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Author: Agnieszka Adamowicz-Pośpiech

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Revisiting G. B. Shaw's *Mrs Warren's Profession*: Differences in Cultural Reception and Translation in England, the United States, and Poland

ABSTRACT: The article is a contrastive analysis of the reception and translation of G. B. Shaw's *Mrs Warren's Profession* in Britain, the United States, and Poland. It examines the significance of the "woman question" in different cultures and drama translation as a means of disseminating new ideas. The author perceives the play as a means of propagating the then-revolutionary views on the role of women in society. *Mrs Warren's Profession* was censored to stifle social debate in Britain and the USA. Different modes of reception in Britain and on the Continent are juxtaposed against the historical and cultural backdrop of the first decades of the twentieth century. In Poland, though the drama was not censored, nonetheless its performance was abandoned due to political and ideological causes. Additionally, indirectly the article is concerned with the debate over marriage and women's legal rights that swept through Europe at that time.

KEYWORDS: translation, *Mrs Warren Profession*, reception, G. B. Shaw

George Bernard Shaw's *Mrs Warren's Profession* written in 1893 remained banned in Britain and the USA until 1925/1906. Critics denounced the play as "revolting, indecent and nauseating." The play was censored to stifle social debate on the rights of women to work and earn their own living. It was one of Shaw's "shock producers" to spur much needed social reform by discussing the tabooed subject of prostitution from the perspective of the laws of supply and demand. However, in Poland the play did not come within the inhibition of *kaiserlich und königlich* (imperial and royal) censorship. Still its performance was abandoned due to political and ideological causes. The chapter focuses on the differences in the play's reception and translation against the historical and cultural backdrop of the first decades of the twentieth century Britain, the USA, and Poland. Indirectly, it is concerned

with the debate over marriage and women's legal rights which was fuelled by Ibsen's and Shaw's dramas at the turn of the centuries.

The first section of this chapter contextualises the reception of *Mrs Warren's Profession* in Britain and the US from the perspective of censorship in those countries. Section two explores the "woman question" and the debate of the role of women that swept throughout Europe at that time. Then in the third part, I focus on the reception of the play in Poland, in particular in Lemberg. The penultimate section explores the translation prepared by an unknown translator for the Municipal Theatre in Lemberg. In the concluding section, I put forward a hypothesis why the ideas of *Mrs Warren's Profession* were overlooked by the general audience in Poland and did not provoke broad public discussion of the position of women in society.

According to Sally Peters, Shaw was a feminist in spite of himself since he wrote plays which discussed ideas that New Women of 1890s would have approved of (Peters 2000, 24; Weintraub 1977, 1–12). He did not directly champion the "woman question" yet he supported the movement by signing declarations, by admitting in his correspondence the rights for women and first and foremost by speaking for them in his prefaces. When *Mrs Warren's Profession* was refused a license by the Lord Chancellor on the fallacious grounds that its subject was improper, Shaw wrote one of his most spirited prefaces.

I simply affirm that *Mrs Warren's Profession* is a play for women; that it was written for women; that it has been performed and produced mainly through the determination of women [...]; that the enthusiasm of women made its first performance excitingly successful; and that not one of these women had any inducement to support it except their belief in the timeliness and the power of the lesson the play teaches. [...]

Nothing would please our sanctimonious British public more than to throw the whole guilt of Mrs. Warren's profession on Mrs. Warren herself. Now the whole aim of my play is to throw that guilt on the British public itself. [...] The notion that prostitution is created by the wickedness of Mrs. Warren is as silly as the notion – prevalent, nevertheless, to some extent in Temperance circles – that drunkenness is created by the wickedness of the publican. Mrs. Warren is not a whit a worse woman than the reputable daughter who cannot endure her. Her indifference to the ultimate social

consequences of her means of making money, and her discovery of that means by the ordinary method of taking the line of least resistance to getting it, are too common in English society to call for any special remark. Her vitality, her thrift, her energy, her outspokenness, her wise care of her daughter, and the managing capacity which has enabled her and her sister to climb from the fried fish shop down by the Mint to the establishments of which she boasts are all high English social virtues. [...] It is no defense of an immoral life to say that the alternative offered by society collectively to poor women is a miserable life, starved, overworked, fetid, ailing, ugly.

Though it is quite natural and right for Mrs. Warren to choose what is, according to her lights, the least immoral alternative, it is none the less infamous of society to offer such alternatives. *For the alternatives offered are not morality and immorality, but two sorts of immorality. The man who cannot see that starvation, overwork, dirt, and disease are as anti-social as prostitution – that they are the vices and crimes of a nation, and not merely its misfortunes – is (to put it as politely as possible) a hopelessly Private Person.* (Shaw 1957, 200–201; emphasis added)

Shaw proposed to discuss the phenomenon of prostitution against a broad social context.¹ As in his other “plays of ideas” (*Widower’s Houses*, *The Philanderer*, among others) he wanted to make the audience feel ill at ease and that was, it seems to me, the main cause for censoring it, not

1 Shaw related the origin of *Mrs Warren’s Profession* in a letter to a newspaper: “Miss Janet Achurch [an actress and friend of Shaw’s] mentioned to me a novel by some French writer [*Yvette* by Guy de Maupassant] as having a dramatisable story in it. It being hopeless to get me to read anything, she told me the story [...]. In the following autumn I was the guest of a lady [Beatrice Webb] of very distinguished ability – one whose knowledge of English social types is as remarkable as her command of industrial and political questions. She suggested that I should put on the stage a real modern lady of the governing class – not the sort of thing that theatrical and critical authorities imagine such a lady to be. I did so; and the result was Miss Vivie Warren [...]. Mrs. Warren herself was my version of the heroine of the romance narrated by Miss Achurch. The tremendously effective scene – which a baby could write if its sight were normal – in which she justifies herself, is only a paraphrase of a scene in a novel of my own, *Cashel Byron’s Profession* (hence the title, *Mrs Warren’s Profession*), in which a prize-fighter shows how he was driven into the ring exactly as Mrs Warren was driven on the streets” (*The Daily Chronicle*, 28 April 1898 qtd. in https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mrs._Warren%27s_Profession).

the notoriously “indecent subject.”² Shaw was socially conscious and used the theatre to explore social issues of his day and to enmesh his viewers in them. Bertold Brecht meant precisely that aspect of Shaw’s dramas, calling him a “terrorist”:

Shaw has applied much of his talent to intimidate people – intimidating them to a point where they would need nerves of steel even just to crawl before him on hands and knees. It will have become clear by now that Shaw is a terrorist. [...] Shaw’s brand of terror is an unusual one, and he uses an unusual weapon, that of humor. This unusual man seems to feel that there is nothing in the world to be feared except the calm and incorruptible gaze of the ordinary human being – that this, however, is to be feared at all costs. [...]

Shaw’s terrorism lies in his assertion that every person has the right to act, in any situation, with decency, logic and humor, and has a duty to do so even when this might cause offence. He knows just how much courage it takes to laugh at what is funny, and how much seriousness is needed to identify what is funny. (Brecht, qtd. in Silberman 2014, 28–29)

In *Mrs Warren’s Profession* Shaw introduces what he was long advocating for in the theatre – genuine discussion. This drama is structured around extended discussions and debate and what follows, the audience is forced to evaluate the opposing moral stances of Mrs Warren and Vivie. Kitty Warren engages in illicit sexual relations, but does so to cater for her child’s needs. The point of the spectacle is to show clearly and unquestioningly that the social circumstances forced by the society upon women of Mrs Warren’s class “allow no moral high road” (Wansley).³ Shaw incriminates the whole of society in the illegal activity of organised prostitution. What is more, he exposes the immense hypocrisy of the society which allows,

2 The word “prostitution” or “brothel” is never used in the play; instead Shaw mentions “businesses” around Europe. Shaw openly admits that: “The good of mentioning them [the subjects of prostitution and gambling] is that you make people so extremely uncomfortable about them that they finally stop blaming ‘human nature’ for them, and begin to support measures for their reform” (Shaw 1957, 205).

3 Sarah Wansley perceptively argues that “several of Ibsen’s and Shaw’s plays utilize a similar structure: an impossible moral situation is presented in order to illuminate evils in the conventional Victorian social system” (Wansley).

sometimes even promotes prostitution, yet at the same time claims that it does not exist (Powell 2004, 200).

Censorship and *Mrs Warren's Profession*

In Britain *Mrs Warren's Profession* was refused a license for a public performance by the Lord Chamberlain, hence it was staged privately in 1902.⁴



PHOTO 1. Fanny Brough as Mrs Warren in the 1902 London production
(Photograph by Frederick H. Evans)⁵

4 It was staged at London's New Lyric Club with the actor-manager Harley Granville-Barker as Frank, Fanny Brough as Mrs Warren, George Goodhart as Sir George Crofts, Julius Knight as Praed, Madge McIntosh as Vivie, and Cosmo Stuart as Rev. Samuel Gardner (photo 1). The first public performance in London took place in 1925.

5 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mrs._Warren%27s_Profession#/media/File:Fanny_Brough_as_Mrs._Warren_1902. This work is in the public domain (accessed March 7, 2015).

This play as well as other Ibsen's and Shaw's plays addressing the "woman question" (e.g., *Hedda Gabler* or *A Doll's House*, among others) were not profitable as theatrical productions (Jacobus 2001, 20). Critics condemned not only the playwrights for writing such pieces but also the actresses and the women in the audience which were described as "monstrous distortions of nature," "masculine women," "disruptive and with a propensity to violence" (Powell 2000, 79). Not surprisingly then, the managers of the traditional theatres were unwilling to stage the so-called "new drama" (Powell 2004, 207–27).

American audience was similarly antagonistic. The actor Arnold Daly was warned not to produce *Mrs Warren's Profession* under threat of criminal prosecution (Shaw 1957, 206–207). There was only a one night performance in New York in 1905 interrupted by the police who arrested both the manager and his cast and put them to jail (Shaw 1957, 206–207).⁶ Shaw responded bluntly to the New York newspaper *Time* which covered the incident:

You tell me Anthony Comstock⁷ threatens to put Arnold Daly in prison if he produces *Mrs Warren's Profession* [...].

The scandal of his [Daly's] imprisonment would completely defeat Comstock's attempt to hide the fact that Mrs. Warren's "profession" exists because libertines pay women well to be evil, and often show them affection and respect, whilst pious people pay them infamously and drudge their bodies and souls to death at honest labour. (Jacobus 2001, 863)

6 The play opened in New Haven, CT, and in New York City in 1905. In New York, the opening night was sold out. Black market tickets went for up to \$30 each. New York critics "raised a cry" against the play as being indecent as well as against its eponymous character being "ordure." After several months, those involved were acquitted of all charges (Shaw 1957, 206).

7 Anthony Comstock (1844–1915) was the founder of the New York Committee (later Society) for the Suppression of Vice in 1873 which was an institution dedicated to supervising the morality of the public. He lobbied for anti-vice legislature and achieved a federal bill in 1873 officially named Federal Anti-Obsecenity Act, more generally known as the Comstock Act. Some of the greatest world's classics were banned from the USA under this act, for example, Aristophanes's *Lycistrata*, Rabelais's *Gargantua*, and Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*. Modern authors included, among others, Honore Balzac, Victor Hugo, Oscar Wilde, and Ernest Hemingway (Green, Karolides 2009, 122–123, 522).

After a year when the American court cleared the play of indecency, the judge behaved like a harsh theatrical critic by producing a verdict which sounded very much as a review. He claimed that “the dramatist has in this play used old and hackneyed materials, the common tool of scores of other playwrights [...] there is so little that is attractive in the drama that it is safe to predict that without the preliminary sensational advertisement of this proposed production its life on boards would be short” (Jacobus 2001, 865).

Shaw wrote a great number of letters to *The New York Times* and *Sun* since he understood the value of scandal as a device for promoting his art.⁸ In spite of the obstacles piled up by censorship Shaw wanted his plays to circulate, thus he published them (Elits 2004, 223) preceded by extensive prefaces where he expostulated his ideas in detail. He argued that “any society which desires to found itself on a high standard of integrity of character in its units should organize itself in such a fashion as to make it possible too for all men and all women to maintain themselves in reasonable comfort by their industry without selling their affections and their convictions. At present, we not only condemn women as a sex to attach themselves to “breadwinners,” licitly or illicitly, on pain of heavy privations and disadvantage” (Shaw 1957, 26).

However, the most infuriating for the British theatregoers was the point he made in the preface to *Mrs Warren's Profession* that it was the society to be blamed not the stage figures or least of all the actors/actresses “the whole body of citizens whose public opinion, public action, and public contribution as ratepayers alone can replace [...] Mrs Warren's profession with honourable industries” (Shaw 1957, 27).

The “Woman Question”

Shaw's play should not be detached from its context and must be seen against the backdrop of the contemporary debate on the “woman question” and struggle for women's rights in Europe in the first decades of the twentieth century. There are a great number of documents such as daily

8 And indeed when the play opened in New York (1905), the opening night was sold out whereas black market prices for tickets soared up to \$30 each.

papers of various nations, philosophical treatises, dramas, novels, and essays which attest to the hot debate. August Strindberg's "The Last Word on the Woman Question" (1883) and his preface to the novel *Getting Married* illustrate what type of postulates were being formulated and what kind of social wrongs were diagnosed. Strindberg believed that the woman of the future shall have the right to demand, among others: (1) the right to the same education as men [...], (2) woman shall have the vote [...], (3) woman shall be eligible for all occupations [...] (Strindberg, in Jacobus 2001, 874).

The last point is the crucial one as far as *Mrs Warren's Profession* is concerned since the economic limitations imposed on women at that time were severe. "Women of the upper-middle classes were expected not to work at all, whereas women of the lower classes living in cities had few choices. Women who did factory work risked injury and disease" (Jacobus 2001, 871). A number of social thinkers and philosophers pointed to the lack of economic independence of women. For one, John Stuart Mill claimed: "Men do not want solely the obedience of women, they want their sentiments. [...] They have therefore put everything in practice to enslave their minds. [...] The masters of women wanted more than simple obedience, and they turned the whole force of education to effect their purpose. All women are brought up from the very earliest years in the belief that their ideal of character is the very opposite of that of men; not self-will, and government by self control, but submission, and yielding to the control of others. All the moralities tell them that that it is the duty of women [...] to live for others; to make complete abnegation of themselves [...]" (Mill, in Jacobus 2001, 873). Strindberg's *Miss Julie* and Ibsen's *Nora* and *Heda* are perfect examples which show the opportunities for women and they draw attention to the limits of women's power and choices at that time (Jacobus 2001, 871).

Marriage then, was the only way for a woman to feel secure and economically safe. Mrs Warren eloquently explains this to her daughter: "The only way for a woman to provide for herself decently is for her to be good to some man that can afford to be good to her. If she's in his own station of life, let her make him marry her; but if she's far beneath him she can't expect it: why should she?" (Shaw 1957, 251). Undoubtedly, economic hardship was the main factor, though not the only one, that caused women to enter prostitution. It was a common fact at the turn of the centuries and the

authorities tried to reduce it by prosecution (Tristan, in Jacobus 2001, 883, Hobson 1987, 100). One of the prostitutes suggested the ways of helping the women and regulating prostitution in London but also, similarly to Shaw, identified the roots of prostitution in contemporary economic situation of women:

Appoint commissioners who are fitted for the office, intelligent, respectable, and responsible, and make it worth their while to devote themselves entirely to the reduction of the scandal complained of. [...] Recollect it was man who made what we are. It is man who pays for the finery, the rouge, and the gin... *it is man who, when we apply ourselves to industry and honesty, employs us upon starvation wages*; and if man had his way, and women's nature were not superior to his, there would be no virtue extant. (anonymous letter in Jacobus 2001, 886; emphasis added)

The Staging of *Mrs Warren's Profession* in Poland

Many of Shaw's plays, including *Mrs Warren's Profession* were translated and produced in Austria, Germany, France, and Poland and met with much success.⁹ Indeed, the Polish staging was prompted by the success of the play in Vienna in the Raimund Theatre (Shaw 1907). Yet in Poland the reception of *Mrs Warren's Profession* was quite different from the other countries on the Continent.¹⁰ Contrary to the USA, there were no problems with censorship and the play was well received in Warsaw and Cracow (Kumor 1971, 133) with 7 and 5 performances, respectively, in 1907 (Kumor 1971, 207–208). However in Lemberg, then the capital of Austrian Galicia, the play was staged only twice.¹¹ The *kaiserlich-königlich* censor granted a licence

9 The first German and French translations were inaccurate and infested with mistakes (Kumor 1971, 43).

10 Poland ceased to exist on the geo-political map of Europe since 1795. The partitions were conducted by Russia, Prussia, and Austria. Lemberg (Lwów) became the capital of the Austrian Partition as well as one of the main cultural centres.

11 After regaining partial autonomy the theatre was entirely supervised by Polish theatrical company.

and the play was skilfully translated by an unknown translator.¹² However, other political and ideological circumstances impeded the staging and, in consequence, prevented a wide social debate of the vital issues the play rose. To understand the erratic reception we have to see the production of the play against the political backdrop of contemporary Lemberg in more detail.

The Municipal Theatre in Lemberg (later the Theatre of Opera and Ballet) was torn between the management of two directors Tadeusz Pawlikowski¹³ (1861–1915) and Ludwik Heller (1865–1926). Pawlikowski supervised the theatre and its repertory between 1900–1906, while Heller directed the theatrical seasons since 1896 to 1900 and 1906 to 1918. Both of them attacked their opponent fiercely in the press and in the municipal council sessions. When the spectacles were reviewed, more often than not, neither the artistic value of the performance nor the skills of the actors/actresses were taken into consideration, but, above all, the figure of the director was scrutinised (overtly or covertly). Another important social factor that refracted the artistic reception of the plays was the negative attitude of Lemberg's Polish press towards almost all theatrical productions (Webersfeld 1917, 2–8; Solski 1956, 133–134, Dębnicki and Górski 1957, 232–233). Last but not least, in comparison with Warsaw or Cracow audiences, Lemberg's audience preferred commercial drama to more serious thesis plays touching on social problems (Solski 1956, 133; Dębnicki and Górski 1957, 231).

Mrs Warren's Profession was staged for the first time on the 7 February 1909 and the second performance took place on the 10 February with Amelia Rotterowa as Mrs Warren, Irena Trapszo as Vivian, Ferdynand Feldman as Crofts, and Józef Chmieliński as Praed. Unfortunately, the play was drawn into local political skirmish and instead of directing the audience attention to the subject matter of the drama, it turned out to be the battlefield for right and left-wing activists. The press depicted Shaw's play as indecent and lewd even before it was staged for the first time in Lemberg

12 There is a note at the end of the Polish manuscript of *Mrs Warren's Profession* that after the first rehearsal on the stage the translator was congratulated on their outstanding work (Shaw 1907, 233).

13 He introduced Shaw's drama on the Polish stage. The first staging of Shaw in Poland took place in the Municipal Theatre in 1903 and the play chosen by Pawlikowski was *The Devil's Disciple* (Dębnicki and Górski 1957, 234).

(Kumor 1971, 132). One of Lemberg's theatrical critics evaluated the play before the premiere:

We won't be retelling the content of *Mrs Warren's Profession* since it's too drastic. The author touched upon the ... theme and he put it in such a cynical way that mere description of his work could offend many readers. [...] Yet it makes an enormous impression thanks to the fact that it's written with exceptional talent. (anonymous review in Kumor 1971, 133)

During the second performance a lycée professor, Michalski stood up during the II act and shouting "It's a shame that such plays are performed on the Polish stage" left the theatre (Kumor 1971, 133). But the worst was yet to come: the viewers in the upper rows, probably an organised group of young right-wing activists, caused an uproar whistling and hurling insults at the actors and actresses (Thullie, qtd. in Kumor 1971, 133). The performance was interrupted. It was resumed after some time for the audience applauded the cast for ten minutes and forced them to come back on the stage. Still



PHOTO 2. Amelia Rotterowa¹⁴

¹⁴ Unknown author of the photograph, accessed March 7, 2015, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Amelia_Rotter-Jarni%C5%84ska.jpg. This work is in the public domain.

the actresses were so frightened that their acting was lifeless and wooden (Kumor 1971, 135). Due to this incident, in spite of the full house, the play was shelved and there were no revivals.

This turmoil in the theatre did not result from the polemics over the artistic value of the play and even less so from its ideological content. Lemberg at that time was an arena of an intense political and ideological conflict (Kumor 1971, 133). The disturbance of the performance was only a sequel to a previous tumult during some other play and it had nothing to do with Shaw's drama. Earlier that month (7 January 1907) there was performed a play by Adam Krechowiecki (1850–1919) entitled *My (We)* which depicted the Revolution of 1905 and the socialists in an unpropitious light. During the spectacle some left-wing activists in the back rows started to shout, lit small squibs and threw them both at the actors and on the wealthy audience in the first rows. Later there were some detonations at the back of the auditorium which turned the theatre into “a true hell” (anonymous review in Kumor 1971, 134). The performance was broken. According to the press this demonstration was organised by socialist militants and the staging of *Mrs Warren's Profession* was used as a means of retribution by right-wing activists.¹⁵

Polish Translation

The translation was commissioned by Heller for the Municipal Theatre in Lemberg in 1907 for the theatrical season 1907/8. Regrettably, the name of the translator is not known.¹⁶ It was not the first translation of this play in Poland since as a rule each theatre commissioned its own translations and

¹⁵ An argument corroborating my thesis that the play itself was overlooked by the general public because of the ideological conflict is the fact that the staging *Mrs Warren's Profession* is not listed in the chronicles summarizing all the performances directed by Heller (Webersfeld and Chojnacka).

¹⁶ The first play by Shaw staged in Lemberg, *The Devil's Disciple*, was translated by Jadwiga Beaupré but the translation was heavily criticised since the translator retold the play instead of following the text (Kumor 1971, 64–66). Thus, the new commission was given to someone else. It might have been translated by Józef Ostoja-Sulnicki (1869–1920) – a journalist, playwright, translator, and film director. He translated also Shaw's *The Doctor's Dilemma* for Heller's theatre in 1911.

they became its exclusive property. Thus, the initial translation of *Mrs Warren's Profession* was done for the Warsaw theatre under the title *Przemysł Pani Warren* in 1907.

The Manuscript

The handwritten manuscript consists of a 14 mm lined notebook of 233 pages. It is written in black pen whereas all the corrections are in pencil. There is a note on the first page that it is for the prompter J. Wojciechowski, so basing on the numerous corrections we may conclude that the original manuscript was turned into a prompt book. Let us first analyse the translation itself. We cannot state definitely whether it was produced on the basis of the original or on the basis of the German version which might be inferred from the remark on the first page: "Z repertuaru wiedeńskiego Teatru Raimunda" [from the repertoire of Viennese Raimund Theatre]. Yet a detailed analysis of the translated text seems to confirm the hypothesis that the translation was done from the original. The major argument justifying this assumption is the fact that the Polish version is very faithful to the English text at best, too literal at worst.

Some examples to illustrate the closeness of the translated play to its original:

1. Oh, I forgot to introduce you. Sir George Crofts: my Little Vivie. (Shaw 1957, 221)

Ach, zapomniałam zapoznać was ze sobą: Pan George Crofts – moja mała Vivial! (MS 31)

2. Will you come in, or shall I get a couple more chairs? (Shaw 1957, 221)

Wejdiesz do mieszkania czy mam przynieść kilka krzeseł? (MS 31)

3. He's been worrying my life out these three years to have that little girl of mine shown to him and now that I've done it, he's quite out of his countenance. (Shaw 1957, 222)

Przez trzy lata mojego życia mordował mnie żeby mu pokazać moją dziewczynę! – a teraz kiedy to uczyniłam zupełnie go coś wyprowadziło z równowagi! (MS 33)

These quotations undoubtedly prove that the translation follows almost word for word the source text. Still they remain within the acceptability and usage of the Polish language. The excerpts below, however, illustrate the worse consequences of slavish and too literal translation. All of them have been changed later by the anonymous editor in the theatre.

4. I think, you know – if you don't mind my saying so – that we had better get out of the habit of thinking of her as a little girl. (Shaw 1957, 222)

Uważam ... wie pani... że powinniśmy ... o ile pani pozwoli zwrócić sobie uwagę ... powinniśmy odzwyczaić się od uważania panny Vivie za małą dziewczynkę. (MS 34)

5. What! Me! Afraid of dear old Praddy! Why, a fly wouldn't be afraid of him. (Shaw 1957, 223)

Co? ja? ja boję się tego starego, poczciwego Praeda? dlaczego? po co? Nawet mucha jego się nie lęka. (MS 35)

6. I'll trouble you to mind your own business, and not try any of your sulks on me. I'm not afraid of you, anyhow. I you can't make yourself agreeable, you'd better go home. (Shaw 1957, 224)

Proszę pana bardzo niech się pan nie wtrąca do nie własnej sprawy i swego złego humoru na mnie nie wywiera; w każdym razie pana się bezwarunkowo nie boję – a jeżeli pan nie może być miłym i uprzejmym, to idź pan lepiej do domu. (MS 36)

Likewise, the English text was translated faithfully, but the Polish version follows the English grammatical and structural norms too literally thus producing a clumsy and artificial text that turned out to be 'unperformable' on the stage.

The Corrections

Rather broad and complex issues that are necessarily brought to the fore when translation of drama is discussed are performability and speakability (Bassnett and Espasa). However, they are only relatively recent developments in translation studies, thus they will not be addressed in this chapter scrutinizing the corrections introduced at the beginning of the 20th century. Instead, the changes will be grouped according to two main criteria which seem to have been applied while editing the manuscript: making a literary written text more dynamic and dramatic and replacing formal speech with its spoken (oral) version.¹⁸

The editing was extensive since approximately one-fifth of the written version was changed: either crossed out or rephrased.¹⁹ First of all, the lines repeating the obvious action that could be seen on the stage were crossed out:

1. "Will you come in, or shall I get some chairs?" (Shaw 1957, 221)

„Wejdiesz do mieszkania czy mam przynieść kilka krzesel?”

Revised: „Przyniosę kilka krzesel.” (MS 30)

Generally, all longish descriptive sentences are crossed out and replaced with short sentences expressing sharply the action on the stage.

2. "Only listen to him, George!" (Shaw 1957, 222)

“George, posłuchaj pan tylko tego dobrodzieja [...]”.

Revised: „George, słyszysz?” (MS 34)

3. „Tch! Nonsense! Mrs Warren: don't you see my daughter there?" (Shaw 1957, 231)

“Cicho. Jakie głupstwa... pani Warren, czy pan nie widzi, że to jest moja córka”.

Revised: “Cicho. ... pani Warren, moja córka. Vivja”. (MS 68)

¹⁸ These criteria, broadly speaking, correspond to the contemporary notions of performability and speakability respectively, in drama translation.

¹⁹ In this estimation I do not include the stage directions which obviously were crossed out *en masse* since the manuscript was turned into a prompt book.

The second major category comprises all the modifications introduced to change the language of the characters from the formal and literary in the written version to more spoken and natural sounding on the stage. Within this broad category the following subcategories can be identified: honorifics, colloquialisms, and idioms. Polish honorific forms of address (Pan/Pani) which were used by the translator as equivalent forms of the personal pronoun “you,” thus making the target version more formal, were consistently edited and replaced with a direct form of address (second person singular – “ty”).

1. You're afraid of Praeda. (Shaw 1957, 222)

“Pani się boi Praeda!”

Revised: „Boisz się Praeda!” (MS 35)

2. “Do you think your form will be any better when you're as old as Crofts, if you don't work? (Shaw 1957, 238)

„Czy pan przypuszcza, że się pan będzie lepiej zachowywał jak Crofts, jeżeli pan nie pracując dożyje jego lat?”

Revised: „Czy przypuszczasz, że się będziesz lepiej zachowywał jak Crofts, jeżeli nie pracując dożyjesz jego lat?” (MS 83)

All sentences which were very literary and formal were rephrased into spoken Polish with the everyday usage of colloquial expressions and idioms.

1. “Hallo! Sort of chap that could take a prize at a dog show!” (Shaw 1957, 226)

„Patrzcie! Ten ci ma urodę, za którą na pewno otrzymałby nagrodę na wystawie psów!”

Revised: „Ten ma urodę, murowana nagroda na wystawie psów!” (MS 49)

2. “That's all you have to say on the subject, is it, mother?” (Shaw 1957, 243)

„Tak matko? Więc to jest wszystko, co mi w danej sprawie powiedzieć możesz, prawda matko?”

Revised: „Więc to jest wszystko, co mi w danej sprawie powiedzieć możesz, tak?” (MS 99)

3. "Don't you keep on asking me questions like that." (Shaw 1957, 243)

„Przestań badać mnie w ten sposób!”

Revised: „Przestań mówić do mnie w ten sposób!” (MS 99)

Last but not least, such colloquial phrases were introduced: “ma silną łapę” (MS 32), “kupa listów” (MS 68), “warta grzechu” (MS 82), “na zbity łeb” (MS 87), “wyszłaś z formy” (MS 102).

To conclude, Shaw's play instead of instigating public debate on the position of women in society was used instrumentally in political conflict. In press reviews there was not a single word on the rights of women. Once again journalists and political activists used socially-significant literature for their own ends. Although the debate on the “woman question” was in full swing in Western Europe (Mill, Strindberg, and Ibsen) in Poland it was still in its infancy (Kałwa 2001, 26) and the opportunity to develop it was wasted.²⁰ There is one more reason that needs to be mentioned when we try to answer the question why the ideas of *Mrs Warren's Profession* were neglected, namely the figure of the playwright, George Bernard Shaw. He was disliked as a socialist and in a number of press reviews at that time instead of an analysis or evaluation of the play and its performance, the journalists discussed the political views of its author.

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20 Strangely enough, in contemporary Polish theatres the situation repeats itself again and again. Theatre has become a place of ideological and political conflict resulting in boycotting the director, actors or the play itself (cf. the conflict between Joanna Szczepkowska and Krystian Lupa in Warsaw, Jan Klata and the audience in Cracow and the social protests against the controversial performance *Golgota Picnic* during *Malta Festival*, Poznań).

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Agnieszka Adamowicz-Pośpiech

**Profesja Pani Warren G.B. Shawa:
różnice w recepcji kulturowej i przekładzie w Anglii, Ameryce i Polsce**

STRESZCZENIE: Artykuł jest analizą kontrastywną różnic, jakie zaistniały w recepcji kulturowej i przekładzie literackim *Profesji Pani Warren* G.B. Shawa w Anglii, Ameryce i Polsce. Autorka artykułu skupia się na tzw. kwestii kobiecej na początku XX w. w różnych kulturach i na podstawie przekładu dramatu ukazuje jak dyskutowano o problemie pozycji kobiet w społeczeństwie w Europie i Ameryce. *Profesja Pani Warren* podlegała cenzurze w Anglii i Ameryce, aby uniemożliwić społeczną debatę nad kwestią roli kobiet. Odmienne kulturowa recepcja w Anglii i na kontynencie jest omówiona na tle szerokiego historycznego i kulturowego kontekstu pierwszych dekad XX w. W Polsce, choć dramat nie był ocenzurowany, to jego wystawianie zostało zablokowane z powodów ideologiczno-politycznych.

SŁOWA KLUCZOWE: przekład literacki, *Profesja Pani Warren*, recepcja, G.B. Shaw

Agnieszka Adamowicz-Pośpiech

**Frau Warrens Gewerbe von G. B. Shaw:
Unterschiede in der Kulturrezeption und in der Übersetzung in England,
Amerika und Polen**

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG: Der Beitrag ist eine Analyse der kontrastiven Unterschiede, die in der Kulturrezeption und in literarischer Übertragung des Werkes G. B. Shaws *Frau Warrens Gewerbe* in England, Amerika und Polen entstanden sind. Die Verfasserin konzentriert sich auf die am Anfang des 20.Jhs in verschiedenen Kulturen gegenwärtige sog. Frauenfrage und schildert anhand der Dramaübersetzung, wie das Problem der Frauen von der Gesellschaft in Europa und Amerika diskutiert wurde. *Frau Warrens Gewerbe* unterlag in England und in Amerika der Zensur, die bezweckte, öffentliche Debatte über die Frauenfrage zunichte zu machen. Unterschiedliche Kulturrezeption in England und auf dem Kontinent wird hier im Hintergrund der historischen und kulturellen Begleitumstände in Polen der ersten Dekaden des 20.Jhs erörtert; obwohl das Drama nicht zensiert wurde, wurde seine Aufführung es aus ideologisch-politischen Gründen gesperrt.

SCHLÜSSELWÖRTER: literarische Übertragung, *Frau Warrens Gewerbe*, Rezeption, G.B. Shaw