion

Years after he first wrote and performed Ne blâmez jamais les Bédouins, in an interview about the 1995 Quebec referendum, Dubois shared a metaphor offering his appraisal of the people of Quebec. I believe that his metaphor about the circumstances of the Quebecois people might serve to elucidate the potentially obscure message in his play. He described the well-known image of a young man standing up to a tank in Tiananmen Square. The public discourse in Quebec at that time, he said, insisted that the Quebecois were the same as that young man, standing up to oppression and tyranny. Dubois corrected, however, that the public discourse had it wrong: he asserted that the Quebecois were in fact driving the tank (Jacot). His contentious statement was intended to awaken the public to the perils of scapegoating in order to refocus attention on the weaknesses inside Quebecois society. His play is, in a way, an early articulation of the same idea: the revelation that all three protagonists have near the end of the play is echoed in his later metaphoric proclamation. In the play, and indeed in the play's title, Dubois is suggesting that an individual's great accomplishments and great failures, unfathomable problems and timely solutions, are all a reflection of that individual. There is no one to blame nor anyone who will help, meaning that each person is the primary agent of her or his own success and conversely that when things go wrong accountability necessarily lies with the individual. Recalling Huffman's assertion that the play works against identity formation that is tied to origin (on page 61), I strongly believe that Dubois is laying out this message for all in his play; it is not a reflection of national politics except perhaps at the level

of individual will. Dubois' work, because it fractures cohesive generic, linguistic, and narrative structures, forces an interrogation of identity categories. The characters in Bedouins are not paragons of political ideology, but caricatures with a tendency for the melodramatic which, because of their hyperbolic nature, eschew overt real-world ties. To read any of the characters as emblematic of any faction in Canadian or Quebecois politics is to do a disservice to the text. Fortunately, Kevan, in his translation, understands all this.

It is, in fact, abundantly clear in Kevan's work that his understanding of Canadian language politics, his sensitivity to the value of code-switching, and his awareness of the transgressive potential inherent in translation have all informed his work. Don't Blame the Bedouins is an eminently effective re-imagining of Dubois' creation which manages to capture the aesthetic intention and unique expressive range of the polyglossic original. Kevan's accomplishment is grounded in a masterful understanding of Dubois' intention in his use of more than one language. The original play used heteroglossia as a creative force, one which offered the potential for new identity formation based on choice rather than hereditary inevitability. Because Kevan understood the value of bilingualism in English Canada, he derailed anything in the text which might have set the play up as an investigation of the dual nature of language identity in this country. His changes enabled that the Anglophone play be read as something like a postmodern morality play, just like the French version. He further prepared the text for an Anglophone audience by anticipating their expectations based on theatrical conventions established in the English-language performance traditions

of Canada. This is not to say that he pandered to Anglophones, making the text too easy for them, but that he removed some of the larger impediments which might have otherwise precluded English spectators from fully grasping the play's meaning .

Ultimately, what Kevan's process tells us about the translation of multilingual theatre is that in order to maintain meaning across language boundaries, the translator needs to intimately know two things: her or his audience's linguistic baggage and performance traditions. With the translator's artistic license employed to address any discrepancies between reception in the source language community and the target language community that are the result of the above disparities, it is indeed possible to translate multilingual theatre. Clearly, for this to become a rule amongst translators, this speculation will need to be tested repeatedly using other texts as a source. Interestingly, however, by focussing on these two potentially problematic points of transference, the translator will already be responding to many of the concerns brought up in translation and linguistic theory that I have included in this study. Because of the motivations behind code-switching, a close reading of language politics emerging in the source text allows a translator to avoid the peril of violent domestication in their iteration of the work for the target audience. An understanding of the value of each code-switch, in fact, makes it almost impossible to accidentally domesticate and also ensures that the translator will not shy from their own creative implication in the target-language text. An intimate understanding of the target culture's theatrical practice aids significantly in assuring that the

performative codes woven into the source text will find adequate voicing in the target culture. The risk of an overly literary or literal translation, one which does not convey intact the theatrical codes of the original, is thus also avoided. Although the examples drawn from Don't Blame the Bedouins offer only a gateway into the understanding of translation for polyglossic theatre, the patterns in Kevan's work are substantiated by the maxims of those linguistic and translation theories that I have referenced and so have a merit all their own. Although the English version of the play in production did not always meet with critical and public success, the Kevan's linguistic process is absolutely accomplished. His process not only gives us access to the information necessary to execute an effective polyglossic translation, but also opens up layers of meaning in any multilingual text, giving further access to this challenging and creative theatrical practice. Kevan's particular sensitivity to the linguistic baggage of his target audience, along with a deep understanding of the theatrical conventions which govern their reception of a performance, are key to the success of his work.

Endnotes

[1] Despite the fact that bilingualism is not universally embraced, a number of longitudinal studies of Canadians' attitudes towards bilingualism not only show generally increasing support, but importantly show majority support for the policy in every part of the country. At a national level, depending on the data source, between 62% ("Canadians and Bilingualism"; Léger poll, 2003) and 81% ("Plenty of Support"; CROP poll, 2007) approve of the policy, with the government's own numbers, which are based on the analysis of a number of sources, coming up the middle at 72% support ("The Evolution of Public Opinion"). Interestingly, all three sources show that Canadians between 18 and 34 are the most likely to support bilingualism, and some show that women are more likely than men to approve of the policy. Similarly, statistics show that support for multiculturalism has increased since the policy's inception, and stood at 74% approval in 2002 (Dasko).

[2] Trudeau's government introduced Multiculturalism policy in 1971 which paved the way for the Multiculturalism Act of 1988. The Act lays out the government's desire to promote recognition and understanding among different cultural groups. (Day 193, 197)

[3] "In 1969, following the recommendations in the report published by the Royal Commission on Bilingualism and Biculturalism, the Parliament of Canada adopted the first *Official Languages Act*. This act recognized English and French as the official languages of all federal institutions in Canada. The *Official Languages Act* was considerably modified in 1988. It sets out the three main objectives of the Government of Canada: to ensure respect for English and French as the official languages of Canada and ensure equality of status and equal rights and privileges as to their use in all federal institutions; to support the development of English and French linguistic minority communities and generally advance the equality of status and use of the English and French languages within Canadian society; to set out the powers, duties and functions of federal institutions with respect to the official languages of Canada. In 2005, the *Official Languages Act* was amended once again to remind federal institutions of their responsibility to take positive measures to support the development of official language communities and to foster the full recognition and use of both English and French in Canadian society. Furthermore, Part VII of the Act is included in the list of sections under which an application for remedy can be made in cases of inaction or failure to comply with the obligations set forth." (Official Languages Act.)

[4] A selvedge is the woven edge of a piece of fabric which does not fray.

[5] Santa Claus is called "Father Christmas" in the English translation, "Père Noël" in French, but all three names in this text refer to the same character.

[6] In a translation not provided in the play text, Rilke's poetry – from "Ist es nicht" to "al ser selbst" – reads in English as follows:

> Isn't it time that, with love, we
> freed ourselves from our loved one and, trembling, endured:
> as the arrow endures the string so that, tensed
> for its flight, it is more than itself. (Rilke 5)

[7] Although I have only been able to translate the Russian, Kevan insists that Lenin is speaking in Mandarin. The rest of the text's multi-linguistic accuracy convinces me that this is true. In my own admittedly rough translation, the Russian reads:

LENIN:	Cha yuen ti. Ki shay pas.
STALIN:	Have a good journey. We are together. We are spies. Go straight. Goodbye.
LENIN:	Yi chie shun pei. Chow!

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