Strategies for Feminist Theatre Translation: Minna Canth's *The Worker's Wife* from Finnish to English

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Abstract
This practice as research PhD aims to propose practical strategies for feminist translators of texts for performance. The strategies have been explored by translating *The Worker's Wife* (1885) by playwright Minna Canth from Finnish to English. The work comprises a thesis (the critical exegesis), a portfolio of practice documentation, and a translation of the play, which is accompanied by a translator's note and extensive annotations. The research is multidisciplinary, encompassing the fields of translation studies, drama, gender studies and, through exploration of the case study text, Finnish literary studies. Although existing scholarship addresses feminist translation practice and theatre translation separately, there is a lack of scholarship addressing the two together. This research brings these two fields together to explore what it means for a feminist translator to translate texts for performance, the particular considerations this entails and possibilities it offers. The research draws on the 'womanhandling' (Godard, 1989) approach and feminist translation theories and practices of the Canadian feminist translators of the 1970-90s. In particular, the thesis is guided by Massardier-Kenney's (1997) recategorization of those strategies, taking recovery, resistancy (after Venuti), and collaboration as starting points for exploration in a theatrical context. Crucially, it considers how the performance situation and theatrical conditions impact the work, seeking to reformulate these strategies for theatre texts. The feminist translator makes interventions in the text on political grounds. This thesis proposes that the feminist theatre translator takes on the role of theatre-maker, and uses the theatrical dimension of a performance text as a site for intervention. Strategies have been trialled through the practical work of translating *The Worker's Wife,* and through collaboration with a director, and holding two readings of the play, employing a practice as research methodology. This thesis also offers an extensive commentary on *The Worker's Wife* by Minna Canth, introducing this revolutionary, feminist playwright to an anglophone readership. It argues for the play to be categorised as an example of feminist social realist drama, which makes pioneering use of techniques foreshadowing subsequent developments in European political playwriting.

Covid-19 Impact Statement

This thesis was produced during the Covid-19 pandemic, which impacted previously planned research activities, specifically with regard to the practice as research elements of the work. Covid-19 related restrictions significantly shaped the ultimate forms that the practice as research took. Previously planned in-person workshops to explore the text were unable to take place, as a significant portion of the work took place during times where in person meetings were either impossible or heavily restricted. The majority of activities (workshops with a director, and one of the script readings) had to take place online, which limited their scope to some extent.

Signed:

Minna Jeffery

Date: 6 July 2023

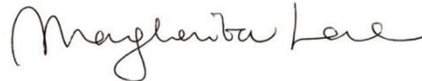
Signed: 

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Table of Contents

Introduction **8**

Methodology 11

Situating my feminism 16

The Worker's Wife 19

Translation studies 22

Feminist translation 24

Theatre translation 29

Thesis outline 31

Chapter One - Feminist Translation Strategies: An Overview **33**

The Canadian feminist translators: supplementing, prefacing and footnoting, and "hijacking" 34

Supplementing 34

Prefacing and footnoting 38

"Hijacking" 43

Co-authership 46

Adapting and re-defining feminist translation practice 47

Author-centred vs. translator-centred translation 54

Feminist translation for theatre 59

Chapter Two - Minna Canth and *The Worker's Wife*: A Recovery Project **61**

Minna Canth 64

Perceptions of Minna Canth over time 68

The Worker's Wife 71

Feminist materialism in The Worker's Wife 78

A Canthian play 86

Feminist gestus 91

Writing as a woman: Canth's positionality 94

Recovering *The Worker's Wife* 99

Chapter Three - Fluency, Fidelity and Feminist Translation: Resistancy as an Approach to Dialogue **103**

Resistancy: an overview 105

Speakability as problematic translation criterion 109

Resisting universalism: translating the specific 120

Resistant speech 126

Direct address 127

Lyrical language 133
Resistancy as problematising the source text and resisting harm 135
Resistancy as disrupting the illusion 140
Illuminating feminist meaning: context is everything 144
The visible translator 146
Breaking the theatrical illusion 149
Conclusion 150
Chapter Four - Collaboration, Intervention and *Mise en Scène* 154
Collaborating with Minna Canth 159
'Stage directions are your way of holding the microphone' 167
The prologue: establishing a theatrical reading 169
Music 172
Sound 173
Beats: response as intervention 174
The on-lookers 178
Translating women: gaze and solidarity 181
Staging the past / Feminist utopias 186
Practicalities: working with other people 193
Conclusion 199
Conclusion: Feminist Translation Strategies for Theatre Texts 201
The feminist theatre translator's toolkit 202
1. Recovery 202
2. Commentary 204
3. Resistancy 205
4. Mise-en-scène: stage directions as intervention 207
5. Collaboration 207
There are hundreds of (feminist) translations of *The Worker's Wife* 209
Further research 213
Bibliography 215
Appendices 224
Appendix A: A Timeline-Portfolio of Documentation of and Reflections on Practice (January 2020 – February 2023) 224
Appendix B: Extract from written feedback from Joanna Bowman, December 2020 247
Appendix C: Transcription of conversation with Joanna Bowman, December 2020 248

Appendix D: Transcription of conversation with Joanna Bowman, February 2022 253
Appendix E: Transcription of conversation with Joanna Bowman, August 2022 258
Appendix F: Transcription of conversation with Ronja Siljander, October 2020 261
Appendix G: Recording of reading of *The Worker's Wife* (May 2022) 266

Introduction

I do think 'The Worker's Wife' is a success. It will live, that is certain. In the future it will be a reminder of what spirit moved in the Finnish women of our time, what feelings they felt, what battles they fought.[1]

Minna Canth

The feminist translator, affirming her critical difference, her delight in interminable re-reading and re-writing, flaunts the signs of her manipulation of the text. Womanhandling the text in translation would involve the replacement of the modest, self-effacing translator. Taking her place would be an active participant in the creation of meaning who advances a conditional analysis.[2]

Barbara Godard

Shortly after the premiere of her play, *Työmiehen vaimo* [*The Worker's Wife*] (1885), Finnish playwright and women's rights activist Minna Canth wrote to a friend expressing her confidence in the play's success, and her assuredness of its futurity.[3] Canth had not yet travelled to Helsinki to see the performance herself, and indeed her opinion of the play evolved over time, shifting from satisfaction to apathy, disappointment, discomfort, and back again. This is unsurprising, given that the play provoked such an outcry that Canth was condemned by the national press as immoral and was ostracised

[1] Minna Canth in a letter to her friend Hilda Asp (Canth & Kannila, 1973, p. 134).
[2] Barbara Godard, 1989, p. 50.
[3] It is worth noting that the letter was to Canth's friend Hilda Asp, an actress, teacher and translator. In the same letter, Canth credits Asp as having been vital to the genesis of the play – a small but apt example of Canth's understanding of writing as a collaborative act, and the role that others play in shaping texts.

by a number of her peers.[4] By several metrics, however, the play was an undeniable success: the law Canth wrote the play in response to, a law that gave men legal ownership of their wives' property and earnings, was changed a few short years later; the play cemented Canth's place in the Finnish theatrical canon, marking her as a fierce and powerful voice against injustice; and it is still performed in theatres and taught in schools over 135 years later. Her comment in this letter also aptly captures the importance of the text as a preserver of the history of the fight for women's rights in Finland. The play continues to have much to say to readers and audiences in the twenty-first century, both at home and abroad. However, the transference of the 'spirit' referred to by Canth from one time and place (nineteenth century Finland) to another (twenty-first century Britain), is not an automatic, straightforward process.[5] What is the role of the translator in facilitating the movement of the words and, crucially in this case, the political impact of the text?

The aim of this research has been to propose practical strategies for feminist translators of texts for performance. The research is multidisciplinary, encompassing the fields of translation studies, drama, gender studies and,

[4] For example, in the same letter to Hilda Asp cited above, Canth references an article by a Dr Calamnius that called the play 'immoral, unchristian, inaesthetic' (Kannila, 1973, p. 134). In the short autobiography Canth wrote for the Norwegian *Samtiden* newspaper, she claims that after the play was first performed, 'parents banned their children from visiting me, a large number of my friends dropped me, and those that remained had to have a lot of moral courage to acknowledge me as an acquaintance' (cited in Ahola, 2019, p. 186)

[5] I use the word 'spirit' here in order to mirror Canth's usage of it, but acknowledge its flawed and problematic nature as a term in translation scholarship more generally. Along with many other translation scholars, I refute the idea of a text having an innate 'spirit', and of the role of the translator being to glean and then translate that spirit. In this context, I use 'spirit' as shorthand for the play's feminist politics and role in giving voice to the oppressed women of nineteenth-century Finland.

through exploration of the case study text, Finnish literary studies. Although there is scholarship addressing feminist translation practice and theatre translation separately, there is a lack of scholarship addressing the two together. My thesis brings these two fields together to explore what it means for a feminist translator to translate texts for performance, the particular considerations this entails and possibilities it offers. I also hope to have contributed new knowledge through my choice of case study text: Minna Canth's *Työmiehen vaimo* [hereafter *The Worker's Wife*]. There are very few translations of Minna Canth's works into English, and there is very little scholarly writing about her in English. Even in a Finnish context, despite her being one of the most celebrated Finnish authors, there is surprisingly little writing about her works, as the tendency has been to focus much more on her biography (see Chapter Two). By translating *The Worker's Wife* into English and providing a commentary on the work, I have contributed to the study of Canth's work, and introduced a voice to the limited canon of pre-twentieth century anglophone plays by women writers.

A theme of multivalence threads through my research. It is at the heart of my politics, my methodologies, and my findings. In this introduction I hope to demonstrate and contextualise that multivalence. I will begin by discussing the methodology of my research and the principles that have guided it, and by summarising my practice-based work and approach. I will then position my feminism, situating my politics and thereby the political context and purpose of my research and practice. Next, I will provide an introduction to my case study text, *The Worker's Wife,* and offer a

justification for how this particular choice of case study supports my research aims. I will then contextualise the theoretical underpinning of my research, which has been drawn from translation studies scholarship, and more specifically from the fields of feminist translation and theatre translation scholarship. Finally, I will outline this thesis through a brief chapter by chapter summary.

Methodology

In her reflection on the practice of literary translation, *This Little Art,* Kate Briggs (2017) offers 'a view of translation as a *site* for learning through reading and writing, through testing and researching, through asking and arguing' (p. 210). Translation is a rich and varied practice which can yield research into language, literature, culture, history, as well as the act of translation itself. My particular research inquiry falls into the latter category, although it is true that I have also made several discoveries in the former categories along the way. I have employed a practice as research methodology for my investigation into feminist translation strategies for performance texts, in which the practice is the act of translating *The Worker's Wife* by Minna Canth from Finnish to English. Robin Nelson (2013) advocates for the use of practice as research where the research inquiry entails 'practical knowledge which might primarily be demonstrated in practice – that is, knowledge which is a matter of doing rather than abstractly conceived' (p. 9). Because my research inquiry is into finding practical strategies for feminist theatre translators, it was vital for that research to be practice-based.

My use of a practice as research methodology is underpinned by feminist theories of research and knowledge-making. Hopfinger and Bissell (2021, p. 46) propose practice as research as an example of what feminist theorist Sara Ahmed (2017) describes as bringing 'theory back to life' (p. 16), highlighting the importance of embodied experience, which 'provides the basis of knowledge' (ibid.). This idea relates to Karen Barad's (2007) new materialist theories of agential realism and intra-activity. Barad (2007) writes that 'practices of knowing and being are not isolable; they are mutually implicated. We don't obtain knowledge by standing outside the world; we know because we are of the world' (p. 185). My methodology is informed by Barad's notion of entanglement, which sees the researcher and the object of study as fundamentally relational, intra-active. Barad (2007) argues that 'agency is a matter of intra-acting; it is an enactment, not something that someone or something has. Agency is doing/being in its intra-activity' (p. 235). Intra-action is helpful way of thinking about the relationship between myself and my research, myself and Canth, myself and the translation, and so on.

The concept of intra-action concerns the transfers between, or imbrication of, practice and theory, or 'ways of doing, making, feeling, thinking, and conceptualising' (Kontturi, Tiainen, Nauha and Angerer, 2018). I have structured my research following the 'hermeneutic-interpretative spiral model' proposed by Melissa Trimingham (2002), where research progress is figured as 'a spiral which constantly returns us to our original point of entry but with renewed understanding' (p. 56). Nelson (2013) articulates this

same idea, calling it an ‘iterative process of ‘doing-reflecting-reading-articulating-doing’’ (p. 32). Key to this iterative process is the idea that there is no disjunction between theory and practice: ‘theory…is not prior to practice, functioning to inform it, but theory and practice are rather ‘imbricated within each other’ in praxis’ (Nelson, 2013, p. 62). My methods, then, have run concurrently. I have produced a timeline/portfolio of practice documentation (Appendix A), which demonstrates how I moved constantly between practice-based and theory-based work throughout my process, how each continually informed the other. Trimingham (2002) emphasises the need to write up practical research as it unfolds, ‘since this clarifies where the research stands, and where it needs to proceed next’ (p. 57). I have done this writing-up both in the form of my practice journals and notes (Appendix A), but also by writing this thesis at the same time as carrying out my practice-based research. Naturally I have needed to continually re-edit and re-work the thesis as my ideas and understanding have progressed and shifted, but the writing up has indeed been invaluable in promoting reflexivity and progressing both the practice and theory.

The majority of my practice (translation) took place at the desk, where I worked on drafts of translations of the play, experimenting with methods gleaned from my theory-based research. I documented my practice by annotating the translation drafts as I went, and by writing extensive notes and journal entries documenting and reflecting on my practice (Appendix A). These notes and journals offer insights into the relations between the process of translation and the final performance text. R Lyle Skains (2018)

has called for the employment of ‘auto-ethnomethodology’ during the composition of practice as research texts. ‘Auto-ethnomethodology’ constitutes ‘a research log (noting insights, process, difficulties), and draft materials and revision notes (which can later be analysed as *in situ* utterances)’ (Skains, 2018, p. 87). Thereby, the ‘creative process and products, and the analytical process and products are deeply intertwined, offering opportunity for insight and nuance into the creative practice’ (Skains, 2018, p. 87). Skains emphasises the importance of reflexivity to the practitioner-researcher’s work throughout the research process, but notes the potential limitations of self-reflexivity as a methodology. However, she suggests that these limitations can be ameliorated, in part, by ‘[observing] his/her activities *in situ*, but [interpreting] these observation records (creative notes, drafts, research logs) after a time period that allows for a distanced perspective,’ and by ‘[supplementing] these observations of process with media-specific analysis of the creative artefacts themselves’ (Skains, 2018, p. 88). I built periods of distance and reflection into my research timeline, and many of my key discoveries were made by documenting the work in situ, but then returning to it later to reflect and articulate, then re-working, reflecting, in a constant loop.

Although a significant portion of the translation work took place at the desk, the parts that took place away from the desk were fundamental to the research. The work away from the desk was entirely enabled by collaborations with other people. I trialled my translations at several points throughout the process by holding three meetings with theatre director

Joanna Bowman, who read drafts of my translation and then offered feedback on the text from a practical theatre-maker's perspective, and by holding two recorded readings of the text with actors. The first was held virtually with members of Foreign Affairs theatre company, and the second was held in person with a group of volunteer readers. I have also had a number of less formal collaborations throughout, mostly with my mother and partner. I document these collaborations in my journals, and discuss them at length in Chapter Four. It is enacting this collaborative practice that has enabled me to ultimately argue for collaboration as a strategy essential to feminist theatre translation.

The outcome of my research is my translation of *The Worker's Wife* (Jeffery, 2023), which is in fact a document comprising two translations of the play, accompanied by a translator's note and extensive annotations.[6] The first translation, on the left-hand side of the page, is what could be called a 'literal translation'. The term 'literal' is flawed, and tied to problematic translation practices (as I explore in Chapter Three), but most succinctly encapsulates what I have sought to achieve in that translation, which is one where I have attempted to actively intervene as little as possible. Rather, I have endeavoured to render the text as closely as possible to how Canth wrote it, on a word-by-word level, and to how the play would have been presented to audiences in nineteenth-century Finland. The text on the right-hand side is my feminist translation of the play, intended for performance in

[6] My (unpublished) translation is submitted as a separate document, and I reference it throughout as (Jeffery, 2023).

a twenty-first century anglophone context. I have placed the two versions side-by-side in order to emphasise where I have intervened in the right-hand text. Skains (2018) points out that creative work (my translation) and critical exegesis (this thesis) are ‘inextricably bound together, informing one another in their communication of knowledge just as the research and creative practice informed one another’ (p. 96). My translation (Jeffery, 2023) and this thesis, supported by my practice documentation (Appendices A-G), together respond to my research questions and constitute my findings. Meaning is ultimately contained in the intra-action between these elements (Coleman, Page and Palmer, 2019).

Situating my feminism

A disclosure: my name is Minna because of Minna Canth. My maternal grandmother, Reetta Nieminen, wrote a biography of Canth before I was born, which is perhaps what put the name into my parents’ heads. Nominative determinism preordained my passions for theatre and women’s rights. Canth provided me with a firm base on which to build my feminism, but over one hundred years of change (not straightforward progression, but change, certainly) sit between Canth and myself. Our feminisms are not the same. Feminist translation refers to the broad range of practices which are united by the aim of contributing, through translation practice and translation scholarship, to the women’s movement – translation-based and academic feminist activism. Throughout this thesis I will continually offer feminism as an explanation, motivation, and justification for my work. ‘Feminism’, however, covers a very wide spectrum of beliefs, so it is

important for me to first situate my feminism, and what I believe myself to be working towards when I seek to contribute to the women's movement.

In her outcry against structural violence and injustice, *Feminism, Interrupted,* Lola Olufemi (2020) summarises: 'when we do feminist work, we are doing the kind of work that changes the world for everybody' (p. 23). My feminism is fundamentally geared towards liberation for all. I am guided by politics that are anti-essentialist, intersectional, trans-inclusive, and decolonial. Essentialist feminism is built on the belief that there are intrinsic male and female essences, supposedly rooted in biology. The belief is built on, and arguably perpetuates, sex-based stereotypes, and restricts the idea of womanhood. Instead, my feminism has been completely shaped by Judith Butler's foundational theorisation of gender, which argues powerfully against the idea that there are two clear biological sexes. Butler (2002) writes: 'gender ought not to be construed as a stable identity or locus of agency from which various acts follow; rather, gender is an identity tenuously constituted in time, instituted in an exterior space through a stylized repetition of acts' (p. 215). In rejecting a conceptualisation of gender built on contestable essential, or even biological, notions, I embrace a feminism that is radically inclusive.

My feminism is inflected by materialist feminism (Wittig, 2013, originally published 1981; Delphy, 2016, originally published 1984), which builds on Marxism and focuses on the material conditions that lead to women's oppression. Like Butler, Christine Delphy and Monique Wittig also argue

against an intrinsic 'femininity' or 'womanhood', taking the approach that 'woman' is a socially constructed category, built on the ways that women are materially oppressed. I use feminism as a framework for understanding oppressions not exclusively in terms of gender, but also class, race, and sexuality. Here, I am guided by the prolific and crucial work of feminists such as bell hooks (1984), who defines feminism as 'a movement to end sexist oppression,' which then 'directs our attention to systems of domination and the inter-relatedness of sex, race, and class oppression' (p. 33). Feminist legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989) coined the influential term 'intersectionality', which corresponds to hooks' 'inter-relatedness'. Intersectionality allows us to understand how different forms of oppression intersect. Crenshaw's original theory and term relate specifically to the race and gender-based oppression experienced by black women, but 'intersectionality' has subsequently been used to apply to the intersections of other forms of oppression, such as class, sexuality, and disability-based oppression.

My feminism is fundamentally geared towards liberatory change. Olufemi (2020) writes against commodified, neoliberal feminism, and calls for a return to the feminist movement's radical roots, defining feminism as liberatory praxis, revolutionary and transformative. She cites the idea that 'feminist work is justice work,' taking this as her framework:

> 'Feminist work is justice work' proposed that feminism has a purpose beyond just highlighting the ways women are 'discriminated' against. It taught me that feminism's task is to remedy the consequences of gendered oppression through organising

> and by proposing new ways to think about our potential as human beings. For me, 'justice work' involves reimagining the world we live in and working towards a liberated future for all. But how do we begin to reimagine? We refuse to remain silent about how our lives are limited by heterosexist, racist, capitalist patriarchy. (Olufemi, 2020, pp. 19-20)

In understanding the feminist movement as being one geared towards liberatory change, I am in alignment with Minna Canth, whose activism was geared towards concrete legislative and structural change, and who in her writing, artistic and journalistic, refused to remain silent about oppression faced by women, and particularly working-class women. *The Worker's Wife* is a play founded on the premise that women's lives are literally limited by the misogynistic legal and justice system, and written in order to loudly reject this reality. By producing a feminist translation of the play, I want to extend Canth's nineteenth-century, Finnish liberatory feminist activism into the twenty-first century anglophone context, where her powerful voice is needed as sorely as ever.

The Worker's Wife

I have chosen Finnish playwright Minna Canth's 1885 play *The Worker's Wife* as my case study for exploring feminist translation for theatre. The play tells the stories of two women – Johanna, the eponymous worker's wife, and Kerttu, a young Finnish-Roma woman. Johanna's husband, Risto, is an alcoholic who spends all of Johanna's wages, on the grounds that they are his legal property. Johanna and their infant child are left destitute and Johanna eventually dies. The play opens at Risto and Johanna's wedding, where we learn that he had previously been engaged to Kerttu, but had jilted

her in favour of Johanna. During the course of the play, Risto rekindles his affair with Kerttu, who is bullied and stigmatised throughout the play for her Roma heritage. He eventually betrays Kerttu for a second time, driving her to threaten to kill him. The play ends with Kerttu being imprisoned, highlighting the hypocrisy and misogyny of Finland's laws at the time. Minna Canth was herself a women's rights activist, writing articles arguing, for example, for better educational rights for women, as well being a prolific writer of plays and novels.

There are currently no available, published translations of this play into English.[7] Indeed, although Minna Canth is one of Finland's most important writers, almost none of her writing has been translated into English.[8] Whilst Canth's male Nordic contemporaries, Ibsen and Strindberg, are well-known to anglophone audiences, Canth's work has been neglected. Translating this play introduces Canth to an anglophone audience, adding to the very limited English language canon of pre-twentieth century women playwrights. In writing *The Worker's Wife,* Canth sought to challenge Finland's misogynistic property laws. The play went on to cause such an uproar that

[7] I am aware of three translations of the play into English: one by Mary Taanila Lehtinen and David Hanhilammi for a performance at the University of Minnesota in 1980 (which was actually printed in a now defunct journal, *Finnish Americana,* in 1981); one produced by Hilja Karvanen for the 'Reunion of Sisters' conference, co-organised by the universities of Kuopio and Minnesota in 1987; and finally, in 2020 East15 drama school MA Directing student Ronja Siljander translated and staged the play for her dissertation project. Towards the end of my writing process, I gained access to the Taanila Lehtinen and Hanhilammi translation, and reflect on reading that translation in the conclusion of this thesis. Sadly, the translation by Karvanen, which only ever existed in manuscript form, seems to have been lost to the ages. I was able to digitally attend the performance of Siljander's translation in October 2020, and subsequently interviewed her as part of my research (see Chapter Four and Appendix F). Additionally, there is a translation of act one of the play by Eric Schaad, included in the anthology *Female Voices of the North 2.*

[8] Canth's play *Anna Liisa* has two published translations into English, one by Austin and Aili Flint (1997) and one by Steve Stone (2007).

the law was brought to debate and was amended a few years later. It is important for feminist translators to uncover a lineage of historical women writers who resisted the patriarchal norms of their eras, and bring their work further into the public eye.

Furthermore, in line with my intersectional feminist politics, I believe it is crucial for feminist artistic work to not only engage with gender but also with gender's intersections with class and race. There is a reluctance in contemporary mainstream feminism to engage with class, in particular. Neoliberal feminism, with its commodified 'girl boss' tropes, fails to acknowledge how class-based oppression intersects with gender oppression. *The Worker's Wife* is a play as much about class as it is about gender. The misogynistic property laws that Canth was arguing against disproportionately affected working-class women, and the play very much addresses that. In *The Worker's Wife,* Canth also explores the intersection of gender oppression with ethnicity-based oppression. One of the play's protagonists is a Roma woman, and Canth portrays how she is oppressed by society because of her ethnicity, as well as her gender. The Roma community are among the most oppressed minorities in Europe today, and so the discrimination exposed in the play still feels pressing. It is crucial for the feminist translator to engage with questions of class and race, as well as gender, and the fact that this source text already addresses these intersections makes it an apt case study.

The play was written in the late nineteenth century. There are therefore inevitably aspects of the play that do not align with my twenty-first century feminist beliefs. In particular, there are problematic elements of how the character Kerttu is presented, in relation to her status as a Roma woman (see Chapter Two and Chapter Three). This presents a challenge when thinking about translating the play in a twenty-first century context. I believe that the feminist translator should approach their source material critically, always translating with their own feminist intentions in mind. For this reason, this play presents a useful challenge, in allowing me to explore how the feminist translator can negotiate the balance between appreciation and respect for an influential feminist text, and a critical approach that remains true to the translator's own feminism.

Translation studies

The theoretical context and underpinning of my research is drawn from the field of translation studies, and, more specifically, from the fields of feminist translation and theatre translation studies. Translation studies as an academic field emerged in the latter half of the twentieth century, although some key contributions were made much earlier, such as Walter Benjamin's highly influential essay, 'The Task of the Translator' (2015, originally published in 1923). In this essay, Benjamin frames translation work as artistic work, and emphasises the important role of the translator. The positioning of the translator as artist rather than technician is foundational to my work. However, Benjamin then goes on to argue that the task of the translator is to release the 'pure language' of the source text, framing translations as transparent – a concept that I find more problematic. From

the 1980s, a ‘cultural turn’ (Bassnett and Lefevere, 1990) took place in translation studies, which began to challenge and move away from the idea of the ‘transparent’ translation, and particularly from earlier understandings of translation bound up in notions of linguistic equivalence and objectivity. Theories of ‘equivalence’ purported that texts were stable, and therefore that linguistically equivalent translations were possible. For example, theorist Eugene Nida (1964) argued that there were two types of equivalence: formal and dynamic. The former involves identifying a core message of the original, and then using both form and content to translate this. The aim of the latter is to illicit the same response in the reader of the target text as the source text does. Nida (1964) calls his approach ‘scientific’. A ‘scientific’, ‘equivalence’ based theory of translation has been undermined by theorists contributing to the ‘cultural turn’. The ‘cultural turn’ replaced the argument for equivalence with one that argued for translation being an activity rooted in context, and with a key ethical component. I disagree with Benjamin and Nida’s conceptualisations of the text as stable, and their denial of the interpretative role and subjective position of the translator. Translation is a fundamentally contextualised activity. Texts are unfixed, and translators are active participants in interpretative meaning making in translated texts.

Lawrence Venuti (1998, 2008, 2013) has made significant and influential contributions to the field of translation studies as a theorist challenging figurations of texts and translations as transparent. Venuti presents an ethical argument against the traditional, ‘invisible’ translator – the translator who achieves the effect of fluency desired by the anglophone world, who

offers supposedly transparent, unmediated access to the source text. Venuti points out the fallacy of this – translated texts always reach the reader through the mediation of the translator, and have been subject to an individual interpretation process. Venuti's pioneering work picks up from much earlier work by Friedrich Schleiermacher (2012, originally published 1813) and Antoine Berman (2012, originally published 1985). Schleiermacher provided the concept of 'foreiginisation' and 'domestication' as differing translation approaches. Venuti has clarified that the two are not binary, oppositional approaches, and that all translation is inevitably domesticating, but makes an argument for 'resistancy' in translation in order to mitigate this. Venuti's theories relate strongly to feminist translation theories and practices, which also position translators as active participants in meaning making, and work to challenge the invisibility of the translator. I have particularly drawn on Venuti's theories in my reformulation of a strategy of resistancy in feminist theatre translation in Chapter Three.

Feminist translation

The term 'feminist translation' encompasses a broad range of practices, but at the heart of all these practices is an understanding of translation as feminist activism; a belief that the choice of text, choice of translation strategies, or both, can contribute to the women's movement. Most often, the term is taken to refer to a specific movement of writers, translators and theorists working in Quebec in the 1970s and 1980s, and it is their strategies that have formed a basis for my own translation research and practice. The Canadian feminist translators were a group of translators, Barbara Godard

and Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood for example, translating avant-garde feminist poetry and prose by writers such as Nicole Brossard, Lise Gauvin and France Théoret from French into English. Both Godard and de Lotbinière-Harwood have theorised their own work; the former in, for example, the preface to her translation of Brossard's *Lovhers* (Godard, 1986) and her article 'Theorizing Feminist Discourse/Translation' (Godard, 1989), and the latter in her bilingual treatise on feminist translation, *Re-belle et infidèle/The Body Bilingual* (de Lotbinière-Harwood, 1991). However, the work and translation strategies of this group of translators was most comprehensively theorised by translation scholar Luise von Flotow (1991), in her foundational article 'Feminist Translation: Contexts, Practices and Theories.' In this article, von Flotow (1991) lays out the key strategies employed by the Canadian feminist translators: supplementing, prefacing and footnoting, and "hijacking". In response to these feminist translation strategies, translation scholar Françoise Massardier-Kenney (1997) presented her own, more in depth, categorisation of different types of feminist translation strategy in her article, 'Towards a Redefinition of Feminist Translation Practice.' Massardier-Kenney divided the strategies into two categories: 'author-centred' and 'translator-centred'. The strategies in the former category are recovery, commentary, and resistancy, and commentary, use of parallel texts, and collaboration in the latter. Whilst von Flotow's strategies have also provided inspiration for my own strategies (as explored in Chapter One), I have used Massardier-Kenney's re-categorisations as the basis for my work, structuring my thesis around my

reappraisal and adaptation of recovery, resistancy, and collaboration in chapters two, three and four respectively.

The field of feminist translation is, of course, bigger than this specific, contained movement. Indeed, Olga Castro and Emek Ergun (2020, p. 126) have criticised the scholarly tendency to confine 'feminist translation' to the Canadian movement. Castro and Ergun (2020, p. 127) trace earlier practices which, although they were not theorised as such at the time, could certainly be classified as feminist translation. For example, they cite seventeenth-century English writer Aphra Behn's translation of Fontenelle's *Discovery of Many Worlds,* where Behn added a female character into her translation (Castro and Ergun, 2020, p. 127); a decision that could be theorised as a feminist translation intervention. Indeed, women and translation have a long, entwined history, as translation was historically one of the only acceptable ways for women to express themselves in writing. Castro and Ergun (2020, p. 131) note that early women translators were also pioneers of feminist translation theory, where they used meta-texts to comment on their practice. Several scholars have subsequently contributed to the field, looking at ways in which translation and gender interact and intersect. This scholarship has looked at how feminist theory has been translated, for example, M.A. Simons' (2001) *Beauvoir and The Second Sex*; how gendered metaphors have been used to discuss the act of translation (Chamberlain, 1988); how misogynistic, or patriarchal, texts can be translated by feminist translators (Levine, 1983); and at women writers in translation (Resnick and de Courtivron, 1984).

Luise von Flotow (1997) has traced feminist translation practices in the twentieth-century, and their intersection with wider cultural conversations about gender and language, in *Translation and Gender: Translating in the 'Era of Feminism'.* Von Flotow's (2016) more recent work, *Translating Women: Different Voices and New Horizons,* co-edited with Farzaneh Farazahad, seeks to widen the field beyond the European and Anglo-American sphere, addressing global feminist translation practices. Other scholars have also sought to decolonise and diversify feminist translation practice and scholarship. Castro and Ergun (2017) politicise translation studies, addressing how translation can serve as political activism, building feminist knowledge, and asking how activism is translated, in *Feminist Translation Studies: Local and Transnational Perspectives*. As definitions of feminism have expanded and progressed, feminist translation scholarship has expanded accordingly. Castro and Ergun (2020), again, have worked to widen its geohistorical scope, considering non-Western perspectives and broadening the definition of feminism beyond earlier 'monolinguistic, oppositional, essentialist, and binary' (p. 125) approaches. Most recently, further contributions have been made by Eleonora Federici and José Santaemilia (2021), whose edited work *New Perspectives on Gender and Translation: New Voices for Transnational Dialogues* has a particular focus on practices emerging from underrepresented European countries.

Although my own research has focused chiefly on the strategies of the Canadian feminist translators, I have also drawn from the wider feminist

translation field. Indeed, this has been vital, given the disparity between the particularities of my own translation project (a historical theatre text) and the texts those translators worked on (avant-garde prose works by their contemporaries). As per my feminist politics, I have particularly aimed to adopt a feminist translation approach that is non-essentialist, does not take the category of woman as stable and universal, and that considers factors beyond gender. Doris Y. Kadish and Massardier-Kenney's (2009) *Translating Slavery* is an anthology bringing together translations from French to English of abolitionist texts by eighteenth-century women writers. These translations are accompanied by critical essays, where the translators discuss their approaches and decisions, with a particular focus on how they translated race and gender in the texts. The project sought to translate these radical, but dated, texts in such a way that the radical gesture crossed the temporal gap between source writer and contemporary reader. The translators navigate the balance between celebrating what is progressive in the writings, but nonetheless challenging what is problematic, particularly in terms of how race is dealt with in the texts. Massardier-Kenney and Kadish's collection offers helpful provocations and frameworks for translating historical texts through a lens that considers race and gender, and I have drawn on their work in my own project. However, again, although the collection does include plays as well as prose texts, they have been translated for an academic readership, and not for performance. I hope to extend their practice and strategies by considering how the performance element complicates this work.

Theatre translation

Accordingly, alongside feminist translation scholarship, theatre translation scholarship is an equally important context for my research. The academic field of theatre translation emerged in the latter half of the twentieth century. In the late 1990s, Susan Bassnett (1998) called it the 'poor relation' (p. 107) of wider translation studies, but the field has certainly burgeoned since then. Theatre translation scholarship encompasses a spectrum of work, drawing, for example, on theatre semiotics and dramaturgy. Early, pioneering contributions were made by Bassnett (1985) herself, in her chapter 'Ways Through the Labyrinth: Strategies and Methods for Translating Theatre Texts,' where she began to consider the challenges of negotiating the numerous signs at play in a piece of theatre and the impact of this on translation. Patrice Pavis (1991) also drew on semiotics in 'Towards Specifying Theatre Translation.' Here, Pavis considered the specific condition that differentiates theatre translation from other forms of literary translation – i.e., 'the situation of enunciation of a text presented by the actor in a specific time and place, to an audience receiving both text and *mise en scène*' (Pavis, 1991, p. 136). Pavis argues that a translated theatre text is incomplete without the *mise en scène*. Bassnett (1991) then argued against this idea in her article 'Translating for the Theatre: The Case Against Performability,' in which she countered that this conceptualisation of theatre translation made the task of the theatre translator impossible. Here, Bassnett (1991) argued against 'performability' as a central concern for the theatre translator in general, pointing out both the vagueness and the contingency of the term. On the one hand, I do not think that the theatre translator can ignore the performance situation, and in fact, I argue that the

feminist theatre translator must see themselves as theatre-maker and actively consider the *mise en scène* of a play and use it as a site for feminist intervention (see Chapter Four). However, I do concur with Bassnett's dismissal of 'performability' as a qualifier for translated plays. I return to this area in greater depth in Chapter Three, where I argue that the feminist translator should treat the quality of speakability, often conflated with performability, with suspicion.

Sirkku Aaltonen (2000) made a significant contribution to the field with her book *Time-Sharing on Stage: Drama Translation in Theatre and Society.* Aaltonen uses metaphors of windows, mirrors, and apartments to figure theatre translation(s), writing about how the texts reflect the conditions of their target cultures. I address these metaphors and the nuanced bearing they have on the work of the feminist theatre translator in Chapter Three. There have also been several writings about particular case studies, analysing the movement of specific texts from one culture to another. Gunilla Anderman's (2005) *Europe on Stage: Translation and Theatre* and Geraldine Brodie's (2017) *The Translator on Stage* provide invaluable insight into the status of theatre translation in the UK. Anderman's historical overview of the reception and translation of now canonical European playwrights, particularly Ibsen, Chekhov and Strindberg, who are useful comparisons to Minna Canth, has provided crucial context for my practice. Brodie has provided a key survey of the culture of translated plays in performance in twenty-first century London. As I have sought to produce a translated text intended for performance in a twenty-first century British context,

Anderman and Brodie's work has allowed me to contextualise my practice and to understand how it responds to the flawed landscape of translated theatre in the UK.

Thesis outline

In the first chapter, I examine the concept of feminist translation. The particular focus of this chapter is an exploration and appraisal of the theories and practices of the Canadian feminist translators. I then begin to suggest how they might be re-defined and adapted for a different, twenty-first century context, and introduce how I have used and adapted their strategies in my own practice. In the second chapter, I apply Massardier-Kenney's 'author-centred' feminist translation strategies of recovery and commentary to my case study text: Minna Canth's *The Worker's Wife.* I give a brief introduction to Canth's life and work and assess existing scholarship about Canth. I argue that Canth made a pioneering artistic contribution with *The Worker's Wife,* using techniques that foreshadowed approaches that would go on to be used by epic theatre practitioners, and offer an analysis of the play, arguing that it should be considered a 'Canthian' feminist social realist drama – a drama that uses non-mimetic strategies to examine and critique contemporary feminist issues. In the third chapter I suggest how Massardier-Kenney's strategy of resistancy could be adapted for the feminist translation of texts for performance. Resistancy, unlike recovery and commentary, is a strategy concerned with the actual translation of the words of the source text. I propose a reformulation of resistancy, drawing on both Massardier-Kenney and Lawrence Venuti's theories. Crucially, I argue that the feminist theatre translator should be invested in producing translations that are

politically resistant, resisting hegemonies. I suggest three applications of resistancy as a feminist translation strategy, challenging traditional concepts at the heart of translation discourse: fidelity and fluency, or their theatrical counterpart, speakability. In the fourth chapter, I examine the ways in which the feminist theatre translator can, and arguably *must,* consider a play's *mise en scène,* and also the ways in which the translator can make use of a text's theatricality as a site for feminist intervention. I propose that the translator employ a strategy of collaboration, drawing on Massardier-Kenney's feminist translation strategy of collaboration and Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood's concept of co-authership. I argue that as collaboration is inherent to theatrical practice, it is vital that the feminist theatre translator approach the translation process collaboratively. Finally, I conclude by gathering together the strategies I have used for my feminist translation of *The Worker's Wife,* proposing them as strategies for feminist theatre translation practice.

Chapter One - Feminist Translation Strategies: An Overview

In this chapter, I will first explore the theories and practices of the Canadian feminist translators of the 1970-90s, before then reappraising them and beginning to propose adaptations of them. I want to place my work within the existing context of feminist translation scholarship**.** Although, evidently, feminist translation practice and scholarship extends well beyond the late twentieth-century Canadian translators, a great deal of foundational feminist translation scholarship does stem from their work. Furthermore, unlike the majority of their arguable predecessors, these translators wrote extensively about their practice, theorising it, and laying out their strategies clearly. For this reason, I wish to take their theories and practices as a starting point for my own. I will first outline and then appraise their strategies, noting the very specific context that allowed for them. I will then suggest how they might be re-defined and adapted for a different, twenty-first century context. I then introduce Françoise Massardier-Kenney's redefinition of feminist translation practice and argue for her redefinition as a helpful framework for re-adapting feminist translation practice to a new context. Finally, I will introduce how I have used Massardier-Kenney's strategies in my own practice, and begin to explore what the particularities of translating for the stage are, and what they mean for a feminist translator.

The Canadian feminist translators: supplementing, prefacing and footnoting, and "hijacking"

The Canadian feminist translators were translators such as Barbara Godard and Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood, who translated avant-garde feminist texts by writers like Nicole Brossard, Lise Gauvin, and France Théoret, from French into English. Their work was theorised by translation scholars such as Luise von Flotow, as well as by the translators themselves. Their translations were feminist in the sense that they were translating explicitly feminist source texts, but also in the strategies they employed for their translating. In her 1991 article, 'Feminist Translation: Contexts, Practices and Theories,' Luise von Flotow sets out the key strategies that constituted the Canadian school's understanding of feminist translation practice. She lists them as: supplementing, prefacing and footnoting, and "hijacking".

Supplementing

The texts translated by the Canadian feminist translators were in themselves experimental feminist texts, making attempts to dismantle patriarchal language - specifically, French patriarchal language. Supplementing is the idea that when translating, the feminist translators were replacing any critique of French patriarchal language in the source texts, with critique of English patriarchal language in their target texts. Von Flotow cites Walter Benjamin's (2015, originally published in 1923) 'The Task of the Translator', in which Benjamin also discussed the idea of supplementation in translation. Benjamin (2015) argued that 'as regards the meaning, the language of a translation can – in fact, must – let itself go, so that it gives voice to the *intentio* of the original not as reproduction but as harmony, as a supplement to the language in which it expresses itself, as its own kind of

intentio' (p. 79). For von Flotow, the feminist translator uses supplementation to translate the political *intentio* of the source text. However, Benjamin (2015) goes on to say that 'a real translation is transparent; it does not cover the original, does not block its light, but allows the pure language, as though reinforced by its own medium, to shine upon the original all the more fully' (p. 79). This is at odds with von Flotow's understanding of supplementing. Feminist translation arguably seeks to 'cover the original' (Benjamin, 2015, p. 79) by presenting a critique of the target language, rather than the source language. Indeed, von Flotow (1991) does own that 'concretely, [supplementing] means serious interference with the text' (p. 74). However, her justification for this is that 'the feminist translator is conscious of her political role as mediator, whereas Benjamin seems to conceive of a translation, or any work of art for that matter, as apolitical and not primarily destined for an audience' (von Flotow, 1991, p. 75). I agree with von Flotow's argument that whether consciously or not, a translator cannot carry out their work without consideration of their target audience. Their own politics will then inevitably mediate how they translate the text for said audience. Feminist translation practice is an explicitly conscious shaping of the text. Supplementing in feminist translation is driven by the intentions of both the author and the translator – in these instances, the intention of dismantling patriarchal language. Therefore, the translators necessarily keep in mind the audience, and consider how this dismantling will be best communicated to them. It is the feminist translator's role to 'shine upon the original' (Benjamin, 2015, p. 79) text by

reinforcing its feminism (and the translator's own feminism) in such a way as is legible to the target audience.

The ways in which supplementing actually manifested in the feminist translators' translated texts was varied. Frequently it took the form of substituting (or supplementing) one form of wordplay with another. For example, the title of Nicole Brossard's book *L'Amèr* combines three French words: mère (mother), mer (sea), and amer (bitter). These words all relate to the first part of the book, which examines the concept of the suffocating patriarchal mother. There is no single-word equivalent that suggests these three combined meanings in English. Instead, Barbara Godard chose to incorporate the three different meanings into the title in her English translation by using graphic formatting to supplement Brossard's original wordplay. Godard titled the book: *The S e our mothers*, formatted so that the 'S' is in a larger font with the three following words in a column beside it, thus spelling out 'sea', 'sour', 'smothers'. This was a clever, visual way of communicating the three words implied in *L'Amèr* – not a direct translation of the word, but rather an attempt to supplement the word play. However, Godard's feminist supplementing here is reliant on formatting, and when the text is cited, in general, the title is given simply as *These Our Mothers* – a fine and suitable translated title, but not one that communicates the intended meanings. What was clearly given a great deal of thought and weight (conceiving of how to supplement Brossard's wordplay), is effectively reduced or even erased in practice. This is perhaps a limit of feminist supplementing – that the effects can only be appreciated if seen on the page.

This limitation is something I will go on to consider when looking more specifically at translating texts intended for performance.

A second example of supplementing is Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood's treatment of the French word 'cyprine' in her translation of Brossard's *Under the Tongue* [*Sous la langue*]. 'Cyprine' is a French word meaning female sexual secretion. In her extensive account of her feminist translation practice, *Re-belle infidèle/The Body Bilingual*, de Lotbinière-Harwood (1991) writes that although the word 'had existed for a long time in French' and 'lesbian writers [had] long used it' and 'feminists…[had] reclaimed it', the word was not in the dictionary, because 'lexicographers don't want to give women access to this word' (p. 145). De Lotbinière-Harwood details the etymology of the word and her struggle to find a succinct English equivalent, before eventually landing on creating a neologism: cyprin. De Lotbinière-Harwood supplements Brossard's provocative reclamation of a word inaccessible to women with the creation of a new word for something previously unnamed in English.

Supplementing was a necessary strategy where the feminism of the source text was reliant on a particularity of the source language (French) that could not be translated directly into English. A key difference between the French and English languages is that in French, nouns, adjectives and participles are gender-identified. The Canadian feminist source text writers frequently used and subverted this when experimenting with defying patriarchal language. As English does not gender-identify these elements of language, these

particular experiments presented a challenge in translation, which is why supplementing was needed. There is a passage in *L'Euguélionne* by Louky Bersianik where she writes about the politics of abortion. Bersianik emphasises how society blames and punishes women for abortion. She adds an 'e' to the end of the word 'puni' (punished), thus 'feminising' the word: 'le ou la coupable doit être *punie*' (Bersianik cited in Simon, 1996, p. 21).[9] Feminist translator Howard Scott supplemented Bersianik's untranslatable feminising 'e' by adding the pronoun 'she': 'the guilty one must be punished…whether she's a man or a woman!' (Scott cited in Simon, 1996, p. 21). Evidently, the Canadian feminist translators used supplementing as a strategy to reconcile linguistic differences between the source and target languages, replacing linguistic feminist gestures in one language with those in another. As I am working on translating a historical text, I have endeavoured to build on this strategy by considering how the feminist translator might use supplementing to translate across time periods, as well as across languages (see chapters Two, Three and Four). Expanding the Canadian feminist translators' understanding of this strategy is useful for thinking about how supplementing can be applied to a wider feminist translation context than that of this particular group of authors and translators.

Prefacing and footnoting

Von Flotow's (1991) second feminist translation strategy is prefacing and footnoting. Whilst the form of this strategy is self-evident, its functions as a

[9] Emphasis mine.

feminist translation strategy were varied. Often, prefaces and footnotes served to explain the translators supplementing practices. In the case of de Lotbinière-Harwood's (1991) 'cyprine' neologism, she herself acknowledged: 'I couldn't just launch a new word into the English language without accounting for it' (p. 147). Given that it was an unfamiliar word to her anglophone audience, de Lotbinière-Harwood had to find a way to explain 'cyprin' in order for her feminist supplementing to be made clear. For much of the supplementing to carry feminist weight, it had to be made evident to the reader that it had actually taken place. Von Flotow (1991) writes that the feminist translator 'indicates her supplementing activities – graphic modes, wordplays more familiar to anglophone feminists' (p. 77), and so on, in prefaces, translators' notes, and footnotes. The Canadian feminist translators came to use prefaces and footnotes extensively as a vital element of their practice. As well as allowing them to provide explanations, prefaces and footnotes allowed them to truly assert their work and presence as translators. In the preface to her translation of Brossard's *Lovhers*, Barbara Godard insisted on the revolutionary importance of prefaces to feminist translation:

> The preface is commonly thought of as the translator's cardinal sin. It violates the current rule that a translation must not give the impression that it is a translation […] The modest, self-effacing translator, corollary to the notion of transparency, is replaced by a translator who is an active participant in the creation of meaning, and may even immodestly flaunt her signature – in a preface. (Godard, 1986, p. 7)

Godard (1989, p. 50) later termed this approach '*womanhandling*'.

Emphasis is placed on the translator's visibility, her assertiveness and her

active participation in the creation of meaning. De Lotbinière-Harwood provided her explanation for her 'cyprin' neologism in a translator's note which briefly explained the French word, its Greek etymology (from Cyprus, the birthplace of Aphrodite), and that she proposed 'cyprin' for use in English – demonstrating how, through supplementing, she had contributed to feminist meaning-making in the text.

De Lotbinière-Harwood (1991) has recounted that the placement of the explanatory translator's note required careful thought 'because the piece is short and poetic, and was going to be printed in a hand-crafted edition, where a translator's note would be very conspicuous and inaesthetic' (p. 147). Eventually, the poem was presented with an asterisk beside the word 'cyprin', leading to the note on its own page at the end of the book.[10] On one hand, having its own page dedicated to it grants the note a sense of importance. On the other hand, the note is consigned to the back of the book, away from the main body of text. This concern about the note's placement also raises questions about the extent to which feminist translators truly wanted to assert themselves in the text – clearly a sensitive balance needed to be struck between 'flaunting their signature,' and disrupting the effect of the source text.

It is also worth underlining quite how reliant the feminist translators' works were on meta-texts. Von Flotow (1997, p. 18) mentions de Lotbinière-

[10] De Lotbinière-Harwood mentions that this decision was made jointly with the book's designer, Odette DesOrmeaux. This highlights how, as with Godard's *These Our Mothers* graphic design choices, the design of the physical text could play an important part in feminist translation.

Harwood's 'discussion in public lectures and writing' of the word 'cyprin'. She argues that it was 'the 'account' [de Lotbinière-Harwood] has given of it,' that has 'further drawn attention both to the 'sanitized' aspects of the English language and the effects gender-awareness in translation can produce' (von Flotow, 1997, p. 18). Von Flotow's comment highlights the importance of meta-texts in communicating the translators' feminism. Similarly, I have mentioned the potential limitations of Godard's *These Our Mothers* graphic supplementing, and how it might be missed by readers. It is through the discussion of Godard's practice, both in her own preface and in von Flotow's article about feminist translation practice, which uses this example, that I personally was made aware of this particular case of feminist supplementing practice that I might otherwise not have noticed. This example, again, highlights how fundamental meta-texts and scholarship surrounding the feminist translators' work are to communicating their dismantling of patriarchal language, rather than feminist meaning being made clear solely in the translated text itself.

The feminist translators' prefaces and footnotes were not exclusively devoted to highlighting their own work as translators, though. They were also a place for the translators to discuss, interpret and contextualise the source texts, placing the source texts and their authors within an allusive, citational feminist canon. The prefaces are careful analyses, making every attempt to fully communicate (translate) every element of the original author's work. In her translation of Brossard's (1988) *The Aerial Letter,* Marlene Wildeman included footnotes throughout to note intertextual

references in Brossard's text (which Brossard herself had not noted) to women writers such as Djuna Barnes, Gertrude Stein, Luce Irigary, and others, and explained the references in her footnotes. Wildeman's notes trace a canon of influential work by women writers, and place Brossard within it, giving the source text contextual weight, as well as demonstrating the care and scholarship that has gone into Wildeman's translation work. It is evident from Godard's (1986) preface to *Lovhers* that intertextuality and reference to earlier women writers is something that the feminist authors themselves were consciously doing: 'the loving allusions to women writers – Virginia Woolf, Colette – shared vocabulary and quotations, institute a feminist intertextuality, a matrilineal literary tradition' (p. 9). Crucially, these feminist writings – both the source texts and the translations – emphasise how their meanings are 'amplified in a multiplicity of female voices' (Godard, 1986, p. 9). Godard (1986) argues that feminist fiction such as *Lovhers* and *These Our Mothers* seek to dissolve 'the authority of the male tradition of the book. For it denounces the economics of proprietorship on which authorship is based… These are to be replaced by values of *interdependence and multiplicity*' (p. 8).[11] Evidently, both the authors themselves and the feminist translators were concerned with multiplicity, and bringing together several women's voices in their works, not just amplifying their own. I find this a very compelling use of and argument for prefaces and footnotes.

[11] Emphasis mine.

“Hijacking”

Von Flotow’s final feminist translation strategy, “hijacking”, is perhaps the most controversial of the strategies. However, “hijacking” seems to me to be less a concrete strategy and more a shorthand for the general approach taken by the feminist translators. Von Flotow (1991, p. 78) took the term from a negative review of de Lotbinière-Harwood’s (1990) translation of Lise Gauvin’s *Letters from an Other*, where the (male) critic accused de Lotbinière-Harwood of “hijacking” Gauvin’s work. Von Flotow turns this criticism into a positive feminist translation approach by invoking the translator’s agency and political motivations. “Hijacking” is a feminist translation approach whereby the translator ‘"hijack[s]" the text, appropriate[s] it, [makes] it her own to reflect her political intentions’ (von Flotow, 1991, p. 79). As von Flotow notes, de Lotbinière-Harwood makes her “hijacking” of *Letters from an Other* quite clear in the preface to the work, asserting her own voice and presence in the translated text: ‘Lise Gauvin is a feminist, and so am I. But I am not her’ (de Lotbinière-Harwood, 1990, p. 9). De Lotbinière-Harwood (1990) has consciously and explicitly “hijacked” Gauvin’s text with the explicit purpose of ‘[making] the feminine visible in language. Because making the feminine visible in language means making women seen and heard in the real world’ (p. 9). She is using Gauvin’s text as a conduit for this. De Lotbinière-Harwood owns her “hijacking” of Gauvin’s text, an act which is driven by her feminist politics and her desire to dismantle patriarchal language in English, and to amplify women’s voices.

When translating Michèle Causse's paper 'L'Interloquée,' de Lotbinière-Harwood used all three of von Flotow's feminist translation strategies: supplementing, meta-textual notes, and "hijacking". She used a typographical supplementing strategy to translate Causse's subversive use of feminising 'e's throughout. Where Causse had subversively feminised words with the addition of the 'e', de Lotbinière-Harwood (1991, pp. 122-3) put the letter 'e' in bold type in the English equivalent words. This strategy was then explained in an accompanying translator's note. However, there were instances where de Lotbinière-Harwood went further in her explicit 'feminisations' of words than Causse had in the source text. For example, the French word 'autre' (other), which does not vary according to gender, occurs throughout the text. De Lotbinière-Harwood (1991, p. 124) chose to 'feminise' this word throughout by emphasising the 'her' in 'other' by putting it in bold type. By including further linguistic experiments in her translation, de Lotbinière-Harwood "hijacked" Causse's original text, taking a step beyond merely supplementing Causse's feminisations.

"Hijacking" is, unsurprisingly, a controversial concept. Rosemary Arrojo (1994, p. 149) has criticised the feminist translators for this particular practice, going so far as to align them with the male translators they claimed to reject, accusing them of a 'double standard'. She cites examples of male translators using texts in translation to serve their own ideological purposes, placing them alongside examples of feminist translators doing what she deems to be the same thing. On these grounds, Arrojo argues that the feminist translators 'sabotage other people's texts and impose their own

political agendas,' showing 'contradictory ethics' (cited in Castro and Ergun, 2020, p. 128). On the one hand, it is true that the translations are ideologically motivated and the translators certainly worked to emphasise that. However, crucially, all translators intervene in, or "hijack", their source texts on some level – the feminist translators just did so explicitly, openly. As Castro and Ergun argue:

> The level of intervention that feminist translation practices involve is not necessarily any greater than that of other hegemonic translation practices, which tend to be perceived as 'non-interventionist' and 'objective' precisely because they confirm the (unmarked) status quo rather than questioning its truth. (Castro and Ergun, 2020, p. 134)

By drawing attention to their actions, and placing emphasis on their visibility, the feminist translators break down the 'illusion of "objective" translation' (Castro and Ergun, 2020, p. 134). The "hijackings" are explicit and purposeful. The male translators that Arrojo aligns the feminist translators with were not explicit in their overtaking of the texts, and rather made a pretence at transparency by not disclosing their interventions. De Lotbinière-Harwood (1991) emphasises the importance of signature, in the sense of literally having the translator's name on the front of the text to acknowledge the translator's 'decoding and recoding decoding activity,' so that 'the translated text is recognized as her personal reading, her interpretation of the source text' (p. 153). Furthermore, the translator's signature does not supersede the author's signature – rather the two appear alongside each other, framing the translated text as 'a joint project realized in the spirit of solidarity' (de Lotbinière-Harwood, 1991, p. 155).

Co-authership

As has been established, in the case of the Canadian feminist translators, the translators' ideologies and interventions were not necessarily at odds with the source texts. Sherry Simon argues (1996) that 'the practices might be understood as 'hijacking' in the sense in which Luise von Flotow introduces it,' but 'the term hardly seems appropriate' (p. 16). (It is worth re-stating here that von Flotow's choice of term is clearly somewhat tongue-in-cheek, and there is a reason she places quotation marks around it.) Simon (1996) goes on to note that 'everything in these practices seems to point to a wilful collusion and cooperation between text, author and translator' (p. 16). De Lotbinière-Harwood (1991) clarifies that in the case of her feminising additional words in her translation of 'L'Interloquée', '[she] did check with Causse' (p. 124). Indeed, many of the translations came about through active collaboration between the source text author and the translator. De Lotbinière-Harwood called this process of collaboration and cooperation 'co-authership'.[12] The collaborative, co-authership model gives agency to both the writer and translator, allowing both to work towards a shared feminist vision, one which 'represents a refusal of the traditional view of the neutral and invisible servant-translator' (de Lotbinière-Harwood, 1991, p. 154). I see this resistance to the traditional hierarchical relationship between writer and translator, which places the translator below the author, as a vital element of feminist translation practice. De Lotbinière-Harwood (1991) writes about the 'energizing *complicité* between women who usually work alone,' which can lead to 'startling discoveries concerning either the initial

[12] The spelling 'auther' is used by Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood as a 'feminised' version of author when referring to women writers.

text or its target-language version-in-progress' (pp. 155-6). She emphasises how enjoyable and productive this way of working can be for both parties. Not only does co-authership equalise the relationship between translator and writer, resisting patriarchal ideas of author as sole meaning-maker, but collaboration can really be beneficial for the work. I will turn to my own collaborative approach, and my understanding of co-authership in a theatrical context, in Chapter Four.

Adapting and re-defining feminist translation practice

Godard, de Lotbinière-Harwood, von Flotow and their contemporaries very much laid the foundations for theorised feminist translation practice. In presenting my own definition of feminist translation practice, I will carry forward three key notions laid out by the Canadian feminist translators, which I believe are fundamental. Firstly: von Flotow's (1997) definition of the feminist translators as, crucially, 'working for the cause of the women's movement' (p. 22). Although this is a fairly basic point, it is worth stating clearly that a foundational point for any feminist translation must be that the translator sees their work as politically motivated, as being feminist in its intent. Secondly, the Canadian translators' espousal of visibility is vital to any feminist translation practice in the agency it affords the translator. The very act of making oneself visible can carry feminist weight in that it defies stereotypical notions of femininity, and diminishes the traditional hierarchical relationship between author and translator. Von Flotow (1997) writes that the feminist translator 'regularly oversteps the bounds of invisibility that traditionally define [their] role' (p. 22). Indeed, they 'draw attention to their action,' (von Flotow, 1997, p. 25) and make no pretence at

invisibility. Translator visibility allows for translations to resist the notion of single meanings in a text, making it clear that this is one of multiple possible versions. The notion of co-authership is also useful for this reason, in allowing for a layering of several interpretations and a defiance of the patriarchal single voice. Finally, the concept of 'intervention' is crucial to feminist translation practice. The feminist translator assumes 'the right to query their source texts from a feminist perspective, to intervene and make changes when the texts depart from this perspective' (von Flotow, 1997, p. 24). This is a useful way of thinking about taking feminist action in translation. Intervention is how the feminist translator makes themself visible in the text, and it is how they enact their feminism, by seeing themselves as an active participant in the creation of meaning in the translated text. The feminist translators' strategies challenge earlier theories of translation, for example Benjamin's (2015, p. 79) notions of 'transparency' and 'pure language', and Nida's (1964) problematic idea of a 'scientific' translation approach that achieves textual 'equivalence.'

However, this small group of theorists and practitioners are not the sole proponents and definers of feminist translation, and there are elements of their theories and practices that I would challenge. The Canadian feminist translation practice was born out of a specific context – feminist writers and translators working in bilingual Quebec in the latter half of the twentieth century. Their theories and practices very much reflect this context. As Françoise Massardier-Kenney (1997) notes: 'Godard [et al's] discussion of feminism and translation is placed within a specific tradition of French

feminism… a tradition represented by writers like Luce Irigary and Hélène Cixous' (pp. 56-7). Firstly, this was a highly academic context, and secondly, this particular tradition of feminist theory had a tendency to 'essentialize feminine difference,' (Massardier-Kenney, 1997, pp. 56-7) and to assume a white, middle-class perspective. Castro and Ergun (2020) write that the 'Canadian feminists' translation praxis emerged in a specific context in response to specific socio-political and literary needs' (p. 130). Their methods and their understanding of feminism were suited specifically to the type of work (avant-garde, feminist texts) that they were working on in a specific context (academic) at a particular time (the 1970-90s).

'Feminism' as an ideological position is neither static nor incontestable. Françoise Massardier-Kenney (1997) has argued that von Flotow's feminist translation strategies (supplementing, prefacing and footnoting, and "hijacking") are not necessarily inherently feminist - 'assuming the notion of feminist itself is clear and non-controversial' - but that it is 'the use to which these strategies are put' (p. 57) that makes them so. The Canadian feminist translators and authors espoused a somewhat essentialist feminist politics. For example, de Lotbinière-Harwood (1991) calls for feminist translators to work from 'a place of commitment to a gynocentric world view' (p. 153). This type of essentialist feminism is not one that fits with my own politics. Whilst I agree with the need to address a historical bias towards androcentricity, I find this call overly binary and lacking nuance. It assumes that there is such a thing as a coherent 'gynocentric world view', an assumption which fails to acknowledge differences between women. Castro

and Ergun (2020) criticise the feminism of Godard, de Lotbinière-Harwood, von Flotow et al, writing that ‘they seem to have pursued a naïve universalist understanding of women’s oppression that overlooked their own position as privileged (Western, white intellectual) women’ (p. 129). Federici and Fortunati (2011), writing in the twenty-first century, present a more contemporary understanding of what feminist translation should mean: ‘translating as a feminist means working while keeping in mind differences among women, their diverse “positionality” in terms of race, class, ethnic group, and social and cultural context’ (p. 18). An awareness of women’s ‘positionality’ is fundamental to contemporary feminist translation practice. Feminist translation should not mean translating without consideration for anything other than gender. If a contemporary feminist translator does not keep in mind their ‘positionality’, they risk failing to truly challenge the status quo. Castro and Ergun (2020) suggest that ‘unless translators consciously and critically reflect on their location as situated political agents, they will in all likelihood be translating (unconsciously or not) in accordance with hegemonic (patriarchal, heterosexist, racist) values’ (p. 133). Any translator inevitably carries their own subjectivities, but a contemporary feminist translation practice must be one where the translator constantly strives for critical awareness of their own positionality, and seeks to question hegemonic values relating to class, sexuality and race, as well as gender.

Castro and Ergun’s positioning of the Canadian feminist translators as ‘intellectual’ (alongside white and Western) is another potential limitation

of their practice. Canadian feminist Robyn Gillam has accused the feminist translators of an 'elitist' approach to translation, arguing that 'certain translations make the already difficult source material even more obscure', and suggesting that the translations 'can only be addressed to a small coterie of academics who are already bilingual and can marvel at these linguistic accomplishments' (cited in von Flotow, 1997, pp. 80-1). The academic, scholarly context of the Canadian feminist translators is undeniable. Referring to Marlene Wildeman's translation of *The Aerial Letter,* von Flotow (1991) writes that Wildeman 'seems to have…prepared a text for use in Women's Studies programs anywhere in America' (p. 78), firmly situating the work in a scholarly context. The same comment would be applicable to a great deal of the Canadian feminist translators' output. Footnotes and prefaces can feel daunting to the everyday reader, crowding the page, and implying that there will be a need for the reader to be guided through the main text. They tend to be associated almost exclusively with academia and scholarly work. Von Flotow herself acknowledges the potentially daunting nature of the Canadian feminist translators' translations. She refers to the 'strong didactic streak' (von Flotow, 1991, p. 76) in the explanations and interpretations of the source text provided by the translator for the reader in the preface and footnotes. She places emphasis on the teacherly role taken on by the translators when prefacing and footnoting: 'in a final pedagogical move [the feminist translator] draws attention to other aspects of the text which the *secular* (i.e. *non-academic* English reader) might miss' (von Flotow, 1991, p. 77).[13] The binary

[13] Emphasis mine.

opposition von Flotow sets up between the academic educator-translator, and the non-academic reader, seems to assume the elitist position that the secular reader is incapable of understanding certain nuances of the text. Didacticism, dressed as copious footnotes and a lengthy, complicated preface, can risk feeling alienating and inaccessible, in a way that von Flotow seems unprepared to recognise.

However, I would still hold that didacticism has a strategic value – a lot of the work of feminist activism is education. I have some further reservations with Gillam's criticism, too, because 'elitism' is a criticism often levelled at experimental or complex work. It is patronising to assume that readers are not willing or able to engage with formally and conceptually challenging work. Some texts that seem obscure are grappling with concepts that are inherently complicated and can only really be expressed in complex ways. The feminist translators and writers were experimenting with creating a non-patriarchal language that did (does) not yet exist, and this is necessarily complicated (and, indeed, 'obscure'). Explaining one's work by way of footnotes and prefaces, as the feminist translators went to lengths to do, provides readers with the necessary tools to engage fully with the source texts and their translation work. I argue that it is not necessarily elitist to translate source texts that are difficult and obscure (loaded and contestable terms), producing so-called difficult translations, nor for the feminist translator to provide explanations and guidance for the reader. However, it is certainly true that feminist translators must seek to address their translations to an audience beyond 'a small coterie of academics' (Gillam

cited in von Flotow, 1997, pp. 80-1). The educational work of feminist translation should not be confined to producing narrowly accessible translations intended purely for scholarly use. As I will explore in subsequent chapters, I believe that the theatrical medium might offer the feminist translator a particularly fertile site for experimenting with discursivity in a way that is not overwhelmingly academic, that makes use of non-textual elements to do so.

The final way in which the specific context of the Canadian feminist translators' practice presents potential problems for a contemporary feminist translator is the closeness of their group. These translators and writers were a relatively small group of individuals, who were in conversation with each other, and often able to work collaboratively. The Canadian school were working in bilingual Quebec, on texts by contemporary writers, where it was entirely possible for writer and translator to work together on texts. Indeed, de Lotbinière-Harwood (1991) acknowledges this herself: 'I'm fortunate in that, so far, the authers I've translated are living – and often just a few minutes away!' (p. 155). Although I find the idea of co-authership a very attractive one, it is limiting if it is only achievable for writers and translators in such close physical proximity. Modern communication technology would certainly allow for a co-autherly relationship to be possible for translators and authors separated by distance, but could the strategies apply to feminists translating texts by authors no longer living? There must be ways to reconcile ethical translation practice with feminist intervention in texts by dead writers. I hope to argue that non-hierarchical

co-authership that does not “hijack” the text at the expense of the source text can still take place when the translator is not able to communicate directly with the writer. Further, I believe it is imperative for feminist translation, when the text in question is a feminist work, to be approached with care, in a co-autherly way.

Author-centred vs. translator-centred translation

In 1997, Françoise Massardier-Kenney published an article re-defining feminist translation practice, moving forward from the work of the Canadian feminist translators. The strategies Massardier-Kenney suggests are not so much a radical departure from those of the Canadian feminist translators, but rather a system of categorising the strategies and defining more precisely what their feminist purposes are. Massardier-Kenney lays out a categorisation of possible feminist translation practices, or strategies, dividing them into two broad categories: ‘author-centred’ and ‘translator-centred’. The ‘author-centred’ strategies are: recovery, commentary, and resistancy. The purpose of these strategies is to illuminate the source text for the reader. Recovery is about the ‘widening and reshaping of canon’, contributing ‘through translation to a rethinking of the canon from which women’s experience has been excluded’ (Massardier-Kenney, 1997, p. 59). Von Flotow (1997) has also written about this idea of re-discovering ‘lost’ works by women writers, particularly in order to unearth and establish ‘a lineage of intellectual women who resisted the norms and values of the societies in which they lived’ (pp. 30-1). These translations are then ‘accompanied by commentaries in which the editors and translators discuss why these texts have been ignored or denigrated by scholars working in the

patriarchal tradition, and present their arguments for reviving these works' (von Flotow, 1997, p. 30-1). This is Massardier-Kenney's second 'author-centred' strategy, commentary, which she defines as 'using the metadiscourse accompanying the translation to make explicit the importance of the feminine or of woman/women… in the text translated' (Massardier-Kenney, 1997, p. 60). Commentary as a strategy recalls the Canadian feminist translators' practice of prefacing and footnoting, but as one of Massardier-Kenney's 'author-centred' strategies, commentary here is focused on illuminating the source text, as opposed to the work and decisions of the translator. However, it is worth clarifying that although this is categorised as an 'author-centred' strategy, Massardier-Kenney (1997) still emphasises the visibility and agency of the feminist translator, writing that 'this type of metadiscourse reminds the reader that translating is an activity which creates authority for the writer translated, that the translator is a critic responsible for introducing and marketing a specific 'image' of that writer' (p. 60). The 'author-centred' feminist translator is a critic, editor and translator in one, and always holds responsibility for how the author they are translating is presented to their audience. An 'author-centred' feminist translation approach does not negate the importance of the translator's work. I present my 'recovery' of Canth's *The Worker's Wife* in Chapter Two, and discuss how my application of the strategy has informed my translation of the play.

Massardier-Kenney's third 'author-centred' strategy is resistancy. She builds her strategy on an interpretation of Lawrence Venuti's early

formulations of a strategy of the same name. I will return to the concept of resistancy, both Massardier-Kenney and Venuti's formulations of it, in greater depth in Chapter Three, as it is one of the strategies that has most informed my own practice. However, in brief, resistancy is a strategy that resists 'fluency' and 'transparency' – dominant qualities in traditional anglophone translation, which tends towards 'domesticating' the source text. A 'foreignising' translation theory and practice would be one that 'resists dominant values in the receiving culture so as to signify the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text' (Venuti, 2008, p. 18). Resistancy means working against the idea of fluency, and producing a defamiliarizing effect in the translated text. This strategy promotes challenging the conventions of the target language, and Massardier-Kenney adapts it to feminist translation by arguing that resistancy can apply to the translation of texts that challenge patriarchal language. Resistancy in these terms recalls the Canadian feminist translators' idea of supplementing, whereby the feminist translator finds ways of challenging misogynistic language in English, just as the author of the source text has challenged French. Massardier-Kenney argues that resistancy, and indeed supplementing, are best suited to modernist and post-modernist writings, that are consciously engaged in challenging linguistic convention. However, she suggests that 'the notion of resistancy needs to be adapted to deal with texts that do not use stylistic innovations to explore gender (this includes most pre-contemporary texts)' (Massardier-Kenney, 1997, p. 61). The adaptation she suggests is essentially the use of author-centred commentary. For Massardier-Kenney (1997), the resistancy in feminist translation of pre-

contemporary texts comes from ‘the matter surrounding the translation’ (p. 61) – i.e. the commentary. She cites Kwame Anthony Appiah’s (1993, p. 817) notion of ‘thick translation’ as a practice comparable to resistancy. Appiah’s (1993) ‘thick translation’ is a notion of literary translation ‘that aims to be of use in literary teaching; […] that seeks with its annotations and its accompanying glosses to locate the text in a rich cultural and linguistic context’ (p. 817). Appiah (1993) argues that ‘thick translation’, by contextualising the source text, presenting the source culture in all its richness, will acknowledge difference, challenging readers and encouraging them ‘to undertake the harder project of a genuinely informed respect for others’ (p. 818). Appiah writes specifically about the project of translating African proverbs into English for American students – a particular and loaded context, rooted in challenging racist and colonial attitudes to oral cultures. For this reason, I am wary of seamlessly comparing thick translation and feminist resistancy. However, Appiah (1993) does, in parentheses, note that as the goal of thick translation of African texts is to repudiate racism, and ‘at the same time, through explorations of feminist issues and women’s writing, of sexism’ (p. 818). Massardier-Kenney argues for thick translation’s applicability to feminist translation. Thick translation ‘does not treat the text as a thing made only to be bought and devoured but as a gendered, linguistic, historical, commercial and political *event*’ (Massardier-Kenney, 1997, p. 61). Thick translation as a strategy for resistancy in ‘author-centred’ feminist translation encourages the reader to fully engage with the author’s work and context.

Massardier-Kenney then lists three ‘translator-centred’ strategies: commentary, use of parallel texts, and collaboration. Unlike ‘author-centred’ commentary, which is focused on allowing the reader to understand the author and context of the source text, ‘translator-centred’ commentary is an opportunity for the translator to discuss *their* work and context. Through commentary, ‘the feminist translator must describe her motives and the way they affect the translated text’ (Massardier-Kenney, 1997, p. 63). Thereby, ‘that translator can take responsibility equally for her own ideological/psychological boundaries as well as those of the text that she translates’ (Massardier-Kenney, 1997, p. 63). In doing this, the translator is positioning themselves, making their own work and context clear. This positioning can also be a way of ‘including the feminist questioning of universal categories in the translation project,’ (Massardier-Kenney, 1997, p. 63) which relates to Massardier-Kenney’s third ‘translator-centred’ strategy: collaboration. This is defined as working on the translation either with one or more other translators, or with the author (co-authership again). Massardier-Kenney links collaboration to the feminist idea of de-stabilising single meanings. Firstly, it allows the translator to avoid ‘the traditional dichotomy between two subjectivities (author/translator) which seek control of meaning’ (Massardier-Kenney, 1997, p. 65). Secondly, collaboration between multiple translators necessitates constant negotiation and discursiveness, which also contributes to the destabilisation of single, or so-called ‘universal’, meanings. This process can then be emphasised through commentary.

Feminist translation for theatre

In my own work, I have appropriated the terminology and purposes of Massardier-Kenney's feminist translation strategies, and those of the Canadian feminist translators, but adapted and reformulated them for the particularities of theatre translation. Although some of the translators discussed above did actually translate theatre texts, they did not theorise this specific practice, and there are crucial particularities of the theatrical context that must shape feminist *theatre* translators' practice. Theatre translation scholar Sirkku Aaltonen (2000) offers a neat articulation of the particular conditions dictated by theatrical performance that have a bearing on the work of the theatre translator, listing them as: 'orality, immediacy and communality' (p. 41). These conditions place an emphasis on the necessity for movement of the text from page to stage, and it is these conditions that a feminist theatre translator's strategies must respond to. Immediacy, for example, refers to the here-and-now nature of theatrical performance, and is a condition that complicates one of the mainstays of all feminist translation practice – the meta-text. An audience member cannot flip the page to refer to footnotes, endnotes and prefaces at the same time as they receive the translated text itself, in the way that the reader of a written text can. How can the feminist theatre translator overcome this limitation? On a more positive note, though, the condition of communality presents a particularly exciting opportunity to the feminist translator, the possibility for live discursivity and encounter, and a layering of voices and perspectives, a defiance of the single voice and meaning. These are just two brief examples of the simultaneous challenges and possibilities that theatrical texts present

to the feminist translator. I will explore these challenges and possibilities at length in chapters three and four.

In the forthcoming chapters I discuss the strategies that I have used for my feminist translation of Minna Canth's *The Worker's Wife*. Although all of the strategies discussed above have played a part in my work, I have used three of Massardier-Kenney's strategies (which, in turn, are reformulations of von Flotow, Godard and de Lotbinière-Harwood's strategies) as the foundation of my work and the structure for this thesis. The three strategies I have been led by are recovery, resistancy, and collaboration. As well as my source text, *The Worker's Wife,* being a theatre text, it also differs from most of the examples discussed above by being a historical text. I am separated from Canth by well over a century, and this, of course, has implications for my work, which I will also come to discuss. For this reason, recovery has been an important guiding strategy, and it is this I turn to in the next chapter. My reformulations of resistancy and collaboration respond more to the specificities of theatre translation. Finally, it is important to note that although I have listed them as three separate strategies, and discuss them as such in three separate chapters, there is a constant interplay between each of the strategies, and each continually informs the other.

Chapter Two - Minna Canth and *The Worker's Wife*: A Recovery Project

The practice-based element of my research is centred on producing a feminist translation from Finnish to English of the play *The Worker's Wife* (1885) by Minna Canth. My choice of text is in alignment with Françoise Massardier-Kenney's (1997) feminist translation strategy of recovery, whereby feminist translators 'recover' neglected texts by women writers, introducing them to new audiences by translating them, and thereby 'widening and reshaping [the] canon' (p. 59). This strategy goes hand-in-hand with Massardier-Kenney's second feminist translation strategy, commentary: recovered texts are 'accompanied by commentaries in which the editors and translators discuss why these texts have been ignored or denigrated by scholars working in the patriarchal tradition, and present their arguments for reviving these works' (von Flotow, 1997, pp. 30-1). This chapter in itself constitutes part of my recovery-commentary strategy – it is a meta-text in which I will introduce and contextualise Finnish playwright and women's rights activist Minna Canth and her play *The Worker's Wife,* and assess existing scholarship about Canth and the play. I suggest that the artistic merit of Canth's political plays should be re-evaluated, and argue that *The Worker's Wife* is an innovative example of nineteenth-century feminist political playwriting, and foreshadows subsequent developments in European political playwriting. Later in the chapter, I will also explain my use of recovery as a strategy in my actual translation of the play.

Arguably, Minna Canth (1844-1897) is not a playwright in need of 'recovering' as such. Although she does not have a recognised place in the wider European theatre canon, her works have certainly not been neglected in her home country of Finland. Canth was a well-known public figure in Finland during her lifetime, celebrated by some and hated by others for her socio-politically provocative journalism and literary output. Her place in the Finnish literary canon was cemented when she was included in Viljo Tarkiainen's (1934) definitive history of Finnish literature: *Suomalaisen kirjallisuuden historia* [*The History of Finnish Literature*]. Since then, she has been included in all major encyclopaedias and compendiums of Finnish literature. The enduring image of Canth in the Finnish cultural consciousness is as a fearless fighter for women's rights and writer of realist literature. Her writing is taught in schools, and she has her own national 'flag day', which is an honour conferred upon figures of national importance in Finland, where the Finnish flag is raised in their honour every year.[14] There is a significant amount of published material about Canth in Finnish – collections of her writings (Ahola, 2019), her collected letters (Kannila, 1973), a novel based on her marriage (Rytisalo, 2018), and more. However, despite her acclaim as an important figure in Finnish literature, there is a surprising lack of scholarship about Canth's oeuvre in Finnish academic writing. Although her plays, including *The Worker's Wife,* are celebrated as canonical Finnish literary works, analytical, scholarly writing

[14] Canth was the first Finnish woman to be given a 'flag day', and this honour was not conferred upon her until 2003. Her 'flag day' is the 19th March, and is also celebrated as 'social equality day'.

about them is very limited.[15] In her introduction to *The Penguin Book of Feminist Writing,* Hannah Dawson (2021) writes that 'a woman writing struggles not to be reduced to her life' (p. xliii), and, indeed, writing about Canth predominantly focuses on her biography rather than her output. There have been five significant biographies of Minna Canth: Lucina Hagman's (1911) *Minna Canthin elämäkerta* [*The Biography of Minna Canth*]*,* Greta von Frenckell-Thesleff's (1944, translation by T. Tuulio 1994) *Minna Canth*, Reetta Nieminen's (1990) *Minna Canth: Kirjailija ja kauppias* [*Minna Canth: Writer and Shopkeeper*]*,* Ilkka Nummela's (2004) *Toiselta kantilta: Minna Canth liikenaisena* [*From another angle: Minna Canth as businesswoman*], and most recently Minna Maijala's (2014) *Herkkä, Hellä, Hehkuvainen Minna Canth* [*Tender, Gentle, Glowing Minna Canth*].[16] It is true that Canth's life resisted societal expectations for late-nineteenth century women, and this is certainly worth exploring and celebrating. However, as Dawson argues, there is a disparity in how writing by men tends to be received on its own terms, whilst women's writing has historically tended to be reduced to facts of the writer's biography.

Furthermore, where Canth's work *is* written about, particularly in the aforementioned histories of Finnish literature, it is often in relation to her male contemporaries – be that her fellow Nordic dramatist, Henrik Ibsen, or

[15] In 2021, the Finnish literary society, Suomalainen Kirjallisuuden Seura, announced plans to finally publish critical editions of Canth's plays, but have not yet announced when these will be published. This collection will be a very welcome addition to the slim body of scholarly work about Canth's output.
[16] The books by Nieminen and Nummela have a particular emphasis on Canth's identity as a shopkeeper and businesswoman.

her Finnish literary contemporaries, Aleksis Kivi and Juhani Aho.[17] As I will go on to explore, Canth was of course writing within a literary context, one with which she was very much consciously engaged, and so there are inevitably parallels between her writing and that of Kivi, Aho and Ibsen, among many others. However, in the comparisons made between Canth and writers such as Ibsen and Aho, Canth is often found lacking.[18] These comparisons fail to acknowledge the crucial differences between Canth's work and that of her contemporaries. Comparison to male writers, alongside viewing Canth's work as being tied to her time and biography, is reductive and detrimental. This is particularly the case when it comes to works such as *The Worker's Wife,* which, despite being among her most famous plays, has been dismissed as lacking literary and artistic merit (see Ahokas, 1973, p. 113 and Schaad, 2006, p. 93). I will argue that this dismissal is bound up in the detrimental framing of Canth's work and lack of analysis of it on its own terms. I believe *The Worker's Wife* to be a play of significant artistic merit, progressive in both its politics and the stylistic communication of those politics, and will go on to explore this.

Minna Canth

Although I do not wish to reduce Canth to her biography alone, I do want to outline her biography in order to provide context for her work and how it

[17] Eric Schaad (2006), for example, in an introduction to *The Worker's Wife,* writes that Canth stands, 'with Aleksis Kivi, [as] one of the greatest playwrights of Finnish literature' (p. 91). Whilst the statement is an adulatory one, I question the need to mention Aleksis Kivi in this context. It is as though Schaad thinks it would be too much, too effusive, to mention Canth's name alone as 'one of the greatest playwrights of Finnish literature', and so must bring in Kivi to qualify the statement.

[18] Rafael Koskimies (1944, p. 228) compares Canth's work to Juhani Aho's; Viljo Tarkiainen (1934, p. 211) compares Canth to Ibsen.

has been received over time, as it is undeniable that her positionality and experiences as a woman fundamentally shaped both her work and the reception of it. Ulrika Wilhelmina Johnson (Minna Canth) was born in Tampere in 1844 to Ulrika and Gustaf Vilhelm Johnson.[19] Her father was a foreman at the Finlayson textile factory, and her mother was a domestic servant. The family lived in workers' accommodation and were part of Finland's Finnish-speaking working class.[20] In 1853, when Canth was eight years old, the family moved to Kuopio, where her father had been appointed manager of the new Finlayson drapers' shop. Industry was growing in Kuopio, increasing the possibility for social mobility, and Gustaf Vilhelm's promotion from factory foreman to shop manager did indeed afford the family an upward shift in social status. Minna Canth received an unusually good education even for a shopkeeper's daughter, attending girls' schools in Kuopio intended for the daughters of the bourgeoisie and the gentry. The teaching at these schools was in Swedish. The students were also taught German, French and Russian. Knowledge of these languages meant that as an adult Canth was able to read the most cutting-edge European writing, and even translated some of it into Finnish. Aged eighteen, Canth moved to Jyväskylä to attend the new teaching seminary there – the first institution in Finland to offer higher education to women and to teach in Finnish. However, she did not graduate, but left her studies two years later in order to marry one of her teachers, Johan Ferdinand Canth. In 1874, she began a

[19] Biographical details gathered from Maijala (2014).
[20] After centuries under Swedish rule, Finland had become the Autonomous Grand Duchy of Finland – a part of the Russian Empire – in 1809, following the Finnish War (1808-1809). Finland would not gain independence until 1917. Despite this, however, Swedish endured throughout the nineteenth-century as the language of the upper and upper-middle classes.

career as a journalist, writing for the newly established *Keski-Suomi* Finnish language newspaper. Her first work of fiction, a short story collection, was published in 1878 under the pseudonym 'Wilja'. A year later, Canth's husband died, leaving her a widow with seven children to care for.

Canth and her children moved back to Kuopio, where she took over her father's drapers' shop. It was then, in 1879, that she wrote her first play, *Murtovarkaus* [*The Burglary*], which she sent to Kaarlo Bergbom – the founder and director of the Finnish Theatre in Helsinki. The play premiered at the Finnish Theatre in 1882. Canth would go on to write ten plays, seven novellas, and numerous short stories, articles and speeches. Canth's working relationship with Kaarlo Bergbom lasted throughout her life, with Bergbom acting as a mentor to Canth. After centuries under Swedish and Russian rule, a nationalist movement was growing in mid-nineteenth century Finland, particularly centred around promoting Finnish language and culture. Swedish, as the language of the upper and upper-middle classes in Finland, had long been the language of Finnish art. The nineteenth century saw a movement of writers writing in Finnish and attempting to build an explicitly Finnish cultural and artistic identity. One of the earliest and most important examples of this movement was the publication of the Finnish national epic, the *Kalevala,* in 1835. This was a collection of oral folklore gathered from around the Karelia region of Eastern Finland by Elias Lönnrot. A second key example is Aleksis Kivi's 1870 novel *Seitsemän Veljestä* [*Seven Brothers*], the first Finnish-language novel. Kivi, who wrote plays as well as prose and poetry, is celebrated as the founder of Finnish-

language literature and drama. Kaarlo Bergbom was very much a part of this artistic Finnish nationalist movement, and had directed Kivi's play *Lea* in 1869. Bergbom established the Finnish National Theatre in 1872, with a view to creating a Finnish, and in particular Finnish language, theatrical culture. Canth, who wrote plays in Finnish and set in Finland, was therefore of particular interest to Bergbom.

However, although Canth was attached to this nationalist movement by virtue of her writing in Finnish, and through her friendship with other Finnish nationalist realist writers such as Juhani Aho, she was not necessarily interested in nationalism and Finnish language promotion in the same ideological way as her peers (Maijala, 2014, p. 85). Many of the leaders of this movement had been born into upper- and middle-class Swedish speaking families and had been ideologically motivated to learn Finnish later in their lives. Canth, on the other hand, had been born into a working-class Finnish-speaking family, and been educated in both Finnish and Swedish. Both languages were important to her: Finnish was her first language, the language of the working-class community into which she had been born, but her knowledge of Swedish gave her access to the most contemporary European literature and ideas. In her work, she portrayed ordinary working-class Finnish people, making Finnish a self-evident choice of language for the work. When Swedish does appear in her work, it is generally spoken in passing by upper- and middle-class characters.[21]

[21] A notable exception is Canth's play *Sylvi* (1893), which she wrote in Swedish for the Swedish Theatre.

Canth's preoccupation was not with abstractly promoting Finnish language and national identity, rather she was concerned with fighting the societal injustices she perceived in the world around her – particularly poverty and poor living conditions, alcoholism, and misogyny. This position also distanced her from the Fennoman (Finnish nationalist) party. The Fennomans were socially conservative and often disagreed with Canth, feeling that she was damaging Finland's reputation as a country by exposing these injustices. As well as often affronting members of the Fennoman party, Canth also frequently clashed with the church. Although Canth was devout, with a very strong sense of morality, she found the church as an institution to be corrupt and hypocritical, and was vocal about this in her writing and correspondence.[22]

Perceptions of Minna Canth over time

Minna Canth's reputation as a fighter against social injustice – and particularly for women's rights – has endured. Indeed, her commemorative 'flag day' has also been named 'Social Equality Day'. This reputation was firmly secured after her death by the portrait painted of her by Lucina Hagman in the first published biography of Canth in 1906. Canth and Hagman had met through mutual involvement in a campaign to establish secondary schools for Finnish girls. Hagman was an important women's rights advocate and politician, founder of the Finnish Women's Union and the Finnish Women's Association. Hagman's lengthy, two-part biography

[22] See, for example, Canth's 1885 article for *Valvoja* magazine, 'One more word on the woman question' (Jeffery, 2023, pp. 180-2).

of Minna Canth (the first part published in 1906, less than a decade after Canth's death, the second in 1911) paints a striking picture of her as a fearless lifelong women's rights advocate. Her most recent biographer, Minna Maijala (2014, p. 17), has argued that Hagman's biography laid the foundations for how Minna Canth has subsequently been remembered and studied. Maijala argues that Hagman saw the writing of this biography as part of her women's rights mission, and thus manipulated Canth's image to serve this mission, turning her into hero and martyr to the cause. Maijala devotes sections of her own Canth biography to debunking inaccuracies in Hagman's portrayal of Canth. Hagman's biography was the first major biography of a Finnish woman, written at a time where women's biographies were an emerging genre. As Maijala notes, 'biographies of great men were felt to provide a poor model for the depiction of women's lives, and the women's biographical writing practised by members of the women's movement turned to other sources for examples of writing, including fiction' (Maijala, 2014, p. 42).[23] Maijala draws a particular parallel between biographies such as this, and the popular bildungsroman genre of the time. The narrative presented by Hagman, of a woman constricted by her father and husband, emancipated in widowhood, was literarily compelling, and suited the agenda of the women's movement, but was not an entirely truthful, accurate telling of Canth's life.

Despite the inaccuracies and biases, Hagman's text is a fascinating and compelling piece of writing, giving a real insight into the beliefs and agenda

[23] All translations mine unless otherwise specified.

of the early-nineteenth-century Finnish women's movement. I have fewer qualms with Hagman's arguable misrepresentation of Canth's life than Maijala does. Hagman is explicit about her own position and intentions, and also includes several lengthy extracts from Canth's letters, which give a clear sense of Canth as a multi-faceted person with her own voice and personality. However, where Hagman's book has arguably had a detrimental effect is in how it set the precedent for the subsequent scholarly engagement with Canth's artistic output. Maijala wrote her doctoral thesis on 'The Age of Nervousness in Minna Canth's Works' in 2008. Here she wrote that 'Canth's strong presence in the Finnish literary canon and literary history as well as in research about late-nineteenth-century culture has created the illusion that there is a large amount of research about Canth' (Maijala, 2008, pp. 9-10). In fact, Kati Launis (2009) notes that Maijala's thesis was 'the first extensive monograph on [Canth's] writing' (p. 61). Maijala argues that the lack of engagement with Canth's writing as works of art in Hagman's biography in part set the precedent for the subsequent dearth of scholarship about Canth's writing. Indeed, Helmi Setälä's review of Hagman's biography in *Valvoja* magazine in 1907 already observed that Hagman had not given proper attention to Canth's artistic work, merely noting where the work had been beneficial to the women's movement: 'the author [Hagman] only references either the content of the work or its reception. Minna Canth's works are nonetheless notable enough that they would have required particular appraisal from an aesthetic and literary perspective' (Setälä, 1907, p. 134). It is certainly true that subsequent scholarly writing about Canth has focused on her biography, and her literary output is viewed

primarily through the lens of her biography and how it responded to issues of her day. I believe that there is a connection between the lack of scholarship about Canth's work and the tendency for her work – particularly her more explicitly political plays, such as *The Worker's Wife* – to be dismissed as dated and lacking in artistic merit. The plays are not written about in depth because there is an assumption that they do not warrant such analysis, but this assumption is tautologically based on the fact of their historical lack of analysis.

The Worker's Wife

Canth's writing is often divided into three distinct phases. The first phase includes her first two plays, *Murtovarkaus* [*The Burglary,* 1882] and *Roinilan Talossa* [*The House of Roinila,* 1885], and is sometimes called her 'innocence' phase (Koskimies, 1965). These were light-hearted plays with rural settings, part of the folk play tradition. The second phase begins in 1885 with *The Worker's Wife*, and is considered to be her 'tendency drama', or 'social realist', phase.[24] This phase includes *Kovan Onnen Lapsia* [*Children of Misfortune,* 1888] – Canth's most controversial play, which was banned after its opening night because the management of the Finnish Theatre found the critique of Finnish politics in the play to be too harsh, and were concerned about consequent loss of state funding (Maijala, 2014, p. 188). The third and final phase begins in 1891 with *Papin Perhe* [*The Parson's Family*] and has been called her 'psychological' phase (Maijala,

[24] Tendency drama ('tendenssidraama' in Finnish) was a nineteenth-century literary genre. The authors of these works, like Canth, sought to incite reform through realistic depiction of the world around them.

2008, p. 12). These plays are said to be characterised by greater psychological depth and naturalism than her earlier works. This phase includes her 1895 play, *Anna-Liisa,* which is considered by many to be her best. Maijala has argued against this categorisation and division of Canth's writing, arguing that the plays of the middle phase are as psychologically complex and interesting as those of the later phase, and that those of the later phase are as socially engaged as those of the middle. I agree with Maijala's argument. I believe that the dismissive attitude towards the plays of the 'tendency drama' phase is in part the result of seeing them through the lens of comparison to her male contemporaries, particularly Ibsen. The plays from this period, particularly *The Worker's Wife,* need to be reassessed and evaluated on their own terms, as feminist social realist dramas, rather than as unsuccessful attempts at Ibsen-esque psychological naturalism.

Canth finished writing *The Worker's Wife* in 1885, having worked on it for at least two years. The play marked a significant shift in her writing. Her first two plays, *The Burglary* and *The House of Roinila,* had been very well received. The review of the former in the *Tapio* newspaper describes how 'Mrs Canth was cheered to the stage three times and rewarded with six flower wreaths,' (cited in Maijala, 2014, p. 154) and Canth was awarded a prize by the Finnish Literary Association for it. *The House of Roinila* received similar acclaim, but Canth herself was dissatisfied with it (Maijala, 2014, p. 158). She wrote later that it was around this time that she read books by Hippolyte Taine, Herbert Spencer, John Stuart Mill, Henry

Thomas Buckle, and Georg Brandes. After reading these writers, she 'finally felt freed from the preconceptions that had kept [her] soul in chains and burdened [her] consciousness with all sorts of confusion. And the desire for reform ignited in [her] once more' (Canth cited in Ahola, 2019, pp. 185-6). It was then that she began to write *The Worker's Wife.* The influence of Brandes on Canth's work is particularly notable. She had seen Ibsen's *A Doll's House* when it came to Kuopio in 1882, and the play likely made a great impression on her (Maijala, 2014, p. 167). Ibsen's shift towards naturalism was part of the 'Modern Breakthrough', which had been prompted by Brandes' 1871 lectures – *Hovedstrømninger i det 19de Aarhundredes Litteratur* [*Main Currents of Nineteenth-Century Literature*]. In the lectures, Brandes claimed that Scandinavia was forty years behind the rest of Europe, and called for Nordic writers to embrace social realism, claiming that 'the only literature that is alive today is one that provokes debate' (Brandes cited in Wilkinson, 2017, p. 696). The way in which writers were to provoke debate was by critically presenting their contemporary realities. Reading Brandes and seeing *A Doll's House* offered Canth a way of bringing together her political work and her artistic work.

It is clear that Ibsen and *A Doll's House* had an explicit influence on Canth when she set out to write *The Worker's Wife.* There are certainly similarities between Canth and Ibsen – both, heeding Brandes' imperative, were attempting to write the world they saw around them. Both *The Worker's Wife* and *A Doll's House* are plays about women in unhappy marriages, and both caused an outcry after their first performances. Indeed, reviews of *The*

Worker's Wife noted the connection between the two plays. O.E. Tudeer (1885), for example, writing for *Valvoja* magazine, drew a comparison in the very first line of his review: 'since Ibsen's *Nora* stirred us all up so, has no other play at the Finnish Theatre awoken such fervent feelings in audiences, nor been the subject of such passionate discourse as Mrs M Canth's latest work.' In her biography, Hagman makes an argument that Canth, as a result of her gender, was fundamentally different to Ibsen and the other male writers she was compared to, painting a portrait of her as a unique outlier. Hagman's argument negates the fact that Canth was very much engaged in her cultural context. She read extremely widely, and her home in Kuopio, Kanttila, became a salon and meeting place for students, intellectuals and artists to discuss the latest ideas and literature, a centre for the distribution of cutting-edge European ideas within Finland. Maijala (2014) writes that 'Canth never kept her ideas to herself. She always spoke openly about what she had read or what she was writing, no matter what stage the work was at' (p. 15). Canth discussed her work with director Kaarlo Bergbom and the many writers and intellectuals who frequented her salon, but equally with her staff and her children and their school friends, and the influence of this way of working can be seen in her work (Maijala, 2014, p. 15). Whilst Canth's politics resisted the dominant culture, her artistic output was produced within and informed by her wide reading and artistic cultural context. Her writing was consciously informed and shaped by her literary influences, including Ibsen.

However, whilst Hagman discredits Canth by not acknowledging the breadth of her reading and her community-oriented mode of practice, she is correct in asserting that Canth's position as a woman writer did afford her a unique perspective:

> We must naturally take as the root of Minna's recognised independence the fact that she saw the contents of the world in her own light, let us say, the light of the feminine spirit… Great men, even those lauded as national heroes, had not seen the side of life that Minna's eye saw. They had only seen the other side of life: only the male side and with a male eye. (Hagman, 1911, p. 175)

Canth's writing was overtly political and, specifically, feminist. Canth's writing is not straightforwardly derivative of Ibsen, in the way that some critiques imply. In his review of the original production of *The Worker's Wife,* O.E. Tudeer articulated one of the differences between Ibsen and Canth's approaches. Ibsen's work, he writes, 'suggests that individuals must begin the work of eradicating evil, the work of fulfilling the ideal, *internally'*; whilst Canth's work 'encourages us to begin by battling those dominant forces that sustain evil *externally*' (Tudeer, 1885, p. 168).[25] In other words, Canth's work is overtly geared towards societal reform, rather than individual introspection. Ibsen's naturalistic style, for example in *A Doll's House,* seeks to mimetically replicate the world Ibsen perceived. Whilst Canth, too, sought to write the world around her, it was explicitly with a view to inciting reform and revolution, and this was the result of her explicitly feminist mission. Canth's particular, gendered position, the breadth of her reading and influences synthesised in her work, resulting in a

[25] Emphasis mine.

feminist dramatic voice that was unique within her context. There were very few other women writers of fiction in Finland at the time, especially women writing in Finnish rather than Swedish, and even fewer women playwrights.[26] However, the late nineteenth century saw a wave of the first women journalists in Finland, including Canth (indeed, she had written articles for years before turning to playwriting), alongside writers such as Anna Edelheim, Adelaïde Ehrnrooth and Alexandra Gripenberg – all of whom were heavily involved in Finland's burgeoning women's movement. The non-mimetic, explicitly argumentative, sometimes rhetorical, tone of the plays from her 'tendency drama' era, I argue, belies the influence of women's rights journalistic writing.

There is an implication in some of the criticism of Canth's political plays that the prioritisation of political message leads intrinsically to a lack of artistic merit. This is a criticism often levelled at political theatre, but one that ignores the aptness of the theatrical form for political engagement, and that diminishes the craft of tying together art and politics. Maria-Liisa Nevala (1989) argues that the 'concrete and public' nature of theatre was crucial to the communication of Canth's political message:

> In the theatre things are flung before the spectator's eyes. They cannot be run away from, and the experience is collective. It cannot be escaped from in the same way that a book can be by closing it.

[26] Päivi Lappalainen (2000) notes that there was only one other woman playwright writing in Finnish at that time – Theodolina Hahnsson, who had published three short plays in the 1870s. Lappalainen speculates that the loneliness of Canth's position as a woman playwright was part of the reason why director Kaarlo Bergbom's support and guidance was so important to Canth. Interestingly, Lappalainen also notes that while there was a dearth of women playwrights, women made significant contributions to Finnish theatre in the late-nineteenth century as translators. She names Elisabeth Stenius and Hilda Asp as examples, both of whom translated plays by Ibsen.

> The language of the stage is an effective presenter of new ideas. Additionally, plays reached a wider audience than prose or verse. (Nevala, 1989, pp. 247-8)

Canth drew on her journalism when writing the play. In fact, she published three articles ('On the Woman Question' parts one, two and three) in *Valvoja* magazine around the time that she wrote *The Worker's Wife,* which supplement the play.[27] In the articles she points to the damage wrought on women by a society that sees things only from the male perspective. In *The Worker's Wife,* then, she puts her argument into dramatic action. *The Worker's Wife* is crafted to communicate political messages in a way that is fundamentally theatrical. A lot of the criticism of the play is partly a result of attempting to read it as *A Doll's House,* and therefore condemning it as a less successful attempt at naturalism. Although Canth was inspired by Ibsen, these are two very different pieces of work, with different goals and modes of expression. *The Worker's Wife* is the culmination of Canth's wide reading, her own artistic, and indeed journalistic, voice, as well as her positionality as a woman and a feminist. The resulting play is *Canthian,* as opposed to Ibsen-esque. It is what I categorise as a feminist social realist drama – a play that responds to contemporary women's rights issues with the explicit intention of inciting change, and incorporates non-mimetic elements to do so, often subverting the expectations of realism. Furthermore, there are certain formal elements of the play which offer early examples of what would go on to form the basis of what is now considered to be canonical twentieth-century political theatre.

[27] I have translated these three articles, and include the translations in the appendices of my translation of *The Workers Wife* (Jeffery, 2023, pp. 175-82).

Feminist materialism in The Worker's Wife

I have categorised the play as a feminist play for brevity, but specifically I believe that *The Worker's Wife* is a *materialist* feminist play. Materialist feminism emerged as a term and theoretical framework in the 1970s, and brings together historical materialism, Marxism and feminism to analyse the material conditions that oppress women under the capitalist patriarchy. Materialist feminist theatre, then, examines how material conditions as the basis of social reality produce gendered behaviour which oppresses women. In *The Worker's Wife,* as in much of her work, Canth was engaged with the intersection between gender and class oppression, and, as I will go on to explore, ethnic oppression. She continually draws attention to the characters' material conditions throughout the play. Money, and the lack thereof, is a constant presence. Characters, particularly the women, frequently discuss and reference money – how much certain things cost, what they are paid for their work, and so on. Act two takes place in the marketplace, which is a loaded and gendered site, populated almost entirely by women. At the beginning of the act, Johanna explains that she has earned one mark from knitting socks, and struggles to decide whether to spend it on milk or on bread. Later in act two, Kerttu attempts to sell potatoes which she has earned as pay for digging them, necessitating the additional labour of having to sell the potatoes at the market. In act four, Johanna explains how she has been offered weaving work, which pays far better than knitting socks. Even then, though, she notes that she 'can't always be so industrious with the baby' (Canth, 1920, p. 253) – a reminder of how societal gender expectations place the labour of child-rearing and domestic work on women

(a point emphasised by Risto and Toppo's derision at the idea that they should mind the baby whilst Johanna goes to speak to her employer).[28] On top of this, the entire play centres around a specifically gendered material condition of the time: the law which gave men ownership of their wives' earnings. The tragic unfolding of the play makes clear how working-class women are doubly materially oppressed and denied autonomy by the law.

However, it is important to note that male characters in the play suffer the material reality of class oppression too. In act four, Toppo makes a satirical speech to Risto about how they contribute more to society by drinking (and thus contributing to alcohol taxes which pay for schools and railways) than they do by working (Canth, 1920, p. 248). By working, Toppo explains, they simply 'make the rich richer, so they can live their lives in even greater luxury,' whilst they, the working classes, toil and starve, 'and even then can't earn enough to get by on' (Canth, 1920, p. 249). This acknowledgement of men's class-based oppression is consistent with materialist feminism, which views men in terms of class ideology and relations, as well as gender ideology and relations (Newton and Rosenfelt, 1985). And just as materialist feminism considers ways in which men are oppressed, it also offers a framework for examining how class relations can put women in oppressive positions of power over each other. As Newton and Rosenfelt (1985) summarise, through the lens of materialist feminism, 'women are not viewed as an unalloyed force for good or as a unified

[28] Where I quote directly from the play, rather than from my 'feminist translation' of it, I reference the actual source text. Quotations are nevertheless all translated by me.

sisterhood' (p. xxvi). This is very much highlighted in the play, particularly by the inclusion of the two upper-class women characters, Mrs Vörsky and Mrs Hanhinen, the latter of whom is, ironically, identified as head of the Women's Association. These women oppress Johanna as much as the men in the play do: they withhold work from her; they threaten her with imprisonment for a crime which she has not committed; they accuse her of being a sex worker, purely on the basis of their gendered, class-based prejudice towards her.

Not only does Canth address class-based oppression, and the intersection of class and gender, she also tackles ethnicity-based oppression through the inclusion of the character Kerttu. Kerttu, or 'Homsantuu' – the derogatory nickname by which she is more commonly known – is a young Finnish-Roma woman, born of a Finnish father and a Roma mother. She is discriminated against throughout by the other townsfolk on the basis of her Roma heritage. Kerttu's inclusion in the play is complicated. It has been speculated that the decision to make Kerttu Roma (or, as she is called throughout the play, a 'gypsy') was a result of director Kaarlo Bergbom's influence (Koski, 1998, p. 82). Bergbom was somewhat hesitant about Canth's shift towards realism, and having a slightly 'exotic', melodramatic 'gypsy' character in the play tied it to the less controversial, safer, popular folk dramas of the time. Accordingly, Kerttu does indeed bear resemblance to these characters, and to the various stereotypical fiery, exoticized gypsy women (Prosper Merimée's *Carmen,* to name but one) nineteenth-century European literature is replete with. She embodies many clichés surrounding

Roma people in literature – she is temperamental, a disruptive force, and her impulsive and violent behaviour is explained as being inevitable due to her 'gypsy blood' (Canth, 1920, p. 282). However, Kerttu is clearly not simply a character thrown in by Canth to give the play a bit of romantic flair. She is one of the play's protagonists – indeed, she is arguably the most compelling and psychologically complex character in the whole play – and is portrayed sympathetically. As Viola Parente-Čapková (2011) notes, 'Canth's stance seems rather clear: the most negative and stereotypical clichés about the Roma are uttered by the most repulsive characters' (p. 16). The audience are clearly meant to feel sympathy for Kerttu and her plight, and it is to her that Canth gives the play's most famous and revolutionary line: 'your laws and justice – that's what I meant to shoot' (Canth, 1920, pp. 288-9).

The language that Kerttu uses throughout the play is of particular note, in that it is strikingly different to the language used by the other characters in the play. It is more heightened, more poetic. In fact, several of Kerttu's lines are reminiscent of, or even direct quotations from, Finnish folk poetry. One of her very first lines ('Tuli nyt nurkkihin nuhina, sekä soppihin sohina' Canth, 1920, p. 202) is a line that appears in *Kanteletar,* the compilation of Finnish folk poetry published in 1840 (Lönnrot, 1840, p. 91). Although her language distances her from the other characters in the play, it simultaneously ties her to Finnishness in a way that would have likely felt familiar to the original audiences of the play. Parente-Čapková (2011) has written about the Roma as 'domestic other' in Finnish literature, 'a group both familiar and foreign' (p. 8). She notes Kerttu's particular hybridity, as a

character who is half Finnish and half Roma: ‘she is a stranger who is nowhere at home, she represents and, at the same time, problematizes and ironizes the idea of “domestic exoticism”, as well as the stability, essence and permanence of all identities’ (Parente-Čapková, 2011, p. 15). The ironizing and destabilising of permanent identities is consistent with the project of feminist materialism. Nevala (1989, p. 221) has written against the suggestion that Kerttu’s presence in the play simply serves to add ‘gypsy romance’ to it. This reading ‘dilutes [Kerttu’s] radical program, by [ignoring] the fact that, through [Kerttu], women’s subjugation is made manifold.’ Kerttu’s oppression centres on the intersection of her gender and her ethnicity. Although there are ways in which the portrayal of Kerttu is founded on problematic, romanticised notions of what it is to be Roma, there are other ways in which the character is explicitly grounded in the reality faced by Roma people in nineteenth-century Finland. When Kerttu attempts to sell potatoes in the marketplace, a policeman assumes that she has stolen them; at one point, Risto threatens to have Kerttu imprisoned for vagrancy; at the end, the policeman explains that after her prison sentence Kerttu will be sent to do forced labour (Canth, 1920, pp. 224, 280, 287). These are all examples of ways in which the legal and justice system materially oppressed Roma people in nineteenth-century Finland. Canth was pioneering in her theatrical exploration of the oppression of Roma people, and particularly the way in which Roma women are doubly oppressed as a result of both their gender and ethnicity. Canth was not the only nineteenth-century Finnish writer to include Roma characters in her writing. Zacharias Topelius, Canth’s Swedish speaking contemporary, included more than one

Roma character in his widely read *Läsning för barn* [*Stories for Children*] (1899), including Dara, the 'old gypsy woman' in his fairy-tale 'A Guardian Angel'. In the story, Dara kidnaps a child and switches children around, and is eventually hanged for these crimes – a depiction drawn directly from the prejudiced stereotypes surrounding Roma people. Canth's fellow Finnish language dramatist Aleksis Kivi, too, included a Roma group, the Rajamäki family, in his novel *Seitsemän Veljestä* [*Seven Brothers*] (1870). In Kivi's text the Roma characters serve to provide humour and clichéd 'gypsy' romance. Kerttu differs from characters such as Dara and the Rajamäki family in that not only is she portrayed with genuine sympathy, but also in that rather than being an exotic side character, she is a central character of the play, central to both its narrative and its politics.

It is crucial that *The Worker's Wife* has two female protagonists: Johanna and Kerttu. Indeed, an earlier draft of the play had been called *Johanna and Homsantuu,* reinforcing the equal centrality of both characters. The two women are juxtaposed throughout, and we see where their social realities converge and diverge. Both are working-class women and suffer as a result of misogyny and classism. However, we also see how their lives are shaped by the fact that Johanna is a married woman of Finnish heritage and that Kerttu is an unmarried woman of Roma (and Finnish) heritage. The two women only encounter each other physically twice in the play, but both instances directly juxtapose them. The first encounter is in act one, where Kerttu is dragged into Johanna and Risto's wedding party and reveals that Risto had previously been engaged to her. The encounter exposes how both

women have been exploited by Risto – Kerttu sexually (permissible because she is a 'cheap sort of woman') and Johanna financially in ways that are condoned by the law and society (Canth, 1920, p. 205). The second time they meet is a fleeting moment in act four. Risto has stolen the cloth that Johanna has been paid to weave for an upper-class woman, who then threatens to have Johanna imprisoned for theft. Kerttu appears at the door to tell Johanna that 'you won't have to take responsibility for Risto anymore. I will take care of him now' (Canth, 1920, p. 265). It is a jarring statement, given that the audience have just been made aware of where Johanna's 'responsibility' for Risto has left her.[29] Newton and Rosenfelt (1985) define materialist feminism as combining 'feminist, socialist and anti-racist perspectives, [and] likely to assume that women are not universally the same, that their relations are also determined by race, class and sexual identification' (p. xxvii). The juxtaposition throughout the play of Johanna and Kerttu, who are equally but differently oppressed, resists a universalising, essentialising portrayal of gender, and is an original theatrical formulation of materialist feminism.

As I have noted, the working title *Johanna and Homsantuu* highlights the juxtaposition of the two central women in the play whose differing social realities are explored. In *Theatre & Feminism,* Kim Solga (2016, p. 39) discusses the trope of the challenging female character at the centre of realist dramas: Ibsen's Hedda Gabler, Strindberg's Miss Julie, for example.

[29] It is also worth noting that Johanna's language changes from this point until her death at the end of the scene. It becomes much closer to Kerttu's, more heightened and impassioned. It is during this, her final scene in the play, that she has become truly disillusioned and awakened to the oppressive structures that entrap her.

These plays, writes Solga (2016), are about '"problem" women, the difficulties they create for those around them' (p. 39). By focusing on individual women, these plays place those women at heart of what are wider, societal problems. By having two women protagonists instead of just one, Canth already begins to destabilise the trope of the individual 'problem' woman. The play is a clear exploration of how these women are at the mercy of their circumstances. It is their unjust social and political contexts that incite the drama, rather than them creating and directing it themselves, and this is emphasised by having the two women's stories play out alongside each other.

Furthermore, *The Worker's Wife* has thirty-three characters, not including the unspecified number of 'wedding guests' and 'market shoppers and sellers' also on the character list. Tudeer (1885) noted in his review of the original production that the side characters in the play 'could be compared to the chorus in an ancient tragedy, who represent the world's judgement of the principle characters' (p. 170). The first two acts are bustling scenes that take place at the wedding party and in the marketplace – in public, in society, rather than in the domestic settings typical of a lot of nineteenth and early twentieth-century drama. This exteriority serves to emphasise the role of society, by bringing society onto the stage. Tudeer goes on to say that Canth's chorus differs from the choruses of ancient dramas, who typically expressed the opinions of either wider society (the audience) or those of the writer (Tudeer, 1885, p. 170). Canth's chorus either mutely observes the action in silent complicity, or actively condemns the oppressed characters of

the play, and do not win the sympathy of the audience. In this way, Canth turns her criticism on the audience, as members of that complicit society.

A Canthian play

In his *History of Finnish Literature*, listing the 'general defects' of Canth's works present in *The Worker's Wife,* Jaakko Ahokas (1973) criticises Canth's 'schematic division of mankind into good and bad individuals,' and mentions her tendency to write 'typical characters rather than finely drawn individuals' (p. 114). Ahokas' claim that *The Worker's Wife,* with its page-long character list, is populated by schematic types rather than individuals is absolutely right. Writing characters who are 'typical', rather than 'individuals', is a technique we might now recognise as belonging to the epic theatre form, and I argue that here Canth was actually pioneering the use of typical characters in political realist theatre. In his *Theory of the Modern Drama,* Peter Szondi (1987, originally published 1956) traces the first shifts towards epic form taking place in plays at the turn of the century. Szondi (1987, pp. 7-10) defines plays from the Renaissance onwards as being 'Dramas', in which the characters are autonomous individuals, speak interpersonally, and events unfold linearly before an audience. By the late nineteenth century, Szondi argues, this drama was in crisis, and he names playwrights whose works belie that crisis, who began to incorporate elements of the epic form that then emerged fully and consciously in the twentieth century. Among the late nineteenth-century playwrights whose works Szondi explores are Canth's Nordic contemporaries, Ibsen and Strindberg, to whom Canth has been compared. Szondi (1987, pp. 28-30) analyses Strindberg's *Ett drömspel* [*A Dream Play*] (1901), arguing that in

the play, Strindberg breaks with naturalism and begins to introduce elements of the dramaturgy of epic theatre, namely by including characters who are types, dictated by their functions within the plot, rather than individuals. I argue that Canth, writing *The Worker's Wife* almost two decades before Strindberg's *A Dream Play,* was at the forefront of this shift towards epic, function-led characters. A clear example of a functional character who fulfils a specific 'type' in the play is Leena-Kaisa, who Tudeer (1885) names the coryphaeus of the play, a sanctimonious older woman who criticises Johanna whenever she threatens not to comply with societal gender expectations. Leena-Kaisa constantly invokes God and Christ, and represents the church as an institution. As Maijala writes, 'Leena-Kaisa's function in the play is precisely to bring out the inequality between men and women in religious moral teaching. Religion functions as part of a hegemonic system, in which both the law and justice are on the side of men' (Maijala, 2014, p. 265-6). Other characters, too, are stand-ins for and representatives of the structures that uphold and perpetuate gender and class oppression – the upper class (Mr and Mrs Vörsky), law enforcement (the Policemen), the bourgeois Women's Association (Mrs Hanhinen), and so on.

Risto, too, is a functional type – the worker. His continued invocation of the law, law enforcement and justice mark him as a stand-in for the broader patriarchy, rather than as an individual villain. His 'villainy' arises from his position within society, rather from anything innate to him as an individual. Maijala (2008) notes that 'Risto does not hide his immoral behaviour

towards women. He just cannot see anything wrong with it, because law and justice are on his, men's, side' (p. 84). Furthermore, as a working-class man, Risto also suffers as a result of societal structures. Pirkko Koskinen (1998) highlights the moment where Risto, as the police drag Kerttu to prison, exclaims: 'isn't it a blessed thing that a land has laws and justice' (Canth, 1920, p. 288). In fact, as a working-class man, Koskinen (1998, p. 72) points out that Risto belonged to the same political class as Kerttu – neither of them would have had the right to vote, nor any kind of political influence. However, just as he is blind to his immoral complicity in patriarchal oppression, so too is he blind to his own vulnerable position in society. Here, again, the play is consistent with materialist feminism, which 'stresses men's relative imprisonment in ideology' (Newton and Rosenfelt, 1985, p. xxvi). After Kerttu fails to shoot Risto, she repeats five times the line 'your laws and justice – that's what I meant to shoot' (Canth, 1920, pp. 288-9). It powerfully reinforces the idea that this play is not about individuals, but about the systems that oppress women, the working-class, and Roma people.

Alongside criticising the characterisation, Ahokas (1973) also names 'artificiality of dialogue' (p. 114) as one of the artistic defects of the play. He does not give examples, but I would conjecture that he is referring, for example, to the frequent explicit references to the law in the play.[30] Rather than these moments being clunky, overly-expositional attempts at naturalistic dialogue, as Ahokas implies in his criticism, I argue that here Canth is employing a sort of alienation technique. These invocations of the

[30] This is possibly also a reference to the poetic language used by Kerttu, discussed earlier.

law disrupt the more naturalistic dialogue of the scenes, and interpolate the spectator, reminding them of the social reality of the world in which they, not simply the characters, live. The effect created by these moments is similar to what Brecht would go on to theorise as *Vefremdungseffekt.* Brecht (2015) describes the v-effect as 'turning the object of which we are to be made aware, to which our attention is to be drawn, from something ordinary, familiar, immediately accessible, into something peculiar, striking and unexpected' (p. 192). Canth did not theorise her work in the way that Brecht did. However, I believe that what she was doing here was a technique that we would now recognise as Brechtian alienation, born of her need to politicise her work and incite social change within her audience. Early on in act one, the following exchange takes place:

> **Risto**. Who's in charge of the funds - husband or wife? You must know that much of Finnish law, my lad?
> **Toppo. '**Course I know the law puts men in charge.
> (Canth, 1920, p. 196)

Later, in act two, Risto says again:

> **Risto.** […] Johanna always manages to get some penny or other for herself, but those belong to me too – the law says so.
> (Canth, 1920, p. 219)

In this instance 'the object of which we are to be made aware' (Brecht, 2015, p. 192) is the fact of married women's lack of financial autonomy. This would have been a self-evident truth for the spectator when Canth was writing, but spoken aloud, repeatedly and non-naturalistically whilst the spectator simultaneously watches the effects of the law unfold, creates an alienating effect that casts the same truth in a different light. The same effect is achieved when Risto, encouraged by Leena-Kaisa and Anna-Maija,

cites the Bible to Johanna, when trying to coerce her into not leaving Risto after his infidelity has been revealed at her wedding party. The verses ('for woman was for man created, not man for woman', for example; Canth, 1920, p. 211) would certainly have been familiar to audiences, and hearing the words at this point in the play would have been jarring, re-contextualising them to point to the ways in which religious institutions oppress women.[31] The technique, not recognised as pioneering, has been assumed to be a poor attempt at what her male contemporaries were doing (naturalism), rather than Canth's own artistic innovation.

I have suggested that Canth's use of function-led character types and her use of alienation are elements of the play which gesture strongly towards the epic. I am not the first to speak of Canth and *The Worker's Wife* in conjunction with epic theatre and, more specifically, with the most famous proponent of epic theatre, Brecht. Jaakko Ahokas, whose critique of the play I have mentioned, conceded that the 'flaws' in Canth's work suggested that 'her best dramatic medium probably would have been something like the epic theatre of Brecht and Piscator' (Ahokas, 1973, pp. 114-5). Ahokas' speculation is entirely entrenched in the idea that Canth could only, surely, have been attempting to mimic Ibsen, and that she failed in this endeavour. His hypothetical 'solution' for the betterment of her work is that she should have been led by different male artists, Brecht and Piscator, rather than explicitly acknowledging and giving Canth credit for the fact that she was pioneering elements of what would go on to be theorised as epic theatre.

[31] Here she is citing the Bible verse 1 Corinthians 11:9.

Contemporary Finnish theatre director Juha Hurme has also drawn a parallel between Canth and Brecht. In praise of *The Worker's Wife,* Hurme (*Minäkin Olen Minna Canth,* 2019) has called it a 'Brechtian play,' noting that this is remarkable given that Brecht was born one year after Canth's death, acknowledging her pioneering work. Canth was indeed writing in a new innovative style for her time period, several elements of which would subsequently form the basis of epic theatre. I am wary of wholeheartedly labelling the play as 'Brechtian', as doing so again places Canth under the label of another male artist, and there are of course points of departure between Brecht's theatre and Canth's. *The Worker's Wife* is, above all, a Canthian play. Nevertheless, it is clear that some of its 'Canthian' elements correspond to what we now understand to be Brechtian techniques.

Feminist gestus

In her foundational article 'Brechtian Theory/Feminist Theory: Towards a Gestic Feminist Criticism,' Elin Diamond (1988) proposes how Brecht's social gestus can be appropriated by feminist theatre-makers. Diamond (1997) defines 'gestus' as: '[a] gesture, a word, an action, a tableau, by which, separately or in a series, the social attitudes encoded in the playtext become visible to the spectator' (p. 52). In a feminist context, she argues, 'the social gest signifies a moment of theoretical insight into sex-gender complexities, not only in the play's "fable," but in the culture which the play, at the moment of reception, is dialogically reflecting and shaping' (Diamond, 1988, p. 90). I believe that Canth, too, was employing her own version of feminist gestus in *The Worker's Wife*, even if she did not theorise it as such.

The first example of what I argue to be Canth's feminist gestus in the play comes in act one. The opening stage directions of *The Worker's Wife* create the following tableau: 'Johanna is standing in front of the window in her wedding outfit; Katri and Laura stand either side of her, holding lanterns' (Canth, 1920, p. 191). From outside come shouts of 'To the bride!' and the play begins. Then, towards the end of act one, this tableau is mirrored. Johanna has learned of Risto's previous engagement to Kerttu, and wants to leave him on the basis of this revelation. Canth gives the stage direction: 'Johanna pulls the crown and veil off her head. Leena-Kaisa and Anna-Maija come forward and set themselves at either side of Johanna' (Canth, 1920, p. 210). As Johanna stands there in disarray, her wedding crown pulled off, Leena-Kaisa, the representative of the church throughout the play, convinces her it would be a sin to break her wedding vows.[32] Johanna tries to resist, but eventually bows to societal pressure and assents that it would indeed be a sin to leave. There is a final mirroring tableau where Katri and Laura again stand either side of her, helping her to look presentable and we hear shouts of 'to the bride!' from outside once more. I would argue that these mirrored tableaux are an example of Canthian feminist gestus. The second tableau is an inversion of a traditional wedding scene, whereby the traditional ritual is made disturbing, alien, to the audience. The two tableaux illustrate the immovability and inevitability of

[32] Maijala makes a compelling argument about the symbolic resonance of the crown in the play. In act four when, again, Johanna wants to leave Risto, Leena-Kaisa tells her that through suffering she is 'polishing her crown' and assuring her place in heaven. Johanna's final words in the play are 'take my crown away – it burns – it burns!' Thus, she finally rejects the crown of patriarchal suffering, but the rejection comes too late. (Maijala, 2008, pp. 265-66 and Canth, 1920, pp. 269-70.)

the role placed on women under patriarchy, and how this is upheld by society, including the other women who are complicit in it.

A second example of feminist gestus in *The Worker's Wife* is Kerttu's dance in the marketplace at the end of act two. Here, Kerttu is desperately trying to raise money to pay for medicine to heal Risto's eyes after she has thrown sand in them to make him leave her alone. She rushes over to a group of wealthy gentlemen in the marketplace and begs them to give her money in exchange for her dancing 'such a wonderfully beautiful gypsy dance' for them. It is a horrible moment, where Kerttu is forced to exploit the men's misogynistic, exoticizing views about her. We know that, in fact, Kerttu was not raised by the Roma half of her family, so even if there were such a thing as a 'gypsy dance', she would not have been taught how to do it. This dance, then, is representationally complex, and subverts the spectator's gaze. The spectator simultaneously shares the gaze of the lecherous gentlemen who watch Kerttu's 'beautiful gypsy dance' – a culturally recognizable trope which plays into stereotypes about Roma people – but also understands the dance to be exploitative and the men's gaze to be misogynistic. Dance is symbolically resonant in the play, and this is set up clearly in act one. Before Kerttu enters, the women at the wedding gossip about her and her 'gypsy origins.' Laura recalls:

> That sort won't take to work, no matter what. One time, she was helping me wash clothes at the ice hole – and she just started dancing, for no reason! I don't know what sort of gypsy dance she was doing, but no one could help laughing at the poor freak. (Canth, 1920, p. 194)

Later in the same scene, Laura reprimands Liisa, another wedding guest, for dancing on her own ('Stop messing around. Everyone's looking at us.' Canth, 1920, p. 197). At the end of the act, Johanna, in turmoil over the revelation about Risto's previous engagement to Kerttu, declines to join in the dance. Risto insists, and when she finally (silently) consents and the group dance begins as the first act ends, her joining in the dance signals the inevitability and entrapment of her position as a woman in society. A woman dancing alone, uninvited, is subversive, but women are expected to dance when called upon to, and it symbolises their fixed position in and enforced compliance with patriarchal society.

Writing as a woman: Canth's positionality

Finally, I want to mention how Canth's positionality as a woman and a feminist influenced the dramaturgy of the play. It is this positionality which resulted in her pioneering incorporation of epic theatre elements into what might have otherwise been a much more straightforwardly naturalistic, and resultingly less revolutionary, play. The theatrical models available to Canth could not adequately address gender inequality, due to their overwhelmingly patriarchal perspective, and so she had to find her own artistic voice. In 1884, Canth sent director Kaarlo Bergbom the script for *The Worker's Wife,* and in the accompanying letter she wrote:

> They're amazingly naïve those men, Strindberg, Nordau etc. When they speak about the relationship between men and women, they only ever look from the *man's* perspective. As if a woman didn't have the power to do the same. A terrible collision will arise from it. (Canth cited in Nevala, 1989, p. 214-5)

Canth’s sentiments here echo Hagman’s words about Canth, with her ‘woman’s eye’, seeing what even ‘great men’ could not see (Hagman, 1911, p. 175). Canth begins and ends the play with the character Vappu – the most resistant character in the play, who openly encourages Johanna to leave Risto, against the voice of the rest of society. The opening lines of the play are an exchange between Risto and Vappu, where he asks whether she wouldn’t like to be a bride too. Vappu replies that she would not. When he insists that surely she has a wide choice of suitors, she replies that it’s ‘better to be careful than regretful’ (Canth, 1920, p. 191). The first perspective presented to the audience, then, is Vappu’s counter-hegemonic mistrust of men and marriage. The play ends almost cyclically with Risto proposing to Vappu, who, now in stronger terms, rejects him categorically, saying that it is enough that he ‘has already ruined two women’s lives,’ and despairs of how society fails to punish men who wrong women, but tells Risto that justice will be served in the afterlife (Canth, 1920, p. 291). Elin Diamond (1988) proposes that a feminist gestic criticism allows the spectator to see ‘possibilities emerging of another reality, what is not there, but could be’ (p. 145). Vappu as a character offers this possibility, particularly in her final damning speech, and beginning and ending the play with her reinforces this. Canth was working in what was undeniably a very male cultural context, influenced predominantly by male writers such as Ibsen. However, her politics were unflinchingly feminist, and she explicitly sought to write from a woman’s perspective. This shaped her writing, and resulted in a play that is unlike the work of her male contemporaries.

It is also worth noting that the views expressed by Vappu in the play most closely resemble Canth's own views. She is the only character to extend meaningful sympathy to Johanna, and attempts to intervene in Johanna's life several times (encouraging her to leave Risto in act one, even offering to let her stay with her; giving Johanna bread for free and finding work for her in act two; supporting her against Mrs Vörsky's accusations in act four). At the end, she agrees to adopt Johanna's son, on the condition that she can 'look after him and raise him as though he were my own,' vowing to 'try and make a person out of him' (Canth, 1920, p. 290). There is a hopeful implication in this pledge. Vappu and her counter-hegemonic politics bookending the play, her sympathy towards the protagonists, the way in which she is somewhat removed from the other characters in the play, suggest, to me, that Vappu is a self-reflexive surrogate for Canth herself in the play.[33] Here, again, Canth was finding innovative ways to put her politics into the play. Without theatrical models available to her which were attempting to do what she was attempting to do, Canth seems rather to have been drawing on the influence of non-fiction writing. The polemical style of Vappu's final speech, and the idea of the author seeming to directly address the audience to make her closing argument, is very much inflected by Canth's journalistic influences.

[33] Although Vappu does not have as much interaction with Kerttu in the play as she does with Johanna, she still extends greater sympathy towards her than the other characters do. She is the only wedding guest to condemn Risto for his behaviour towards Kerttu in act one ('But you were engaged to that girl, that's what I understood. So why on earth did you leave her like that?' Canth, 1920, p. 209), and in act five ('And that wasn't enough. You have sent that poor, unhappy girl, who the police carried past me out there, to a place two times more terrible still.' Canth, 1920, p. 291).

Tellingly, Vappu's final damning speech was actually cut from the first production of the play. Canth and director Kaarlo Bergbom discussed the ending of the play at length (Maijala, 2014, p. 167). Bergbom evidently felt that it was too much for Johanna to die, suggesting that she be blinded instead, as a metaphor for her blind compliance with societal expectations. Canth, though, insisted on the necessity of Johanna dying, writing that 'it felt impossible to present that sort of quiet, peaceful, patient philosophy, now when my heart is full of bitterness and revolution' (Canth cited in Maijala, 2014, p. 167). Nonetheless, Bergbom did exercise directorial license when it came to the performance, and ended the play at the moment where Kerttu is dragged away by the police (Hagman, 1911, p. 206). Indeed, it is clear that throughout the process, Bergbom – who was sceptical about Canth writing a realist play (despite himself having enthusiastically directed *A Doll's House* for the Finnish Theatre in 1880; it was one thing to stage a realist play by a foreign man, and quite another to stage one by a Finnish woman) – had attempted to soften Canth's writing (Maijala, 2014, p. 167). Early on in the process Canth wrote the following to a friend:

> Writing [the play] is so infinitely fun. Whilst writing, I sometimes feel such great strength, courage and freedom that it almost feels threatening. What a good war hero I would have made if I had been a man and lived during a war time! "Take no prisoners" I think, every time I put some particularly sensational truth in Homsantuu's mouth. The only thing is that [Bergbom] will weed them all out. (Canth cited in Maijala, p. 160)

Had Canth written the above after the premiere of *The Worker's Wife,* she could just as well have referenced Bergbom weeding out the sensational truths she put in Vappu's mouth, which is what he did by fully omitting the

final scene. When Canth was writing her second play, *The House of Roinila,* she had written to Bergbom for advice. In his reply, he had said: ‘if you trust my advice, write folk plays, write pictures of real life and in particular of women’s life’ (Bergbom cited in Aspelin-Haapkylä, 1909, p. 112). The biting social critique that Canth produced in portraying real women’s lives in *The Worker’s Wife* was clearly not the sort of ‘real life’ that Bergbom had meant by this. The hegemonic, patriotic realism encouraged by Bergbom was not adequate for Canth’s mission, which was to incite revolution.

The reception of *The Worker’s Wife* proved both Bergbom and Canth right. Lucina Hagman, who attended the premiere, wrote that the play divided audience members into two camps, and that ‘everybody felt that a meteor had fallen to the ground, so fierce was the explosion’ (Hagman, 1911, p. 214). Similarly, Reetta Nieminen (1990) summarises responses to the performance: ‘*The Worker’s Wife* delighted the youth and enlightened adults and angered conservatives’ (p. 106). The play received a great deal of press attention in the aftermath of the first performance. Among the harshest and most vocal critics of the play was Agathon Meurman, journalist, important Fennoman politician, and member of the board of the Finnish Theatre. Meurman wrote no fewer than three articles in the *Finland* newspaper railing against Canth and *The Worker’s Wife.* In his articles, he condemned Johanna and Kerttu as being untruthful characters constructed by the women’s rights agenda, and doubted the artistic merit of the piece and its

durability as a work of art.[34] Several of the responses to the play centre around the question of whether or not it was 'truthful', or realistic. Hagman (1911, pp. 215-6) recalls overhearing a member of parliament remarking as he left the theatre, that it would have been a 'good piece, if it hadn't been so truthful.' Päivi Lappalainen (2000) observes that 'the conservative circles' responses to Canth's work point to how realism – and in this instance the question of what realism is – connects to efforts to stabilise and justify the prevailing order' (p. 69). Meurman's principle concern was that the play dared to call into question the laws and justice system of the land ('Such is the latest accomplishment offered to us by the women's movement,' read the sarcastic conclusion of Meurman's review, cited in Maijala, 2014, p. 170), but this is exactly what Canth sought to do. Hagman describes what the play achieved:

> *The Worker's Wife* was something completely new. It depicted old things, very old, very everyday things, insignificant things, in many peoples' opinion. But it depicted them with a new spirit, shone new light on them, new colours. (Hagman, 1911, pp. 208-9)

This effect of *The Worker's Wife* is testament to the success of Canth's non-mimetic rendering of reality.

Recovering *The Worker's Wife*

This chapter represents part of my feminist translation of Minna Canth's *The Worker's Wife,* for which I have used the joint strategies of recovery and commentary, as proposed by Massardier-Kenney. The other half of my

[34] Crucially, as Meurman himself acknowledged in the articles, he had not actually seen nor read the play, so any opinion on the play as a work of art is entirely uninformed. No matter – as Nieminen (1990) quips, 'like a true politician, he knew what was good literature and what wasn't' (p. 106).

‘recovery’ work is evidenced by the translation I have produced (Jeffery, 2023). My translation includes a preface and footnotes, which provide context for the text, and through which I have endeavoured to highlight feminist meaning in the play.[35] In this chapter, and through my translation, I have sought to demonstrate how existing scholarship around Canth and the lack of critical analysis of her work feed into each other and result in an underappreciation of the artistic value of her political plays, in particular. This reflects a wider context in which women writers are reductively read solely through their biographies, and are not permitted to transcend their contexts in the way that their male contemporaries are. I have also explored how the influence of Ibsen on Canth has led to a similarly reductive reading of *The Worker’s Wife,* which fails to appreciate where the play actively departs from Ibsen-esque naturalism. Canth was creating her own feminist, social realist dramaturgy, inflected by her own experience as a woman, and as a women’s rights journalist, and the work of her fellow women journalists, rather than simply making a failed attempt to mimic Ibsen. I have also addressed ways in which elements of this Canthian dramaturgy mirrored elements of what was subsequently termed epic and Brechtian theatre, although ultimately argue against wholeheartedly categorising it as a ‘Brechtian’ play, but rather label it as a Canthian play.

Doing the practical work of translating *The Worker’s Wife* necessitated a deep engagement with Minna Canth’s craft and politics. It was through

[35] Inevitably, a portion of the material in the preface and footnotes of the translation is lifted from this chapter.

doing this work that I made many of the textual discoveries that influenced my critical reading of the play. My iterative process of 'doing-reflecting-reading-articulating-doing' (Nelson, 2013, p. 32) meant that I was constantly reflecting on and theorising every translation decision, having to continually confront the play word by word. Collaborating with other people throughout the translation process also facilitated this engagement. I was required to articulate my reading of the text, and to answer questions about it, often to justify and advocate for it, and doing so clarified my ideas about the play. I also gained several insights through my collaborators' interpretations of the text. Similarly, hearing the translated text read aloud at the two readings I held enabled me to better understand the movement of text from page to stage, and the bearing of orality on the politics and dramaturgy of the play. I discuss this process and the insights gained through it at length in Chapter Four.

Feminist translator and theorist Luise von Flotow (1997) has written that one of the most important arguments for recovery work in translation is that it establishes 'a lineage of intellectual women who resisted the norms and values of the societies in which they lived' (pp. 30-1). I hope that my commentary on the text (this chapter, and the annotated translation I have produced, which includes a preface and extensive footnotes throughout) contributes to a rehabilitative appreciation of Minna Canth's artistic, as well as political, voice. Her political influence has been undeniable, but now there is a need for a greater appreciation of how her politics and artistic craft were inextricably linked. Her influence as a political, feminist artist, not just

as a political voice, can be seen in the rich lineage of political women playwrights in Finland that followed her. Canth was the first woman playwright writing political plays in Finnish, but she was succeeded by writers such as Elvira Willman (1875-1927), Maria Jotuni (1880-1943), and Hella Wuolijoki (1886-1954). In 1918, Elvira Willman dedicated her novella *Vallankumouksen vyöryssä* [*In the Throes of Revolution*] to Minna Canth. The dedication summarises Canth's powerful impact on women's writing and politics in Finland:

> From you, Minna Canth, I received the first awakening of my life. Your genius encouraged me to work in service of what is right and beautiful. You are the guide of the youth, you, who already at the dawn of our civilisation dared to write:
> "Your laws and justice – that's what I meant to shoot!"
> (Willman, 1918, p.2)

Chapter Three - Fluency, Fidelity and Feminist Translation: Resistancy as an Approach to Dialogue

In the previous chapter, I discussed my application of the first of Françoise Massardier-Kenney's 'author-centred' feminist translation strategies, recovery and accompanying commentary, to Minna Canth's *The Worker's Wife*. Recovery dictates the choice of source text, and commentary is the meta-textual means through which the translator illuminates feminist meaning in said source text for the reader. However, neither strategy specifically concerns the actual translation of the words of the source text.[36] Massardier-Kenney's third 'author-centred' strategy is resistancy, which does, at least in part, concern *how* the feminist translator translates the words of the text at hand.[37] In this chapter, I propose an appropriation and reformulation of resistancy for the feminist translation of texts for performance. Massardier-Kenney's strategy of resistancy was informed by Lawrence Venuti's concept of the same name, which she defines as: 'making the labour of translation visible through linguistic means that have a defamiliarizing effect and that work against easy fluency' (Massardier-Kenney, 1997, p. 60). Venuti's (1998, 2008, 2013) understanding of resistancy is multifaceted, and has evolved over the course of his career, and I will return to his formulation of resistancy later in this chapter. Based on her interpretation, however, Massardier-Kenney (1997, pp. 60-1) adapts

[36] Although it is important to note that recovery entirely shapes the translator's understanding and reading of the text in question, and this understanding inevitably bleeds into and shapes the way the words of the text are translated and the choices the translator makes.

[37] It is worth noting that the categorisations of these strategies are inevitably blurry. Although Massardier-Kenney categorises resistancy as an 'author-centred' strategy, it can also double as a 'translator-centred' strategy, as I will go on to explore.

resistancy for feminist translators, encouraging them to find ways of challenging patriarchal linguistic conventions in translation, where the source text does so too. Massardier-Kenney (1997, p. 61) notes that the strategy is most easily and obviously applied to experimental feminist texts, such as those translated by the late-twentieth century Canadian feminist translators discussed previously (see Chapter One). She suggests that 'the notion of resistancy needs to be adapted to deal with texts that do not use stylistic innovations to explore gender (this includes most precontemporary texts)' (Massardier-Kenney, 1997, p. 61). Her proposal is that the feminist translator use meta-texts (prefaces, notes, commentaries) to produce 'thick translations' (a notion she borrows from Kwame Anthony Appiah, 1993), which 'point out the importance of what is women-identified in terms of literary production' (Massardier-Kenney, 1997, p. 61).[38] Whilst there is a great deal of value in producing resistant, 'thick translations' of works by women writers – indeed, as a strategy adjacent to commentary, it is one that I have adopted in my translation of *The Worker's* Wife, and the preceding chapter and my annotated translation together constitute attempts at this (see Chapter Four and Jeffery, 2023) – I want to push the strategy of feminist resistancy further. There are additional considerations for the feminist translator of texts for performance, largely dictated by the fact that these texts are ultimately intended to be performed by actors and received by live theatre audiences. Printed meta-texts, for example, are generally not accessible to the primary receivers of the translated theatre text. How, then,

[38] Appiah (1993) proposes 'thick translation' in the context of translating African proverbs. The aim of thick translation in this context is to challenge racist, colonial attitudes towards oral cultures.

can the feminist translator of texts for performance make their translations resistant?

Resistancy: an overview

Firstly, I want to delve deeper into the ideas that inform resistancy as a concept, and how it functions. Massardier-Kenney builds her interpretation of resistancy on her understanding of Venuti's (1998) early formulations of the concept. However, Venuti (2008, 2013) has since clarified and further developed the idea. Venuti, in turn, built his theory and strategy of resistancy on work by earlier translation scholars. In formulating his theory and strategy of 'resistancy', Venuti was building on work by Friedrich Schleiermacher (2012, originally published 1813) and Antoine Berman (2012, originally published 1985). The former coined the oppositional approaches of 'foreignisation' and 'domestication' as strategies in translation (a theory which Venuti re-appraises, establishing that the two are not actually binary approaches); the latter advocated for a translation ethics that 'respects cultural otherness by manifesting the foreignness of the source text in the translation' (Venuti, 2013, p. 3). Venuti's resistancy is a strategy developed from his perception that the anglophone market prizes 'fluency' and 'readability' above all as translation qualities. These qualities are based on a myth of transparency, on the idea that the translator is completely '*simpatico*' with the author of the source text, and that the reader of the translated text is gaining unmediated access to the source text. The translator, and all traces of their work, are necessarily invisible. However, of course, the translator *has* intervened in the text, and Venuti (2008, p. 1) argues that the translator's interventions, the steps taken to make the text

read as ‘fluent’, have been assimilative manipulations to make the text meet the expectations of the receiving culture. To counter this, Venuti proposes that translators espouse a ‘foreignising’ approach to translation, and resistancy is a way of characterising this approach. The purpose of creating a foreignising effect is to ‘question dominant values in the receiving situation’ (Venuti, 2013, pp. 2-3) — a purpose clearly in line with the values of feminist translation. The resistant translator seeks opportunities to actively challenge the target language, to be ‘unfaithful’ to the ‘dominant aesthetic in the receiving situation’ (Venuti, 2008, p. 252). This can begin already with the choice of source text; the resistant translator should seek out texts which could offer a challenge to the target language or culture.[39] Crucially, though, Venuti (2013) has clarified that the foreignising effect is one consciously constructed by the translator. It is not a matter of there being some essential, inherent ‘foreign’ quality to the source text that the translator must then carry over into the translated text (although the resistant translator is encouraged to work with texts that do, for whatever reason, resist easy assimilation). Venuti explains:

> Any sense of foreignness communicated in a translation is never available in some direct or unmediated form; it is a construction that is always mediated by intelligibilities and interests in the receiving situation. (Venuti, 2013, p. 3)

Resistancy is an interpretative act. On this point, Venuti departs from his predecessors, Schleiermacher and Berman, whose theories took the ‘foreignness’ of a source text to be something innate and invariable to be

[39] In *The Scandals of Translation,* Venuti (1998) discusses the importance of translating ‘minor literatures’ – texts that possess ‘minority status’ in their own cultures, which could in turn be useful in translation for ‘minoritizing the standard dialect and dominant cultural forms in American English’ (p. 10).

uncovered and carried across by the translator. Venuti has also clarified that resistancy, or a foreignising approach, does not mean that a translator should abandon fluency, but that it is rather a matter of making purposeful interventions to challenge the hegemony of the target language, to introduce alterity. Resistancy is constructed, and purposeful.

It is clear that resistancy, with its goal of challenging the target culture's linguistic values, is an approach very much compatible with the goals of feminist translation, which is fundamentally counter-hegemonic. Venuti (2008) notes the 'abusive fidelity' inherent in resistancy, 'which constructs a simultaneous relationship of reproduction and supplementarity between the translation and the foreign text' (pp. 255-6). Feminist translation, like Venuti's formulation of resistancy, challenges the concept of fidelity in translation. The full title of Luise von Flotow's (1991) foundational article 'Feminist Translation: Contexts, Practices and Theories,' includes the subheading: 'Or, How to translate "*Ce soir j'entre dans l'histoire sans relever ma jupe*."' In the article, she contrasts two translations of the line in the subheading, one of which is by an explicitly feminist translator, Linda Gaboriau. Translator David Ellis renders the line as: 'this evening I'm entering history without pulling up my skirt' (cited in von Flotow, 1991, p. 70). It is, as von Flotow (1991) concedes, 'a perfectly adequate, idiomatic version of the source language text' (p. 70). Feminist translator Linda Gaboriau, on the other hand, translates the line as: 'this evening I am entering history without opening my legs' (cited in von Flotow, 1991, p. 70). Gaboriau's translation destabilises the notions of equivalence and

fidelity. Word by word, according to traditional, normative figurations of translation, her translation is arguably less ‘accurate’ or ‘faithful’ than Ellis’ translation, but nonetheless it communicates a meaning of the line. Gaboriau’s translation is successful from a feminist standpoint because, as Barbara Godard (1984) argues, it ‘makes explicit a major feminist topos, namely the repossession of the word; the naming and writing of the life of the body, the exploration of its images, as experienced by women’ (p. 14). Gaboriau has used the line as a site for resistancy, disrupting the norms of the receiving situation, and this resistancy has resulted in a translation that challenges the notion of fidelity. The resistant feminist translator, then, actively seeks out opportunities to emphasise a text’s feminist politics and to shape its meaning, even where this involves making ‘inappropriate’ or ‘unfaithful’ linguistic choices.

Notably, the translation comparison explored above, the quotation in von Flotow’s subheading, actually comes from a performance text: *La Nef des sorcières* (published in translation as *A Clash of Symbols*), a series of monologues devised and written by a group of feminist writers and first performed in Quebec in 1976.[40] Neither von Flotow nor Godard, both of whom use the line from this play as an example of feminist translation practice, explore the implications of *La Nef des sorcières* being specifically a performance text. The performance situation carries particular conditions, which have particular implications for translated theatre texts. Theatre

[40] Marthe Blackburn, Marie-Claire Blais, Nicole Brossard, Odette Gagnon, Luce Guilbeault, Pol Pelletier, and France Théoret, *La Nef des sorcières* (Montréal: Quinze, 1976).

translation scholar Sirkku Aaltonen (2000) lists these conditions as: 'orality, immediacy and communality' (p. 41). It is because of these conditions that theatre translation arguably has a somewhat different relationship with the concept of fidelity than other forms of literary translation do. Aaltonen (2000) explains that 'theatre translation actively rewrites, or adapts, many aspects of the source text, justifying this strategy with references to the 'requirements of the stage'' (p. 41). In many ways, then, theatre texts present a particularly apt and appealing opportunity to the resistant feminist translator, given the established culture of 'active rewriting' (Aaltonen, 2000, p. 41). In fact, Gaboriau's feminist translation of the text was actually for a production of the play by Toronto's Alumni Theatre in 1978, whereas Ellis' translation was not for performance, but for inclusion in Canadian literary journal *Exile.* Perhaps there is an argument to suggest that Gaboriau's translation was informed by the fact of it being for performance, as well as by her feminist politics. Her translation of the line is more explicit, arguably corresponding to the criterion of 'immediacy'. Furthermore, as Godard's analysis of the translation states, Gaboriau's translation makes the body explicit, a fact highlighted by the physical presence of a performer.

Speakability as problematic translation criterion

Aaltonen (2000, p. 41) goes on to cite the criteria 'playability' and 'speakability' as oft named justifications for adaptation (which is perhaps a way of saying 'infidelity', with fewer negative implications) in theatre translation. The invitation to adapt and rewrite when translating texts for performance presents feminist translators with an exciting opportunity, as I

will go on to explore later in this chapter. However, I argue that the criteria used to justify those rewriting practices in mainstream anglophone practice may in fact restrict rather than free the feminist translator. Specifically, I want to examine how 'speakability' as a dominant requisite of anglophone theatre translation begets a normative practice that should be treated with as much suspicion by the feminist theatre translator as 'fidelity' is by the feminist literary translator. 'Speakability' as a quality of translated theatre texts has been used in conjunction, sometimes interchangeably, with a number of other terms: performability, theatricality, playability, and so on. The quality that has garnered perhaps the most attention in theatre translation scholarship is the concept of 'performability'. Susan Bassnett (1991) has strongly contested the term, condemning it as a term 'that has no credibility, because it is resistant to any form of definition' (p. 95). Its meaning is indeed elusive, in part because it is almost impossible to claim it as an *a priori* quality unique to a text written for theatrical performance. As Eva Espasa (2001) succinctly puts it at the start of her examination of the term: 'anything which is performed becomes performable' (p. 49). Bassnett (1991) posits that 'attempts to define the 'performability' inherent in a text never go further than generalized discussion about the need for fluent speech rhythms in the target text' (p. 102). In line with this observation, I want to focus on the concept of 'speakability,' which is perhaps more specifically what the definitions Bassnett refers to are alluding to. Indeed, 'speakability' seems to be the dominant concern, the ultimate evaluating criterion, in the mainstream anglophone theatre translation context, even where the term is not used explicitly. The ideologies that uphold the

expectation of ‘speakability’ and the practice that results from it are, I argue, inconsistent with the task of the feminist theatre translator, and my reformulation of resistancy for feminist theatre translation is very much informed by a resistance towards unquestioning prioritisation of ‘speakability’.

‘Speakability’, though perhaps a little more precise a criterion than ‘performability’, is no less difficult to define – all texts are ‘speakable’ in the same way that all texts are ‘performable’. It is not really a question of whether a translated text is physically ‘speakable’, but rather of whether the translated text’s ‘speakability’ aligns with what the target culture deems to be ‘speakable’ (or performable). Bassnett (1991) points out that ‘it is principally among English language translators, directors and impresarios that we find the use of the notion of ‘performability’ as a criterion essential to the translation process’ (p. 102). Indeed, it is this pervasive anglophone understanding and prioritisation of speakability, or the dominant understanding of what constitutes being ‘speakable’, that has shaped the mainstream translated-theatre landscape in the UK (Bassnett, 1991, p. 102). Of the relatively small number of plays in translation performed in the UK, a significant proportion are translated through a two-step process where a source-language expert produces a so-called ‘literal’ translation, which is then re-worked by an English-speaking theatre-maker — very often a well-known British playwright (Brodie, 2018, p.335).[41] In a 2015 interview with

[41] It is difficult to determine exact data, but Brodie (2018) estimates that approximately 12-14% of ‘straight’ plays performed in London ‘have a source that has been subjected to a translation process’ (p. 335).

Katalin Trencsényi, then literary manager Sebastian Born justified the National Theatre's use of this practice, saying:

> Ultimately we feel that we want to create a play that would work for a production here. That the actors will feel they can speak the dialogue, and that there isn't a sense that what we are presenting is an alien artefact. (Born cited in Trencsényi, 2015, p. 53)

Whilst the Royal Court Theatre have generally not followed the two-step translation model, at least in more recent years, favouring a more translator-oriented approach, previous literary manager Christopher Campbell (cited in Trencsényi, 2015) echoed Born's sentiments: '[a translation] has to sit convincingly in the mouth of an English actor. Very often there are simply too many words in the English translation, or it doesn't sound credible' (p. 54). Without explicitly naming it, both Campbell and Born are emphasizing the importance of 'speakability' as a requisite for translated plays.

So how exactly does 'speakability' manifest in plays translated into English? Here is a short example from a play translated into English using the two-step process outlined above: Henrik Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler,* translated by British playwright Patrick Marber in 2017, based on a 'literal' translation by Karin and Ann Bamborough. The translation was produced by the National Theatre – an institution that, as we have seen, has tended to favour the 'speakable' results produced by British playwrights working from 'literals'. In Marber's version, the opening lines of the play read as follows:

> **Juliana**. Are they asleep?
> **Berte**. (*nods*) They arrived well after midnight. And then Mrs Tesman refused to go to bed till I'd unpacked every one of her bags.

Juliana. We must let them rest. *(She walks around.)* It's stifling. They must always have air. (Ibsen translated by Marber, 2017, p. 4)

For comparison, translator Michael Meyer, working directly from the source language (Dano-Norwegian), rather than by way of a 'literal', renders the same lines thus:

> **Miss Tesman**. *(stops just inside the door, listens, and says in a hushed voice)* Well, fancy that! They're not up yet!
> **Bertha**. *(also in hushed tones)* What did I tell you, miss? The boat didn't get in till midnight. And when they did turn up — Jesus, miss, you should have seen all the things madam made me unpack before she'd go to bed!
> **Miss Tesman**. Ah, well. Let them have a good lie in. But let's have some nice fresh air waiting for them when they do come down. (Ibsen translated by Meyer, 2002, p. 2-3).[42]

There are two particularly relevant things to note: the character names, and the length of the texts.[43] Marber has opted to call the first character 'Juliana' instead of 'Miss Tesman'. In his brief introduction to the playtext, Marber (2017) explains that director Ivo van Hove had 'asked [him] to write a script that could work for a modern-dress production in an almost empty space, but that could, in theory, be performed in period costume on a realistic set' (p. viii). Referring to the character by her first name, rather than the more formal 'Miss Tesman', is presumably a concession to modernity. The second main difference is that Marber's version is more concise than Meyer's. The former extract is about half the length of the

[42] It is worth clarifying that I do not cite Meyer's translation as a comparative example because I think it is any 'better' than Marber's. As no translation can be, Meyer's translation is not 'neutral' or even necessarily more 'accurate' than Marber's. However, on a word-by-word level, Meyer's translation is closer to Ibsen, and he makes fewer interventions.

[43] A third difference that warrants mentioning is that Marber has cut the stage directions. This is in line with the 'neutralising' cutting down of the text.

latter. In terms of word count, Meyer's translation corresponds almost exactly to the source text, whilst Marber's is about half the length. He has cut the verbal flourishes that Meyer (2002, pp. 2-3) retains ('fancy that!', 'Jesus, miss', 'Ah, well') and pared the text back until it conveys the key facts of the situation, but little else. The rest of Marber's translation follows in the same vein. In the introduction to the text, he writes that van Hove had instructed him to 'not 'update' the text nor use slang,' but that he was 'permitted to edit the original and occasionally reorder lines of dialogue but no further liberties were encouraged' (Marber, 2017, p. viii). Accordingly, Marber's main strategy seems to have been cutting the text down, with the result that the text, devoid of the somewhat nineteenth-century style verbal flourishes, is more 'neutral' (neither period nor modern), as per van Hove's brief.

Paring back texts as a way of making them 'speakable' is a common theme in this context – I have already cited Christopher Campbell's (Trencsényi, 2015) comment about there often being 'too many words' (p. 54) in a translation, for example. Indeed, reviews of Marber's *Hedda Gabler* noted its brevity, praising it for being 'fleet' (Clapp, 2016) and 'brisk, cobweb-free' (Billington, 2016). Similarly, speaking about his 2012 translation of Ibsen's *A Doll's House,* based on a 'literal' by Charlotte Barslund, British playwright Simon Stephens claimed: 'most of the stuff that I did was cutting. I cut 1,000 words from the literal' (Haydon, 2014). The 'literal', he assents, was 'to an extent actable,' and his work was mostly about 'refining and refocussing' (Haydon, 2014). However, Stephens does acknowledge

that he did also make some small additions to the text, as well as cutting: ‘there are some linguistic flourishes that I added to make lines sing more happily out of my mouth,’ for example, ‘embellishing lines with adverbs’ and ‘qualifiers’ (Haydon, 2014). For instance, Michael Meyer translates the following exchange between the Helmers as:

> **Helmer**. Bought, did you say? All that? Has my little squander-bird been overspending again?
> **Nora**. Oh, Torvald, surely we can let ourselves go a little this year! It’s the first Christmas we don’t have to scrape. (Ibsen translated by Meyer, 2008, p. 25)

In Stephens’ translation this becomes:

> **Torvald**. Has my little hamster been spending all of my money again?
> **Nora**. Not all of it.
> **Torvald**. Did you buy all this?
> **Nora**. Is that very bad?
> **Torvald**. It’s a little bit bad. Not terribly bad.
> **Nora**. But we can afford it, this year, can’t we?
> *He looks at her as he comes into the room to examine her purchases.*
> With the salary you’re going to get? And the lots and lots of money you’re going to earn? This is the first Christmas when we haven’t had to count every penny. (Ibsen translated by Stephens, 2012, pp. 4-5)

Although, again, the key facts are the same in both versions, Stephens has indeed drawn out the exchange, adding qualifiers and a couple of extra lines. Incidentally, like Marber, Stephens has chosen to refer to both characters by their first names (Torvald) rather than their surnames (Helmer) here. Stephens owns that the resulting effect of his additions is that they ‘anglicised the energy of the lines,’ and despite having ‘started off with the intention of writing something more born out of Scandinavia,’ he

ultimately created ‘a tremendously English version’ (Haydon, 2014). In fact, he even partly attributes the success of the production to the fact that ‘the text is more anglicised than [he’d] anticipated making it’ (Haydon, 2014). The production was well received by critics, who praised Stephens’ language for being ‘lively and faithful’ (Dowell, 2012) and maintaining a ‘fluent authenticity’ (Hitchings, 2012). It is striking that a knowingly anglicized translation should be referred to as ‘faithful’ and ‘authentic’. The critics’ praise very much supports Venuti’s observations about the prioritisation of ‘fluency’ as a desirable quality of translation, and the illusion of transparency and fidelity it engenders. Stephens has knowingly manipulated the source text to produce an assimilative translation, which has convinced audiences that they are gaining access to something ‘authentic’, to Ibsen.

Aaltonen (2000) cites Jirí Levy’s attempt to define speakability, which he aligns with ‘easy graspability’: ‘short sentences and sentence chains, well known words in preference to rarer ones, the avoidance of difficult consonant clusters and so on’ (p. 42). The justifications here are presumably the ‘orality’ and ‘immediacy’ conditions of the performance situation – immediacy arguably necessitates ‘graspability’. Similarly, Phyllis Zatlin (2005) cites Clifford Landers, agreeing with his belief that ‘style […] sometimes must yield to the reality that the actors have to be able to deliver the lines in a convincing and natural manner’ (p. 1). Landers’ argument recalls Christopher Campbell’s belief that a translation ‘has to sit convincingly in the mouth of an English actor’ (Trencsényi, 2015, p. 54).

Both Marber and Stephens' translations of Ibsen conform to Levy's definition of speakability, espousing brevity and simplicity. Critics' responses to the productions suggest that, in performance, the translated texts were indeed easy to follow, and delivered in a natural and convincing manner. Based on Marber and Stephens' translations, and the above scholarly and practitioner definitions of speakability, can we surmise that a 'speakable' text (i.e. a text deemed 'performable' in a UK context) is natural, concise, simple, easy to grasp? And that the way to achieve this is to cut superfluous words, but also add in anglicisms? Quickly, the limited scope of theatrical languages offered by speakability is exposed. Patrice Pavis (1991) warns against 'the norm of 'playing well' or of verisimilitude,' and 'the danger of banalization lurking under cover of the text that 'speaks well'' (p. 143). Translator Penny Black also notes the 'monotonous voice' that can result from the two-step translation process, because British playwrights 'straighten [the language] up or use their own language' (Trencsényi , 2011, p. 197). Here, Black begins to point towards what a prioritization of 'speakability' can lead to, and what is problematic about it as a criterion, particularly for feminist translators: monotony.

According to Bassnett (1991), the term 'performability' first came into use in the twentieth century, generally in connection with naturalistic and post-naturalistic texts, leading her to suggest that assumptions about performability are 'based on a concept of theatre that is extremely restricted' (pp. 102-3). Trencsényi (2015), reflecting on Campbell's comments about the importance of speakability, similarly concludes that 'these criteria best

serve one particular type of theatre, the realistic-naturalistic' (p. 54). It perhaps makes sense, then, that two of the writers who have tended to dominate translated theatre in the UK, to the extent that Gunilla Anderman (2005) argues that they have become 'honorary British dramatists' (p. 5), are Ibsen and Chekhov. There is a predominance of 'speakable' 'versions' of plays by Ibsen and Chekhov by British playwrights, and Anderman (2005) points out that Ibsen has become so much a part of the anglophone canon that 'it is not always remembered that Ibsen's work is only known in English through the mediation of translation' (p. 8). Clearly speakability is an ideologically determined criterion. Judging the quality of a translation against the criterion of performability (speakability) inevitably requires a conception of performability that is aligned with the target culture's theatrical conventions. This both places significant limitations on which texts can be translated, and also means that translations are being consciously moulded to fit the conventions of the target culture, resulting in a homogenous and monotonous theatrical culture.

It is important to note that the examples discussed here do not paint a complete picture of the contemporary translated theatre landscape in the UK. There are, of course, plays in translation produced at mainstream theatres which are translated by an individual translator (rather than by the two-step process), which are not 'realist-naturalist' plays or by canonical playwrights. Examples from recent years include Sasha Dugdale's (2017) translation of Natal'ya Vorozhbit's *Bad Roads,* and William Gregory's (2021) translation of Pablo Manzi's *A Fight Against…(Una Lucha Contra)*,

both episodic, non-naturalist plays performed at the Royal Court, the latter by a cast of Latinx actors. There are also some translations of canonical plays where translators do actively intervene and produce more resistant translations, such as Martin Crimp's 2019 adaptation of Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac* (which premiered at the Playhouse Theatre in London's West End). Additionally, there are smaller companies doing important work to challenge and alter the UK translated theatre landscape and bring more translated theatre to the UK, such as Out of the Wings, Foreign Affairs, and Cut the Cord.

Nevertheless, there is an undeniable predominance of translated theatre in the UK which is lead by a problematic conception of speakability, and which is restrictive and limiting. Speakability is bound up with producing translated theatre texts that are palatable to UK institutions and their presumed audiences. This criterion determines not only *how* texts will be translated, but also *who* translates them and *which* texts will be translated in the first place. The criterion is dictated by those in power, generally with a view to conforming to the target culture's expectations for what theatre should be. Given this, it is surely clear that the dominant practice of unquestioning prioritisation of 'speakability' in theatre translation is incompatible with the aims of a feminist translator. The feminist theatre translator strives to resist hegemonic ideologies, whereas we see that the dominant understanding of speakability upholds them. Feminist theatre aims to question, provoke debate, and move beyond the bounds of existing norms and oppressions. The idea of extending boundaries – whether of dramatic

languages, or of ideologies and ways of thinking – is consistent with this project. Rather than espousing speakability, conformity, normativity, in the translation of dialogue, I propose that the feminist theatre translator be guided by the principle of resistancy. My conceptualisation of resistancy builds on Venuti and Massardier-Kenney's strategies. Like Massardier-Kenney, I use resistancy as a tool specifically for challenging gender norms and for translating feminist meaning in a text, but I have reformulated the strategy for a specifically theatrical context, and figure resistancy as a feminist translation strategy oppositional to normative speakability. Furthermore, I have extended Massardier-Kenney's strategy by considering how a translator can go further to create feminist meaning in a text, beyond the use of printed meta-texts and the replication of resistant gestures already in the source text. With the regard to the latter, I draw more on Venuti's more recent conception of resistancy as being constructed and purposeful, whilst Massardier-Kenney's definition of the term is such that the translator simply translates what is inherently feminist in the source text.

Resisting universalism: translating the specific

Aaltonen (2000, p. 1) employs the apt analogy of the mirror to figure Western theatre translation practice, arguing that translations are inevitably a mirror held up to the target culture, rather than the window onto the source culture that they are sometimes purported to be. As we have seen, normative UK theatre translation practice actively aspires towards this mirroring. Often under the guise of ensuring 'speakability' in translated plays, texts (which are often selected in the first place because of their perceived mirroring potential) are adapted to fit hegemonic cultural expectations,

leaving scant room for alterity. David Johnston (2016) cites playwright Michael Frayn's introduction to his translations of Chekhov (which are direct translations, as opposed to two-step ones), where Frayn writes: 'each line should be what that particular character would have said at that particular moment if he had been a native English-speaker' (p. 14). Johnston (2016) posits that Frayn's 'wholly domesticating strategy' means that the experience of watching his translations of Chekhov 'is more akin to looking out of [a] window, but seeing only your reflection framed there' (p. 15). In other words, the window becomes a mirror. Frayn's domesticating strategy is almost certainly led by his belief that Chekhov's plays are 'universal'. Bassnett (1998) scathingly cites Frayn's comments on the subject, made during a debate about theatre translation held at the Lyttleton Theatre: 'you don't need to know a word of Russian to be able to translate his plays because everyone knows what Chekhov is about, everyone knows by some sort of inner certainty what Chekhov intended and what he was saying' (p. 93). Although it is possible that Frayn's comment was made somewhat glibly, it nonetheless encapsulates some of what is problematic about dominant attitudes towards translated plays, particularly by canonical writers such as Chekhov and Ibsen. Chekhov's plays are deeply rooted in the particular context out of which they arose (i.e. late nineteenth-century Russia). That is not to say that the plays cannot resonate with audiences in other contexts, but it is impossible to deny the influence of their linguistic and cultural context. Secondly, Frayn is completely concealing the interpretative work he has done in translating the plays, the manipulation of the source text that Venuti (2008) refers to. Frayn's comments about making

characters speak like 'native English-speakers' confirms that his translation approach was indeed 'wholly domesticating' (Johnston, 2016, p. 15), that he has had a hand in manipulating the text in order to render it a certain way.

Where the mirror analogy fails, at least to some extent, is where it implies an assumed homogeneity on the part of the audience. These are the same grounds on which Frayn's assertion that 'everyone' understands Chekhov is problematic — the idea that Chekhov (as translated by Michael Frayn) speaks to, and in the voice of, 'everyone'. Perhaps it would be more accurate to say that the mirror in the analogy reflects Frayn himself, rather than the audience as a collective. 'Everyone' is an impossible category. Frayn's assumption of universality homogenises both the play and its characters, but also any audience of the play. An assumption of universality can be particularly problematic for feminist translators. Many feminist scholars and activists have an uneasy relationship with universality as a concept. Already in *Le Deuxième Sexe* [*The Second Sex*] (1949), Simone de Beauvoir challenged the concept of universality, pointing out that what has been historically framed as 'universal' has in fact been what is male. Furthermore, subsequent feminist writers and activists have challenged the idea of 'woman' as universal category. The term 'intersectionality', coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw (1989), urges women to understand how race and gender intersect, and how this creates difference between women. Pioneering work by Crenshaw (1989), as well as earlier work by feminist scholars and activists such as bell hooks (1984) and Audre Lorde (1984), reminds us that women do not form a homogenous, universal category

either, and that conditions of race, class and sexuality create fundamental differences between women that refute the idea of the universal. Within feminism, often what has been written and thought about as universal has in fact applied specifically to white, middle-class women. Elin Diamond examines this in a theatrical context as part of her critique of mimesis (which arguably relies on universalising identification), writing about 'the violence of 'we'', exploring the ways in which white feminist artists have tended to exclude representation of black women; artists who 'thought they were producing new sites of "we" – a "we" that empowered women, but that in fact excluded many women' (Diamond, 2007, p. 406). Indeed, the work of the Canadian feminist translators has been criticized on similar grounds, for having a strong tendency towards essentialism – the idea that womanhood is something innate and essential, something universal to all women. Feminist theatre translation, then, must acknowledge and reckon with difference. Strategies employed by the feminist theatre translator should not pretend that difference does not exist, in a well-meaning attempt to universalise.

There is perhaps an assumption that the specific can be alienating, but an assumption of universality can be equally so, given the tendency to equate what is universal simply with what is dominant. Rather, feminist translators should embrace the specific. Feminist works are born out of particular contexts, and the translator cannot simply ignore those contexts, attempt to override them, neutralize them, smooth over them. Specificity is key to demonstrating that 'woman' is not a universal category. From a practical

translating perspective, this is where recovery as a strategy (see Chapter Two) can be helpful: thorough, contextualised engagement with the source text and its writer allows the translator to carry out their work in a way that is grounded in the specific. However, it is important to note that difference and otherness should equally not be fetishised or essentialised, or used in a tokenistic way. Aston and Harris (2007) caution against this, writing that 'differences (ethnic, sexual, class, sexuality, age, religion, national, etc.) cannot be 'dealt with' instantly in a single performative gesture or through a series of 'stylized acts'. Neither can they be 'dealt with' by simply listing them, embracing them, celebrating them or remarking their proliferation' (p. 12). Aston and Harris cite feminist theorist Sara Ahmed's (2000) model of 'strange encounters', which is founded on a politics of 'collectivity', as an approach that avoids both universality as a homogenising, dominant concept, and the fetishisation of difference. In *Strange Encounters,* Ahmed (2000) critiques the fetishisation of 'strangers' and otherness, which ultimately enables the West to construct identities around this perceived opposition, to distance 'strangers' ('others') and remove their agency. Ahmed (2000) calls for 'politics that is premised on closer encounters, on encounters with those who are other than 'the other' or 'the stranger' ('ourselves undressed')' (p. 180). Her politics of collectivity asks us to reimagine how we encounter others:

> Thinking about how we might work with, and speak to, others, or how we may inhabit the world with others, involves imagining a different form of political community, one that moves beyond the opposition between common and uncommon, between friends and strangers, or between sameness and difference. (Ahmed, 2000, p. 180)

I advocate for a translation practice that espouses this model, where translators speak with, and not for, the authors and communities they translate, that communicates what is specific and particular, and that resists easy assimilation and conforming to dominant norms. The idea of collectivity is, of course, important to feminist practice and indeed, as a collective art form, theatre is perhaps an ideal forum for inviting collective encounter. The feminist translator must find a purposeful balance between the specific and the collective – neither fetishise difference nor universalise what is not universal. Translation is not a clear window onto a source text, but nor should it simply be a mirror held up to the target culture. I argue that a strategy of resistancy is a way of achieving this balance.

I will now offer some practical examples of how to employ a strategy of resistancy when translating a theatre text, drawn from my own practice of translating *The Worker's Wife.* The first is translating dialogue in such a way that it need not continually conform to expectations for naturalistic dialogue, particularly where the non-normative speech serves a feminist purpose. The second is to use resistancy to intervene in and challenge the source text where it does not conform to your own politics, and you perceive that the text may potentially be harmful (i.e. engender a performance that risked perpetuating damaging attitudes towards members of already marginalised communities) if left without intervention. The third is to use resistancy to disrupt the theatrical illusion and the illusion of the invisible translator by adding staged meta-texts to the translation. The staged meta-texts are also a theatrical adaptation of author-centred

commentary, as they provide a site for illuminating feminist meaning in the text.

Resistant speech

Pavis (1991) calls for the theatre translator to be ‘a dramaturge who must first of all effect a *macrotextual* translation, that is a dramaturgical analysis of the fiction conveyed by the text’ (pp. 139-40). The aim of this analysis is to enable the translator to ‘reconstitute the artistic totality’, including ‘the ideological point of view of the author’ (Pavis, 1991, pp. 139-40). Whilst I disagree with the implication in this imperative that there is some ultimate understanding of the text that the translator can gain access to via dramaturgical analysis, and then convey in translation, it is clear that thorough, contextualised engagement with and analysis of the text in question are key. It is crucial for the feminist translator to have analysed the text in order to have their own interpretation of its dramaturgy, one that is led by the text itself rather than imposed on it, in order to be able to truly work with the text. Doing this work is very much part of the feminist translation strategy of recovery (see Chapter Two), where the translator engages fully with the text and its context in order to communicate this to the reader. Truthfully, I began work on my translation *The Worker’s Wife* without having first done this work. This was intentional insofar as I was interested in the influence of instinct, and in seeing the results of an initial encounter with the text. In fact, this approach did result in a telling example of the influence of context and dominant, hegemonic practice. With hindsight, I can see how much my expectations were shaped by the existing landscape of mainstream UK theatre translations. The translated theatre I

had been exposed to was precisely the sort of 'speakable', assimilative translations of canonical naturalistic plays, translated by well-known male British playwrights referenced earlier in this chapter. Seeking to find a space for Minna Canth in that familiar landscape, I aligned her with Ibsen, her Nordic contemporary. This alignment was also very much informed by the fact that Canth is often compared to Ibsen in scholarship, and *The Worker's Wife* framed as an attempt at Ibsen-esque naturalism. With this in mind, I initially approached my translation guided by the principle of 'speakability', imagining that my final translation might have some similarities with, for example, Stephens' *A Doll's House.*[44] To a certain extent, the text did not entirely resist this approach: the setting and much of the dialogue are clearly rooted in realism, much of the dialogue could be rendered in a way that conforms with the perceived principles of 'speakability' – brevity, additional Britishisms, naturalness, and ease of diction. However, whilst approaching the text from this angle, I found myself coming up against several elements of the text that did not meet my expectations for what a 'speakable' text should be like, which *did* resist smoothing out into 'natural' dialogue.

Direct address

Duly, I stepped back from my translation and began to consider what these resistant moments were doing in the source text, and the resulting analysis completely altered my previous reductive and assimilative understanding of

[44] In an early practice journal, I write about wanting to replicate the 'liveliness and naturalness of the source text', and cite the interviews with Sebastian Born and Christopher Campbell that I have since gone on to critique in this chapter (Appendix A, p. 228)

the play. As discussed in the previous chapter, I now consider the play to be a Canthian feminist social realist drama, rather than an attempt at naturalism. *The Worker's Wife* subverts naturalism and contains non-mimetic elements in order to critique misogyny. What emerged from my analysis was the realisation that for the dialogue in the play to consistently aspire towards naturalism and mimesis would be at odds with my reading of the play's ideology. A translation of *The Worker's Wife* that prioritised speakability, that attempted to simplify and smooth, to make all dialogue sound like natural speech would be inconsistent with what is potentially resistant in the play. Eva Espasa (2001), in her problematisation of the notion of speakability, cites Lars Hamberg's naturalism-based belief that 'the translated dialogue, "must characterize the speaker and thus seem genuine; [...] an easy and natural dialogue is of paramount importance in a dramatic translation, otherwise the actors have to struggle with lines which sound unnatural and stilted"' (p. 53). There are several instances in *The Worker's Wife* where characters refer explicitly to points of Finnish law. If the dialogue is understood to be naturalistic, these passages come across as inconsistently expositional and somewhat mechanical – unnatural and stilted. However, I argue that this perceived clunkiness is actually an important disruption, and that they are there to consciously take the audience out of the action momentarily, and to remind them of the connection the play has to reality. They also expose how characters in the play are indoctrinated and cannot think outside of the hegemonic structures that rule their lives. Rather than trying to smooth out the unnaturalness of these lines, for example by cutting them or through significant re-writing, I

have tried to find a way to make explicit and emphasise their non-mimetic quality; in other words, to be guided by resistancy in my translation of the lines. In practice, this actually meant *not* intervening much when translating these particular lines, and sticking as closely as I could to what Canth wrote, rather than intervening to make them sound more 'natural', which would be the approach of a translator invested in making the text 'speakable'. Where I *have* intervened in these lines of dialogue is in terms of how I have framed them. I considered how these lines would be approached by an actor, and what impact that would have on the meaning of the text. Indeed, holding a reading of an early draft of my translation gave me the opportunity to hear the dialogue read in an unquestioning, 'naturalising' manner. I wanted to guard against performers attempting to 'naturalise' these lines, and also to emphasise and starken the contrast between these lines and the otherwise often 'fluent', lively dialogue. The first instance of disruptive, 'unnatural', dialogue comes fairly early on in the play, where the characters Risto and Toppo address the misogynistic property law at the heart of the play:

> *The following dialogue between Toppo and Risto is spoken as direct address to the audience. They speak in a rehearsed, scripted manner, as if by rote.*
>
> **Toppo.** What'll you do, when your old woman turns round and says, 'that's my money, you can't spend it however you like'?
>
> **Risto**. What'll I do? What a question! Who's in charge of the funds – husband or wife? You must know Finnish law well enough to know that, my lad.
>
> **Toppo**. 'Course I know the law puts men in charge, but it seems to me these wives manage to stick up for themselves pretty well.

> **Risto**. The tricksy ones probably have their means and schemes, but my Johanna isn't like that.
> *Dialogue goes back to normal.*' (Jeffery, 2023, p. 31)[45]

In Chapter Two, I discussed this particular exchange as an example of *verfremdungseffekt* in the play. The stage directions I have added here are intended to encourage a performance that draws attention to and leans into that alienation effect. I will return to and expand on how the feminist theatre translator can use stage directions as a site for feminist intervention in the following chapter (see Chapter Four). There, however, the focus is on non-dialogic performance elements. Here, stage directions are used to encourage a performance quality that will draw out a non-mimetic interpretation of the dialogue. My application of resistancy here has been not to intervene and adapt in my translation of Canth's dialogue, but to intervene in how I ask this dialogue to be performed.

Similarly, there are instances in the play where characters make speeches that come across as surprisingly rhetorical and declamatory. If one interprets the play as naturalistic, these lines become somewhat jarring. However, again, on consideration, these speeches serve an ideological purpose. They are spoken by women characters who do not conform to societal expectations within the world of the play (and, indeed, the world of the audience) and are, I believe, meant as an address to the audience. Canth

[45] Throughout my translation, where I have made additions to Canth's text, I have used a different font to identify this. Although I wholeheartedly believe in the feminist translator's right to intervene in and add to the text, and see this as part of the work of feminist translation, I also want this work to be identifiable, to make it clear where I have intervened and where the work is more distinctly my own.

permits these women characters powerful agency, allowing them to break the fourth wall and speak directly, accusatorily, to the audience. Again, these speeches appear in the middle of scenes that could otherwise be interpreted as naturalistic, and a translator could find ways around them - for instance, by modifying the speeches to make them sound more conversational, or simply by cutting them. I have opted to keep these speeches, which I believe to be key to the play's ideology, and attempted to preserve their declamatory register in my translation. I also again added in stage directions to prompt a direct address delivery. For example, Helka's powerful speech in the third act, in which she speaks about religious hypocrisy:

> **Helka**. *(She speaks out to the audience.)* You Christians, what a people you are. Hypocritical, sanctimonious, nothing else. You're certainly pious enough when you sit in church on Sundays and listen to the priest's dull sermon; but as soon as you leave your pews, then the wolf steps out of the lamb's clothing. You miserable sinners preach one thing, and live another, that is true as true. And 'gypsy' as I am, I will say only this: you people disgust me.
>
> […]
>
> *Helka turns back to the scene.* (Jeffery, 2023, p. 96)

In this particular example, I have also changed some of the pronouns. Canth used 'you' in the first sentence ('you Christians'), but then shifted to 'they' for the rest of the speech. I have used the accusatory second-person throughout to turn the criticism on the audience, and emphasised this through the stage directions.

The character Vappu also makes a key declamatory speech at the very end of the play. The speech is very dramatic – as it should be, considering that it articulates the play's central thesis: that the law and institutions of justice and law enforcement are fallible, and fail to protect the oppressed. Similarly, I have attempted to preserve, and in fact to emphasise, the heightened, rhetorical style of the speech in my translation through two means: firstly, by again using stage directions to direct the performance of it, and secondly by transposing the font into all capitals:

> *This is spoken like a prophesy.*
>
> **Vappu**. NOTHING, THAT IS CLEAR. NOTHING! THE WORLD HAS GOT WHAT IT WANTED FROM YOU, IT WON'T PUNISH YOU, NOR WILL IT HOLD YOUR FAULTS AS FAULTS. PRIESTS AND JUDGES BOTH ARE ON YOUR SIDE, FOR THEIR EYES ARE BLINDED BY SIN. THE SERVANTS OF LIGHT USE THEIR POWER IN THE SERVICE OF DARKNESS. BUT THINGS WILL NOT END HERE. THE LAST WORD HAS NOT BEEN SPOKEN. AND AS SURELY AS A LORD, TOO, HAS A LORD, AND THE NEEDY HAS A GOD, THEN SO SURELY WILL YOU STAND BEFORE HIS THRONE, WHERE PEOPLE CANNOT SIMPLY DECIDE WHAT IS JUSTICE AND WHAT IS TRUTH. THEN AT LAST YOUR SENTENCE WILL BE CAST. (Jeffery, 2023, p. 170-1)

The change to capital letters is inspired by the graphic intervention strategies of the Canadian feminist translators (see Chapter One). I want to draw the eye to this speech, to make it inescapable and insistent, and to encourage a delivery of the speech that plays with that insistence. The rhetorical nature of the speech is, again, made clear by the added stage directions. It is important that the resistant women characters speak out to the audience. The very fact that the rhetorical style of the speeches does not meet our expectations for naturalistic drama is fundamental. The speeches

disrupt the action of the scene and remind the audience of the real-world implications and political import of what they are seeing.

Lyrical language

Another example of non-mimetic speech in the play is the surprisingly lyrical, poetic language Canth uses at certain moments throughout. In particular, the character Kerttu often expresses herself using much more heightened language than the other characters. Her lines are often alliterative, visceral, and imagistic. Through engagement with the text, I made some illuminating realisations. Firstly, there are two other characters who use similarly heightened – poetic, lyrical, or rhetorical – language: Kerttu's grandmother in act three, and then Johanna, whose language becomes increasingly heightened towards the end of act four, as she becomes more and more awakened to the impossibility of her situation. Kerttu and her grandmother share a lexicon from their first encounter, which helps to create a unity between the two characters. Johanna and Kerttu share a vocabulary and manner of speech (one that is more poetic than the everyday speech of the other characters) once the former is awakened to how society and the law oppress her, something that Kerttu and her grandmother have known since the start of the play. Secondly, I realised that a lot of Kerttu's language was in fact either in the style of, or directly quoted from, Finnish folk poetry (see Chapter Two). These allusions complicate Kerttu's outsider status, aligning her with Finnishness. Kerttu's poetic language also means that she is granted greater depth of character, and the audience has more insight into her inner life than they do any of the other characters. For example, at the height of her despair, Kerttu asks:

> **Kerttu.** Where am I from? I'd tell you, if I knew. Do the needy have shelter, do the unhappy have homes? Wild ducks have their place, and geese have quiet nests, but the ill-starred have only the backwoods for a home, the wilderness for their refuge. (Canth, 1920, p. 233)

In this speech, Kerttu indirectly references lines from three different songs that appear in *Kanteletar* – a collection of Finnish folk songs and poetry. All are melancholy songs about displacement and homelessness, and finding a home in natural, often harsh, landscapes. The line also has a possible Biblical resonance, calling to mind Jesus' words: 'foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head' (King James Bible, Matthew 8:20). Although the Finnish poetry resonances may not carry through to an anglophone audience, it is possible that the Biblical resonance might be apparent. Even if neither carry through to the audience, the lyricism of Kerttu's language is nonetheless productively challenging, because it grants her a depth of character, distances her from the other, harsh and less well-spoken characters, and creates sympathetic feeling in the audience. Again, in these lines, therefore, it is a resistant strategy to actively *not* intervene, but rather to preserve, or replicate, the non-mimetic language of the source text.

It is important to note that 'fluency' does not need to be rejected outright. Resistancy is not about producing deliberately obscure, unidiomatic translations for the sake of it. Rather it is about producing a translation that is not unquestioningly assimilative. Although elements of the dialogue in *The Worker's Wife* may come across as somewhat dated to a contemporary reader, Canth was mostly clearly aspiring to write lines that sounded like

natural speech. Indeed, Canth's naturalistic dialogue was praised effusively by one of her reviewers: 'the dialogue wins still greater eminence. […] So fluent, so lively, so natural is the characters' conversation, that the audience forget both writer and theatre' (Tudeer, 1885, p. 171). I would do Canth an unnecessary disservice to deliberately obfuscate the text in a way that was not predicated on an attempt to create (or recreate) feminist meaning in the play. The non-mimetic instances I have cited are effective because they actively disrupt and subvert what might otherwise be a naturalistic, less radical play. The feminist translator must work closely with the text to find where it departs from expectations, and what the meaning of that disruption might be, and then find ways of carrying that into the translation.

Resistancy as problematising the source text and resisting harm

The feminist theatre translator, perhaps most especially the translator of historical texts, may occasionally find themselves at odds politically with the text in question. The form of resistancy discussed above is one born of a desire to re-create what the translator interprets as radical and resistant in the source text. My choices and interventions there were led by an attempt to make explicit in my translation elements that I felt to be crucial to the politics of the source text, and to resist smoothing these elements out by defaulting to speakability and assimilative naturalism in the dialogue. They were elements discovered through my subjective reading of the text, self-consciously guided by my own feminist politics, but born nonetheless of an effort to engage closely with the source material and to find ways of replicating it. This next strategy, on the other hand, arises from the fact that

not everything in the source text will always align with the feminist translator's own politics. This is perhaps particularly the case with regard to translating historical texts, where decades or even centuries might fill the gap between the author and translator's feminisms. This gap can result in frictions. Even if the gestures made in the source text were well intentioned, the different context can render the gestures potentially harmful. The form this harm may take is, for example, the portrayal of characters that conform to damaging stereotypes around members of marginalised and oppressed communities, or the voicing of bigoted beliefs. These portrayals have real world implications, contributing to a perpetuation of those damaging stereotypes and beliefs. Resistancy as a strategy reminds the feminist theatre translator of their discursive position in relation to the source text, that there are times when that discursivity might form part of the translation, where they might feel the need to problematise the source text, and intervene in it to mitigate the text's potential to perpetuate harmful stereotypes and problematic beliefs.

This application of resistancy was particularly influenced by Kadish and Massardier-Kenney's (2009) anthology *Translating Slavery.* This foundational collection brings together a selection of French abolitionist texts by women writers, accompanied by critical essays discussing the translation process. In particular, the translators examine what it means to translate race and gender. One of the key complications for the translators involved in the project was the temporal gap between themselves and the authors they were translating. The women writers included in the collection,

such as playwright Olympe de Gouges and writer Germaine de Staël, were progressive, even revolutionary at their time of writing. However, the temporal gap between the writers and translators means that 'their texts present characteristics that the modern reader is likely to view as compliant with the dominant culture rather than as "radical"' (Massardier-Kenney, 2009, pp. 6-7). The source texts make gestures that were certainly resistant at the time, even if they might now be considered compliant at best, and at worst actively problematic. Massardier-Kenney (2009) asks: 'what can the translator do to make [the] resistant gesture apparent?' (p. 7). One possibility is to recourse to meta-texts, to use these to explain and contextualise. To that, however, Massardier-Kenney (2009) asks: 'is it sufficient to acknowledge this resistance in the "margins" of the translation, in the preface, or can this gesture be included in the translation itself?' (p. 7). Ultimately, the translators in the anthology do make significant use of prefaces, but they do also make more direct interventions – they adapt. Massardier-Kenney (2009) justifies this by arguing that 'adapting the radical gesture of the text could very well be another way of making the text "culturally fluent", of making it fit our own contemporary expectations of what constitutes "resistant" writing' (p. 7). In other contexts, the adaptation of texts to suit the receiving situation may be considered as infidelity to the source text. In a theatre context, however, translators freely adapt in the name of making texts fit the theatrical context of the target culture by making them 'speakable'. In those instances, the adapting work is generally not framed as infidelity. In the same spirit, I propose that the feminist theatre translator adapt where it is politically constructive to do so.

However, although the *Translating Slavery* anthology does include one or two theatrical texts, the translators in the anthology do not particularly discuss the theatricality of the playtexts they translate, and their translations were not produced specifically with performance in mind, but rather to be read on the page. The performance situation inevitably introduces further complications, because of its immediacy, and also because of the representational nature of theatre. In *The Worker's Wife,* the greatest tension between Canth's nineteenth-century context and my own twenty-first century context is in the way that Canth portrays members of the Roma community. The Roma community were heavily oppressed in nineteenth-century Finland, and continue to be significantly marginalised in both twenty-first century Finland and England.[46] Furthermore, nineteenth-century art is replete with stereotyped, problematic representations of Roma people (or, as they are most often labelled, including in *The Worker's Wife,* 'gypsies'). In the previous chapter, I examined Canth's portrayal of Kerttu's Roma heritage, arguing that although the character is undoubtedly based on the problematic stereotype of the 'exotic gypsy woman', Canth's portrayal is ultimately resistant, and an attempt to engage with and expose the prejudice experienced by members of the Roma community, and the way that Kerttu is doubly oppressed for being both a woman and Roma (see Chapter Two). Nonetheless, it is undeniable that Kerttu's character needs to

[46] For example, in the UK, the 2022 Police Act legislates against roadside encampment, legislating against those who live nomadically, which disproportionately affects members of the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller communities (Monbiot, 2022). Meanwhile, in Finland discrimination against Roma people persists, affecting employment, housing and education, among other things (Non-Discrimination Ombudsman, n.d.).

be approached with care and caution by any theatre-maker not wishing to produce a performance that perpetuates harm towards an oppressed community.

The resistant feminist theatre translator must approach texts with caution, and be prepared to intervene in cases where the work risks perpetuating harm towards a marginalised community through stereotypes, problematic portrayals of members of that community. I made a series of resistant interventions in *The Worker's Wife* with this motive in mind. On the level of dialogue, these were almost entirely censorious interventions – cuts in places where I found that the language and the portrayals it engendered were entirely bound up in harmful stereotypes. For example, there are several instances in the play where Kerttu expresses self-loathing, and effectively confirms that the stereotypes the other characters believe about her are indeed true ('Did God create me, or was I born of sin?', 'I'm so vicious and so wicked' Canth, 1920, pp. 203, 237). I have cut those lines, because they verge on justifying the other characters' bigotry towards Kerttu. The play must make clear that the stereotypes are unfounded. I have also made the small gesture of changing the character's nomination from 'Homsantuu' (the derogatory nickname she is called by other characters in the play) to 'Kerttu'.

Although I do not disagree with editing texts to fit contemporary feminist ideals on the grounds on the grounds of 'infidelity' to the source text, it is true that invisible edits (such as the cutting of problematic lines) does

contribute to producing a ‘smooth’ translation of the sort I am wary of. I do not wish to advocate for simply straightforwardly translating problematic lines, leaving them unquestioned. I believe that there is scope for me to intervene more actively still, in a way that places me in more of a conscious dialogue with Canth, and *The Worker’s Wife* as she wrote it, building the problematisation actually into the work. At the moment, an audience encountering my translation would most likely be unaware of my interventions. In this sense, I have met the resistant criteria of resisting perpetuating harm in my translation, and of making Canth’s radical gesture apparent. However, it might also be helpful to be honest about the interventions, and about the position of the source text, to bring the conversation about the problematic aspects of the play to the stage.

Resistancy as disrupting the illusion

My third application of resistancy in feminist translation picks up on the idea of resisting smoothness by placing oneself in open, staged dialogue with the source text. This application of resistancy centres around the idea of disrupting illusions: firstly, the illusion that what the audience are accessing is the unmediated source material, and secondly, the theatrical illusion itself. In the introduction to this chapter, I cited Massardier-Kenney’s (1997) suggestion that feminist translators of pre-contemporary texts could employ meta-texts as a resistancy strategy, using them as a site to illuminate feminist meaning in the source text. I noted the obvious unsuitability of this strategy for theatre translations, as audiences generally do not have access to meta-texts. One solution is using theatre programmes and marketing materials as potential sites for contextual and analytical

information that comments on the feminist meanings in the source material. However, this strategy is of somewhat limited efficacy, given that there is no guarantee that the majority of audiences will engage with this material. My alternative proposal is that the feminist theatre translator find ways of actually staging meta-textual elements. Staging meta-texts has a tri-partite purpose: firstly, it allows the translator to communicate information that illuminates feminist meaning in the play; secondly, it breaks down the illusion that renders the translator invisible; and thirdly, it disrupts the theatrical illusion.

This strategy was inspired first and foremost by my engagement with Massardier-Kenney and the Canadian feminist translators' theories and practices. My theatrical formulation of the strategy, however, was further inspired by two pieces of work in which theatre-makers engaged critically and meta-theatrically with the works they were performing, bringing meta-text on stage. The first was *Chekhov's First Play* by Irish theatre company Dead Centre. The play is a sort-of adaptation by Dead Centre writers Bush Moukarzel and Ben Kidd of the first play Anton Chekhov wrote, which was neither performed nor published during his lifetime, and is usually called either *Platonov* or *Fatherlessness. Chekhov's First Play* opens with Bush Moukarzel, who is also the director, entering and announcing: 'Chekhov's first play is really complicated and messy…so I thought I'd set up a director's commentary to explain what's going on, what it's about, and why you should like it' (Moukarzel and Kidd, 2016, p. 11). The commentary is spoken into a microphone and plays through headphones worn by the

audience members. He provides a little context for the play ('Chekhov was nineteen when he wrote this') and alludes vaguely to themes in the play ('property, of course, is one of Chekhov's main themes…' Moukarzel and Kidd, 2011, pp. 11-12), before the action of the play begins. The play begins, and duly Moukarzel's commentary runs alongside the action. As the play goes on, unwieldy and convoluted, Moukarzel struggles to keep up with his commentary, and both commentary and play unravel in tandem. *Chekhov's First Play,* then, is a version of the play as Chekhov wrote it, overlaid with a meta-text (preface and running commentary) by the play's translator-adaptors.

My second inspiration was Branden Jacobs-Jenkins' (2017) adaptation of Dion Boucicault's 1859 play *The Octoroon,* which becomes *An Octoroon* in Jacobs-Jenkins' version. Jacobs-Jenkins has not translated the text from one language to another – Boucicault wrote the play in English – but has brought the play from its nineteenth-century context into a confrontational conversation with the twenty-first century, whilst still, for the most part, maintaining the play's nineteenth-century setting. *An Octoroon* includes a staged preface and several other meta-textual theatrical interventions. In *An Octoroon,* Jacobs-Jenkins confronts head-on the racism of the play as Boucicault wrote it, meaning that this example is very much pertinent also to the strategy of resistancy as problematising the source text discussed above. One of the characters in the play is a playwright called 'BJJ', Jacobs-Jenkins' own initials, and the character list specifies that the character is to be 'played by an actual playwright', although Jacobs-Jenkins has not played

the part himself (Jacobs-Jenkins, 2017, p. 8). There is another character in the play called 'Playwright', to be 'played by a white actor, or an actor who can pass as white' (Jacobs-Jenkins, 2017, p. 8). BJJ is to be played by 'an African-American actor, or a black actor' (Jacobs-Jenkins, 2017, p. 8). 'Playwright' is clearly a cipher for Boucicault. The play opens with a prologue, titled 'The Art of Dramatic Composition: A Prologue.' During this, BJJ performs a monologue in which he begins to explain what led him to adapt *The Octoroon.* Playwright interrupts this monologue, essentially heckling BJJ, who eventually exits the stage. It is a staging of, and a setting up of, the antagonistic entwining of Jacobs-Jenkins and Boucicault's relationship as author and adaptor, their different ideological positions. It is important to stress that whilst I have drawn inspiration from Jacobs-Jenkins innovative and incisive work, our relationships with our respective source texts are fundamentally different. Jacobs-Jenkins is in complete ideological disagreement with his source text, and uses his adaptation to explore that disagreement and to critique the text (and, through it, ongoing societal racism). I am mostly in ideological agreement with my source text, but have found Jacobs-Jenkins' approach helpful in considering how to approach those elements of the text that I am not in political accord with.

Later on in my process, I came across a third, much older, example of staged meta-text worth mentioning here: a 1917 Spanish translation of Ibsen's *A Doll's House,* accredited to Gregoria Martínez Sierra, but understood to have been produced collaboratively with his wife, María Lejárraga de Martínez Sierra. The published translation is accompanied by a

2500-word preface, which had been given as a speech by Martínez Sierra before the start of the play's performance (Muñiz, 2018, p. 430).[47] Lejárraga was significantly involved in the Spanish feminist movement, and Iris Muñiz (2018) has argued that translating and performing Ibsen formed part of the Martínez Sierras' activist work. The preface clearly sets up the didactic tone of the performance event, and provides a 'thorough ideological explanation of the meaning of the play according to the translator' (Muñiz, 2018, p. 430). Interestingly, the preface gives away so much of the plot that it actually reveals the very end of the play, where Nora leaves – a decision that reinforces the didactic purpose of the preface and performance (Muñiz, 2018, p. 430).

Illuminating feminist meaning: context is everything

I have written a staged preface, or prologue, into my translation of *The Worker's Wife,* to be performed before the play as Minna Canth wrote it begins. I set out to write the prologue because I wanted to provide what I believed to be crucial historical context for the play. It seemed vital to the play for the audience to understand its urgency, to understand its real-world stakes. The prologue is a piece of text (which I have suggested can either be displayed via projections or surtitles, or read aloud, or both), which begins with a line adapted from the title page of Canth's published play: 'the incident takes place in a town called Kuopio in Finland, 1885' (Jeffery, 2023, p. 16). It then explains that, at the time, Finland was still part of Russia, but was still governed according to the 150-year-old Swedish Civil

[47] Muñiz (2018, p. 430) notes that it is unknown whether the speech was given before every performance, or only the premiere.

Code, which contained a law that gave men legal ownership of their wives' property and earnings. The prologue makes it clear that in writing this play, Canth was explicitly responding to this misogynistic law. That would have been self-evident to audiences at the time, but not to most contemporary UK audiences. I believe it is important for an audience to be aware of this information because it grounds the play in its historical and cultural context and makes clear Canth's radical gesture in writing this play, demonstrating how she sought to challenge the misogynistic laws and norms of her period. The staged prologue, then, is a way for the feminist translator to communicate key contextual information that illuminates feminist meaning in the source text.

Using the preface as a site to convey context can also help to create a bridge between the source text and the contemporary moment. In *Chekhov's First Play,* the director draws a parallel between the events of the play, and an allusion to the contemporary Dublin property crisis, thus creating a bridge between the nineteenth and twenty-first centuries (Moukarzel and Kidd, 2011, p. 12). Jacobs-Jenkins also uses the staged meta-text as a way of bringing the past and present into uncomfortable conversation with one another in *An Octoroon*, reminding the audience of what has and, crucially, has not changed in the intervening years. The Martínez Sierras also used their preface to tie the events of the play to the present performance moment, making explicit the feminist meaning of the play, and then explaining why this message was vitally important in Spain at that time (Muñiz, 2018, p. 430). The preface, then, can be a way of providing crucial

context for the source text, rooting it in its specific culture, but then also of creating a link to the contemporary performance moment, without removing or alienating the play from its original context. Here, resistancy is adjacent to recovery and commentary (see Chapter Two).

The visible translator

The Martínez Sierras' preface to *A Doll's House,* explaining why it was important for them to translate the play in that particular political moment, also discussed how they had approached the task of translating, and therefore made visible their work as translators (Muñiz, 2018, p. 430). Breaking the illusion of the 'invisible translator' is the second resistant function of the staged meta-text. In writing my prologue, I sought to experiment with inserting my editorial, translator's voice into the performance text. This is a theatrical formulation of what feminist translator Barbara Godard (1989) has termed 'womanhandling,' whereby the feminist translator 'flaunts the signs of her manipulation of the text,' replacing the 'modest, self-effacing translator' in favour of 'an active participant in the creation of meaning who advances a conditional analysis' (p. 50). Throughout my translation I have used a different font to indicate where I have made more explicit interventions in the translation, a convention established in the 'key' following the character list in the play's title pages. The prologue, then, is of course typed in a different font to the rest of the play, making it clear to the reader that it is my own work, rather than Minna Canth's. Opening with such an intervention exposes the 'continuing provisionality' (Godard, 1989, p. 50) of my translation, that what follows is *my* translation of *The Worker's Wife*. The alternate font would, of course,

not be apparent to a live theatre audience, but the tonal incongruity of the prologue marks it as a voice external to the rest of the play. There is no pretence that what is being presented in that moment is the original author's work.

Moukarzel and Kidd and Jacobs-Jenkins handle their respective source texts boldly and assertively, irreverently, confrontationally, in the case of the latter. The plays are Dead Centre and Jacobs-Jenkins' as much as they are Chekhov and Boucicault's, perhaps even more so. In the case of *Chekhov's First Play,* three writers are credited: Chekhov, Moukarzel and Kidd. In her review of the production, Duška Radosavljević (2018) calls the play 'a three-way conversation with the original – a collaboration of sorts.' Jacobs-Jenkins takes full ownership of his text, and is listed as the sole writer – given the vastly different intentions and ideological stances of his and Boucicault's text, this makes sense. Chekhov, certainly, is a canonical writer, even in an anglophone context. His plays are frequently performed and there are numerous translations and versions of his works. Boucicault is perhaps now less canonical than Chekhov, but is certainly better known in an anglophone context than Minna Canth is. There is undoubtedly a difference between handling source texts by canonical, oft-translated male writers, and untranslated, relatively unknown works by marginalised (in my case, female) writers. There is a greater sense of responsibility towards the original writer, and the position the translator holds as the person introducing their work to an anglophone audience. Again, there is a question of power dynamics, and the feminist translator must negotiate that dynamic

carefully. That being said, I nonetheless advocate that the feminist translator approach plays as boldly as the writers of the two examples above do. Godard (1989) calls the 'womanhandling' translator 'immodest', making a subversive proposition in her call for this translator to replace one who is 'modest, self-effacing' (p. 50).[48] Thus, Godard and I advocate for an immodest openness, and acknowledgement of the translator's role in drawing out feminist meaning in the play. De Lotbinière-Harwood (1991) makes a fitting analogy in writing: 'speaking out in her own voice from the textual spaces called notes and prefaces, the translator is on a metaphoric / stage, performing directly for her audiences as "acting writer"' (pp. 159-60). In my preface, the character delivering it is listed as 'Minna'. Admittedly, this is an ambiguity I am able to exploit thanks to the fact that I share my name with the playwright. Nonetheless, the blurring of playwright and translator is something I wanted to play with. In this way, I nod towards putting myself on stage, taking up the role of writer, and making myself visible as mediator. I include 'Minna' in the character list of my translation, and put the following note in the text:

> The character of Minna may be performed by an actor, or simply appear as a projection or surtitles, or be read as a voiceover. If performed by an actor, it would work well to have her and Vappu played by the same performer, although a distinction between the two characters should be made. Or I could come and perform it for you, if you like. (Jeffery, 2023, p. 15)

[48] It is also worth noting that modest and immodesty are very much gendered terms.

Minna returns throughout the play: briefly at the end of act two, at the beginning of act four (after the interval), in the middle of act five, and at the very end of the play. Her (my) presence in the text is insistent.

Breaking the theatrical illusion

The final resistant function of the staged meta-text strategy is that it provides an opportunity to break down the theatrical illusion. Returning briefly to *Chekhov's First Play* and *An Octoroon,* both plays are interested in the failures of theatre, and in breaking down the illusion of it. The former picks up on Chekhov's debate in *Platonov* about the need to find meaning in theatre, and the need for it to reflect and respond to real life, and the impossibility of this. The meta-textual 'director's commentary', vague and messy from the very start, steadily breaks down as the on-stage action too descends into chaos.

I had not initially considered the breaking of the theatrical illusion as being a function or purpose of my staged prologue to *The Worker's Wife.* In fact, it was only something I realised in conversation with director Joanna Bowman, who I have collaborated with on my translation, who commented that 'the prologue itself breaks in a way that sets up what the play goes on to do' (Appendix D, p. 254). I discuss my collaborative work with Joanna (and others) at length in Chapter Four, but this example already begins to demonstrate my iterative research process, and the way that collaborative practice shaped both the translation and my research findings. Feminist theatre has a questioning, uneasy relationship with mimesis. Because the feminist project is forward-facing, pointing towards an equal and liberated

future, feminist theatre cannot reflect 'real life' unquestioningly, in a way that reinforces oppression, painting it as inevitable and even psychologically compelling.

David Johnston (2016) defines the ever elusive concept of 'performability' as 'the quality that ensures the play's success in stimulating and sustaining the authorized game of make-believe that is theatre' (p. 18), and argues that for this reason it is a default concern of stage translation. I argue that the feminist theatre translator is not necessarily automatically concerned with 'stimulating and sustaining the authorized game of make-believe,' (Johnston, 2016, p. 18) and might in fact seek out opportunities to disrupt, or resist, the game. Writing against a definition of performability that renders it an appropriate priority solely for translators of naturalistic texts, Espasa (2001) argues: 'translation does not have to be a vehicle for the illusion of theatre, but one more instrument among the scenic signs, which expose the artificiality of theatre' (p. 55). Espasa's proposal is particularly pertinent to the feminist translator, and I propose that the staging of meta-textual elements could be one strategy for this.

Conclusion

A typical criticism of the Canadian feminist translators has been that their work is overly academic, even elitist. The presence of footnotes in a text can bring about an assumption that the text in question is dauntingly academic, but that does not need to be the case. Footnotes and other meta-texts should be illuminating, and can be enjoyable, even playful. There is also a potential criticism that feminist footnotes attempt to overly direct the reader, are too

didactic. Feminist translator Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood (1991) writes about footnotes as setting up a 'polyvocal' composition, the aim of which is 'not so much to direct the reading (exert auther-ity) as to give target culture readers added pleasure' (p. 157). The feminist translator is not attempting to claim sole authorship of the text, to exert authority, but rather to add her voice to the conversation, opening up a dialogue between herself, her source author, and her audience. By making it clear that this is *her* interpretation of the text, she makes it clear that other alternatives are possible, and reminds the audience of the unfixed nature of texts. She also reminds the audience of her labour in producing the translation, and of her presence and the influence of her positionality on the work. The notion of pleasure is also key, though. Whilst there is undeniably an educational element to the work, that does not need to be at the expense of pleasure and, as de Lotbinière-Harwood (1991) notes, can be used to enrich the audience's experience of the text in a way that makes their engagement with the text more enjoyable.

Although the use of footnotes, specifically, has not been part of my strategy of resistancy (although the use of staged meta-texts could be extended to staged footnotes as well as prefaces), the broader question of audience engagement is important. Resistancy is not a matter of completely alienating the audience by deliberately obfuscating the dialogue, favouring lyricism and archaism over clarity without a clear purpose or direction, or, at the other end of the spectrum, spoon-feeding the audience your own agenda without room for discursivity. Resistant translation choices are made with a clear purpose in mind, directed by the feminist translator's ethics and

politics. The terms of engagement the translated play has with its audience will be project specific, but it need not be straightforwardly patronising, or antagonistic. In my translation of *The Worker's Wife,* I have attempted to mirror the terms of engagement with the audience that I believe Canth also sought to achieve. I hope that the dialogue is entertaining, pleasing sometimes in its naturalness and humour and sometimes in its lyricism, but also that it sometimes subverts, or resists, the audience's expectations, and that it awakens feelings of indignation and frustration, but also of solidarity and empowerment.

My three applications of resistancy in feminist translation are: resistant speech (working with the politics and dramaturgy of the source text and preserving their resistancy in translation, resisting the lure of uncritical 'speakability'); resisting harmful portrayals by confronting problematic elements of the source text; and finally, staging meta-texts in order to illuminate feminist meaning in the text, make the translator visible, and break the theatrical illusion. Evidently, all three of these strategies involve conscious interference in the text on the part of the translator. This level of interference will awaken questions around translator (in)fidelity. There is no denying that strategies of feminist resistancy produce translations that veer closer to what might be categorised as adaptation. However, adaptations and interventions are not made without purpose; they are not arbitrarily imposed on the source text. All translation involves a degree of manipulation on the part of the translator, but for the feminist translator, that manipulation is explicit and is ethically and politically directed. Sherry Simon (1996) argues

that ‘for feminist translation, fidelity is to be directed towards neither the author nor the reader but towards the writing project – a project in which both writer and translator participate’ (p. 2). The writing project is a feminist one, one that contributes to the women’s movement, facilitating a feminist conversation that crosses spatiotemporal borders and seeks to challenge norms and make change.

Chapter Four - Collaboration, Intervention and *Mise en Scène*

Patrice Pavis (1991) writes that the work of the theatre translator must be led by what is particular about the theatrical form – 'that is, the situation of enunciation of a text presented by the actor in a specific time and place, to an audience receiving both text and *mise en scène*' (p. 136). In this chapter, I will be examining the ways in which the feminist translator must consider the *mise en scène* (i.e. the physical putting-on-stage) of the text they are translating, and also the ways in which the feminist translator can make use of a text's theatricality as a site for intervention. The feminist translator of texts for theatre should be equally as concerned with the *mise en scène* as with the words on the page. In texts for performance meaning is ultimately created on stage, and so the feminist theatre translator should employ strategies which consider this. I propose that the feminist theatre translator use collaboration with other theatre practitioners as a strategy, particularly when considering the *mise en scène.* I will provide examples of theatrical interventions I made in my translation of *The Worker's Wife,* and I will illustrate where working with collaborators fundamentally shaped my translation work. Collaboration is the final 'translator-centred' feminist translation strategy listed by Françoise Massardier-Kenney. I propose a broadening of Massardier-Kenney's definition of collaboration as feminist translation practice, and argue that it is collaboration as an approach and strategy that is most crucial for the feminist translator of texts for

performance. Massardier-Kenney (1997, pp. 64-5) defines collaboration as a strategy whereby translators collaborate with other translators, or even with the authors themselves. This strategy, and the justification for it, is closely aligned with Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood's co-authership model. Both strategies are aimed at challenging the hierarchical relationship between author and translator, and the patriarchal concept of single authorship. A collaborative model gives agency to the translator, whilst equally resisting the idea that translators need to 'master' the text in question. Massardier-Kenney (1997) writes that through collaboration, the feminist translator can 'avoid the traditional dichotomy between two subjectivities (author/translator) which seek control of meaning' (p. 65). Collaboration necessarily enables a destabilisation of the concept of single-meanings in a text – negotiations between authors and other translators bring about conversations about layers of meaning, and open up myriad possibilities in a text. In fact, Massardier-Kenney goes on to argue that it is this concept of negotiation that actually defines feminist translation practice in general:

> Perhaps it is the connection between an interest in understanding how the discourse constructs/deconstructs gender and this idea of negotiation, of the desire to avoid a strict separation between author/translator, writer/reader, translator/scholar and source text/target text that could be used to define the feminist approach in translation. (Massardier-Kenney, 1997, p. 65)

Both the rejection of hierarchy and the questioning of fixed matters are also consistent with much feminist theatre practice, making this approach particularly applicable to feminist theatre translation.

The interpretative work and constant negotiation required of a collaborative process is arguably inherent to theatre-making. Theatre is generally understood to be necessarily collaborative: the making of a piece of theatre typically involves a number of individuals and a combination of several elements. It is this quality that makes theatrical texts such fertile ground for feminist translators. In this chapter, I will explore how I have used a collaborative approach in my translation of Minna Canth's *The Worker's Wife,* and how those collaborations ultimately shaped the work. Writing about the concept of 'co-authership', Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood (1991) references the 'energizing *complicité* between women who usually work alone,' which can lead to 'startling discoveries concerning either the initial text or its target-language version-in-progress' (pp. 155-6). Throughout the course of translating *The Worker's Wife* I have had a series of collaborative encounters which have crucially shaped the work, and where I experienced the pleasure and productivity of that 'energizing *complicité*' (de Lotbinière-Harwood, 1991, pp. 155-6). I will discuss how collaborating with other people informed my translation and my research findings. My collaborative process was documented in situ through my practice journals, notes and recordings (Appendices A-G). I then, through my iterative, auto-ethnomethodological, reflexive process, referred back to the documentation throughout, continually moving between 'doing-reflecting-reading-articulating-doing' (Nelson, 2013, p. 32).

There are telling themes running through my practice documentation, mostly hinging around the simultaneous joys and anxieties of collaboration.

The journals show that I craved collaboration from very early on in my process, feeling isolated and uncertain (these feelings were almost certainly compounded by the fact that I was doing most of the work during the Covid-19 pandemic), longing for communion and wanting to discuss the play and my work with other people. The documentation makes it clear that I was grateful for the opportunity to ask for help and to get second opinions on things, and how exciting, enriching and productive it was whenever I opened the text up to another person. I write about feeling creatively (and theatrically) starved, and coming back to my work with renewed energy whenever I turned to other people. This is the case even when turning to other people did not necessarily mean collaborating with others on this specific project. For example, I have documented how doing a week of research and development for another performance, my first in-person, in-the-rehearsal room work since before the pandemic, reminded me of the embodiedness of theatrical performance in a way that then reinvigorated my work on *The Worker's Wife* (Appendix A, p. 237). On the other hand, the documentation belies my persistent anxiety about the work, feelings of inadequacy and a need to 'get things right' (as if such a thing were possible). Those feelings are emphasised whenever I have to open the text up to someone else. I document feeling exposed when I share my translation, or extracts from it, with others, and seemingly cannot help feeling protective of both my and Canth's work. Despite that anxiety, however, I hope this chapter will illustrate how fundamental collaboration has been to my research, and why I propose it as a crucial strategy for the feminist theatre translator.

My first collaborations were with my mother, Riitta Jeffery, and with Finnish language expert Leena Kuikka, who helped me with parts of the play where the Finnish language was particularly difficult (Appendix A, p. 229). We held three calls early in the process to discuss these 'language problems'. My mother also read my fourth draft of the play, comparing it with the source text, and gave feedback on where she thought I had misunderstood or missed certain things. Secondly, at several points in the process, I asked my partner Lily Levinson for her opinion or advice on the work. This was perhaps the least formal of all my collaborations, but it feels important to acknowledge, because her responses and input significantly shaped the work (Appendix A, pp. 227, 230-1, 241). Next, I collaborated with two sets of actors: I held an online reading of the fifth draft of my translation in 2021 (in two halves, the first in February and the second in June) with a group of actors from Foreign Affairs theatre company – a London-based company with an international ensemble, who specialise in performing theatre in translation (Appendix A, pp. 234, 237-8). I held a second reading in May 2022 (I write about this experience in Appendix A, p. 243. I also recorded this reading and have provided a link to the recording in Appendix G). This was a reading of my penultimate draft, and the readers were a group of volunteer performers, a mixture of professional actors, dramaturgs, directors, and writers. This reading was held in person. I recorded both readings, and both readings were also followed by informal discussions about the play and my translation with the readers. My most sustained collaboration was with director Joanna Bowman. Joanna and I met

three times throughout the course of my work: December 2020, February 2022, and August 2022. Each time, I sent her my most recent draft of the translation, and we met (online, due to geographical and pandemic related constraints) to discuss her response to the work. For our third meeting, she also listened to a recording of the reading I held in May that year. As I will illustrate, her feedback and our discussions have been fundamental to the progress of my work, each time both challenging and clarifying my ideas. Finally, in August 2020 I was put in contact with Ronja Siljander, a director training at East 15 Acting School. For the final project of her MA in directing, Siljander translated and directed a production of *Työmiehen vaimo* (Siljander translates the title as *The Workman's Wife*). I watched her production in October 2020, and subsequently interviewed her about the process of translating and staging the play. Although I did not exactly 'collaborate' with Ronja, engaging with her work and hearing her account of the process nonetheless went on to shape my work in ways that I will go on to explain. Her production is both the only full production of the play and also the only other translation into English of the play that I had access to during my translation process. All of my collaborations have been particularly fundamental when considering the *mise en scène* of the play, thinking about the movement of this text from page to stage and what that movement entails and offers.

Collaborating with Minna Canth

In my early practice journals, there is a clear sense of anxiety about doing justice to Minna Canth and the play in my translation (Appendix A, pp. 224, 228). These anxieties were founded on admiration of the source material

and Canth herself, and an awareness of the fact that she is relatively unknown in the UK. When I spoke to Ronja Siljander about *her* translation of the play, she echoed these sentiments: ‘I don’t want to bring [Minna Canth’s] work to the UK and say that it’s Minna Canth’s work, and then not have it speaking in the same tone as the original’ (Appendix F, p. 263). Similarly, in my first conversation with Joanna Bowman, we spoke about the difference between working on a play like *The Worker’s Wife* as opposed to a canonical work like *A Doll’s House* or *Antigone,* for example: ‘I mean not breaking it before it’s been seen whole’ (Appendix C, p. 249). These feelings were compounded by, for example, my mother mentioning several times what ‘lovely language’ Canth uses in the play (Appendix A, p. 229). Was the language ‘lovely’ in my translation?[49] If it was not, was I failing Minna Canth? Misrepresenting her to UK audiences? Some of my worst fears were realised when I shared an extract from an early draft with my partner, because I thought she would enjoy that particular passage. She replied dismissively that it was ‘too annoying to read’ (Appendix A, p. 227). This was a legitimate criticism for a second draft translation where I was only just beginning to put sentences in an order that even vaguely resembled the conventions of English grammar. Nonetheless, her comment again awakened an anxiety about rendering the text in such a way that it did justice to the source text and Minna Canth.

[49] It is worth noting that although I am framing my mother’s input somewhat negatively here, this comment was actually ultimately a helpful reminder when thinking about the language in the play. It was through the conversations with my mother and Leena about some of the difficult Finnish phrases that I began to realise and think about how alliterative and poetic a lot of the language was. This realisation was crucial to my thinking around and approach to resistancy and resisting the urge to translate everything naturalistically (thus smoothing out that ‘lovely language’) discussed in Chapter Three.

However, these feelings began to shift over the course of my work. The anxiety did not, and has not, gone. Of course I still feel invested in producing a translation that does justice to Canth's work, but I have shifted how I frame my relationship with Canth and where we both stand in relation to my translation. The shift was prompted in part by the reading I was doing about feminist translation practice alongside my practical translating work, and especially my reading about feminist translators resisting the role of the traditional 'invisible' translator. I was particularly excited about Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood's co-authership model and the explicit agency that gave the translator as an active participant in the creation of meaning in the translation. On the other hand, de Lotbinière-Harwood's model was mostly predicated on an explicit, active collaboration between author and translator. Being able to actively work with the author you are translating is an ideal scenario in many ways, but it is not an option for those working on texts by authors who are long dead.[50] I continued working to produce a translation of the play that I felt replicated the source text as closely as possible, working with my mother and Finnish linguist Leena Kuikka to clarify particularities of Finnish language, and immersing myself in research about Minna Canth and nineteenth-century Finland. Eventually, I completed a draft of the translation that I was satisfied with, which I felt was a fairly 'accurate' rendering of the source text on a word-by-word level. I had translated every

[50] It is worth acknowledging that although active collaboration with a living author is an ideal scenario on a theoretical level, this would not necessarily be the case on a practical level. Collaboration is often messy work, and it is conceivable that a translator-author collaboration may well be complicated by tricky power dynamics and competing authorship anxieties. Practice-based research into a collaborative relationship of this kind would certainly offer fertile ground for further study.

word of Canth's text, made no additions, chose language befitting a nineteenth-century setting. I sent this draft to Joanna Bowman, the director I had arranged to collaborate with. I wanted to work with her in order to gain her insight on the text as a theatre-maker, so that she could help me think about the work theatrically. At the same time, I also arranged to have a reading of the work with Foreign Affairs theatre company.

Joanna sent me written feedback ahead of our meeting. The very first comment on this document was the crucial question: 'who is this translation for?' (Appendix B, p. 247). This basic question was fundamental to my shift in approach to the translation. I realised that my concern with producing an 'accurate' translation had almost led me to forget that this was a theatrical text that I intended for performance in twenty-first century Britain. In our conversation, Joanna went on to say that: 'I think the tension for me at the moment is that the story is so good and the setting's so good, but it kind of feels constricted by nineteenth-century performance ideas' (Appendix C, p. 248). A month or so later, I heard the same draft read aloud by actors from Foreign Affairs theatre company. This experience reinforced Joanna's comments. The language did often come across as stilted, in a way that sometimes impeded meaning, character, and liveliness. Certain lines were overly expositional, and there were also moments where the difference between nineteenth-century and twenty-first-century language meant that dramatic tension and impact were softened. The latter result in particular meant that actually my translation risked obscuring the powerful gender

politics at play in the text, by bogging them down in overly formal, verbose language. I will provide some examples of this later on in this chapter.

Both Joanna's comments and hearing the play read by actors served as a reminder of the role of the theatre translator. As David Johnston (2016) writes: 'the stage translator, like all of the other practitioners who collaborate in the making of theatre, is centrally concerned with constructing performance' (p. 18). Whilst I had produced a linguistic rendering of Canth's text, I had not approached the text as a theatre-maker, as one concerned with constructing performance. Doing so involves an understanding of the distance between my current cultural and historical moment and Canth's cultural, historical moment, and the theatrical conventions of both. Pavis (1991) writes that translators of theatre texts must 'confront and communicate heterogeneous cultures and situations of enunciation that are separated in space and time' (p. 136). In an interview, theatre translator Penny Black figured the role and position of the translator as follows:

> The translator is the person who is sitting precisely in the middle, with his back to the original playwright, facing the British stage. You have to take in all that the original playwright wants to do, you have to absorb everything, but later you have to turn your back on him/her because it all has to go on this stage over here. (Trencsényi, 2011, p. 194)

The reminder that the translator must ultimately face the British stage is helpful, but I want to slightly re-configure Black's image. I do not wish to figure myself as turning my back on Canth as such. Rather, I see my relationship with her as fundamentally equal and collaborative. Canth and I

are co-creators of my translation of *The Worker's Wife,* working together to produce a translation which performs a nineteenth-century Finnish play to a twenty-first century British audience. This is a difficult relationship to negotiate, particularly when Canth is unable to advocate for herself in this scenario. At one point during the translation process, when thinking through my relationship with Canth, I was reminded of the phenomenon of famous musicians performing duets with holograms of dead musicians.[51] There is undoubtedly something uncanny about these spectral performances, but nonetheless I think it is a helpful illustration of how the feminist translator is an active co-performer alongside the writer, but that it is the translator who is there, live in the room, and not a ghostly hologram from the past.

My first intervention, then, when producing a version of the translation where I positioned myself as an active collaborator with Canth, and where my goal was to produce a translation for the contemporary British stage, was to cut and condense. I cut some lines that were overly expositional by twenty-first century British performance standards, and condensed lines that had sounded particularly stilted and overly formal in the reading.[52]

For example, in act one, I initially had the line:

> **Kustaa**. Don't say that. Even if you take a poor one, you'll get someone to mend your trousers, stop your knees poking out.

Following the conversation with Joanna and the Foreign Affairs reading, this instead became:

[51] For example, on an episode of *American Idol* in 2008, Celine Dion famously sang a duet with the long-dead Elvis Presley. In this analogy, yes, I am Celine Dion and Canth is a hologram of Elvis.

[52] It is also worth reiterating that in accordance with my translation strategy of resistancy, explored in the previous chapter, these interventions were not driven by an unquestioning desire for 'fluency' or 'speakability' in the text, and I did not make cuts if I thought the language, even if unexpectedly expositional, would have a political meaning.

> **Kustaa**. Nah, even a poor one'll mend your trousers, stop your knees poking out. (Jeffery, 2023, p. 27)

Or, Risto filling peoples' drinks and saying the line 'now they are full once more', became a simple stage direction instead (Jeffery, 2023, p. 36). Similarly, when Johanna wants to speak to Risto privately, and asks to have a word with him, he responds:

> **Risto**. You can have three. Oh, I see! We're going right out of the way, so the others won't hear. Well, what on earth's the matter now?

I added in stage directions, rather than Risto needing to spell it out verbally:

> *Johanna tries to lead him aside to speak privately. It is not a very successful attempt; everyone is clearly listening in.*
>
> **Risto.** What on earth's the matter now? (Jeffery, 2023, p. 37)

I still wanted the play to be rooted in its nineteenth-century context and did not attempt to thoroughly 'modernise' the language as such, making it completely anachronistic. However, I did occasionally add in stronger expletives where they were not present in the source text, in order to make the language more forceful and impactful in a twenty-first century context. For example, in act one Johanna asks her newly-wed husband Risto not to drink too much at their wedding, and he responds with irritation. In my initial, more 'literal' translation, the exchange went as follows:

> **Johanna**. Quiet, quiet, don't speak so loudly. You're joking, Risto, you don't mean that. If you got drunk, I'd be so ashamed I couldn't hold my head up.
>
> **Risto**. Oh really! It sounds like, like -

The line precedes Risto reminding Johanna of the vicar's words during the wedding service: 'the head of the woman is the man' – a Biblical quotation

(1 Corinthians 11:3). I wanted to use stronger words here to sharpen the sudden shift in tone, the harsh reminder of Johanna's socially sanctioned oppressed position as a woman. I also particularly noticed in the reading that Johanna's anxiety about Risto drinking felt somewhat alienating in a context where getting drunk at weddings is acceptable, even encouraged, norm. In my later version, the exchange became:

> **Johanna.** Shh, don't shout. You're joking, Risto, you don't mean that. If you got completely drunk, I'd be so ashamed I couldn't hold my head up.
> **Risto**. For fuck's sake! It's starting to sound like – (Jeffery, 2023, p. 38)

As well as adding an expletive here, I also softened Johanna's line by adding the 'completely', in an attempt to make the line less alienating in a contemporary context. Later on in act one, when Kerttu is dragged in to the wedding party, Risto responds as follows:

> **Risto**. Kerttu! (*Draws into the shadows*.) What on earth will come of this?

This line came across as overly formal in the reading, so I changed it to a short, sharp…

> **Risto.** *(Draws into the shadows.)* Shit! (Jeffery, p. 40)

My final translation of the play is a document where my earlier, more 'literal' translation of the play is on one side of the page, and my subsequent collaborative, feminist version of the translation is on the other side of the page. This comparative document makes it clear where I have intervened by cutting and condensing, and by supplementing old-fashioned expletives for more contemporary ones in the latter translation, such as in the examples

cited earlier. To the reader encountering the latter translation on its own, though, and to an audience member watching a performance of that translation, those interventions are invisible. However, a consideration of the performance situation should not only entail the feminist translator intervening invisibly in the translation. In the collaborative model, the feminist translator should assert herself as a theatre-maker, and intervene visibly in the text, using performance elements as a site for this.

‘Stage directions are your way of holding the microphone’

Explicit, visible interventions are also, in some ways, a way of sharing the stage with Canth in a way that does not obscure or subsume her work. There is no pretence that my translation is the play exactly as Canth wrote it. Rather, it is clear that I have consciously and explicitly inserted my own reading of the play alongside the text. In my first conversation with Joanna, I picked up on a comment she had made about liking one of the opening stage directions, and said that I had started thinking about perhaps using the stage directions as a site for inserting my presence into the translation more assertively. We had previously discussed the idea of adding a commentary on top of the text as it stood, and spoke about Dead Centre’s *Chekhov’s First Play,* which I reference in Chapter Three. I had dismissed a complete Dead Centre version of *The Worker’s Wife* for the reason given earlier about not wanting to ‘break [the play] before it’s been seen whole’ (Appendix C, p. 249). However, using the stage directions seemed to me an effective way of inserting my reading of the play into the text (and subsequent performance of the text) in a way that works alongside the text itself. As Joanna put it: ‘the stage directions are your way of holding the microphone’

(Appendix C, p. 251). In earlier chapters, I dismissed the typical feminist translation practice of footnoting as a strategy inapplicable to performance texts. Perhaps, however, stage directions can be seen as the feminist theatre translator's theatrical formulation of footnotes, their way of offering a performative commentary on the text.

In order to make my stage direction interventions more explicit, I used a different font for anything that was an addition by me, and included a key at the beginning of the playtext to explain this. Using a different font was in part inspired by the Canadian feminist translators' use of graphic formatting in their supplementing interventions. It is also worth clarifying that my interventions were always driven by my feminist reading of the play. In the same way that a feminist translator of literary texts might use footnotes to illuminate their feminist reading of a text, I used stage directions to try and create (or at least suggest, encourage) a feminist performance of the play. Again, returning to the idea of my translation being co-authered by Canth and myself, the majority of the interventions came about through analysis of the play. Interventions were therefore also inspired by research I did into scholarly writing about Canth and her work, and also by research into historical and archival material – Canth's letters and articles, earlier drafts of the play, and reviews and writings about the original production. In that regard, they are a theatrical formulation of the commentary and recovery strategies discussed and deployed in Chapter Two. However, some of the interventions were inevitably also dictated by my desire to produce a

translation intended for performance on a twenty-first century British stage; a translation that considered what it means to perform this play *now*.

The prologue: establishing a theatrical reading

In the previous chapter I discussed the use of staged meta-texts (translators' prefaces as theatrical prologues) as an example of feminist resistancy. Inevitably, strategies overlap and interventions serve multiple functions. As well as the prologue serving the 'resistant' functions I have already detailed (resisting translator invisibility, illuminating feminist meaning in the play, and disrupting the theatrical illusion), it was also a site for me to use stage directions to establish a theatrical reading of the feminist politics of *The Worker's Wife*. My prologue begins with the following stage directions:

> *Two women.*
> *The first woman, Kerttu, is harvesting potatoes. The work is hard, but Kerttu is tireless. She gets paid in potatoes rather than cash, so she needs to harvest enough to have plenty to sell at the market later. The second woman, Johanna, knits socks. The lighting is poor and the work is fiddly, but Johanna works quickly and precisely. She needs to knit two pairs to get enough to pay for bread.* (Jeffery, 2023, p. 16)

Canth at one point considered calling the play *Johanna and Homsantuu*, before eventually settling on *The Worker's Wife* (Jeffery, 2023, p. 188). In my translation, I wanted to reassert the juxtaposition of Johanna and Kerttu that runs through the rest of the play – a juxtaposition I argue to be crucial to the play's politics (see Chapter Two). Secondly, I have argued that *The Worker's Wife* is specifically a materialist feminist play, preoccupied with

women's material conditions (see Chapter Two). In the play as Canth wrote it, the first image of Johanna is as a bride, and the first image of Kerttu is as a 'wild gypsy woman' ('standing in the moonlight, thrashing her arms about like mad' Canth, 1920, p. 192). In *Theatre & Feminism*, Kim Solga (2016) writes about the significance of the entrances of women characters, which are 'shaped to encourage particular kinds of views of female characters, especially when those characters are marked by the play as strong, difficult or simply central to the story' (p. 22). Kerttu's entrance, which follows a discussion between other characters about her as 'wild' and promiscuous, is her being dragged into the wedding, a disruptive force and inciter of drama. This framing plays into problematic stereotypes about Roma women, and I wanted to resist that by suggesting an alternative visual introduction to her character. I wanted the opening image of the play to establish the two women's status' as workers. Johanna knitting socks for a living and Kerttu harvesting potatoes are both directly referenced later on in the play.

In the prologue I also considered how I could make use of theatrical elements and establish a theatrical language for my translation. The first way I wanted to do this was through consideration of light. I began thinking about light in the play and its significance surprisingly early on in the process. In one of my practice journals, I document writing to my mother to ask about what she thought 'näyttävät valkeata' meant in the opening stage directions of the play (Appendix A). I felt vindicated by the fact that she was not certain what it meant either, and nor were the Finnish friends we passed the question on to. Because the direction was in the wedding scene,

my mother suggested that I research nineteenth-century Finnish wedding customs to see if anything helpful came up there. Eventually, one of our friends remembered his grandmother using the word 'valkea' to mean a fire or flame. This tallied with my research, which suggested that weddings often took place in the autumn and that wedding celebrations were generally held in the evening.[53] October evenings are dark, hence a need for lanterns. This example illustrates how sprawling translation work can be. Clarifying that detail wrought a striking opening tableau – Johanna flanked by Katri and Laura holding lanterns. From a theatrical perspective, the knowledge that this first act takes place in a lantern-lit space, when it is dark outside, seemed to me to be an important detail about the setting. I began thinking about lighting states in the rest of the play, and noticed that more than once Kerttu is associated with moonlight: the first reference to Kerttu in the play is the women at the wedding watching her 'standing in the moonlight,' and Canth's stage directions dictate that act three (the act where Kerttu goes to the forest) takes place by moonlight. I wanted to draw on this and establish a motif of moonlight as the light of revelation, and a light that unites Kerttu and Johanna. At the end of the prologue I added the direction: '*For a moment, Johanna and Kerttu are completely still, bathed in moonlight.*' (Jeffery, 2023, p. 19)

[53] My research into nineteenth-century Finnish wedding customs also lead to other discoveries that I decided to include in the translation. I was keen for the opening of the play to be fully rooted in the setting, and so made sure to include details such as a description of the bride's outfit (black dress), for example (Jeffery, 2023, p. 19).

Music

As well as considering lighting and a visual language for the play, I also wanted to use the prologue to establish an aural world, to use sound as part of my feminist dramaturgy. Songs in the play offer an insight into characters', particularly the women characters', inner lives, in ways that are not necessarily articulated through dialogue. Canth includes a number of folk songs throughout the play. These songs comment on the social situation at hand, and particularly give insight into societal expectations, especially the songs sung by women characters. For example, in act one, wedding guest Liisa sings a short song about 'old maids' who should be hidden away on 'Kyöpeli mountain' (the mythical Finnish mountain where witches were said to live), thus setting up the societal pressure placed on women to marry. Later on, Johanna opens act four by singing a sad lullaby that begins: 'Rock the child to Tuonela'. Tuonela is a name for the underworld in Finnish mythology. Two possible interpretations of the melancholy song are that infant mortality rates were so high that mothers used these lullabies as a necessary reminder of the peace that death would bring; or, relatedly, that poor living conditions almost led mothers to dream of the afterlife as a better alternative for their babies than reality. I decided to pick up on Canth's device of including folk songs to comment on the play, and to restrict the singing in the play to only the women characters. I cut the songs sung by men, exchanging them for directions simply to hum or whistle, and then put in some additional songs for the women. I establish this device already in the prologue, where I added in a folk song called 'Morsiamen Itketys' [The Bride's Lament], to be sung by a chorus of women. My historical Finnish wedding research had led me to the practice of 'wedding

laments', and the tradition whereby family members sang to the bride to be in order to encourage her to cry. According to tradition, if the bride did not cry before her wedding, she was fated to cry all through her marriage. I added a wedding lament to the prologue because it seemed a perfect tonal introduction to the play, and one that established the motif of women using song to voice their oppression. Additionally, I have chosen to keep the songs in Finnish in order to root the play in its context and to remind the audience of its translated-ness. However, I have provided English translations of them and stipulated that these translations should be made visible to the audience, so that the audience do not lose the resonance of the lyrics.

Sound

As well as actual songs, I thought about how I might be able to use sound as another feminist dramaturgical device, an additional non-verbal political commentary. Part way through act one, Risto exhorts the male guests at the wedding to 'drink until […] the ringing and banging in your ears is louder than a Tampere cotton mill.' I was struck by this image, and kept returning to it. Weaving and textiles play an important role in the play – Johanna's only source of income is knitting and weaving, and it is Risto stealing the cloth Johanna is weaving for a wealthy client that ultimately leads to Johanna's death. Canth's own father had worked at a textile factory and went on to own a drapers' shop that she then inherited and ran. In her journalism Canth, referenced the impact that industrialisation had on women's livelihoods. Handiwork was among the only forms of work permitted to women, but industrialisation was rendering that work

increasingly redundant, making it ever more impossible for women to earn a living. The cotton mill serves as a metaphor for the capitalist system which underpins all the play's action, and traps both the men and women in an ideology that oppresses all of the working-class characters in the play. I added the following direction at the beginning of act one:

> *Softly, the sound of a cotton mill. This sound continues throughout the play, varying in intensity – sometimes it is barely audible, and at other times it is deafening.* (Jeffery, 2023, p. 22)

Through the sound of the mill, I want to call attention to the system that underpins the action. The only place where the mill sounds are not present is in act three, in the forest. It is here that Kerttu meets her family – an impossible, utopian coincidence possible only outside of the town, away from society.

Beats: response as intervention

One of the earliest interventions I made was to add a number of 'beats' throughout the play. I wanted to find a way of working with my instinctive, personal, emotional response to the play, and inserting that response into the translation. I had taken a step back from the translation for some time, and then returned to it with fresh eyes, read through a printed copy and marked the page after every line that particularly gave me pause. Although many of these moments were clearly meant to be jarring, were written by Canth to elicit an emotional response from her audience, there were also a number of moments where my response was particularly heightened by the temporal distance between Canth and myself. Von Flotow (2016) suggests that the

feminist translator can use the translation itself to 'reflect and draw attention to aspects of the source text that are new, or innovative, or deemed useful for the new readership' (p. 7). In some ways, my 'beats' are a reverse of that strategy, a way of almost calling out things that are problematic to the new readership. The first 'beat' I added comes early on in act one, when the women at the wedding are gossiping about Kerttu:

> **Liisa.** You never know. Just the other day, that Mrs Soininen from out of town was here singing her praises to the heavens. Apparently, she's worked like a horse for them all summer –
> **Johanna**. There you go.
> **Liisa**. – but everyone still took the piss out of her. Especially those boys on the farm. Well, you know what they're like –
> **Katri**. She was probably asking for it.
> *Beat.*
> **Liisa**. Give over. (Jeffery, 2023, p. 29)

In the source text, conversation moves on quickly, but I was struck by the cruelty of Katri's line, and also by its contemporary resonance. I added a 'beat' to ensure that a person encountering the text would be prompted to pause here, even momentarily, to take in what Katri has just said. The 'beats' are much more ambiguous than the majority of my other interventions, which are otherwise clear staging instructions (or suggestions). The 'beats' are a way of drawing attention to moments that grabbed my attention in the play, and an invitation to the theatre-makers who encounter the play to consider their own response to those moments.

In addition to the beats, there are a handful of other ambiguous interventions I made that act more as a commentary on the text than as actual stage directions. In the third act, where Helka realises that Kerttu is in fact her

long lost granddaughter, the realisation happens very quickly. Kerttu meeting her family in the middle of the forest is a plot point difficult to reconcile in a modern context. It disrupts what has up to now been a reasonably conventional realist play (despite the disruptive, non-mimetic dialogue moments I have referenced earlier), and harks back to melodrama, sentimental and verging on the ridiculous. I punctuated the revelatory lines with exclamation marks:

> **Helka**. Kerttu? – Did you hear that, Hagert? Her name is Kerttu. What about your surname, child, your surname?
> !
> **Kerttu**. Väänänen.
> **Helka**. From Tuusniemi?
> !
> **Kerttu**. My father was from there.
> […]
> **Helka**. […] You truly are my flesh and blood. Come into my arms, child, come into your grandmother's arms.
> ! !
> **Hagert**. Hello, Kerttu. I am your uncle.
> **Ilona**. And I am his wife. Now you aren't alone anymore, Kerttu, you have a family and friends.
> ! ! ! (Jeffery, 2023, pp. 90-2)

And added a comment after the following line:

> **Helka**. Long years have rolled by since that time, and still we tread through this land. But only now has our path brought us back to these haunted parts. What strange fortune guided us to one another? Of course, you'll come with us from now on, or what, my child?
> What strange fortune, indeed! (Jeffery, 2023, p. 93)

Thinking self-reflexively, if I am completely honest with myself, there was perhaps an element of me trying to cover my back here, a sort of ironic nod to the ridiculousness of this scene, and an attempt to assure the reader that I am in on the joke of that. Joanna Bowman commented on the exclamation marks in our conversation, framing them as a way of creating a complicity between the translator and the theatre-makers working with the translation, acknowledging the distance between us in the twenty-first century and Canth in the nineteenth:

> I really think what you've done well in this is an awareness that forms and conventions have changed since the nineteenth century, and actually the way people speak is different. And even that emotional reactions are different. I loved the bit with exclamation marks. I think that's a really smart […] device. (Appendix D, p. 253)

Bowman's comment brings up the question of whether the translator should be attempting to 'solve' what they deem to be flaws, or problems, in the source text. I have discussed problematising elements of the text that do not align with the translator's feminist politics, and argued for the importance of this sort of 'corrective' work. The question of dramaturgical, aesthetic, 'flaws', though, is different. It feels more difficult to justify on the terms that I have set myself (that my translation/adaptation choices are guided by my politics). On the other hand, it is understood that a director and actors would undertake this sort of 'corrective' work in the rehearsal room. Finding ways to make things 'work', to make drama convincing, are a part of any staging process. My beats and exclamation marks are a way of drawing attention to difficult moments, but ultimately handing them over to the next theatre-makers to work on staging the text.

In the second reading I held (Appendix G), the readers more or less ignored all the beats and exclamation marks. This was fine – it was a cold read after all, and I had not given them any instruction about what to do with these features and had not necessarily expected the readers to address them particularly. It served as a reminder, however, of how my translation is, like the source text, just another text to be interpreted, teased out, expanded on by other practitioners, other collaborators. In our second conversation, Joanna commented on the invitation an ambiguous marker like the exclamation marks offer:

> There are so many ways you can interpret [the exclamation marks]. That felt really exciting because it felt like there were so many ways to [interpret them]…And it felt entirely modern, but also not. It felt as if [they were] in conversation with the text. (Appendix D, p. 254)

The on-lookers

The addition of 'on-lookers' was an intervention that grew out of my first conversation with Joanna, which is evidence of how fruitful collaborative work during the translation process can be. In the written feedback she sent me prior to our conversation, Joanna noted: 'interested to know what is public and private – much to explore here in the rehearsal room – ties into gossip question – to what extent are people watching and being watched?' (Appendix B, p. 247) She expanded on this in our conversation, saying that there would be 'a lot of fun to be had' (Appendix C, p. 251) in the rehearsal room with working out which conversations are public and which are private, and said that this might be worth thinking about more in my translation. The question of public and private conversations struck me as being potentially crucial to the play's politics. I went through the script and

marked the separate sections of dialogue, thinking like a director, drawing diagrams of the stage and working out which, if any of the conversations, would be private (Appendix A, p. 233). Doing this made me realise that I did not think any of the conversations in the play were private. Johanna, in particular, is not permitted any privacy – her property belongs to her husband, and her affairs are all held up to public scrutiny. Having had this realisation, I wanted to draw out the lack of privacy and the constant scrutiny, and so added in stage directions that instructed actors to consciously watch supposedly private conversations unfold. Initially I focused on the first two acts, which are 'crowd' scenes, and so the physical presence and proximity of people, not to mention the audience, is key. Already from the very beginning of the play, we are made aware of the invisible crowd outside the playing space, who shout 'come out, bride!' and who Risto refers to right at the start of the play: 'I'd like to hear what those gate-crashers out there are saying about my bride' (Canth, 1920, p. 192). Act two takes place in the marketplace, and so all of the dialogue presumably takes place under the watch and in earshot of all the market sellers and shoppers. The pivotal argument between Johanna and Risto, where he demands money from her on the grounds that it legally belongs to him, takes place in the market. The public nature of this interaction is made clear when he tells her:

> **Risto.** Would you stop shouting? For christ's sake. Ranting away in the middle of the market like a madwoman. Have you no shame? People are looking at you funny. (Canth, 1920, p. 221).

In my adaptation, I wanted to emphasise the public nature of the argument, and highlight how Risto essentially performs the role of oppressor and

upholder of the law in front of society, and so added in the following directions:

> *Johanna and Risto face each other. The crowd gathers around them, as if around a boxing ring. It is unclear who they are rooting for.* (Jeffery, 2023, p. 69)

Later on in the act, Risto again takes up the role of oppressive man in front of the marketplace crowd, when he and his friend Toppo clumsily attempt to seduce Kerttu, drawing on a full range of misogynistic and xenophobic tactics as they do so:

> *Kerttu sits down on her cart and starts juggling potatoes. She pretends not to see Risto.*
> *The crowd gathers again, around the boxing ring once more.* (Jeffery, 2023, p. 77)

The repeated directions help to emphasise the parallel drawn between the two women, Kerttu and Johanna, how both are constantly under the watchful and oppressive gaze of society.

The presence of the crowd was obvious in the first two acts, where Canth has herself has written them into the directions in the form of wedding guests and marketgoers respectively. However, although the fourth act takes place in Johanna and Risto’s home - a domestic, supposedly private, space – I began to think about the presence of societal scrutiny in these acts too. In his review of the original production, critic O.E. Tudeer (1885, p. 170) figured the character Leena-Kaisa as the coryphaeus – the leader of the chorus. When she enters Johanna’s home, she repeats what other people in

the town say, and reveals to Johanna that she has no privacy, that nothing she does goes unscrutinised. Leena-Kaisa says to Johanna:

> **Leena-Kaisa**. So you're as happy as that? (*Looking at Johanna for the first time*.) Then there might not be any truth in what people are saying about Risto drinking a lot these days.
> *She looks away again. On-lookers begin to appear, slowly, at the windows.* (Jeffery, 2023, p. 118)

I wanted to bring the 'people' on stage, to physicalise their constant presence in Johanna's life. The on-lookers also return at the end of the play.

Translating women: gaze and solidarity

In the previous chapter, I wrote about resistancy as an approach and strategy, and named 'resistancy as problematising the source text to resist harm' as an application of the strategy. There, I discussed the need for care when translating the character Kerttu, using resistancy in the translation of her lines, making cuts where I thought the translation risked perpetuating harm towards the historically oppressed Roma community, through presenting a problematic, clichéd portrayal of a Roma woman. My focus there was on translating the dialogue, the words that Kerttu says. However, it is also vital for the feminist translator to consider the *mise en scène* in this regard – where might the action on stage, in performance, be problematic? And could stage directions be used to reframe those moments, in order to mitigate harmful representations?

In act two, in a moment of desperation, Kerttu performs a 'gypsy dance' for the crowd in the marketplace, because she needs to make money as quickly as possible, to pay for medicine for Risto. Reading the play in the twenty-first century, it is a jarring moment. Kerttu is forced to exploit the misogynistic, exoticizing views the men in the marketplace hold about her. In the second chapter, I argued that the dance is an example of feminist 'gestus' in the play. We have been made aware that Kerttu has had no access to the Roma side of her family, so even if there were such a thing as a 'gyspy dance', she could never have been taught it. The dance is entirely invented, and the audience are forced to be spectators, to share the gaze of the lecherous men who exoticize Kerttu, whilst being made aware that this gaze is exploitative. However, it is crucial that this is made clear in performance, that the dance is not allowed to be presented as an exotic cliché, performed to bring the spectators pleasure. In the original performance of *The Worker's Wife,* the role of Kerttu (or Homsantuu) was played by Ida Aalberg – the most famous Finnish actress of her day. It was this dance that had in fact drawn Aalberg to the role: she had just played Nora in *A Doll's House,* and had taken dance lessons in Norway to learn the tarantella for it, and wanted the opportunity to draw again on those skills (Nieminen, 1990, p. 109). In his review of the production, Hjalmar Neiglick criticised Aalberg's presentation of the character: 'her gypsy girl is, starting with the costume, just like a painting; but we have never had that sort in Finland,' referencing the fact that Aalberg's Hosmantuu was based on a fantasy idea of an exotic gypsy princess, rather than a portrayal of a Finnish-Roma woman founded in any sort of reality (cited in Nieminen, 1990, p.

109). Feminist critic Maria-Liisa Nevala has written about how the enduring understanding of Homsantuu (who is always referred to as Homsantuu, her derogatory nickname, rather than Kerttu) has been informed by the performance history of the play: ‘in early performances Homsantuu was performed as a happy and exotic girl dancing with a tambourine’ (Nevala, 1989, p. 221). Any contemporary production of *The Worker's Wife,* in or out of Finland, must challenge previous interpretations of the character, and work against presenting a problematic, harmful stereotype of Roma women.

In my adaptation, I have tried to make the moment more incongruous, to lift it somewhat out of its potentially problematic context and to place Kerttu more in conversation with the contemporary audience. I have framed it as a sort of karaoke sequence, a sort of parody of the problematic, exoticized spectacle that it could be:

> **Kerttu.** *(Pushes her cart out of her way and takes a microphone out of her pocket.)* Make space and sing along!
> *Time stops. Kerttu sings and the crowd watch. She dances, but the dance is strange. Not sexy, and not what you expect. It is excruciating. Whilst she sings, the daylight quickly dims, and the moon begins to slowly rise.*
> *Unlike the other songs in the play, the one that Canth uses here is not a traditional Finnish folk song. As far as I can tell, it is one Canth wrote herself. You can set it to a tune or swap it out for an alternative song, as long as it is fitting. Personally, I would*

> *suggest having her do a karaoke cover of Janis Ian's 1975 hit, 'Love is Blind'.* (Jeffery, 2023, pp. 84-5)

I have suggested a more contemporary song to replace the mock-ballad written by Canth. I do not have entirely robust, academic or political justifications for choosing the Janis Ian song, and it is perhaps a choice where my tastes have overtaken my scholarly and political concerns. I came across the song whilst working on the translation, and was immediately struck by how the lyrics made it a fitting match for this moment in the play, ironically alluding to the literal blinding that has just taken place and to Kerttu's deeply misguided attraction to Risto, and also underscoring the bitterness and tragedy of her situation. I find it dramatically and politically compelling to have Kerttu sing something completely unexpected here, in a way that forces the audience to confront any expectations they might have had. You think that Kerttu is about to perform a provocative 'gypsy' dance, and then she comes out with this slightly obscure 1970s ballad by lesbian icon Janis Ian. Lastly, I like the idea of having an unexpected intrusion from the twentieth-century in what has otherwise been a play rooted in the nineteenth-century. Whilst I do not want the play to be de-historicized, I do want it to act as a reminder of the connections between Canth's time and our own. The other characters in the play might still receive it as an exotic display – indeed, the plot requires them to, and Kerttu is purposefully exploiting their view of her in order to make money, but what the audience would see is something out of line with this. I hope that the phrasing of my stage directions makes it clear that I encourage my future collaborators to

make their own choices here, but to consider the implications of those choices.

I have also attempted to re-frame Kerttu's presence in act one, by adding the following stage directions at her entrance:

> *Then the door opens and Kustaa pulls Kerttu inside, who resists with all her strength. The dancing breaks up and everyone stands still. The mood shifts dramatically. From here until she exits, the scene should be led by Kerttu, as if we are seeing events from her perspective, through her eyes. Kerttu's situation is bewildering, and the way that the other characters respond to events is grotesque and jarring.* (Jeffery, 2023, p. 40)

It felt important to make Kerttu the central focus of the action and to emphasise the terrible way she is received by the other characters; to show *them* as irrational, and not her. Then, later in the act, she delivers a curse. The curse, like the dance, is a moment where Kerttu is drawing on the others' stereotyped, exoticizing view of her. I have, again, put in stage directions to try and create a moment where what the characters in the play react to is not quite the same thing that the audience of the play witness:

> *Kerttu gathers herself, and then starts speaking again with renewed force. It is dark, other than the glow of moonlight through the windows. Everyone is genuinely afraid.* (Jeffery, 2023, p. 48)

Then after she has delivered the curse

> *For a moment, Kerttu looks very lost and very alone. She gathers herself again.* (Ibid.)

There is a problematic stereotype of ‘gypsy curses’ and ‘gypsy magic’ founded in bigoted views towards Roma people which this moment has the potential to play into – Kerttu as violent, temperamental ‘gypsy woman,’ casting spells. Indeed, when telling the story of Kerttu’s childhood, the character Laura suggests that Kerttu’s mother had cast a curse on Kerttu’s Finnish father which had led him to drink and, eventually, death. However, we know that Kerttu was not raised by her Roma family, and so even if there were such a thing as a Roma curse, where would she have learned how to do it? I suggest that here, Kerttu is exploiting the wedding guests’ bigoted views about her in order to deliberately frighten them. Her anger is completely justified by the context of the scene, and so she is trying to assert power in a scene where she has otherwise been completely powerless. In my stage directions, I have added a fleeting moment where Kerttu’s vulnerability is emphasised, and have attempted to highlight the consciously constructed nature of this moment, so that the curse does not pass by without remark, unquestioningly perpetuating stereotypes about Roma women. The other characters still react as if she has indeed cursed them, exposing their problematic views.

Staging the past / Feminist utopias

When I decided that I wanted to translate *The Worker’s Wife,* I had to untangle my reasons for wanting to do so, and to think through how I wanted to frame my translation. In the introduction of this thesis, I offered my justification for choosing *The Worker’s Wife* as the case study for my research. Translating works by historical women writers is an important

feminist gesture because it contributes to the limited canon of plays written by women, and helps to create an intellectual lineage of resistant women. This rationale justifies translating the plays for literary or archival purposes, but what is the value of translating such texts for performance*?* I have written about needing to alter certain aspects of the text in order to make it align more with twenty-first century performance conventions, not to mention twenty-first century politics. When wanting to make a theatrical feminist gesture, why choose a historical play to do so? Can plays from the past adequately respond to the current political moment? Evidently, I think they can, or I would not have embarked on this project. Staging the past can enable spectators to analyse situations and gender politics from a temporal distance, to draw parallels between the past and their own period and productively appraise what has and has not changed. Sue-Ellen Case (2007) writes that 'theatrical re-inventions of history are an intervention into the present, offering a critical relationship with contemporary issues through the lens of the past' (p. 105). Crucially, however, if the ultimate goal of feminist performance is to challenge the *status quo* and help to create change, then feminist theatre-makers must not only think about the past and present, but also the future. As Case (2007) goes on: 'these theatrical representations of history implicitly offer a vision of the future, suggesting ways in which spectators might rethink concepts of progress, transformation and the *status quo.* In order to think forward, theatre practitioners frequently look back' (p.105). Representations of the past, then, must offer the possibility of change in the future.

Stagings of the past do not necessarily offer that possibility implicitly, without conscious effort and intervention on the part of the theatre-makers involved. This too, then, is part of the work of the feminist theatre translator working with historical texts. My entire translation has been produced with an attempt to offer a glimpse of past, present and future, and all of my interventions have been guided by that. However, there are a handful of interventions that I made more explicitly as an attempt to suggest the possibility of change and futurity. Feminist theatre scholar Jill Dolan (2007) has written a manifesto on 'Feminist Performance and Utopia', where she writes: 'for me, both personally and politically, feminist performance's ability to point us towards a better world remains an intractable principle of faith' (p. 212). Her third manifesto point urges us to be 'artists, scholars and citizens at once, creating performance that hazards a glimpse of utopia' (Dolan, 2007, p. 216). The goal of the following interventions was an attempt to engage with the idea of a feminist utopia, and to insert that utopia into my translation theatrically.

i) *Feminist haunting: life after gendered violence*

In *The Worker's Wife* as Canth wrote it, Johanna dies at the end of the penultimate act. Act four ends with Johanna fainting into a feverish delirium, and the first lines of act five reveal that she died of this illness, brought on by the shock of her dire, worsening circumstances. Johanna dies as a martyr to the capitalist patriarchal system that wrought her impossible situation. Risto's unwillingness to acknowledge the part he played in her death, and his readiness to move on and find another wife, show that he has

learned nothing by her death. Canth, with her clear laying out of the precise conditions that lead to Johanna's death, emphasises that it was preventable, and the purpose of the play was to incite legal change and overthrow the conditions that paved the way for Johanna's tragic end. Although this was powerful and effective at the time, I am less certain about the finality of Johanna's death in a twenty-first century context. There is a long lineage of women dying tragic, fated deaths on stage. I wanted to bring Johanna back into the play as a physical presence in act five, in order to make her character more insistent and assertive, to not allow the audience, these people watching her story over a century later, to forget her. I added the following stage direction at the start of act five:

> *Johanna, who is now dead, watches on. When she is present, there is a sort of supernatural feeling.* (Jeffery, 2023, p. 147)

Johanna proceeds to haunt the rest of the play: picking up her baby to give to Leena-Kaisa, hiding the washbowl from Risto. As a theatrical ghost, she acts as a sort of bridge between the audience and the characters on stage – we are complicit in her haunting, we can see her when Risto, Leena-Kaisa and Toppo cannot. The only person on stage who can see Johanna is Kerttu. Bringing Johanna back on stage also allowed me to create a stronger solidarity between the two protagonists. After their predominantly antagonistic encounter in act one, Johanna and Kerttu are only on stage together for a brief moment in act four (a moment that, incidentally, I have given a little more weight in my translation, Jeffery, 2023, p. 132). In my feminist utopia, the two women are ultimately united in their fight against the system that oppresses them, represented by Risto, and there is clear

solidarity between them. In my translation, then, Johanna enters with Kerttu, and stands beside her pointing a second gun at Risto. Although I do think that Johanna is already a resistant character – there are examples in previous acts that make it clear that she comprehends how oppressed she is – she is ultimately denied the opportunity to fully express that and to rebel against her situation. I wanted to offer her a redemptive opportunity here, from beyond the grave, from the future-present. When Risto says something stupid, Kerttu and Johanna look at each other and roll their eyes, and when he asks what Kerttu wants, they reply in unison: ‘Revenge’ (Jeffery, 2023, p. 158).

ii) *Alternative endings*

My next feminist utopian intervention was to include a list of possible alternative endings at the climactic moment where Kerttu fires her gun at Risto. I initially wrote these ‘versions’ as stage directions, but later changed them to be lines spoken by ‘Minna’, but hope that a theatre-maker approaching the text would still see this as an invitation to experiment with staging the different ‘versions’ of events:

> *Kerttu falls to the floor.*
> **Minna.** VERSION 1: Kerttu has shot Risto. In the chaos, she gets up and escapes to re-join her family.
> VERSION 2: Kerttu’s grandmother has fought past Toppo and the police and shot Risto from afar. She grabs Kerttu, they run.
> VERSION 3: Johanna has shot Risto, she grabs Kerttu, they run.

> `VERSION 4: The shot has backfired and hit Kerttu. She and Johanna ascend to heaven.`
> `VERSION 5 (the final version): The shots misfire. Risto falls over. Kerttu is knocked down by the policeman.` (Jeffery, 2023, p. 162)

Throughout the course of writing *The Worker's Wife,* Canth changed her mind several times about how the play should end. In a letter to director Kaarlo Bergbom, written when Canth had only just begun work on the play, two years before it would first be performed, she described her planned plot for the play (Jeffery, 2023, p. 186). In this version, Risto is about to stab Johanna, when Kerttu intervenes and dies. In response to a later draft, Bergbom suggested to Canth that Johanna should be blinded, rather than dying – a suggestion that she rejected because 'it felt so impossible to present that sort of quiet, peaceful, patient life philosophy now, when my heart is full of bitterness and revolution' (Jeffery, 2023, p. 187). Novelist Juhani Aho also recalled visiting Canth later in her writing process, and how they had discussed the ending of the play. During the course of their conversation, Canth had realised that instead of Kerttu actually managing to shoot Risto, it would be more powerful for her to misfire and realise what she had actually meant to shoot (Maijala, 2014, p. 168). Tracing the progression of Canth's ideas about the ending of the play shows two things: firstly, it is a reminder of possibility and mutability, and secondly, it illustrates the discursive nature of Canth's process. The idea for these 'versions' came about through my own collaborative practice work, when I held the reading of a draft of my translation with Foreign Affairs theatre company, about halfway through the translation process. At the end of act three, the actors discussed their predictions (and hopes) for how the play

would end (Appendix A, p. 235). Including these endings in my translation resists the idea of tragic inevitability, reminds us that things did not have to be this way, that alternative, even utopian, endings are possible.

iii) *Utopian justice*

Ultimately, unlike Bergbom, who cut the final scene from the play in his production of it, I have not actually altered the end of the play as Canth wrote it. The final 'version' of events I offer is the actual version, and the rest of the play follows. Canth's ending is tragic and unsatisfying, but allows for Kerttu to say the most important line in the play and truly articulate the total failure of the legal and justice system, rather than either becoming another martyr or simplistically 'resolving' the situation by killing Risto. The final section, which Bergbom cut, fully underlines the message of the play. Vappu arrives and delivers a powerful speech where she explicitly condemns Risto, and the entire legal and justice system. I have added stage directions to bring Johanna and Kerttu to stand beside Vappu as she delivers this speech, to suggest that their 'endings' in the play are not final, and that change and justice are possible:

> *Whatever is building rises to a peak, drowning out the mill sounds. This is spoken like a prophesy.*
>
> **Vappu**. NOTHING, THAT IS CLEAR. NOTHING! THE WORLD HAS GOT WHAT IT WANTED FROM YOU, IT WON'T PUNISH YOU, NOR WILL IT HOLD YOUR FAULTS AS FAULTS. PRIESTS AND JUDGES BOTH ARE ON YOUR SIDE, FOR THEIR EYES ARE BLINDED BY SIN. THE SERVANTS OF LIGHT USE THEIR POWER IN THE SERVICE OF DARKNESS.

> BUT THINGS WILL NOT END HERE. THE LAST WORD HAS NOT BEEN SPOKEN. AND AS SURELY AS A LORD, TOO, HAS A LORD, AND THE NEEDY HAS A GOD, THEN SO SURELY WILL YOU STAND BEFORE HIS THRONE, WHERE PEOPLE CANNOT SIMPLY DECIDE WHAT IS JUSTICE AND WHAT IS TRUTH. THEN AT LAST YOUR SENTENCE WILL BE CAST.
>
> *There is thunder, hell fire, and an awful sound.*
>
> *Risto explodes into a thousand pieces. The law is destroyed. Justice is destroyed. The church is destroyed. Johanna, Kerttu and Vappu ascend, triumphant, into heaven.*
> *Silence. A moment of uncertainty.*
> *The mill sounds start up again softly.* (Jeffery, 2023, pp. 170-1)

I appreciate that these last stage directions are ambitious, but it felt exciting to write them, to imagine the possibility of it. These directions are, again, an invitation to a future collaborator to join Canth and I in imagining that, to keep all our eyes trained on the past, present and future at once and begin to imagine feminist utopia.

Practicalities: working with other people

On the subject of utopias, it is important for me to acknowledge that my entire translation project was, in a sense, utopian – created with scant consideration for practical things like time and resources, programmers and budgets. Other than two privately held, unpaid readings, and discussions with Joanna Bowman where we fantasised about how we would stage this

play if someone gave us access to the Olivier Theatre, my translation has not moved beyond the page, beyond the hypothetical. For that reason, almost none of my choices were made with a view to practicality. I concentrated on producing my best-case-scenario, aesthetically and politically driven version of the translation. The only concessions to practicality that I made were to cut a very small handful of side characters, including the two children – Kerttu's niece and nephew – who I deemed unnecessary. Even then, a production of my translation as written would require a cast of at least eleven (the number of speaking roles in the first act), as well as, ideally, supernumeraries to populate the stage for the crowd scenes and act as the 'on-lookers' in the later acts. Joanna and I also spoke about the value and importance of including the Finnish songs in the production, so we can add a language coach and possibly a musician or two to the list of production costs.

It was illuminating (grounding?) to speak to Ronja Siljander about her experience of translating, and then actually staging the play. Siljander explained that the translation and staging processes had felt quite separate to her, that she had translated the play in its entirety, and then moved on to staging it. The staging process, however, resulted in a completely new version of the translation (an example of iterative practice), and our conversation revealed that the choices that led to the production of this second version of her translation were entirely dictated by practicalities related to the staging. Watching her production, I was struck by her inclusion of a staged prologue – one of my feminist theatre translation

strategies in action! In the prologue, performers introduced the play in unison ('This happened in Finland in 1885'), and recited a brief contextualising timeline of women's rights in Finland. In our conversation, I learned that the inclusion of the prologue was a practical decision: because the production took place during the pandemic, the majority of the audience were accessing it digitally, and so would not have access to a programme, which might typically provide context for the play. Siljander added in the prologue as a device to have a sort of 'on-stage programme', to ease the audience in and make them aware of the play's historical and geographical setting. Much of the rest of the translation was shaped by practical constraints: a cast of no more than eight, and a maximum time limit of ninety minutes. She cut numerous characters, including Kerttu's family and therefore most of the third act. Ronja was also faced with the challenge of working with actors unfamiliar with Finnish, which led, for example, to her decision to anglicise the character's names for ease of pronunciation, and replacing the Finnish folk songs and lullabies with English ones.

Siljander made effective use of choreographed movement in the performance, using passages of stylised, mimed action to fill in some narrative gaps (Risto drinking and behaving violently, the men and women working, Johanna giving birth). Siljander explained that the choreographic work had, again, had a practical purpose, saying that ultimately it was 'much more just about fitting the core events to the ninety minutes and for the eight actors than it was about making huge artistic choices' (Appendix F, p. 263). The physical work was also about livening up the performance:

'it's [a] very text-heavy play, something I would call a teacup drama, so if you don't have the bits that are moving and heavy with energy, you will have a text-heavy place, with people sitting or standing around a lot' (Appendix F, p. 265). Framed this way, the inclusion of physical work can be thought of as a concession to twenty-first century performance conventions. The use of choral, physical work was established already in the prologue, and Siljander explained that the purpose of the prologue had also partly been to 'create space' for that choreographic work and to 'engage the audience with the vocabulary of the whole piece' (Appendix F, p. 264). It is illuminating to think of movement and choreography as part of the 'vocabulary' of the play – it expands the definition of the word, ties text to physicality and reminds us that both are crucial to performance. Although she did not frame it as such herself, I think Siljander's incorporation of choral and physical work could be thought of as an example of theatrical, feminist supplementing. Siljander supplemented some of the discussion about work and labour in the play with a physical representation of it, a visual expression of the toll of labour on working-class men and, in particular, women's bodies.

Finally, it became clear how important a role collaboration had played in Siljander's eventual translation. She explained that the process 'did not end in the rehearsal space' (Appendix F, p. 264), and that she altered and cut lines according to feedback from and collaboration with the performers she worked with. It was important to her to leave space in her translation to see how the text would 'flow with that particular ensemble and their energy, and

how they're bringing their characters alive' (Appendix F, p. 264). For example, the cast had commented that some of the language felt overly old-fashioned, and they jointly tweaked some of it as a result. I am impressed by Siljander's flexibility and lack of defensiveness and protectiveness about her text – her willingness to allow others to so concretely contribute to the translation. Although throughout this chapter I have written about the political, academic value of collaboration as a feminist translation strategy, it is impossible to deny that collaboration is much easier in principle than it is in practice. It could be argued that my inclusion of stage directions and my attempt to write some sort of *mise en scène* into my translation is really an attempt to exert control and authority over the text, to ensure that any production of it is still very much *my* version. Although my interventions and choices were very much guided by collaborations, it was ultimately me that produced the text, it bears my name.

In my second conversation with Joanna Bowman, discussing my prologue, she said: 'I really love the prologue, and I think if I was going to direct a production of this I would want to include it. But I can also imagine a version where the prologue is really useful in rehearsal, but then after preview one it goes' (Appendix D, p. 254). My immediate, instinctive reaction was affrontery – I had written the prologue into the text, it was an intrinsic part of my feminist translation of the play. However, were we to stage the translation, it would be her prerogative to make decisions that served the politics, yes, but also the specific production at hand. Collaboration is about trust and challenge.

As I have already alluded to throughout this chapter, I made significant discoveries in both of the readings I held. In the first reading, it was immediately clear that much of the text, as Joanna had fed back to me in our conversation, was too archaic and too wordy. Meanings occasionally got lost as readers stumbled through long lines, and some sections sounded like overblown caricatures of nineteenth-century writing in a way that did not do justice to the source text. In the second reading, I noted that the stage-directions I had written to instruct Risto and Toppo to say lines where they relay the law in a 'robot-like voice', absolutely did not have the desired effect. The two readers read the lines in a deadpan, robotic voice and whilst the effect was jarring, it did not convey the idea I had intended, that they say the lines as if by rote, unquestioningly parroting the misogynistic, oppressive laws they uphold. In both instances, I had to put aside any feelings of pride and defensiveness I felt about my translation and acknowledge that these were flaws that needed attending to and re-working, which I duly did.

There were obviously also positive realisations that came about through the readings, where I learned things about the text from hearing the performers' interpretations of it. For example, in my second reading, I was struck by how the two readers performed Risto and Johanna's characters respectively. I had been concerned about how the character of Johanna would come across in performance, worried that she would sound frustratingly (annoyingly) earnest and alienatingly yielding. In fact, hearing her

performed, with a much more forceful and independent inflection than I had imagined, enabled me to both re-evaluate the character and see her as more resistant than I had previously considered. Similarly, I was invigorated by how Risto was performed – a characterisation that pulled the character away from its melodramatic potential to something much quieter, and more sinister. Working with performers for the two readings, and with Joanna in our discussions, served as a reminder of my role as only one component of the work. The text does not belong to me, and the text does not create the performance. The text is for me to hand over to my collaborators, to be enriched by layers of interpretation.

Conclusion

Susan Bassnett, writing against 'performability' as a concern for translators, argues that translators of texts for performance should concentrate solely on the text:

> Once we accept that the written text is not fundamental to performance but is merely one element in an eventual performance, then this means that the translator, like the writer, need not be concerned with how that written text is going to integrate into the other sign systems. That is a task for the director and the actors and serves again to underline the fact that theatre is a collaborative process in which not only are different sign systems involved, but a host of different people with different skills. (Bassnett, 1991, p. 99)

On the one hand, Bassnett's argument feels freeing. The collaborative process of theatre is one of the most exciting things about it, and it is a relief to think that there would be several parties involved in realising a translated play, and that the translator need not concern themselves with managing every single sign system. This holds true for feminist theatre translation, and

as I have argued, the collaborative element is crucial politically as well as practically, because it allows for a layering of voices and multiplicity. On the other hand, however, the feminist translator does have an ethical responsibility to consider the *mise en scène* of the play they are translating, where the enactment of parts of the play may potentially contradict their politics (such as Kerttu's dance, in this play). Furthermore, I hope I have demonstrated that the feminist translator need not see a consideration of *mise en scène* as a burden or obligation, but can in fact use that element as a productive site for feminist intervention.

Conclusion: Feminist Translation Strategies for Theatre Texts

The aim of this research has been to investigate strategies that a feminist translator could use to translate a text for performance. I have sought to demonstrate these strategies in action through my translation of Minna Canth's *The Worker's Wife* from Finnish to English. Producing that translation and this thesis involved an iterative, self-reflexive, practice as research approach. Through my research, I have brought together the fields of feminist translation and theatre translation, making an original contribution by doing so, proposing strategies specific to the feminist translation of texts for performance. My strategies were built on the work of the Canadian feminist translators of the 1970-90s, as theorised by Luise von Flotow (1991), Barbara Godard (1989), and Susanne de Lotbinière-Harwood (1991), and more particularly the reformulation of their strategies by Françoise Massardier-Kenney (1997), from whom I have taken my four guiding strategies: recovery, commentary, resistancy, and collaboration. The methodology of this research has been to produce translations from Finnish to English of *The Worker's Wife* by Minna Canth, to collaborate on that translation with a director, and to trial it through holding two readings of the play. Following Nelson (2013), I have implemented an 'iterative process of 'doing-reflecting-reading-articulating-doing'' (p. 32), whereby theory and practice have constantly informed one another. My timeline-portfolio of practice documentation (Appendix A) charts the progress of this work, documenting my varied, collaborative, self-reflexive, theory-based, and instinctive approaches to the translation practice. The final outcome of this

process is my comparative translation of *The Worker's Wife,* which includes a preface and commentary on the text. The final text is two translations of the play placed beside one another, a more 'literal' translation on the left, and on the right is the translation of the play where I have made a number of interventions and additions. This document makes up my complete feminist translation of *The Worker's Wife,* produced using the strategies I have developed through the course of this research, and which make up my feminist theatre translator's toolkit.

The feminist theatre translator's toolkit

I have used the terms proposed by Françoise Massardier-Kenney (1997) in her reformulation of the Canadian feminist translators' strategies, and adapted them for theatre translation practice, as well as then proposing some of my own strategies. The strategies inevitably all feed into one another, constantly overlapping and combining.

1. ***Recovery***

Choice of text

In the first instance, a strategy of recovery can guide the choice of source text. The feminist theatre translator is contributing to the feminist theatrical landscape in their target culture, and one way of doing this can be by 'recovering' texts in order to expand the canon of texts by historical woman writers. Certainly in an anglophone context, this canon is not extensive. By adding voices to it, feminist translators help to establish 'a lineage of intellectual women who resisted the norms and values of the societies in which they lived' (von Flotow, 1997, pp. 30-1). It is also valuable to

challenge linear, overly simplified narratives of progression. Theatre is a particularly exciting medium for this work, because it simulates a live encounter with these radical women from the past.

Approach

Recovery as choice of text is a strategy only applicable to historical texts, but recovery as general approach can provide a framework for how the feminist translator approaches any source text. Recovery as an approach involves the translator conducting a thorough analysis of the source text, and extensive research into its historical, social and political context. It might sound obvious, a necessary element of the work of any translator, not just a feminist translator. However, it bears emphasising because this work is crucial in laying the foundations for the following strategies and its importance cannot be overstated. In particular, the feminist translator should focus their analysis on uncovering a reading of the politics of the text, on the level of both form and content. It is crucial to establish your political reading of the text. For the feminist theatre translator, there should be a particular focus on a dramaturgical analysis of the text – how do its politics play out on stage?

In the case of the feminist translator working on a historical text, doing this work can help to create a closeness with the author of the source text, to hopefully enable a more collaborative process. If there is additional extant material by the author (other writings, letters, diaries, etc.), these can prove an invaluable resource for the feminist theatre translator to gain insight into the culture the text emerged out of. This work can, and I would argue

should, run parallel to the actual translation work, rather than needing to pre-date it. In doing the practical work of translating, the translator gets so close to the text that it can allow for key discoveries to be made. A rich, thorough understanding and reading of the text will fundamentally shape the final product, laying crucial groundwork for the following strategies.

2. *Commentary*

My strategy of commentary falls, like Massardier-Kenney's (1997) does, into two categories: author-centred and translator-centred.

Author-centred

Author-centred commentary clearly stems from the above strategy of recovery. All that extensive research and analysis should be present in the text, by way of commentary (preface, footnotes, appendices). Doing this enables the reader to come to 'know' the author as the translator has, to contextualise their work. The translator can also use this commentary to illuminate feminist meaning in the text for the reader. Furthermore, providing this commentary can assist future theatre-makers approaching the text, contextualising their understanding of the play. They are particularly helpful to theatre-makers seeking to make their own, contextualised interventions in the play – a collaborative practice to be encouraged by the feminist theatre translator.

Translator-centred

Translator-centred commentary allows the feminist translator to make the labour of translation visible, to show where they have intervened in the text.

Ideally, both forms of commentary should be present in the text. Including the commentary will have the further benefit of empowering others encountering the text. The translator-centred commentary will demonstrate that the text is always in flux, and open to interpretation and intervention. The author-centred commentary will give others the apparatus to make interventions in a way that is fully engaged with the text and its context. I would also encourage the feminist theatre translator to think about how these commentaries could be communicated theatrically, and this is addressed in the following strategies.

3. *Resistancy*

The purpose of resistancy is to employ a translation approach that resists and challenges the norms of the target culture. In a theatrical context, this particularly means resisting the normative desired criterion of 'speakability', which, as I have explored (see Chapter Two), has historically restricted the choice of source text, and can also result in an anglicisation of source texts, and lead to monotonous translations. Resistancy also means resisting a universalising approach to translation, where the source text is decontextualised. Here, again, the feminist translator draws on their recovery work.

Resistant speech

The feminist translator should, where it is productive to do so, resist the norm of mimetic speech, and not be afraid of speech that might not fit normative expectations for how people on stage should sound. The recovery of the text will have identified if and where in the text the style of speech

contributes to its politics, and the feminist translator can then draw on this in the translation. This strategy can also involve using additional stage directions to really underscore the non-mimetic nature of the speech, to draw out a performance that emphasises it.

Problematising the text

Resistancy can also be used as a strategy for problematising and challenging the source text itself. The feminist translator will not always be in agreement with her source text. Where a feminist literary translator may be able to challenge the text through a footnote, the feminist theatre translator must consider the performance dimension and think about what is and is not ethical to represent on stage. If there is an aspect of the source text that is potentially harmful, the feminist translator must consider ways of reformulating and intervening in the text, through cutting or reframing, or even writing the problematisation into the text. Thus, they produce a translation that resists perpetuating harm.

The staged meta-text

A feminist translation that employs a strategy of resistancy is one that disrupts the illusion, both the theatrical illusion and also the illusion of transparency. The inclusion of staged meta-texts (be they prologues, epilogues or even staged footnotes) makes it clear that the text in question has been through a translation process. The translator themselves is brought on stage, their work and intervention in the text made visible. Staged meta-

texts can also be a site for illuminating feminist meaning in the play, again drawing on the recovery work.

4. *Mise-en-scène: stage directions as intervention*

For the feminist theatre translator, the stage directions are a vital site for intervention in the text. Building on the recovery work, and drawing on the resistancy work, the feminist theatre translator must think about the performance dimension, and find opportunities to intervene on that level in order to draw out feminist meaning in the play. They should make productive use of all the sign systems at play in theatrical performance in order to do this.

5. *Collaboration*

Collaborating with other people

It is crucial for the feminist theatre translator to collaborate with other people – such as theatre-makers or other translators, writers and language experts – in the process of producing the translation. Collaboration opens up other meanings in the text, challenges any single interpretation. It highlights the contingency of meanings and language. Particularly for the theatre translator, collaborating with other theatre-makers is crucial in gaining a more rounded insight into the dramaturgy of the text. Collaboration can also allow the feminist translator to trial the effects of the strategies in performance.

The relationship with the author of the source text should also be collaborative. Feminist translation is a project of solidarity, where the

translator endeavours to speak with the playwright. A collaborative translation approach also frames the translator as making an equal contribution to the creation of meaning in the translated text.

Feminist theatre translation as tapestry

Images related to weaving have threaded themselves through my work from the very start. In my early practice journal entries I talk about picking up and dropping threads of research. In my 'recovery' work I thought a lot about the significance of weaving and thread in the play, and puzzled over the language related to it. I have thought about the significance of weaving, cloth and thread in Canth's own life – her father having worked at a textile factory and then a draper's shop, which she then inherited. I have thought about weaving in relation to women's labour. In one of her articles, 'On the Woman Question' (Jeffery, 2023, p. 178), Canth talks about how industrialisation has affected women's ability to earn by devaluing their labour. I watched a documentary about the history and lives of Roma people in Finland, made by the singer Hilja Grönfors, where she thinks about her female ancestors imprisoned for their ethnicity, and put to forced labour in prisons, made to spin cloth from nettles (*Eihän tämä maa minun omani ollut,* 2010). All of this thinking about weaving then fed into my understanding of my practice, the threads of influence and other people's work and contributions, which then weave together to form a translation which is in fact a tapestry. Ultimately, a feminist theatre translation cannot be a neat, clean document – it is inherently messy with interventions, edits,

additions. It is like the back of a tapestry – the threads all tangled and visible.

There are hundreds of (feminist) translations of *The Worker's Wife*

Towards the very end of my research process, I finally gained access to the one existing published translation of *The Worker's Wife*.[54] The translation is by a mother-son team, Mary Taanila Lehtinen and David Hanhilammi – the former having acted as the 'literal' translator and the latter having produced the 'adaptation'. The translation was for a production of the play at the University of Minnesota in 1980, which Hanhilammi directed. The text was then published in 1981 in a now defunct journal focused on Finnish-American culture and experience. I had deliberately avoided looking for this translation earlier on in my process, not wanting to be influenced by another translator's choices. Later on, however, when I felt more robust in my own translation and reading of the play, I decided to seek it out, and eventually tracked down a copy of the journal. To my surprise and delight, as well as the actual translated text, the journal included a director's/translator's note written by Hanhilammi, laying out his reading of the play. The actual playtext also included much more of his directorial vision than I had anticipated, and he had made bolder choices than I had baselessly assumed.

[54] Other than Ronja Siljander's translation (see Chapter Four and Appendix G), there is one other translation of the play that I am aware of, by Hilja Karvonen. I was keen to track this translation down, as it was produced for Reunion of Sisters symposium in Kuopio in 1987. As this was a feminist symposium, I would love to know whether Karvonen's translation was at all shaped by that context, whether it might also be a consciously feminist translation of the play. Sadly, my search for this translation (which only ever existed in manuscript form) has been fruitless. The Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura [Finnish Literary Society] had a box of materials related to the symposium, but not the translation manuscript. The Minna Canth foundation in Kuopio have also been unable to find a copy in their files, which leads me to suspect that the manuscript has been lost to the ages, sadly.

In Hanhilammi's version, the play is set in a children's play area, complete with climbing frame, slide and merry-go-round. A cast of children are present throughout the performance, playing on the set and often mirroring the actions of the adult characters. In his director's note, Hanhilammi (1981) explains this choice: 'the child characters continuously remind us of the fact that the future lies in the hands of our children' (p. 9). I appreciate some of Hanhilammi's choices – for example his decision not to anglicise the characters' names, and his use of music throughout, which is playful and illuminating. I also appreciate that Hanhilammi draws on expressionism, and does not attempt a realist staging of the text.

However, I fundamentally disagree with Hanhilammi's reading of the politics of the play, and how this then plays out in his translation of the text. In his director's note, he argues that the play is 'a call for an inner integrity which will lead to freedom and equality,' and 'an exploration of free will, and an appeal that we recognize and utilize our freedom of choice' (Hanhilammi, 1981, pp. 4, 9). He argues that the target of Canth's anger was 'the willingness of some women to sell themselves in one way or another' (Hanhilammi, 1981, p. 5). He then draws this meaning out in his translation, by making interventions both on the level of text and of *mise en scène.* For example, when Johanna and Risto argue in the marketplace in act two and Johanna cries to be released from her misery, Hanhilammi (1981) has Risto reply: 'Misery? Well, you can get rid of me, if that's what you want' (p. 30). A more literal translation of what Canth wrote here is: ''This misery?' What's the matter with you?' In his translation of the line, Hanhilammi

gives Johanna the option to leave Risto. On the level of *mise en scène,* in the opening scene of the play, Hanhilammi (1981, p. 11) has Johanna get dressed for her wedding on stage, and meanwhile a screen in the background shows a projection of a sex worker meeting a client and getting undressed. This opening moment acts as a theatrical prologue to the play, and it is interesting to note that both Hanhilammi and I had Johanna getting dressed into her wedding outfit on stage in our theatrical prologues. Where he has used this act to convey Johanna's free will in choosing to marry Risto, I have endeavoured to use it to opposite ends. In my prologue, Johanna does not dress herself, but is instead dressed by a chorus of women (Jeffery, 2023, p. 19), which is intended to illustrate her lack of agency, and how she is co-opted by society into taking on the role of wife.[55]

I cannot necessarily invalidate Hanhilammi's interpretation of the text, which he makes a strong argument for, even if my own reading of the play is entirely different. I feel strongly that the target of Canth's anger is the structures and people that uphold the oppression of women, and certainly not the women themselves. I hope that I have demonstrated in this thesis and my translation that the text can hold and support my reading of it. Hanhilammi has arguably made consistent use of translation strategies that I have theorised as feminist theatre translation strategies. He has 'recovered'

[55] Hanhilammi is also seemingly uninterested in Kerttu's status as a Roma woman. He mirrors Canth's use of the word 'gypsy' in his translation; he cuts her backstory, as told by Laura in act one; and he cuts her family in act three, making it purely a conversation between Kerttu and Risto. He is much more interested in her as a woman who supposedly 'sells herself' by being with Risto. He explicitly sexualises Kerttu's dance in act two by projecting images from Playboy magazine onto the screen behind her, and having her strip at the end of the dance (Hanhilammi, 1981, p. 36).

the text, provided a commentary on it, and found theatrical ways of imposing and communicating his reading of the play, just as I have sought to use theatrical means to convey *my* reading of it. However, Hanhilammi's is *not* a feminist translation of *The Worker's Wife.* It does not contribute to the women's movement. Nevertheless, reading his translation served as a helpful reminder of the purpose and contingency of feminist translation work. For it to be a feminist translation of a text, the strategies must be employed to ends that seek to contribute to the women's movement, to challenge norms and dominant ideologies, to resist perpetuating harm towards marginalised peoples.

There are infinite possible translations of *The Worker's Wife.* More than that, there are infinite *feminist* translations of *The Worker's Wife.* I have a metaphorical graveyard of abandoned feminist translations of the play – avenues I either briefly considered or actively started going down, before moving away from them in favour of something else. At one point, Joanna Bowman and I imagined a version of the play that begins in the twenty-first century, and then shifts further and further into the past with each successive act (Appendix C, p. 252). There is a feminist translation of *The Worker's Wife* where it is set in Kuopio in 2023, or even, perhaps, in London 2023. There is a feminist translation of *The Worker's Wife* where there are only two characters: Johanna and Kerttu. Perhaps there is even a feminist translation of *The Worker's Wife* where both are entirely absent. There is a feminist translation of *The Worker's Wife* where all the male characters are replaced by puppets. In fact, this last version could still fit within the scope

of my own feminist translation of *The Worker's Wife.* This list could go on ad infinitum, and the point is to emphasise the contingency of this work. What drives and shapes the outcome is the translator's tastes, context and, crucially, her politics. My choices have been driven by my interpretation of the text, and by my preoccupations as a feminist, and where the text intersects with my feminist politics.[56] In producing my translation, I have sought to produce a text that contributes to and furthers the feminist movement. That is the point of this work. It is translation as feminist praxis.

Further research

There are two key, and related, avenues of further research, which went beyond the scope of this project, but which would crucially further the field of feminist theatre translation studies. Firstly, the vital next step for this research would be to carry the methods through to a full staging process. What my project lacked, due to financial, temporal, and pandemic-related constraints, was practical, in-the-room, on-the-stage trialling of the strategies. I endeavoured to compensate for this through my collaboration with Joanna Bowman, and by holding two readings of the play with actors. Nevertheless, by not actively staging the play, I avoided coming up against many of the practicalities and potential pitfalls of taking a text from page to stage. The vital next step for this research would be to trial these strategies in full performance. Doing so would also allow for a further exploration of the collaborative potential of feminist theatre translation practice. What I

[56] I should also acknowledge that it cannot be denied that the translation was also shaped by my theatrical and literary tastes. As much as I endeavoured to root all my choices in political motivations, they were also often dictated by my personal aesthetic sensibilities.

have aspired towards in my translation and strategies is utopian. I would still argue for the value of this approach, but acknowledge that adaptation would be necessary in the staging process, when grappling with practical, particularly financial, constraints.

The second area for further research, would be the application of these strategies to a text by a contemporary writer. My strategies have undeniably been shaped by the fact that I worked on a historical text by a dead writer. Applying feminist theatre translation strategies to a contemporary text by a living writer would create a very different set of conditions, new challenges but also new opportunities. It would permit the feminist translator to truly test the collaborative, co-authership model, and discover whether or not that 'energizing *complicité*' (de Lotbinière-Harwood, 1991, p. 155) is possible, and if so, what it brings about.

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Appendices

Appendix A: A Timeline-Portfolio of Documentation of and Reflections on Practice (January 2020 – February 2023)

I have constructed this timeline-portfolio which charts my work over the last three years or so. It is constructed from notes taken during the process, and extracts from the journal I kept during some of this time, ordered chronologically.

<u>January – March 2020</u>
At this time, I am starting to read around the play, thinking about my approach, and taking my first tentative steps into actually translating it.

Journal entry, 5th January:
'My reading this week has got me thinking about context and influence. By that I mean the context of a translation and production, yes, but mainly of the original work. I've been thinking about the layers of influence that result in a piece of work, the reading a writer has done and how that bleeds into their own writing. This thinking was prompted by reading Wade Hollingshaus' article "Making Sense of Minna Canth", in which he writes about how Canth's shift to realism came after her reading Georg Brandes' lectures, which called on Scandinavia to embrace realism as other European countries had decades ago. Brandes, in turn, was influenced by positivism through Auguste Comte and Hippolyte Taine. So one way to 'understand' Canth's play is through the reading she did that may have influenced the writing of it. Is this necessary for a translator? I'm driven by a desire to keep learning and researching and saturate myself in context, because my gut tells me that this is the key to a 'good' translation. If I know everything Minna Canth knew then I can effectively speak in her voice. I don't actually necessarily think that, but that's what the little voice at the back of my head whispers to me, driven by an anxiety to *do well, truly represent her, get to the truth of the work and bring it out.* Something like that. These are thoughts I have to keep examining though, because once you really tap into those things they get quite sticky. Am I thinking of reading Comte because I think the arguable influence of positivism is a really important framework for this play, or at least high on the scale of importance? Something I want to really come through in my translation? I think Hollingshaus makes an interesting argument about Canth and positivism, but it's not particularly something that I'm that interested in, or that I deem super important about the play, thinking about it being read/seen/heard today.

I'm also not saying I shouldn't read Brandes at least. I probably should, because I think it is fairly clear that she [Canth] was responding directly to what he was asking Nordic writers to do. She was clearly struck by what he said, enough so that she translated his lectures into Finnish. More just that I need to keep thinking about *my* influences, and what I do and don't want to be influenced by, what my priorities are.'

Journal entry, 12th January:
‘So I decided to see what happened if I just launched in, without having read the text for months, and without reading ahead as I was going. For this first draft of the first couple of scenes I’ve created a table with three columns: Finnish text, word-by-word translation into English, notes (left to right). Lines are broken up into rows. I’m not sure about it just yet. It’s maybe a bit visually confusing and I’m not sure it’s giving me the space to play around with options and raise questions to the extent I would like to. I’m going to push through and create a version of at least act one like this, and see what this approach brings up.

Already I’ve raised a great number of questions and considerations, which I’m noting as I go in the right-hand column. I went as far as the end of the first conversation. I started with the character list, which prompted thoughts about naming, significance of certain professions, and (something I’ve known would be a significant and delicate consideration from the start) the characterisation of the character Homsantuu and her family as ‘mustalainen’ (i.e. ‘gypsy’). Next up were the opening stage directions – very clear and precise, opening set and blocking – and the first chunk of dialogue. I came to my first proverb and lots of words that already had feeling unsure, and some initial instincts about the characters of the first two speakers.

I’ll keep going with this template next week and get to the end of act one, and see how that goes. I don’t think I’ll be able to resist research and textual analysis for long though.’

I begin and then complete work on the first draft of the translation. It was a fairly instinct-based, speedy approach – not worrying too much about syntax, looking up words but not settling on things for the trickier words, starting to research some elements, but not in particular depth. At the same time, I read and write about feminist translation strategies used by the Canadian feminist translators, but do not actively draw on their strategies in my own practice at this stage.

(Riston ja Johannan häähuone. Oikealla ovi sivuhouneeseen, vasemmalla ikkuna. Perällä ovi porstuaan.	*(Risto and Johanna’s wedding room. On the right a door to the side room, on the left a window. At the back a door to the porch.*	I’m going to just copy the formatting for now. There’s probably something better than ‘wedding room’ for ‘häähuone – look into what this is Again – porch is ok but maybe ‘veranda’ or something is better – research architecture
Huudetaan: >>morsian ulos!>> Esirippu nousee.	*It is shouted: >> bride out!>> The curtain rises.*	
Johanna seisoo morsiuspuvussa ikkunan edessä; Katri ja Laura näyttävät valkeata molemmin puolin. Vappu seisoo etunäyttämöllä oikeaan.	*Johanna is standing in her wedding outfit the window in front of; Katri and Laura look white on both sides. Vappu stands upstage right.*	‘they look white on both sides’ is definitely not right – check this. Is it an idiom?
Taaempana: Risto, Yrjö, Toppo, Kustaa, Heikki, Janne, Lotta, Liisa, Leena-Kaisa ja Anna-Maija y.m. häävieraita.	*Further back: Risto, Yrjö, Toppo, Kustaa, Heikki, Janne, Lotta, Liisa, Leena-Kaisa and Anna-Maika and other wedding guests.*	
Ikkunan takaa kaikuu eläköön huutoja.)	*Window from behind echoes long live/hurrah cries.)*	‘eläköön’ is tricky…’long live’ is kind of right but not quite.
RISTO. Mitä mietitte, Vappu? Eiköhän olisi hauskaa sentään olla tuolla kohdalla?	RISTO. What do you think, Vappu? Wouldn’t it be fun nevertheless to be in that position?	Or ‘what are you thinking about’ ‘sentään’ is tricky, ‘nevertheless’ is too formal, really. Other options in dictionary are ‘at least’ or ‘however’
VAPPU. Morsiamenako?	VAPPU. As a bride?	The case this noun is in has the question built into it, so in English it should probably include a question phrase (like ‘you mean?’)
RISTO. Niin juuri. Kun vielä noin kunnioitetaankin. Seuratkaa pois Johannan esimerkkiä ja ottakaa itsellenne mies tekin.	RISTA. Yes just. When still like that one is honoured/respected/venerated/revered/esteemed. Follow away Johanna’s example and take for yourself a man you too.	These are all weird options for ‘kunniotetaankin’! Something to think about Also, the text is coming out quite formal in this word by word, but it doesn’t really read like that in Finnish.
VAPPU. Enpä hänestä ole millänikään.	VAPPU. Not of her am I anything/nothing	This comes out very weird word by word. The gist is more like ‘I’m not jealous of her at all’ or ‘she’s got nothing on me’, etc
RISTO. Mutta minkätähden ei? Teille niitä kumminkin on tarjonna sulhasia kuin kirjavia kissoja. Mikä arveluttaa?	RISTO. But why on earth not? To you them nevertheless are supply fiancés like multi-coloured cats. What makes you dubious?	Check the word fiancé – not sure when that came in to use Obviously can’t really go with ‘multi-coloured cats’, will look into that ‘what makes you dubious’ also obvs isn’t quite right

Screenshot of the first page of my first draft.

Journal entry, 15th March:
'I am thinking about how to record my research process and log what I am thinking about, through this log and through other mediums. I keep a list of what I read, but I was also thinking about how much you can tell about my thoughts and preoccupations this week from my google search history.

A selection of the thing I googled this week:
history of Romani people in Finland
politics of citation
finnish hymnbook 1701
Spivak politics of translation

This search list is half things I googled for the thesis chapter I'm working on, and half things I googled whilst working on my translation. I'm trying to keep thinking about both things together and letting them inform each other.

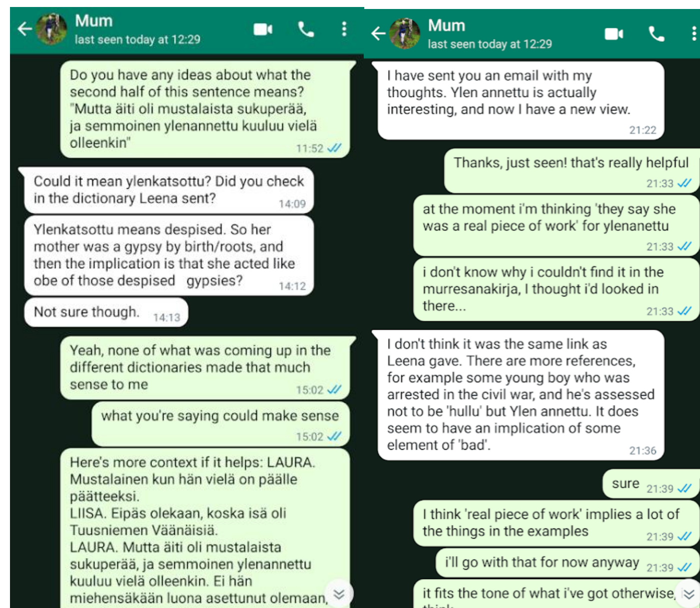
I'm still working on my first draft of the translation. I'm at a stage where my research for it is generally quite 'quick google search' based, with a lot of annotations of 'research this' or 'look into this'. This feels like a slightly chaotic approach, but I think, for now, on this draft, it works for me. I set out to translate this first draft quite quickly, working on instinct rather than too much thought, to see what would happen. There are things, though, that I either can't move forward without checking, and things I can't resist looking up, just out of curiousity and interest .

[…]

It's a slightly chaotic approach, half researching things, picking up and dropping, but I think for now it feels ok to get snatches of things and work quickly and instinctually and see what comes of that. I can (and will!) come back to things later.'

<u>April - May 2020</u>

I begin work on the second draft. This is the first time I reach out for language advice. I message my mum to ask about any words/phrases I am confused about in act one. She helps where she can, but there are a few words and phrases that she doesn't recognise either, so we outsource these to other Finnish friends to see if they can help.



A screenshot from messages between my mum and myself, where I ask for help with some tricky language. Leena is a Finnish language expert.

June 2020

I went back to the translation after taking a hiatus from it to work on the thesis and my theory-based research. I continued work on my second draft and took a bit more care over syntax than I had in the first draft, and spent more time doing research about various elements of the text (references, historical contexts, unfamiliar expressions). I enjoyed learning about 'song-sellers' and healing malt baths. I read a lot more into the history of Roma oppression in Finland and started thinking about what bearing that has on my translation.

Journal entry, 28th June:

'A few days ago, whilst I was working on my second draft, I was translating a passage in Act 4, where Toppo is telling Risto how society is structured, in order to persuade him to come to the pub with him. He explains how, by going to the pub, they contribute to society by drinking and therefore contribute to alcohol taxes, which are then used to build schools and railways. It's a passage I really enjoy. It's funny and satirical. I wanted to share it with someone, so I called Lily over to read it. 'Have a read of this bit I've just gone over, it's really good I think.' After a couple of seconds she said, dismissively, 'Sorry, I can't read this. It's too annoying to read.' I was filled with righteous indignation. How dare she! I felt very offended, both on behalf of myself as a translator, and, more importantly, on behalf of Minna Canth. Well, not really for myself, because it was a messy second draft, where words only just hung together enough to make grammatical sense. I mainly felt deeply offended on behalf of Minna Canth. OK, yes, this version of the text Lily was reading was extremely wordy and heavy. Clunky and old fashioned and, yes, difficult to read. But surely she could see through that and get how funny and charming this passage is? Evidently

not. After my initial annoyance had worn off a bit, and I'd thought more detachedly about her reaction, it gave rise to some pertinent questions. I had translated every single last word of Finnish into English, and stuck as closely as I could to Finnish sentence structure and punctuation whilst still being legible in English. So in one sense, this second draft is a very accurate translation, 'true' to the source text. And it is somewhat old-fashioned, inevitably so given that it was written in the nineteenth century. There's a lot more exposition, for example, than we're used to in contemporary English language playwriting. But honestly, reading it in Finnish, it *is* lively and characterful, not heavy or difficult to read at all. In fact, the Finnish really rolls off the tongue and is a joy to say aloud. So this clunky English version, arguably so 'true' to the source text, doesn't seem right. It seems an injustice to the liveliness and naturalness of the source text.

There's a gap between nineteenth-century Finnish and twenty-first century English that I need to work out how to navigate. Is the answer cutting it down, finding more 'modern' equivalents to words? I recently read interviews with Christopher Campbell, previously Royal Court literary manager, Sebastian Born, previous literary of the National Theatre, and Penny Black, German to English theatre translator. All of them mentioned how often translations are too 'wordy' at first and need cutting down. Why is that? Is this a particular English aversion to wordiness? But as I've said, the Finnish version doesn't feel wordy at all, and if the English version *does,* then there's a problem. I think it's something I'll just have to play around with a bit, and see what different things feel like. My main feeling is, I don't want to sell the text short, or misrepresent it, let it feel heavy and dated, when it's not really. I just want people to like it!'

July 2020

I finish my second draft and gather a list of 'problem words and phrases' to send to my mum and Leena Kuikka, a Finnish language expert. We hold a zoom call to discuss them. Buoyed by this conversation, I start work on my third draft, where I am trying to focus on bringing the 'liveliness' of the Finnish text into my English translation, which currently feels a little stilted. I ask my long-suffering partner, Lily, to read through act one with me, and iron out bits where what I have written does not align with what I mean, and also note that my punctuation is still stuck in nineteenth century Finland in a way that is getting a bit confusing.

Journal entry, 1st July:
'I've just finished the second draft of my translation (mainly putting the jumbled word-by-word first draft into some sort of grammatical order, and doing further contextual research as I go), and had a very frustrating couple of days. I ran into a passage with four confusing and difficult expressions, one after the other. Obscure expressions and turns of phrase, that made little sense to me (though the context gives a good implication of the meaning behind them). Google sometimes lulls you into complacency and ease, I think. Every time I come across something a bit difficult, I assume that I'll

be able to just google the expression and something helpful will come up, because it very often does. However, with each of these phrases, the only search results were from online copies of this play. I kept trying to search varying combinations of the words in the expressions, or things I feel might lead me there ('expressions from the Savo region', 'Kanteletar Penttinen') but finding nothing of any use, getting increasingly annoyed and gloomy about the progress of my translation. It makes me feel like I don't know enough Finnish, or have a strong enough cultural background to do this play. But then I have to remind myself that this play is over a century old, and no one has complete and utter knowledge of a country's every last cultural quirk. And really, although at some point it felt as though I'd exhausted every single search route for these expressions, all it had really been was an evening and a morning's work, purely based on googling things! I.e. not much. I can't expect to hold a country's entire cultural and linguistic history in my head, and I can't expect to find it so readily available on the internet like that.

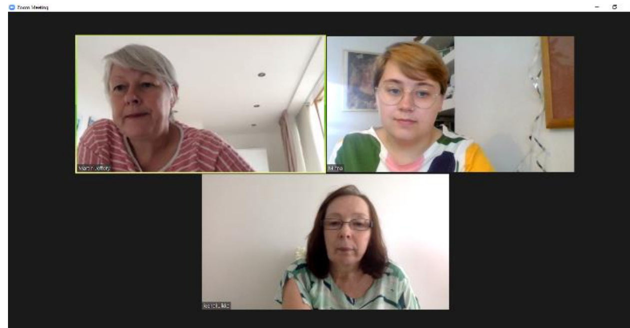
In the end, I sent my mum a text with a couple of the difficult expressions, to see if she recognised any of them. She phoned me back, more or less immediately, to say she hadn't heard any of them before, and off the top of her head had no idea at all what they meant. On the one hand, I felt vindicated and surer in my knowledge of Finnish. If my mum didn't know either, clearly I wasn't missing something really obvious. On the other hand, not super helpful. She suggested talking to a language expert, about them, so I reached out to a Finnish language expert, Leena. Before hanging up, my mum said emphatically: 'But it is *lovely* language. *Lovely* language.''

Journal entry, 8th July:
'As per my mother's suggestion, I put together a list of 13 phrases or expressions I was particularly confused about, and sent them to her and Leena. They had about a week to mull them over, and this morning we had a video call to talk through them. It felt invigorating and comforting to talk to them about the play, my translation, Finnish language, my research, etc. A welcome moment of communion at a time where interactions with anyone other than the person I live with are few and far between. We called it a 'breakfast meeting' and each of us had a coffee in hand, and I (half) joked about them being part of my women's translation co-operative.

The short story is that more or less none of the expressions were familiar to either of them. Which is fine and makes sense, given how old the play is and how Finnish, like most languages, has lots of very specific regional particularities. Neither my mother or Leena have roots in Kuopio, where Minna Canth lived and the play is set. However, both had very kindly and diligently done some digging around, and also brought with them their richer Finnish cultural knowledge. For example, they knew, which hadn't occurred to me, that cats often show up in Finnish turns of phrase with negative or disparaging connotations. Cats are less useful pets than dogs. This made a lot of sense with a couple of the expressions I'd sent them. With a lot of them, we concluded that it was clear that the word-by-word meaning wasn't anything too profound or important, and you could get what

they meant from the context. A few of them were clearly just sort of filler expressions or exclamations.

Whilst Leena excused herself for a minute to go and get more coffee, my mum said again, in English, ‘it really is lovely language.’ It had sort of taken me aback the first time she’d said it. I didn’t *not* think it was lovely language, but I suppose I just hadn’t really thought about the language in that way for a long time. It made me feel sort of guilty, for forgetting about how characterful it was, not paying enough attention or something. When you spend time poring over individual words and looking them up in various different dictionaries and trying to get to the bottom of the *meaning* (that elusive concept) of every single word, and thereby the text in general, you’re liable to lose sight of the text as a whole. She’s right, though. It is, indeed, really nice language. Leena pointed out that almost every single bit of text I’d sent her contained alliteration. Honestly – almost every single one! I can’t believe I hadn’t paid enough attention to pick up on that. Now that she’s pointed it out, I see it everywhere. It’s impossible to ignore. It seems so basic, but honestly for the past few months of translation I’ve been so (mostly unconsciously) focused on Englishness and English language, that I’ve stopped properly reading the Finnish language and missed huge things like that. To be honest, it made me feel a bit weird, a bit silly, a bit like ‘do I even know this play at all?’. Which of course I do, but this was really a good reminder to not only fixate on words, but pay attention to language as a whole. That’s one of my main goals moving forward on the third draft.



Screenshot of the zoom call between my mum, me and Leena. (I don’t know why everyone looks so serious/vaguely bored in this screenshot; it was genuinely a really nice chat!)’

Journal entry, 14th July:
‘I had a go at the first few pages, and then asked Lily to read through them with me. It’s difficult reading them aloud in your own voice, because you’ll always say the lines how you intend them to be read, what makes sense in *your* voice. When you open a text up to another person, it suddenly becomes very clear where phrases sound awkward or convoluted, difficult to read, etc. Or where meaning has been obscured. You suddenly realise ‘no, that’s not what I meant at all’. Or there were parts where she said, ‘what does this bit mean? What exactly does it say in the source text?’ and once I’d spelt out what the source text said, we agreed that this wasn’t really what my translation said, and re-worked it.

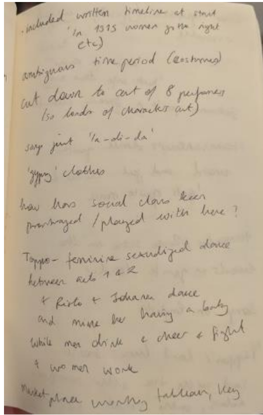
Something that really stuck out to Lily was the punctuation. She kept on saying, 'this is confusing! Why is this a full stop, not a question mark?' And she was right every time. I would say around ninety percent of the lines that were clearly questions ended in a full stop rather than a question mark. It was something I'd noticed myself, that a lot of the punctuation didn't fit English rules of grammar, but I had this feeling that 'what if I'm missing something? What if there's some vital linguistic reason that I'm completely ignoring by changing the punctuation? Is this tampering with the meaning of the source text??' Which, when I write it down and list it all out, seems highly unlikely. I find it unexpectedly hard, sometimes, to navigate the relationship between the source text and my translated text. It comes down to wanting to get it 'right', when there are many versions of what 'right' is. And when I really examine what I'm trying to do with this translation, what my beliefs about translation as a practice are, getting obsessive about exactly mirroring nineteenth century Finnish punctuation in case it's holding secret meanings, doesn't meet that criteria. I'm sure there's some logical, probably quite obvious, reason why Minna Canth was very sparing with question marks, but Lily's right that it's needlessly confusing to contemporary English eyes to see full stops where you know there should be question marks.'

August 2020

I keep working on the third draft, and read through each act with Lily as I finish them.
I have another call with Leena and my mother to talk through a few more problem words and phrases that have come up.
Jaakko Nousiainen from the Finnish Institute in London puts me in touch with Ronja Siljander, a theatre directing student at East 15, who has just translated the play too. At first, this stresses me out and makes me feel competitive and protective over my work (she probably feels the same), but then I get over myself and feel excited about the crossover and reach out to Ronja. We have a short email exchange, I agree to watch her production of her translation in October, and she consents to being interviewed by me about it afterwards.

September –November 2020

I begin participating in workshops organised by Foreign Affairs theatre company, who specialise in translated theatre. The workshops are a gathering of other translators working on translating plays, and every couple of weeks we gather and bring extracts from what we are working on and ask our peers for advice and feedback. We also do general workshops on things like punctuation and voice. It feels exposing to share extracts from my work with people who have no context for it, in a way that is helpful and forces me to ask myself questions about what I am trying to do with the translation.
In October, I watch the livestream of Ronja's production of The Workman's Wife, and then interview her about it (see Appendix F). Both the production and conversation give me lots to consider.



Notes taken whilst watching Ronja's production:
'included written timeline at start 'in 1915 women got the right etc.'
Ambiguous time period (costumes)
Cut down to cast of 8 performers (so loads of characters cut)
Songs just la-di-da'
'gypsy' clothes
How has social class been portrayed/played with here?
Toppo – feminine sexualised dance between acts 1&2 & Risto & Johanna dance and mime her having a baby whilst men drink & cheer & fight & women work
Marketplace working tableau, key'

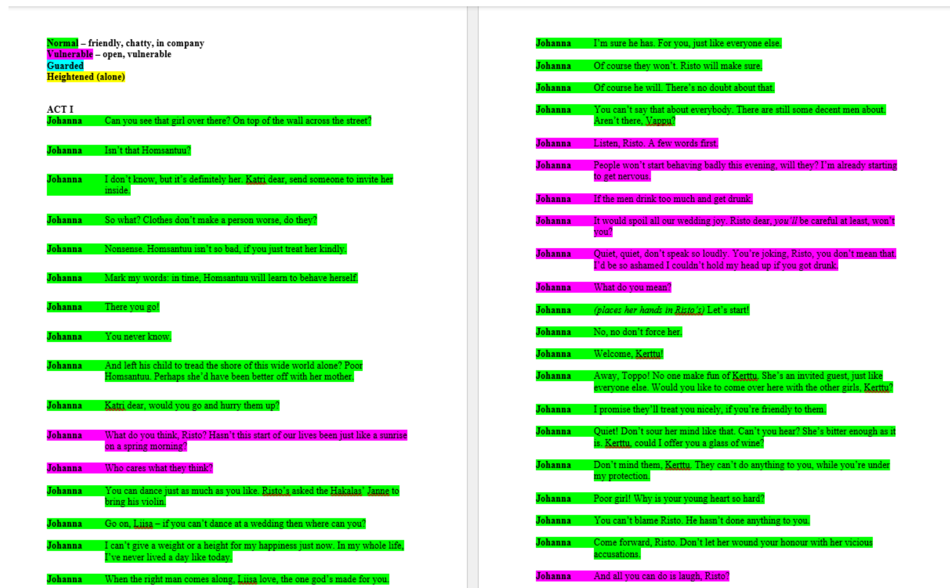
I finish my third draft of the translation.
I write a preface to my translation where I discuss the history of Roma oppression in Finland and the uneasy relationship this play has with Roma portrayal. I haven't decided yet if/how I want to use this preface, but it was helpful to do the research and to write about it.

December 2020

I complete a fourth draft of the play, which is more a tidying-up of the third than anything departing particularly radically from it.
I send this fourth draft – which includes the preface about Roma portrayal in the play and a brief biography of Canth - to Joanna Bowman, a theatre director, to read. She sends back a couple of pages of notes (Appendix B), and right at the end of the month we have a two-hour long zoom call where we discuss her feedback (Appendix C). The conversation gives me a lot to think about and goes on to really shape my work from then on.

January 2021

Based on my conversation with Jo, I start thinking a lot about registers, and about public/private conversations in the play. I am thinking mostly about the language used by the main women characters in the play. I create a document for each of those characters and copy every line they speak into them, and start seeing if I can differentiate the 'registers' of their lines and trace any patterns.



Normal – friendly, chatty, in company
Vulnerable – open, vulnerable
Guarded
Heightened (alone)

ACT I

Johanna Can you see that girl over there? On top of the wall across the street?

Johanna Isn't that Homsantuu?

Johanna I don't know, but it's definitely her. Katri dear, send someone to invite her inside.

Johanna So what? Clothes don't make a person worse, do they?

Johanna Nonsense. Homsantuu isn't so bad, if you just treat her kindly.

Johanna Mark my words: in time, Homsantuu will learn to behave herself.

Johanna There you go!

Johanna You never know.

Johanna And left his child to tread the shore of this wide world alone? Poor Homsantuu. Perhaps she'd have been better off with her mother.

Johanna Katri dear, would you go and hurry them up?

Johanna What do you think, Risto? Hasn't this start of our lives been just like a sunrise on a spring morning?

Johanna Who cares what they think?

Johanna You can dance just as much as you like. Risto's asked the Hakalas' Janne to bring his violin.

Johanna Go on, Liisa – if you can't dance at a wedding then where can you?

Johanna I can't give a weight or a height for my happiness just now. In my whole life, I've never lived a day like today.

Johanna When the right man comes along, Liisa love, the one god's made for you.

Johanna I'm sure he has. For you, just like everyone else.

Johanna Of course they won't. Risto will make sure.

Johanna Of course he will. There's no doubt about that.

Johanna You can't say that about everybody. There are still some decent men about. Aren't there, Vappu?

Johanna Listen, Risto. A few words first.

Johanna People won't start behaving badly this evening, will they? I'm already starting to get nervous.

Johanna If the men drink too much and get drunk.

Johanna It would spoil all our wedding joy. Risto dear, *you'll* be careful at least, won't you?

Johanna Quiet, quiet, don't speak so loudly. You're joking, Risto, you don't mean that. I'd be so ashamed I couldn't hold my head up if you got drunk.

Johanna What do you mean?

Johanna *(places her hands in Risto's)* Let's start!

Johanna No, no don't force her.

Johanna Welcome, Kerttu!

Johanna Away, Toppo! No one make fun of Kerttu. She's an invited guest, just like everyone else. Would you like to come over here with the other girls, Kerttu?

Johanna I promise they'll treat you nicely, if you're friendly to them.

Johanna Quiet! Don't sour her mind like that. Can't you hear? She's bitter enough as it is. Kerttu, could I offer you a glass of wine?

Johanna Don't mind them, Kerttu. They can't do anything to you, while you're under my protection.

Johanna Poor girl! Why is your young heart so hard?

Johanna You can't blame Risto. He hasn't done anything to you.

Johanna Come forward, Risto. Don't let her wound your honour with her vicious accusations.

Johanna And all you can do is laugh, Risto?

A screenshot from the document I made to try and differentiate the different registers used by women characters in the play.

I also go through the whole play and mark out whether I think any given conversation happens in public or in private. I conclude that actually in the first two acts all conversations are public, and that sense of being listened in on spreads out into act four, despite it ostensibly taking place in a private, domestic space (Johanna and Risto's home). I think generally about whether any conversation that takes place in the theatre is really private. These thoughts are foundational and shape the direction of my work from this point forward.

The thoughts about register take a little longer to muddle through, and I am not sure if I have un-muddled them yet. I do begin to perceive patterns though, about how Johanna's language in particular shifts throughout the play, and that there might be helpful parallel's with Kerttu's language here.

PRIVATE/PUBLIC convos

ACT I

First convo between Vappu and Risto:
This feels like it could be a public conversation: Vappu is downstage right on her own, and Risto is part of the gang of people towards the back of the stage. So it's like he's shouting to her across the room, other conversations probably fall to a hush when he does this. Risto is semi-mocking and it's somewhat uncomfortable to listen to. Perhaps there are a few embarrassed laughs from the rest of the party.

Risto probably gets a bit defensive. Conversation picks up after a slightly bemused/awkward silence after Vappu's somewhat cryptic last line.

Maybe Vappu is preparing the tea which is about to be served

Convo between Johanna/Katri/etc
Starts as a private conversation between Johanna/Katri/Laura, but Lotta, at the edge of the other group, joins in

Risto & the boys

This is a conversation just between the boys. Perhaps they have wandered further downstage whilst having tea etc. There is other background chat.

This is how men talk when women aren't listening.

Johanna & the gals

The girls are still gossiping, a continuation of the earlier conversation.

A real sense of it being fun gossip, but division in the group about who thinks what re Homsantuu (more or less Johanna and Liisa vs Laua/Katri/Lotta)

Risto & the boys

Again, a private convo with the boys, until Risto talks to Johanna, at which point it opens up to the room at large

Johanna & Risto

Private convo between the two of them. Johanna more tender/vulnerable than she has been, but Risto is still slightly in his 'boys' mood – possibly even looking about to get back to them

Johanna & the girls

Screenshot of document going through each conversation in the playand working out whether it takes place in public or in private.

February 2021

My mum reads through my fourth draft and gives me helpful, detailed notes about where I have missed or misunderstood things from the Finnish. She sends me heavily annotated texts act by act. I go through her suggested edits more or less immediately, and implement a several of them. It is fun to get a sense of the voice she gives they play through the suggestions she makes, even if I often don't agree with them.

The Worker's Wife DRAFT FOUR

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Johanna You can dance just as much as you like. Risto asked the Hakalas' Janne to bring his violin.

Liisa How fun! My toes are already itching to dance. Shall I show you how to dance the Old Maid? Give me some space. *(Sings softly and dances)*
'Raatikkoon, raatikkoon,
Vanhat piiat pannaan.
Raatikkoon, raatikkoon,
Vanhat piiat pannaan.
Tuon, tuon Kyöpeli vuoren taa,
Ett'ei noita, ett'ei noita
Pojat naida saa.'[9]

Laura Stop messing around. Everyone's looking at us.

Liisa *(Stops dancing)*. Let them look. I don't care!

Johanna Go on, Liisa - when are you allowed to dance, if not at a wedding?

Liisa See, Janne's already taking out his violin. Soon the real fun will begin. And the bride will be led to the floor first. You must be very happy this evening, Johanna.

Johanna Just now my happiness knows no weight or measure. Never in my life have I lived a day like this.

Liisa Lucky girl. When will it be my turn?

Johanna When the right man comes along, Liisa dear, the one God has made for you.

Liisa Yes, and who knows. Perhaps he hasn't made one for me.

[9] Translation: 'Left abandoned, left abandoned, the old maids will be / There, there, behind Kyöpeli mountain / So that the witch, so that the witch can't marry the boys.'
See Appendix for sheet music.
Kyöpeli mountain is a fictional place where people used to say that unmarried women would end up after they turned 25 (or 30, or 40, depending on the place and time period). It's also associated with being where witches fly to and from.

12

Comments

Martin Jeffery
Maybe fiddle?

Martin Jeffery
O what fun ?

Martin Jeffery
Discussed with Leena – also refer to the emails I just sent. Scarpheap/dump would be the translation. Might it be interesting to bring up the connotation/context about spinsters being left in the same place as the witches. Leena said that the old maids also paid a higher tax than married women!

Martin Jeffery
"Noita" is definitely a pronoun referring to the vanhat piiat.

Martin Jeffery
Fooling?

Page 13

Martin Jeffery
arvoisat

Martin Jeffery
roveissaan – kysy Leenalta – 12/2 still under discussion

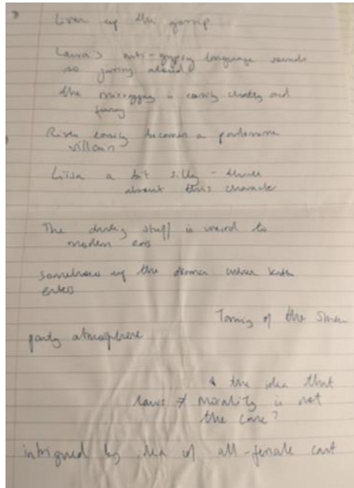
Martin Jeffery
unless they are a bit drunk

Martin Jeffery
chaps?

Example of my mum's comments on draft four. As you can see, she also had to outsource some things to Leena again. A true collaborative effort.

Foreign Affairs reading 1, 24th February:
I have a reading of the play via Zoom with Foreign Affairs theatre company. I had to send them the script a few weeks in advance, so I hadn't implemented the changes my mum suggested, nor many changes based on Joanna Bownman's comments.
The reading is nonetheless very helpful. There are 6 readers, and only 1 man, so there is a lot of multi-roling and gender-swapping. It is exciting to hear the play read aloud. I am struck and relieved by how engaging it is, and how the plot moves forward and the drama and tension rise, despite the fact that it is a) online and b) a cold read. We take pauses between each act to briefly discuss, and the actor's give encouraging feedback. I mark places on the script where particular words of phrases have stuck out as needing work. I also make notes about reactions and how actors have approached certain characters and the tone. I am pleased but do feel that the language often feels overly dated in a way that I think is sometimes unhelpfully alienating. We reach the end of act three and everyone is suffering from screen fatigue, so we decide to stop and reconvene at a later date to read acts four and five. Before we end the call, we have a brief discussion about the play so far, and Trine, one of the directors of Foreign Affairs, suggests that everyone either guess what happens at the end, or say what they would

like to happen at the end. I write down these suggestions, most of which centre around justice for Johanna and Kerttu and punishment for Risto. I understand, and feel internally regretful that their wishes will not be fulfilled, and it gets me thinking about the ending. I start wondering if there might be something I could do with these suggestions.

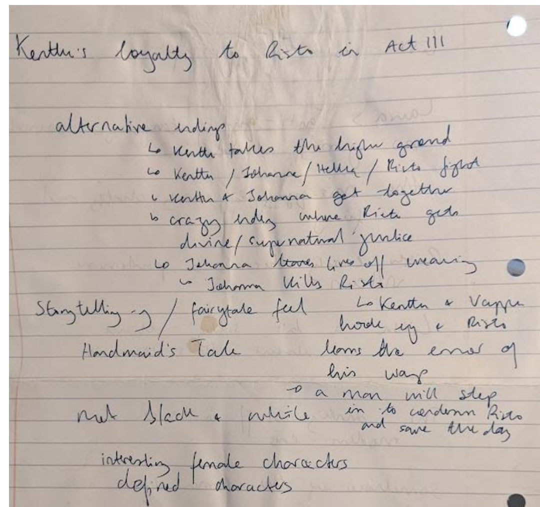


Notes taken on a battered looking piece of paper whilst listening to Foreign Affairs read-through:
'Liven up the gossip
Laura's anti-gypsy language sounds so jarring aloud
The misogyny is easily chatty and funny
Risto easily becomes a pantomime villain
Liisa a bit silly – think about this character
The drinking stuff is weird to modern ears
Somehow up the drama when Kerttu enters
Taming of the Shrew
Party atmosphere
*the idea that law ≠ morailty is not the case?
Intriguied by idea of all-female cast'

(contd.)
'Kerttu's loyalty to Risto in Act III
Alternative endings:

- Kerttu takes the higher ground
- Kerttu/Johanna/Helka/Risto fight
- Kerttu & Johanna get together
- Crazy ending where Risto gets deivine/supernatural justice
- Johanna lives off weaving
- Johanna kills Risto
- Kertu & Vappu hook up and Risto learns the error of his ways
- A man will step in to condemn Risto and save the day

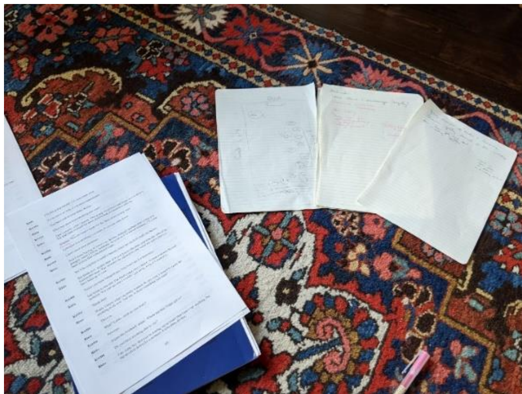
Story-telling/fairy-tale feel
Handmaid's Tale]not black & white
Interesting female characters
Defined characters'

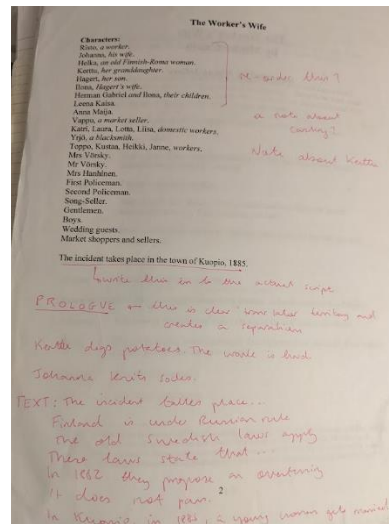


March – May 2021

Encouraged by my supervisor, led by my theory reading/thinking/writing, and by Joanna Bowman's comments and my reflections from the Foreign Affairs readthrough, I start working on an 'adaptation' of the play, where I attempt to make bolder interventions into the text.
I split my work into two drafts: the 'literal' translation, and the 'adaptation'. The 'literal' is on its fifth draft, and is essentially what I have

done so far. I polish it up, working from my mother's edits, Joanna Bowman's comments, and discoveries from the read-through.
I start the 'adaptation' in April. This is a more significant attempt at producing a feminist translation of the text, drawing on my reading about the strategies of other feminist translators.
I print out the fifth draft, and start reading it whilst scribbling ideas and notes on it. I immediately want to have a go at a prologue, so sketch something out by hand. I think about the public/private divide I discussed with Jo, and draw some staging diagrams for act one, thinking about configurations. I then jump to act five because I have some ideas at the back of my mind.




The Worker's Wife

Characters:
Risto, *a worker.*
Johanna, *his wife.*
Helka, *an old Finnish-Roma woman.*
Kerttu, *her granddaughter.*
Hagert, *her son.*
Ilona, *Hagert's wife.*
Herman Gabriel *and* Ilona, *their children.*
Leena Kaisa.
Anna Maija.
Vappu, *a market seller.*
Katri, Laura, Lotta, Liisa, *domestic workers.*
Yrjö, *a blacksmith.*
Toppo, Kustaa, Heikki, Janne, *workers.*
Mrs Vörsky.
Mr Vörsky.
Mrs Hanhinen.
First Policeman.
Second Policeman.
Song-Seller.
Gentlemen.
Boys.
Wedding guests.
Market shoppers and sellers.

The incident takes place in the town of Kuopio, 1885.

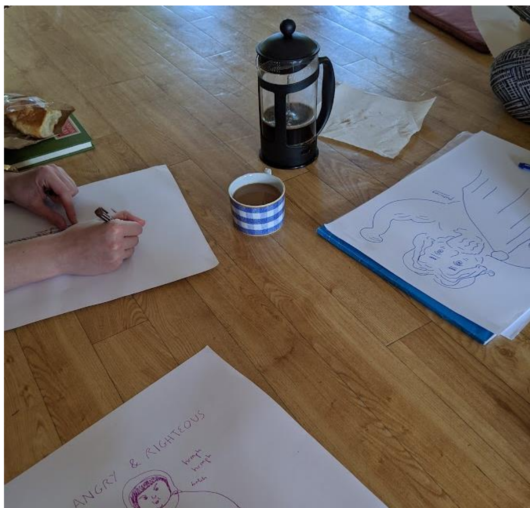
A picture of printed script, notes and diagrams, and picture of annotations on script. Annotations read: 're-order this?' 'a note about casting?' 'Note about Kerttu' 'write this in to the actual script' 'Prologue -> this is clear 'translator territory and creates a separation.
Kerttu digs potatoes. The work is hard.
Johanna knits socks.
TEXT: The incident takes place…
Finalnd is under Russian rule
The old Swedish laws apply
These laws state that…
In 1882 they propose an overturning
It does not pass.
In Kuopio, in 1885, a young woman gets married…'

During this time, I also look to other plays for inspiration. I have been feeling creatively (theatrically) starved. The ongoing pandemic means I have barely seen any theatre for the last year or more, other than the odd online production. I decide to turn to playtexts, and read The Welkin by Lucy Kirkwood, because I want to see how another writer handles women and history in a contemporary context. The opening scene of the women going about their business inspires me. It helps that this adapting work is concurrent with me working on a chapter about the play and Minna Canth, and that this has made me think more analytically about what is going on in the play. I start adding in some extra stage directions in a different font, cutting a few lines to streamline some moments, and changing some of the

language, using slightly more modern expressions and more modern expletives, for example.
I also read and think about other recent(ish) feminist adaptations of similar(ish) plays: Polly Stenham's Julie, Stef Smith's Nora. Nora was one of the last things I saw at the theatre before the lockdown started, and Joanna Bowman had been the assistant director on it, which was partly why I had thought she would be an apt person to collaborate with on my translation. There are several things I liked and disliked about both Julie and about Nora, which I try to pin down more precisely. I think about similarities between my work and theirs, and how to avoid the pitfalls I perceive in their re-writings of nineteenth-century plays looking at women's position in society.
I also go back to and start really thinking about the Canadian feminist translators' strategies and about how I could use those in my work. I consider graphic interventions, and supplementation. I work mostly according to instinct, but then think through what the theoretical underpinning of the work is, and then go back to the work again, back and forth.

June 2021

This is not strictly related to my translation, but it had a definite impact on it, so it is worth mentioning. In the first week of June I travel to York for a week of R&D on a show that I have been working on with my company, Good Friends for a Lifetime, for almost a year. We started researching and writing during the first lockdown, having regular zoom calls to work on and discuss writing, research and ideas, but this is the first time we have been able to be in a room together to work on it. It is the first time any of the three of us has been in a room making theatre since February 2020. It is creatively liberating, and helps me to find a way back into thinking theatrically, thinking about bodies in space and interaction and sound. This unlocks a lot for me when I go back to the translating work the following week.



Doing R&D with Good Friends for a Lifetime in York. Thinking about stage images, thinking about bodies on stage and about movement properly for the first time in over a year.

I then have the second half of the reading with Foreign Affairs (acts four and five). They are reading from the same script I sent them back in

February, which feels strange. My thoughts have moved on so much since then. It is nonetheless still very helpful, and I come away with more things to think about in terms of clunky sounding lines, but also in terms of wider ideas about the play, its movement and impact.

Notes from the second Foreign Affairs reading, which read:
'All the turns at which things could have gone differently if the world were otherwise
Second half = man heavy

Leviathan – Russian film – hopelessness
Complicity -> Johanna's complicity, too (against Kerttu, too)
Vappu as outsider
Helka appears at the end and shoots Risto
Women disappearing – all unresolved and dropping off
Suspension of disbelief (as if Kerttu could shoot Risto, as if Risto could go back to Johanna)
Leena-Kaisa = the church
Still find what Vappu says fairly mainstream
Leena-Kaisa = miserable, has to twist religion like that in order to live
Vappu's speech is still satisfying
We trust Vappu – she's proven herself to be a stable character
Vappu = the ray of hope
She makes the men look particularly stupid at the end – quite satisfying/heartening
A dignified ending
Risto has lost – the moment when Vappu asks if she can raise the boy to be <u>good</u> – he is the man of the future'

<u>July 2021</u>

Another experience that is not explicitly related to my research, but which undeniably impacts it. I spend a week at the British Centre for Literary Translation's Summer School, on the multilingual theatre strand. I learn a lot from the workshop leader, William Gregory, and from the other translators in my cohort. I note the crossovers and differences in our concerns; everyone else in my cohort is working on a contemporary play, and it makes me feel the temporal distance between myself and my play acutely. Among other things, we think about breath, rhythm and punctuation, approach the text in an actorly way to help bring it to life.

Extract from BCLT notes.
Notes read:
'connecting to the responses that other theatre practitioners have to theatre texts
Resisting imposing 'correct' ways to write/speak English
Spoken-ness//speakability
Breaking down the little sounds
Breath, sound, language – find places where the quality of text creates effect in source text – is there scope to carry this over?
Plosives, etc.
Sentence structure – regular, irregular etc.
Connection between punctuation -> breath -> emotion
Act of speech vs. acting'

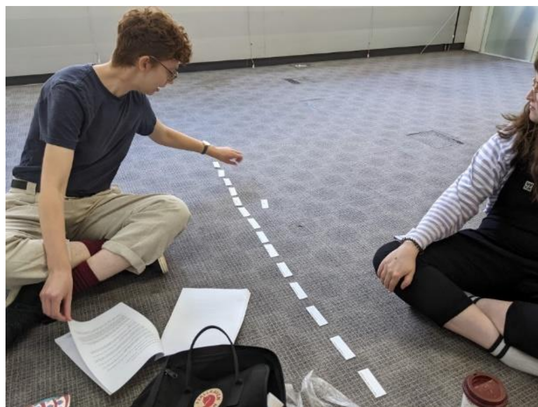
Again, I come back to my translating work with a renewed energy.

I listen to the recordings of the read-throughs with Foreign Affairs. I have a printed copy of the script and annotate it accordingly. I then go through another draft based on these annotations.

Annotations made on the script whilst listening to the recording of the Foreign Affairs read-throughs. Annotations read: 'add stage direction', 'too drunk', 'angrier', and 'so above <u>has</u> been public'.
'clunky'.

August-September 2021

I work on producing an adaptation of act one, and then create a document where I put my 'literal' act one next to my 'adapted' act one. I write up an explanatory note where I try to pin down what I have particularly done in this adaptation: added a prologue, modernised language, added in stage directions, and worked to make Kerttu's character more resistant.
During this time, I also do more R&D on my show with my company. Again, it keeps me thinking a lot about stage images and about sound, and also about structure and dramaturgy and grappling with that. It is all reinforcing the idea of theatre translator as playwright, dramaturg, theatre-maker.



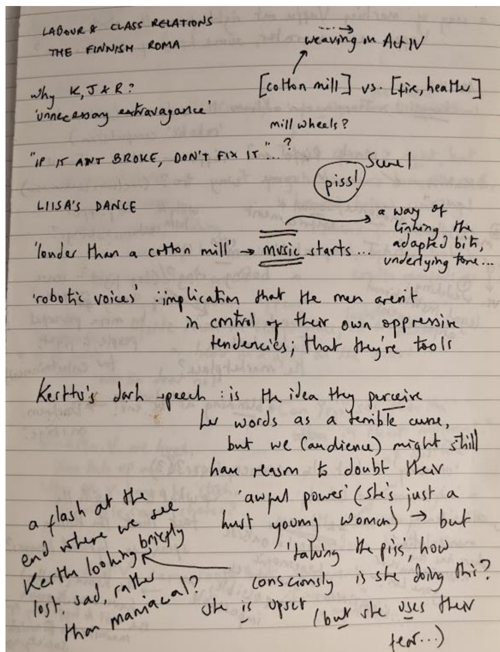
Doing dramaturgy with Good Friends for a Lifetime.

October-November 2021

During this time I am working on finishing up the 'literal' translation.
I also work a little more on the adaptation, trying to encourage myself to be bolder about the interventions. It is only semi-successful. I still feel anxious about moving too far away from the text and making interventions that feel too forceful.

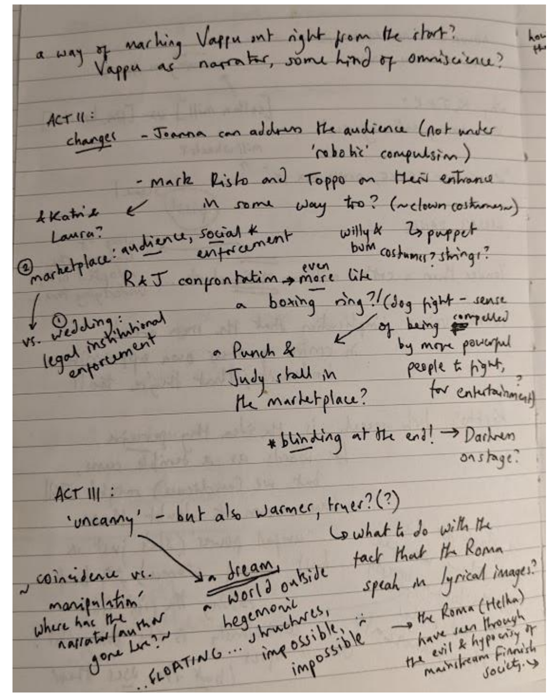
December 2021-January 2022

I continue work on the adaptation, eventually finishing a full draft of it.
I ask my partner Lily to read it, which she does. She gives me lots of notes and we have a really helpful discussion about it, thinking about the different locations, the breakdown in the play, and ideas of performativity in it.



Some of Lily's notes, written after reading the first full draft of my adaptation:

'Labour & Class relations The Finnish Roma
à weaving in Act IV [cotton mill] vs. [fire, heather]
Why K, J & R? 'unnecessary extravagance'
Mill wheels?
'If it ain't broke, don't fix it' …?
Piss! Scene 1
Liisa's Dance
'louder than a cotton mill' -> music starts…a way of linking the adapted by, underlying tone…
'robotic voices' implication that the men aren't in control of their own oppressive tendencies; that they're tools
Kerttu's dark speech: is the idea they <u>perceive</u> her words as a terrible curse, but we (audience) might still have reason to doubt their 'awful power' (she's just a hurt young woman) -> but 'taking the piss', how consciously is she doing this? She <u>is</u> upset (but she uses their fear…) -> a flash at the end where we see Kerttu look briefly lost, sad, rather than maniacal?'



'a way of marking Vappu out right from the start?
Vappu as narrator, some kind of omniscience?
Act II:
<u>Changes</u> – Joanna can address the audience (not under 'robotic' compulsion)
- Risto and Toppo on their entrance in some way too? (clown costumes – willy & bum costumes? Puppet strings?)
& Katri & Laura?
2) marketplace: <u>audience</u>, <u>social</u> * enforcement
1) vs. wedding: legal institutional enforcement
R&J conformtation – even more like a boxing ring? (dog fight – sense of being compelled by more powerful people to fight for entertainment?)
– Punch & Judy stall in the marketplace
*<u>blinding</u> at the end! – darkness on stage?
Act III: 'uncanny' – but also warmer, truer? (?)
-> what to do with the fact that the Roma speak in lyircal images?
Coincidence vs. manipulater
Where has the narrator/author gone here?
…FLOATING…
<u>A dream,</u> a world outside hegemonic structures, impossible, impossible :(
The roma (Helka) have seen through the evil & hypocrisy of mainstream finnish society'

February 2022
I implement some changes inspired by Lily's feedback and our conversation about the play. I send this draft to Joanna Bowman to read. We have our second meeting to discuss it (Appendix D). It is a satisfying conversation, and I think we both feel excited about the play, but I still get the sense that I could take things further. I am relieved that Jo finds this version more compelling than the last, and also that she finds my interventions freeing and exciting rather than restrictive, or an imposition.

My supervisor, Margherita, invites me to take over a workshop and lecture slot on her module 'Sex, Gender and Performance', to look at The Worker's Wife with her students. It is an interesting experience. The students find the text too remote, feel that it does not resonate with their contemporary lived experience. The version of the text I have given them to work with is my 'literal', intervention-less version. I want to encourage them to intervene in the text, but they seem reluctant to do so, even if I think it might help them find elements of it to relate to. Interestingly, they only place they do seem keen to intervene is in cutting the word 'whore' from the text – a surprisingly censorious gesture.

March - May 2022
My company and I devise and run a workshop on Collage as Feminist Dramaturgy, one in April and one in May. It is based on the approach we use when making our devised work, using collage as a starting point. We pool influences and inspirations and make physical collages to find points of connection and new ways of looking. We layer things and avoid linearity and a single voice. Again, this work bleeds into my translation work as I start to really think about my own work in this way, as collage. I, too, am working on ways to layer voices and meanings.
I work on producing an annotated version of the translation. This puts my 'literal' and 'adapted' versions side-by-side, with footnotes. The footnotes serve two main purposes: some are there to illuminate my translation decisions, and others are there to point out references and meanings in the text. It also includes appendices, which are three articles Canth wrote at the same time as she was working on the play, which I see as an accompaniment to the play, a review of the play, and then a selection of letters that Canth wrote whilst working on the play. I enjoy translating these appendices, and I feel doing it deepens my insight into the play and makes me feel closer to Canth, and gives me ideas for a few more potential interventions.
I brush up another draft of the adaptation, but don't make any dramatic changes at this point.

During this time, I also go back to thinking more about theory, working on my thesis chapter about the strategy of 'resistancy' in theatre translation, formulating these ideas more.
It is helpful to trace this interplay between theory and practice in the work, because here they really did inform each other. I retroactively theorised something I had done based on 'vibe' and instinct, but then also thought

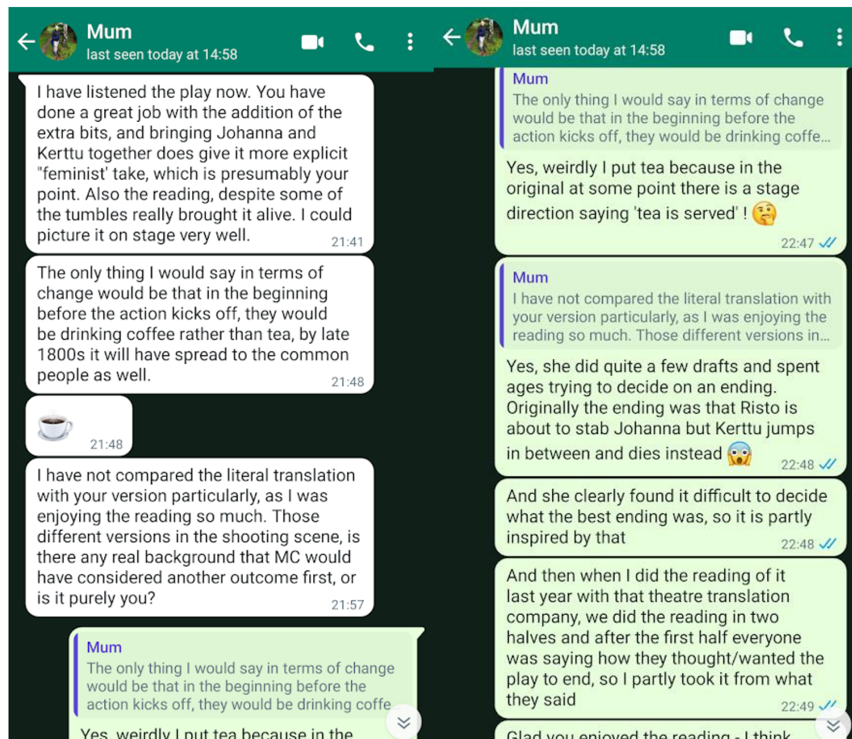
through the theory more and then went back to elements of the translation to streamline and support this.

On the last day of May, I hold a reading of the most recent draft of the adaptation. I have invited a group of volunteers to read – a mixture of actors, directors, writers and theatre academics. I had sent them the script and assigned roles in advance, but stressed that they need not look at the text in advance (although one or two of them did). We gather and read the script, taking short breaks in between each act. I find the reading a very satisfying and energising experience. People seem to respond well to the text, and for the most part it comes across in reading as I had imagined. Despite it being a cold read, it felt lively and exciting and, for the most part, how I had hoped it would sound. I noted a few things here and there as we went, and one of the biggest takeaways was the realisation that the stage directions that asked for lines to be read 'robotically' did not have the desired effect. I was also struck by the obvious fact of what different readers/actors bring to a text, and how their interpretation shapes the work. I had put some thought into the 'casting', trying at least vaguely to give people parts to read that they would feel comfortable with, and that might even suit them. The character of Johanna had been a worry to me throughout the process – a worry that she would come across as frustratingly (annoyingly) earnest and alienatingly yielding (even though I don't think she is). Hearing actor Harriet Taylor read her with a much more forceful and independent inflection than I had imagined, felt like a relief. Similarly, the way Lewis read Risto pulled him back from melodrama to something quieter, and more convincingly sinister. I come away from the reading feeling buoyed, but with plenty to reflect on and develop. I have recorded the reading (Appendix G) to listen back to and to use to demonstrate my translation in (some sort of) action.

Taking a break from reading.

June – August 2022

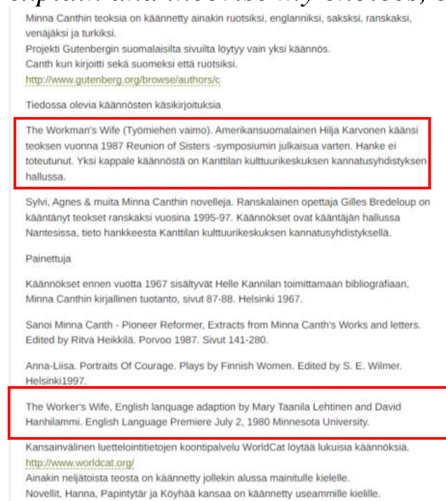
I keep working on the annotated translation.
I send my mum a recording of the reading to listen to.



I send the recording of the reading to Jo. We have a final meeting to discuss her responses to it (Appendix E). Joanna Bowman's feedback, my own notes from the reading, and recent theory I have been reading will all go on to inform my final draft, which I start work on in the autumn.

September – December 2022

I end up taking a break from the translation work until December to work exclusively on the thesis. It is good to take a step back from the play, to reflect and think analytically and critically about it. I find it difficult to explain and theorise my choices, but do my best to pin things down.



Minna Canthin teoksia on käännetty ainakin ruotsiksi, englanniksi, saksksi, ranskaksi, venäjäksi ja turkiksi.
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Canth kun kirjoitti sekä suomeksi että ruotsiksi.
http://www.gutenberg.org/browse/authors/c

Tiedossa olevia käännösten käsikirjoituksia

The Workman's Wife (Työmiehen vaimo). Amerikansuomalainen Hilja Karvonen käänsi teoksen vuonna 1987 Reunion of Sisters -symposiumin julkaisua varten. Hanke ei toteutunut. Yksi kappale käännöstä on Kanttilan kulttuurikeskuksen kannatusyhdistyksen hallussa.

Sylvi, Agnes & muita Minna Canthin novelleja. Ranskalainen opettaja Gilles Bredeloup on kääntänyt teokset ranskaksi vuosina 1995-97. Käännökset ovat kääntäjän hallussa Nantesissa, tieto hankkeesta Kanttilan kulttuurikeskuksen kannatusyhdistyksellä.

Painettuja

Käännökset ennen vuotta 1967 sisältyvät Helle Kannilan toimittamaan bibliografiaan, Minna Canthin kirjallinen tuotanto, sivut 87-88. Helsinki 1967.

Sanoi Minna Canth - Pioneer Reformer, Extracts from Minna Canth's Works and letters. Edited by Ritva Heikkilä. Porvoo 1987. Sivut 141-280.

Anna-Liisa. Portraits Of Courage. Plays by Finnish Women. Edited by S. E. Wilmer. Helsinki1997.

The Worker's Wife, English lanquage adaption by Mary Taanila Lehtinen and David Hanhilammi. English Language Premiere July 2, 1980 Minnesota University.

Kansainvälinen luettelointitietojen koontipalvelu WorldCat löytää lukuisia käännöksiä.
http://www.worldcat.org/
Ainakin neljätoista teosta on käännetty jollekin alussa mainitulle kielelle.
Novellit, Hanna, Papintytär ja Köyhää kansaa on käännetty useammille kielille.

In early December I decide to try in greater earnest to track down the previous translations of the play that I have seen reference to in corners of the internet. There are two full translations (plus Ronja Siljander's) that I have seen referred to in a couple of different places. The website of the Finnish library service has an entry on their 'Ask a Librarian' page from 2016, which responds to the question 'How much have Minna Canth's works been translated into other languages?' The anonymous librarian's response lists two translations of Työmiehen vaimo: Screenshot from kirjastot.fi (https://www.kirjastot.fi/kysy/kuinka-paljon-minna-canthin-teoksia?language_content_entity=fi)
Text in red boxes reads:

'The Workman's Wife (Työmiehen vaimo). American-Finn Hilja Karvonen translated the work in the year 1987 for the publication of the Reunion of Sisters symposium. The project did not come to fruition. One copy of the translation is held at the Kanttila cultural centre.'
'The Worker's Wife. English language adaptation by Mary Taanila Lehtinen and David Hanhilammi. English Language Premiere July 2, 1980 Minnesota University.'

I also discover that the majority of act one has also been translated by Eric Schaad, for inclusion in Female Voices of the North: An Anthology volume 2. In the short essay preceding the translation, Schaad concurs with the above: 'The play first appeared in English as The Worker's Wife in 1980, almost one hundred years after its premiere in Finland. This first English translation of 1980 was adapted for the American stage and performed in Duluth, Minnesota by the University of Minnesota. At least one other English translation by Hilja Karvonen exists in an 1987 manuscript.' I made these discoveries fairly early on in my work, but decided not to seek out the translations because I wanted to approach my own without interference. By now, at the tail end of my research, I feel sure enough in my choices to be curious about these other translations. I have written to the Minna Canth's House (Kanttila) foundation to inquire about the Karvonen translation, and a lady called Anja is investigating the matter. She also suggested in contact SKS, the Finnish Literary Society. They looked in their archives and found correspondence and other materials about the Reunion of Sisters symposium, but no translations, which makes me think it might have been lost to the ages. The Lehtinen/Hanhilammi translation appears to have been printed in a journal called Finnish Americana – A Journal of Finnish American History and Culture volume 4. I have also contacted an antique book seller in Finland who seems to have a copy of that. In the meantime, Schaad's translation of act one has been easier to access. I only had to go to the UCL Library to read it. It was a highly enjoyable experience, though one that made me feel glad of my decision to only really look for other translations at this late stage. The most striking thing about Schaad's translation is his decision to include several Americanisms. He has Risto refer to 'those guys'; Toppo exclaims 'Hell's Bells!' and Risto tells him to 'Quit kiddin' around'; Johanna worries about the men starting a 'ruckus', and Risto replies 'Ruckus? Sam hell!'; and, perhaps my favourite, when Kerttu is brought in, Toppo asks 'who is that rambunctious hellcat?' (!) It's great fun. I suppose my translation probably has as many Britishisms, but I am too close to read them all as such.

Just before Christmas, I get hold of the Hanhilammi/Taanila Lehtinen translation. It is fascinating. Helpfully, Hanhilammi includes a director's note, where he lays out his reading of the play. It is completely, radically different to my own, to an extent that I am shocked by (even though I shouldn't be). I actually have quite a visceral, angry response to it, a feeling of indignation about the extent to which I feel he has 'misunderstood' and 'misrepresented' the play. I try and enforce some critical distance and to

reflect on it more. Although I do not agree with his interpretation of the text, it is enjoyable that his translation/adaptation has such a strong directorial vision, something for me to really argue with. And there is no denying that he has made his choices after reflection and analysis and does justify them fairly compellingly.

January – February 2023

I then begin and complete my final version of the translation. I look back on all my notes from the reading, from my conversation with Jo, feedback from my supervisor, reflections from writing my thesis. The final draft does not depart radically from the penultimate one. I make a few edits here and there, and then add in a few bits – specifically a few more appearances by 'Minna' throughout the course of the play, and a couple more songs.

Appendix B: Extract from written feedback from Joanna Bowman, December 2020

The Worker's Wife (Draft Four) – 28th December (JB thoughts)

This is an amazing play! I can't believe (well I can) it hasn't been done or talked about or Ibsen-revived etc. I think there is lots to play with and work with here – it's certainly a rich/dramatic/exciting etc piece of work. Naming of Kerttu is spot on.

Big questions I have:

- Who is this translation for? Is it for modern audiences or is it a translation that is speaking to a traditional production, one that might feel nineteenth-century in tone and language?
- How can the dialogue be livened up?
- Where do the idioms belong? Is there a world in which English twenty-first century equivalents are found? Are the idioms to help with feeling or with location? If the former, then
- You speak at length about this in the introduction – and I think it is a problem of the play rather than the translation, but it is perhaps one that could be problematised more: what is Kerttu's heightened language **doing?** Is it to show us that she is different from the rest of the town? Where has she got this language from? Is it something that needs to be saved for when she is cast out of town?
    - I wonder if the idea of Kerttu being brought up outside the Roma community needs to be explored more?
- Wonder if Risto's alcoholism needs to sit more in the action of the play rather than on top of the text, particularly at the start?

[…]

- Interested to know what is public and private – much to explore here in the rehearsal room – ties into gossip question – to what extent are people watching and being watched?

[…]

Appendix C: Transcription of conversation with Joanna Bowman, December 2020

These extracts are from a conversation held after Joanna had read by fourth draft of the translation, where I had not yet begun to make many 'interventions' in the text.

[…]

JB: I think the tension for me at the moment is that the story is so good and the setting's so good, but it kind of feels constricted by nineteenth century performance ideas. Which makes perfect sense because that is what you've sent me. And if it wasn't that you'd probably have done this a bit weirdly, you know. And I guess, if someone sent me this script and said 'I'd really like you to direct it' I'd say 'yeah I will do that –'

MJ: But you're gonna do some editing.

JB: Yeah, I don't want it to be constricted by its context. […] The other thing as well, that I'm sure you've considered, that's unique to theatre, is how much a thing will change in rehearsals, how much performance context with specific actors, a specific set, a specific theatre would then maybe change a rehearsal script. Which is also really tough when you can't do that stuff. For pandemic and budget reasons.

MJ: Yeah, exactly. […] There's only so much you can enforce on the page, I guess. Which is also what's nice and exciting about theatre, but also when you're thinking -

JB: Terrifying!

MJ: Yeah, and also when you're thinking, trying to think ethically and politically and so on, and so on, you…you are opening up to kind of vulnerability on those fronts.

JB: Absolutely. And there is a lot of misogyny in the play. And that's…One of my major frustrations at the moment is, it seems to me that a lot of discourse at the moment is that if you show something you align with it or condone it or endorse it in some way. And, you know, I don't need to tell you this but that's an irritating way of thinking.

MJ: But it can be, right? The thing is that it *can* be presented in such a way that it is condoning it or not questioning it.

JB: Exactly.

MJ: That's a production question, like how to overcome that.

JB: Completely. And I guess how not to think that your own values will save you from that as well. You know? Just because I think of myself as like

pretty not misogynistic, doesn't mean that that's how the audience is gonna receive it.

MJ: This is true. Yep. Stressful. So yeah, all of that was partly in response to your big question of 'who is this translation for?' Which the answer of which is, the draft that you read the answer is inconclusive because it wasn't…as you could tell, I think, there wasn't a clear answer as to who it was for. […]

JB: […] *A Doll's House* is probably my favourite play, and your translation of *The Worker's Wife* really reminded me of the first versions of *A Doll's House* that I came to, which were dense and nineteenth century and told this magnificent story that felt like if I'd been to a theatre I'd have liked it, but if I just read it on the page I was like 'oh this is a really cool story.' And I really think this draft achieves that, and there's complete clarity and storytelling and character in this draft, which I was really taken by. Thumbs up!

[…]

MJ: […] There's a consideration when you're working with a play that isn't really known, or a writer that isn't really known here and doesn't have a long rich production history in English to go against, I guess…But at the same time, as you say, that is the relevant consideration: what would this person in this contemporary moment watching it, what are they seeing?

JB: Yeah, it's really hard isn't it... […] With *this* play, exactly like you've just said, there is slightly more of an ethical, moral, I don't know…If the play doesn't have a status, then there is almost…not a duty, but a question about how –

MJ: Yeah, about not misrepresenting it somehow.

JB: I mean not breaking it before it's been seen whole, maybe.

MJ: […] Well, the problem with it as it is now, is that it's neither one or the other. It's neither…it's in a bit of a no-mans-land of like nineteenth-centuryness and also, I dunno, whatever. And possibly the answer is leaning into the kind of weirdness and strangeness and alienness of it. And like really thinking about how that might play out, and I certainly, when I imagine a staging of it, that's certainly not a super straight staging, you know? That's certainly not really ultra-traditional kind of, I dunno what to compare it to, type thing. But then, yeah…Like a middle ground or leaning in one way or the other needs to be found, I think.
[Explanation of my new ideas about the play being 'Brechtian', and that freeing up my thinking.]

JB: That's really interesting. […] Now you've said it that makes perfect sense. When I was reading it, the thing that I was sort of imagining most closely was a sort of Katie Mitchell version, where it would probably be

quite hyper-naturalistic, but you would have the camera following Kerttu all the time, only fixed to her. If I was gonna rip off Katie Mitchell, that's what I would do. But I think a Brechtian production...because it seems to me that a lot of sits on the text. I think there is actually subtext in it, but a lot of the subtext is then said a little bit later on. And it does seem to me that actually, maybe that sort of very overt….I think I probably came to it being like 'oh great, yeah, contemporary of Ibsen and all those guys, probably grappling with some sort of new idea of naturalism on stage.' But actually that, I guess a little bit like for you, has completely been like 'oh yeah! They just *say* the thing!'

MJ: Yeah, that's the exact thought process I had. I also came to it like 'yes, how are we dealing with naturalism and realism from the nineteenth century, hmmm.' And yeah, she is widely given the title of being a realist author and people have called her like 'the mother of Finnish realism.' But it's realist in the sense that it's dealing with real issues of the time, but stylistically it's not naturalistic.

JB: Not at all, not in the language.

MJ: […] And I think that thought process frees up some of the weirdnesses of it. Or some of the weird idioms where you're like, I dunno…It offers an option of how to deal with stuff like that, or how to approach stuff like that.

JB: Yeah absolutely. […] I think that really frees it. And I think the language is a little bit what I was preoccupied by in my reading, because it's so…interesting. And of course the language is heightened, and that isn't naturalistic. The play is unlocked!

MJ: Haha, yeah, that's it! Solved it now!

JB: We're done!

[…]

Thinking again in production terms, there would be nothing stopping one from doing a very…not naturalistic but nineteenth century performance culture-ish version. And then actually also doing the whole microphones on the outside of the stage, we're gonna break it up, we're gonna then put our *own* commentary or whatever on top of this thing. A bit like what…did you see Chekhov's First (or Last?) Play?

MJ: Yeah, that's what I've been thinking as well when I was thinking about the performance of it. And drawing on stuff like that, that…yeah. That offers a commentary of the play.

JB: Cause I think that's what theatre does. The best pieces of theatre…Or my favourite pieces of theatre are always ones where there's an implicit layer of 'we know you're watching this' on top of it. And what do we do

with that? Yeah. Now we just need to fine fifteen actors and half million pounds!

[…]

JB: The other big thing, which I realised after I'd sent you this I didn't actually move up to the top, was just about the public and private stuff.

MJ: Yep, that was really interesting. Yeah.

JB: It feels a bit like to me that there's a lot of fun to be had, with sort of gossip and people overhearing things. You know...how the private becomes public and the public becomes private. Those sorts of things seemed to really be…If I was six months away from a rehearsal room with this draft I'd be like that is the thing that I think is worth pushing more. Cool. Cool.

[…]

MJ: You said that you liked the 'the incident takes place thing', and I also thought that was nice. And that was making me think that I maybe want to use…that the stage directions are quite a nice opportunity to have some of my voice in there, and your pointing that out was making me think that I could probably go and use that to greater effect throughout, the kind of voice that the stage directions offer me.

JB: Yeah. […] I actually think in translation - I guess to go back to the sort of Dead Centre production of this - the stage directions are your way of holding the microphone, aren't they?

[…]

MJ: So you said that you liked that I had that song in the first act in Finnish. How do you feel about that generally throughout? [...] Because it's something I've preserved and something I am undecided about, or am open about. And I'm just curious about whether you have any particular…

JB: I really liked it. I think, again, it's taste isn't it, but if I was doing a production of this, I would probably keep the Finnish, but then do modern music with it. That's sort of what felt… you know – it felt like to me like the songs were the, perhaps one of the ways that the differences could all be bridged in one neat moment. You know, so in my production of *The Worker's Wife,* you would possibly have this camera stuff, but certainly the songs would sound modern, with deliberately foreign text, performed by people in period dress. Those are the three things the songs would do, in a production that feels satisfying. And I think the songs almost become moments to acknowledge…You've got three different worlds, that you're trying to put in one thing. I think it's cool!

[…]

JB: There's a version of the production where they all start in modern dress, and the first scene is a great party in 2021. And really the wedding scene is sort of contemporary in many ways, it feels quite modern. And as the production goes through, it gradually changes from a sort of open theatre where a party's happening, to a closed set where religion occupies. That was my other idea as I was reading – this modern production that gradually turns into a period production. And uses all of the difficulties to leave the audience in the original context of it, and almost has five sets throughout. But that's one for…that's for when the National are calling, we'll do that one!

MJ: Yep. Ideal. […] It's something to think about, and I don't want to lose it from it because it's too fundamental to it, like…it's faith, I guess. But then I also want, with that character, I want that character to…I want people to respect her! Like I want it to shine through that she's a cool and interesting character who makes the central, who voices the central moral questions of the play and for that not to be lost either.

[…]

JB: That's that! I mean I think it's great, genuinely, it's the kind of play that if anyone ever asked me to direct it, I'd in an instance say yes because it's really fucking good. It's not a play that I read and was like 'these problems make the play bad.' They're problems that make the play more complicated.

MJ: Yeah, I'm glad you think that.

JB: And I think it's a great translation. I think it's clear and the characters are really good. I think the characters have distinct voices, you know, I think all of the sort of basic tenets of theatre making are well ticked off.

Appendix D: Transcription of conversation with Joanna Bowman, February 2022

These extracts are from the conversation I had with Joanna Bowman, after she had read the first draft of my 'feminist translation' of the play.

JB: It's really good! […] I think this is a really clever blend of translation, but with a sort of adaption sensibility sitting on top of it. Which feels…it feels like you're doing…I think the thing that was missing for me a little bit last time was: 'ok fine, but why would I, a twenty-first century person in the UK, watch this?' And I don't feel that in the same way in this new version. And that's partly taste, you know, I like things when they break slightly. And I like the start of this a lot – that sort of monologuey bit, or captions or however you choose to do it. I thought that was great. I think it's really good to emphasise the obligation to the original play. I think that's really…I think that's a really clear articulation of why things still feel nineteenth-century-y. […] I really think what you've done well in this is an awareness that forms and conventions have changed since the nineteenth century, and actually the way people speak is different. And even that emotional reactions are different. I loved the bit with exclamation marks. I think that's a really smart…a really smart device. And a really…Just thinking practically as a director, a useful guide of like 'I know what the playwright or translator - how the scene needs to move.' It's just a practical tool. I love what you said about it not feeling too anachronistic. Still being Finland. I don't think I can speak to whether it feels *Finnish,* but it definitely doesn't feel British. Like I think…did we speak last time about idioms?

MJ: We did, yeah. And I think some of them have gone. I did get rid of some of them I think, because again I tried to have this feeling that like…'is it helpful or not?' in places.

JB: I was gonna say, I think in this reading of it I was suddenly like, 'oh these establish a place, and a different place, and a different familiarity with this place,' in a way that felt really…I don't know, there was one that I picked out last time as well, about the 'tens of tomcats' or something. And I think when I read it last time I was a bit like 'mm I don't know what hearing that would feel like.' But this time I was like 'no, it alienates me, it makes me suddenly aware that…' I think it makes you aware of the translation. Which is a positive thing. That could probably be construed as a bad thing, but I think it's exciting to know that this is coming from a different place and a different time. And actually it's…The thing I was struck with this time was that it didn't feel flat? I think in the reading last time it felt a bit like the information overload at the expense of character. And this time I really didn't feel that. I really liked those robot-y sections. That's the kind of thing that would fill me with delight – the idea of getting to play with those. I think everything that I'm saying is leading up to saying that this version feels really theatrical and performable, rather than like 'oh I read an interesting play in an archive, that I guess I could follow through to performance traditions today.' This one was like 'oh there's a lot in here that I want to play with, that I'd like to put on.' Which feels like a really good place to be in. A lot of the things that I wrote when I was reading it

where along the lines of 'ooh, I like this! Ooh, I want to do this! This is really exciting!' I think the prologue basically does what this version of the play does, which is to start, and you think you know it, and you're like 'oh right, I'm starting on a historical, moralising tale' And then the prologue itself breaks in a way that sets up what the play goes on to do. Which felt really exciting. And I can imagine ways in which you could have Kerttu saying this, and then gradually her voice being lost into the others or…There are lots of ways in which that actually became a micro of the full play. It felt to me like this text was much more open than the last one as well. Much more open to interpretation, open to…Although you have made interventions in it, those interventions leave a lot of space, which I think is really exciting.

MJ: That's really good to hear. […] That's what I wanted it to feel like, and I felt that hopefully I did achieve that. But I was worried that…does it feel like too much of a reading of it that you feel like you don't have scope to do your work, you know?

JB: I don't think so. I think actually…I think specificity is really useful. And I think actually rather than being like, I don't know, 'someone is happy' or whatever, the exclamation marks for example – there are so many ways you can interpret that. That felt really exciting because it felt like there were so many ways to…And it felt entirely modern, but also not, it felt as if it was in conversation with the text. And I think when the language is heightened or unfamiliar in some way, it really played into that nicely. […] And I think it's surprising that in my previous reading of the play I felt that this play was failing at something. Whereas I really didn't feel that in this version. It didn't feel like it was trying to do something and then not doing it.

[…]

JB: I think what it does really well is sets things up. Like the form is very good – it sets things up and then uses them. Then sets another thing up…It's sort of economical I think. Which feels satisfying to read, in a way that I don't think it did before. And this time it does. I wondered in your interventions, if there was room for a bit more of the prologuey stuff, maybe before each act? I don't know if that's a bit too much. But I kind of wanted a bit more? Once you've established it, I wonder if there was…Cause obviously you do lots of direct address, then you also have this robot direct address…I guess in my imagination the prologue was a big ensemble to audience moment. And I wondered if there was more space for some of that? […] I think there's also…I really love the prologue, and I think if I was going to direct a production of this I would want to include it. But I can also imagine a version where the prologue is really useful in rehearsal, but then after preview one it goes. Yeah. It's interesting with all the 'version' stuff…If that first bit helps with that later on. Like you say, how it's done, how much of the fact that in the rehearsal room there were four choices, how much of that the audience gets to know.

[…]

[Speaking about my addition of the 'versions' of events in act five]

JB: I guess...is there a question of whether we aren't trusting her original ending? Is a possibility. I don't…I think my taste suggests that's not what's happening, but I suppose there is a reading that is there a sense that we just don't trust it and we don't think it's very good, and we're trying to re-write to make it more exciting. But I suppose I think the options are more interesting. I think acknowledging that there were lots of options, and in fact lots of options that were written, in the same way that whatever his name is re-wrote *King Lear* to make it happy – I don't think that acknowledging that endings are difficult and that there are different versions is saying that this one was wrong. I think it's particularly…'Kerttu has shot Risto, she gets up and rejoins her family' – dramatic. 'Johanna has shot Risto, she grabs Kerttu and they run' – dramatic. I think you know, in many ways that sort of drama isn't necessarily in keeping either. It feels – this is slightly crass – but it feels a bit like those one woman shows where they're like 'and then we ended up happy! *Zhoom!* That's not what happened!' I mean there are obviously smarter ways of doing that but…

MJ: I know what you mean.

JB: Reading it as a director, I'd be excited…I was, I am excited by those things. But also, I know that I can ignore them if they don't work. It definitely all feels like offers, and really good ones, that make it much more theatrical. I think this version feels live. I think this version demands to be performed in a way that feels…I really like the moment, I think it's in act two? Where maybe it's Risto is mimicking what Johanna has said? They go into sort of robot mode? I thought that was really smart. Like I think the misogyny in this version feels much nastier and much more present

[…]

JB: Oh yeah, I wondered if there was…I think I said this last time, and this is OG Minna's problem, not yours, but the reconciliation between Kerttu and the grandmother feels very easy. I think one of the things I wrote that if I was directing it – I probably said this last time because it's the kind of thing I like – but I would be interested in exploring how comfortable she is with the word 'grandma' and that new relationship. I wonder if there's a textual way of suggesting that, possibly.

MJ: Mm yeah, that's interesting, because I must have changed, gone back four or five times between 'grandmother' and 'grandma' haha. Which is really minor, but it's that same problem where it does feel a bit…'Grandma' already feels quite…But 'grandmother' is too formal for her to say, but yeah 'grandma' is already quite cosy in a way where you're like 'ooh, we've only just met!' Yeah, that's something to play with.

JB: I guess there's a linguistic, you know, story. I guess the extreme is going from name through to granny. But I wondered if there were moments of linguistic recognition that could be in there a little bit more?

[…]

JB: I think all the crowd stuff is really nice. Most plays that I get sent to read are one, two, maybe three handers. It's really exciting to read a play with a massive group of people in it. And I think you handle the size of it really well. It's hard – that seems to be something that a lot of young emerging playwrights talk about.

MJ: How nice it would be to have loads of people.

JB: Yeah, and the skill needed to handle that. I love the moments where you set up two groups of people who then dissolve into each other. That felt very satisfying. You can imagine that on the Olivier or something. […] Or it's a similar thing, but you could have a sort of forced perspective so that when there are three people in it, it looks like the right size, but when there are fifteen people in it, it suddenly looks tiny. I think that's a really clear articulation of what each act is physically doing.

MJ: Yeah, and then act five is like the breakdown, the full breakdown and destruction of it. And again, in an imaginary production, maybe there could be a sense of like wreckage or emptiness or something in that. Because everything's been exploded, or something...

JB: Yeah, I'm very intrigued by this supernaturalness. And what that suddenly does to the writing, the performance. I love that – I think it's one of the versions – 'the supernatural feeling is gone.' I think that Is a really useful stage direction. It's that thing we were speaking about earlier of being specific but open, which feels like the best thing for a producible and performable text. Feels really useful. I would say that act five is quite wordy? It feels like what we've seen a lot of what act five then says at the start? I wonder if there's some streamlining. Particularly as we're maybe building to a kind of odd, fragmented ending. I wonder if act five…Maybe act four needs to break act five a bit more a little earlier. It definitely gets there by the end –

MJ: But it takes a little while to get there.

JB: Yeah, and I think – I guess, what is it that breaks the play? Is it Johanna's death? Is it the supernatural feeling? And that might help…

MJ: To dictate the…

JB: I like the maintaining of the Finnish names. That feels really nice. These stage directions are great: 'Mrs Vorsky enters. There is something about her that makes her seem much larger than Johanna.' That's great. I

think there's such a clear theatrical sense in the stage directions that feel really meaty.

[…]

JB: I think it's come on, I think it's shifted massively, and it now feels much…I think what it really wants now is a go. An on feet, or on chairs in a room reading – which is obviously a difficult thing to come by. I wonder if there's something about all the theatrical languages you've got in there – the robot talking, the prologue, the direct address which isn't robotic (act two) – I wonder if there's a little more clarity about what each of those do? And whether they do the same thing or –

MJ: Is each of them serving a particular purpose or…

JB: Yeah, and whether they're all adding up to a nineteenth-century Finnish play done fairly straight, but there are some interventions, or whether they're doing more than that. You know, if they're more essential…I guess how essential they are. And what it does to the play to have them in there. […] But yeah, I think more thinking about the interventions as a whole. Because I really like them individually, but as a whole I want to know more about what they're doing.

[…]

Appendix E: Transcription of conversation with Joanna Bowman, August 2022

These are extracts from the transcription of the conversation I had with Joanna after she had listened to the recording of the reading I held of the play in May 2022.

JB: Yeah, I think it's great. I think it's really good. I think it reads really well, I think it sounds really good. I think it certainly feels much clearer in the listening than it maybe does on the page. And I like all the interventions. Well, I say all the interventions – there aren't that many, but I think they are really cleverly and thoughtfully deployed.

[…]

JB: I think the slightly heightened, the sort of 'tortoiseshell tomcat' heightened-ness of it actually worked in quite a lovely way in the listening. It doesn't feel nearly as heightened as it does on the page. And obviously that's readers coming to it cold, but there is something distinctly not British and distinctly not 2022, whilst still feeling utterly necessary and speaking to the modern age, without pretending to be that. Which I think is really good. I think…it's hard to know when much of it is scenographic, but the starting two sides – I am maybe interested in pushing the function of that a bit more, beyond it being purely an illustration of something. Making sure that the moment it dissolves…I mean maybe that's a staging thing, but making sure there's a moment that happens, the dissolving.

[…]

JB: I slightly wonder if a post interval intervention, like the one you have at the start, and I don't know whether…The ending is sort of one, isn't it? With the sort of explosion. But whether a textual one is useful there as well as a physical one. I think it's interesting that obviously your name and her name are the same, so I wasn't sure whose voice I was reading the first intervention in. And I quite like that. I think there's possibly room for something at the end which is voice-led rather than action led.

[…]

JB: I think the music is really good. I mean obviously in the recording it's only a sense of it. But I wonder…I like the idea that the mill is so present throughout it. I wonder if there's space for a song at the end, or an example of what that might be.

[…]

MJ: Yeah, I think I had a thought when I was listening to it about the music, about wanting to clarify a bit what the function of the songs are. I realised I had cut a few bits of song from the original play. There are bits where, specifically the men break into a couple of lines of song in the middle of things. And I'd mostly cut those, because I think I had thought

that seemed like more hassle than it's worth for them to just sing a couple of lines in Finnish and people not know what to do with it and stuff. And I tried to always replace it with them whistling or dancing or humming, but then when I was listening to it, I wondered what might it actually only women characters that sing. I wonder if that could do with a clearer…more consistency and clarity with that.

JB: Yeah, I suppose the idea of it being an extra language or a language that speaks the unspoken. Particularly in translation to leave them untranslated, there's an interesting question about what's being said and not understood and who has access to that. Who has access to the Finnishness of this play still. But it certainly didn't feel odd or off kilter when the song happened. Particularly because it starts so early, so it's in the world of the play. And it was sort of that thrill, dunno, even just in the listening when I realised that it was sitting underneath text and working with text. But it could probably do more than just illustrate…At the moment it just feels illustrative of what the world this play comes from was, when actually it could have a bigger function.

MJ: Yeah. I guess similarly, I made a point about the consistency of the interventions. Which I guess is also what you were saying about the possibility of having the textual intervention in the midpoint and more at the end. And I think you did say that last time, with this draft, that there are quite a few different things and additions, that listening to it I did think could be more streamlined and consistent.

JB: I suppose it's about the first intervention not feeling like it's only there to explain why the events of the play happen. Which is…It's hard, because you sort of need that to understand why the play happens in the way it does. So, with that in mind you want to find more of a reason for it to happen. And I like very much the moments where the intervention disagrees or comments in a modern way. The 'hmm…if it ain't broke don't fix it.' I think there are perhaps moments of…You don't want to do a sort of lame thing of someone shaking their head in a po faced way at the misogyny, but I wonder if there are moments of commentary or intervention. I like the tone of that. Maybe at the start of the next bit something which is sort of like – this is crass, but 'not going well is it?' sort of thing.

[…]

JB: [I think that] the interventions consciously draw attention to some of the questions that the play is asking.

MJ: And I guess the follow-on from that is also – in the translation, it can't…Because we don't have that specific law, it can't be asking 'is this law right?' But do you think it's asking something else, or?

JB: That's so interesting. I think lots of historical political works always ask the question of 'how far have we come?' How much has actually changed? What of modern patriarchy do we see in nineteenth-century patriarchy? And

also what of nineteenth-century patriarchy do we see in modern patriarchy? I guess the question – and this is slightly different because it isn't often performed, or it's never performed in this country – but I think often plays like *A Doll's House* or whatever always ask 'why are we putting this play on?' And I slightly wonder if there is still a sense in this of why do we tell a story of nineteenth-century oppression of women, rather than a twenty-first century one? And I think that's a really good question to ask. We put on these plays because they're good. That's a good enough reason to put on a play, I think. And I mean the play does more than that, right? Particularly the ending interventions where you've got the four possibilities. I think it sort of consciously draws attention to the fact that this story is one of many, and constructed in a way that there could be many others. Which is always an interesting thing, I find, to ask. Although sometimes asked in quite dull ways. Not in this play! I think those are the questions. I suppose there are also questions that are particularly resonant now about how with talk about Roma people. You don't shy away from using words like 'gypsy' that are problematic words today. And the use of language around the other is really interesting in the play. But you do that in a really exciting way, which is never explicitly didactic, or explicitly finger-wagging.

[…]

MJ: I guess that's the main question: does it feel like it could have an on-stage life? And is there a sense of a mise-en-scène.

JB: Definitely. […]I think it does that exciting thing that when I'm looking for things that I want to make, that it has a clear sense of what it is, but enough left open that I can meet it. There is a reason that I am doing this rather than someone else. And I think that's really important in a text. And I think there's space for the Olivier production of this with real sets and a real mill wheel going round at the back through the whole of the play. And there's also space for a Mountview, completely bare, just some lights on stage and people in rehearsal skirts. And I think the fact that the play holds lots of staging possibilities, both in terms of scale and aesthetic, is really exciting. I think you could also do it in modern dress, and that would be an exciting thing. But then all I want to do is direct period work in modern dress! But I think the script does hold lots of possibilities in it. Whilst not being like 'I dunno, you do what you want!'

[…]

JB: It definitely doesn't feel like a well-made play. And I think that's the play, but also the choices you've made with it. It doesn't feel structurally perfect, which is always interesting.

MJ: And I think I'm trying to argue that from a feminist stand-point it's not helpful to present things that have too much of a veneer on them. Because otherwise it's like 'Oh well that's that, that makes sense, great, things are good.'

JB: Yes, exactly.

Appendix F: Transcription of conversation with Ronja Siljander, October 2020

MJ: […] I wanted to ask about your translation process, like how, what you actually did, how you started working on it, how many drafts did you do, did you sit with a dictionary, you know, the kind of, practicalities of how you sat down to translate it?

RS: […] There were three different big drafts. […] The first run was just a very raw, very straightforward translation, where I skipped all the like songs and idioms and poems and lullabies and expressions and proverbs and so on. So that was sort of just very rough, 'ok this sentence would be translated this way in English,' and trying to get it linguistically correct, but not emotionally, not like to reflect culture or anything. […] And the second week I focused on sorting out the majority of the bits that I could not sort out in the first week. But I still did not, for example, focus on any of the songs. […] I was very afraid of translating any of the songs because […] some bits needed re-researching even in Finnish, like what is the background, what is that in Finnish, how does it go and how do I make it work in English too. But yeah, I technically started that kind of cultural interpretation process in the second week. And after the first two weeks I had draft one, which was still very raw and sketchy. [...] The third week was more like a linguistic check. Like I started to think about language and think about grammar and grammar rules, for example. And English and Finnish are two very different languages, and I noticed that the flow started to pop out different. That it sounds good in Finnish, but if I start to translate the flow of the language itself, it comes a bit, and the thing I don't know how to say in English is *takkuileva* [tangled]. A bit, in a weird flow. And I started pointing out, I call them yodas, because in Finnish we somehow tend to put verbs in different places than what they would be in English. […] And the fourth week, would be the same thing as I did in the third week, but now I started thinking about the emotional and the cultural perspective. And to understand much more of what are the people talking about instead of what they are actually saying. It was much more about getting into those proverbs and idioms and expressions and just sayings. And I noticed I was googling a lot of like, 'how to curse in English in an old-fashioned way?' and 'English lullabies and folk songs,' and even how do any kind of religious prayers go in English? And doing a lot of that […] work for making it more accessible for the English-speaking audience. I did focus at this point quite a lot on making it more English, but I was somehow in between this, like I don't wanna lose the colour or the tone or the touch of Finnish language and the world itself, but on the other hand I don't wanna go to this old Victorian style of people speaking in the UK. […] Then I think I had draft two around this time. And I think the last run, draft three, was the upcoming couple of weeks, so I think that would have been a couple of months long project. And that was much more about thinking about the character names, what are like flowing, because there are some names that don't work, like *Yrjö* -

MJ: Yeah that's really hard for English people to say haha

RS: Some things I needed to, as well as I could, not think artistically about, but technically how would the names be the best, if translated. And I got more into like translating the songs too, and from the point of view of, from the UK eyes and ears rather than the Finnish ones. And places and grammar, grammar mistakes, still finding those 'yodas' in the text. And I noticed I did some cutting of sentences at this point already. Like one side note was that I did the translation project completely different from the staging or directorial view. […] I decided I am gonna have like a translation project, and then adaptation, which can be much more artistic, but the translation, if I can, just focus as much as I can into the technical, […] how it should be told in English, instead of how do I think it needs to be told.

MJ: Yes, yeah.

RS: But in the very last draft I think there was already some, I was sort of sliding slightly into the adaptation process. So I started to make some sentences, for example, shorter. So the overall rhythm of some of the acts, and I also put them into smaller scenes, so they started to work. But that was sort of the translation process, but overall […] probably thirty or twenty five percent of the translation process was still sort of shaping up in the adaptation process itself.

MJ: […] What considerations did you have when you were translating? And maybe here if you want to talk about your adaptation process as well, kind of what you then were thinking about when you did that, as well as when you were doing the first translation?

RS: Well I knew first of all that I need to fit the play into ninety minutes. So that was, I think it was a good sort of restriction…I don't wanna say restriction…It gave a good frame for how much do I need to get rid of. So I did, with the adaptation process itself I did roughly also three drafts. And I started first adapting by cutting unnecessary, from my point of view, unnecessary characters. And I still don't think I found the ideal, or the perfect world. I still think there is characters that could be cut off. But I decided that I wanna still stick to the structure and the main plot twists of the original play, so I found myself being quite careful with what I can cut. Because otherwise I would have needed to go twisting some events around, possibly. And I knew at this point that it's gonna be eight actors, cause I was going first with five or six.

MJ: Wow, ambitious!

RS: And I found it very hard to start with, with act one, which is already a massive wedding group scene that can't actually be done with less than eight people. In an ideal world it would have ideally needed even a couple more. [...] Eight's a good amount of people to work with, so…that was sort of the director in me saying that it's a nice amount of people to work with, so let's work with that. […] The one major thing in the beginning was that I cut off all the family members of Homsantuu. Completely. And I leave her alone, which was a hard decision, but it was one sort of guiding light then in the beginning. Also I had initially in my adaptation a much more sort of

choral work, and chorus lines. There is still some traces in the last version, which you've seen, of this sort of unified choral line of people speaking at the same time. But, that was sort of one thing I played around through the whole sort of adaptation process, that who is actually - can I give this line instead of what Minna Canth was suggesting, can I give this to someone else? Can all the women instead of just Johanna say this line? So on, and so on. I think my adaptation itself was much more just about fitting the core events to the ninety minutes and for the eight actors, than it was about making huge artistic choices. […] I felt quite respectful probably also because I don't want to bring [Minna Canth's] work to the UK and tell that it's Minna Canth's work, and then it's not speaking in the same tone as the original. I was focusing a lot on the triangle in the adaptation process. So the husband and the wife and the outsider. Just primarily keeping their own personal arcs moving, not in sync but moving together, and the focus was a lot on that every act is about one of them. And that also helped me when I was thinking, when I was struggling in the adaptation process, with questions like 'is this necessary? Does this deserve to stay?' It's a harsh reality but some bits just didn't?

MJ: In your answer about why you chose to do this, you said you were really interested in the politics and the kind of feminism in the play. Is that something that you had in mind when you were doing the adapting process or the translation process? Or is that something that you kind of then focused on more when it came to the directing and staging process?

RS: There was most certainly…it stayed all the time in the adapting process. With all the women, female characters in the play, even though the majority happened in the rehearsal process, even in the adapting I tried focusing on having that everybody has their thing to say about why this is the reality of the world (in the play)? What is the reality we're living in at the moment. I think the original play is so clever, already to start with, that it's…a punch on the face of the patriarchy already as it is. […]

MJ: That makes sense to me, that fact is it's already in the play, so the best thing you could do is to just like do the best at representing the play as it is.

RS: Probably what I'd like to say about the staging, or the directing bit of the whole process, is that it was interesting to see that the whole theme of the play comes from how other people treat you, not how you stand on your own feet. […] The whole play is about pressure, and habits and the norms that are appointed you because that's the law, that's it, that's the tradition. So it was so interesting to get the into rehearsal space itself, because we were having so much fun with the text. Even though it's so bad, specifically with 'Ridge' (in Finnish Risto), who is so evil a character. But not evil because he is evil or decides to be evil, it's because that's the product of the time. […] It was hard to work with the character, but he's a perfect example of how you don't need to do anything with the theme, or you don't have to underline the theme because it's just inside the text. I think I managed to work with his lines well, because he it's not about what he is, it's about how he says [things], the whole evil aura. […] I had a three week long rehearsal period. And I had fifty pages long script when we got to the rehearsal space. And the two first weeks, how we worked, showed that there's some bits that

still just don't work, like not in the bigger picture, it's much more about snipping some things off. Cutting them, merging. But I did the vast adapting work – I sat down at the end of the second week, Friday night, and I cut off eleven pages.

MJ: Wow!

RS: It was so horrible, but that is what I needed also. Because after that the whole play was eighty minutes. And again...you can't have a full script and you decide that this thing is going to work, because you never know how the people you are working with are going to work with the text. How the text is gonna flow with that particular ensemble and their energy and how they're bringing their characters alive. […] It's one thing I want to emphasise, that it was so needed, that adaptation process did not end in the rehearsal space. It was still in progress until like a week before the premiere. It was quite needed. I think the group needed it, but more than that, that particular version needed it. And there, I decided to not look back to any of the previous drafts, or the original text, and just see how this works, this version on stage, and what does it need to make it work better.

[…]

MJ: Did you know that you were gonna do some of the physical theatre stuff before you started translating? Or is that something that just kind of happened in the rehearsal room? And the bit that you added at the beginning for example, like with the dates and the chorus stuff at the end as well? You've sort of addressed it a bit, but yeah…Was that something you had in mind at the start or?

RS: Well I knew I wanted to engage with the physical theatre vocabulary. I did not know how, before I was done with the translation process, and nearly done with the adaptation. Even after the adaptation process, I did like translation, adapting, and then I went to 'how would I do that as a director?' […] There was much more of this whole either women chorus, or men chorus, or the whole cast, whole ensemble chorus in one of the most playful drafts of the adaptation. I did chop it out a little bit, because that's a tool that I would need a bigger cast for to work. Trying to trace back the decision of making the entrance with setting up 'this happened in Finland'…That was already probably one of the bits I started with adapting, because I had this sense of 'I need to develop a device of how to read the play, for the people, specifically in this time,' because I knew that there is gonna be not so many people entering the theatre space, you know, getting the programme at the door and reading what the play's about.

MJ: Mm, yeah, good point

RS: That was one of the bits I added - the first few lines at the beginning of the play - where things were sort of twisting around until the very end, if they are good choice to keep, which I kept, and I think was needed. And it helped for the beginning of the whole play to create space for this physical theatre infused bits, to engage them within the vocabulary of the whole piece. Because it's a very text-heavy play. Something I would call a teacup drama. So if you don't have the bits that are moving and heavy with energy,

you will have a text-heavy place, with people sitting or standing around a lot, and a heavy focus with what people are saying.

[…]

RS: I would say that the translation itself was like very technical. [...] And from my point of view, I felt like I needed to keep it very separate from the adapting process itself. And that adapting was much more artistic and more playful and more 'how do *I* read this text?' […] One thing I thought about is whenever I see the name of the play translated into English, it tends to be 'The Worker's Wife', and I was actually very…I was struggling quite a lot at some point if I'm gonna keep it 'The Worker's Wife', or if I'm gonna have the 'man' in there, because there was a contrast all the time in the play – there's a man, and there's a woman, there's a husband, there's a wife. To contrast those two different genders opposed in the play, I added the Work*man*'s Wife.

[…]

There's some things that in the whole process, like the *whole* process, the translating, adapting, overall, um…I consider myself having pretty good English and understanding of English, and then suddenly I realise that I don't…Cause I'm not fully British, not born and raised here, don't really share the same cultural or even linguistic heritage. So I was having, every week and every day, something that I didn't understand. Which was challenging, but also, I think probably one of the best parts of the whole thing was that I decided to do a play that no one here understands. In Finnish. And translate it, and struggle throughout for like half a year to deliver the thing as well as I can? […]

MJ: I think this play also, you said it as well when you were talking about the songs, that you had to kind of re-research the songs in Finnish as well, because some of them are a bit obscure. And I dunno, maybe this is me not being then as much of a native Finnish speaker, but I found a lot of the idioms and the proverbs quite difficult in the Finnish. Like there were some things in there where I was like 'what are you saying? What does that mean?' And even like I called my mum sometimes and I was like 'please, do you know what this is?' and she was like 'I've literally never heard that in my life', and I was like 'aaah!'

RS: […] I think there was at least a few bits where I needed to text my sister, who is a master of Finnish language, so she studies Finnish in Finland.

MJ: That's what you need, haha.

RS: She's so into understanding why the language is what it is. Yeah, even me growing up in Finland, I'm not from that time, and from that social structure. So it was sometimes a pain in the arse to understand.

[…]

Appendix G: Recording of reading of *The Worker's Wife* (May 2022)

I held a reading of my feminist translation of The Worker's Wife *in May 2022. The readers were volunteers, a mixture of actors, directors, dramaturgs, and theatre academics. I assigned roles and sent them the script in advance, but did not require them to read it, so it was a cold read.*

The script used is almost the same as the one in the right-hand column of the 'annotated translation'.

Readers:
Maeve Campbell – Kerttu
Natcha Chirapiwat – Stage directions
Donna Coulling – Leena Kaisa / Helka
Marta Donati – Katri / Voice 2 / Ilona
Scott Howland – Toppo / Gentleman 1
Minna Jeffery – Minna / Liisa / Boy 2 / Mrs Hanhinen / Songs
Lily Levinson – Laura / Boy 1 / Mrs Vörsky
Fergus Macdonald – Kustaa / Gentleman 2 / Mr Vörsky / Policeman 2
Benjamin Mason – Yrjö / Policeman 1 / Gentleman 3 / Hagert
Lewis McKinnon – Risto
Claire Parry – Vappu / Boy 3 / Woman
Harriet Taylor – Johanna

Link to recording of *The Worker's Wife.*

Duration: approx. 2 hours.