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The history of Louis-Ferdinand Céline's anti-Semitic pamphlet Bagatelles pour un massacre in Italian and English translations: the Contradictions of Censorship.

Trinity College Dublin
MPhil in Literary Translation
2018

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The history of Louis-Ferdinand Céline's anti-Semitic pamphlet *Bagatelles pour un massacre* in Italian and English translations: the contradictions of censorship.

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Abstract

This dissertation offers a case study of Louis-Ferdinand Céline's anti-Semitic pamphlet *Bagatelles pour un massacre* (1937) in English and Italian translations with a particular focus on the forms of censorship applied to it, its manifestations, causes and consequences. This research is contained within the framework of descriptive translation studies, critical discourse analysis and translation history. It defines the source text as an ideologically problematic text in France through a textual analysis and a comprehensive history of publication and reception of the work. It is at the heart of uninterrupted controversies and is censored from 1945 onwards. The text is consequently situated in the wider context of ideological literature in translation by comparing the history of publication of the pamphlet in Italy and in the English-speaking world. It attempts to define the socio-cultural implications of the total censorship imposed on its English translations, while questioning the fact that the pamphlet has been published more times in Italy than in its source country. The possible manipulation of ideological texts in translation is illustrated through the comparative case study of the Italian translation of 1937 produced according to the Fascist's regime rules. Finally, the idiosyncrasy of the ST and its temporal and ideological distance with the contemporary context are defined as the principal causes of the censorship still applied to the pamphlet. These cultural gaps could be overcome by the integration of the text in the duty of remembrance. The institutional publication of the English and Italian translations might thus avoid dangerous political reuses linked to the greater diffusion of unprofessionally translated texts via new technologies.

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Introduction

Few writers in French history have caused as much ink to flow as Louis-Ferdinand Céline. In 2018, more than 50 years after the author's death, the debate is still open as to what is commonly evoked as 'le scandale Céline' [the Céline scandal]. Indisputably one of the major French novelists of the 20th century, in the collective imagination Céline is torn between literary genius, revolutionary stylist and bitter and forthright critic of his times. He is alternately avoided, criticized and praised. He is the innovative writer of *Voyage au bout de la nuit* (1932) [Journey to the end of the night] and *Mort à Crédit* (1934) [Death on the installment plan], but also the virulent instigator of the so-called 'anti-Semitic pamphlets' *Mea Culpa* (1937), *Bagatelles pour un massacre* (1937) and *L'Ecole des Cadavres* (1938). In France, they are considered as 'ghost texts', since they were taken out of publication after 1951 at the author's request to avoid negative publicity. However this inaccessibility never tamed the animosity and intensity of the debates surrounding it. As recently as January 2018, the publisher Gallimard had to postpone its plans for publication of the pamphlets in view of the public outcry caused notably by the French Jewish associations.

This dissertation's aim is to study the history of the English and Italian translations of *Bagatelles pour un massacre* [Trifles for a massacre] from its publication in 1937 to the present day with a focus on the different forms of censorship applied to the translations. As mentioned earlier, the pamphlet and its translations are not easily available as they have been published sporadically and in small print runs. Therefore the ST on which this dissertation is based is Omnia Veritas' 2018 edition, an almost unknown, conspiracy theorist publishing house, as it is the only accessible printed version.

In translation, those texts have proven to be just as problematic as in France. Ethically and politically, they are marked by their initial time and place of publication and can only be defined according to this context's limitations, that is the pre-Holocaust period in France during which anti-Semitism was widespread in literature as in politics. Their transposition into another culture and language is made difficult by the radical evolution of the ideologies of the source and target cultures.

This study will focus on the pamphlet's translations into Italian and British and American English. These languages were chosen as they have had very different reactions to

this text over the past seventy years. It has officially never been published in English whereas the Italian translations saw more publications than the ST, before being taken out of print in the 1970s. Considering the absence of official English translations, this language will be used as a point of comparison and this study will deal essentially with the Italian translations, focusing on the expurgated version by Corbaccio (1938) produced during the Fascist period. The particular status of the pamphlet in these countries is all the more striking considering that the rest of Céline's bibliography has been widely translated and read in those target cultures. This work therefore appears as a peculiar example of censored literature in translation.

In many ways, the extent of the political and ethical themes at stake in translating such a text leads to several translation problems. First there is the issue of the purpose of such a translation through time: the ST only knew a short-lived period of political and ideological relevance in France, from 1937 to 1945. In the English-speaking countries, the text has never been considered as relevant, as confirmed by its non-translation. In Italy, it has been translated more than in France, and it was particularly relevant under the Fascist regime as the pamphlet was inscribed in the creation of racial laws. Contemporarily, new technologies represent a turn-around in the diffusion of inaccessible literature in translation, as it offers a wider diffusion while abolishing the usual legal diffusion means of translated texts such as official publishing houses working with qualified translators. Even though the pamphlet is not currently officially published in France, Italy, England and the United States, can be easily found on Google in all languages, eventually leading to political exploitations by various groups such as revisionist websites. The history of translation of the pamphlet can be a starting point for reflection on the evolving status of translated works in the era of new technologies in which no text seems to sustain its condition of 'ghost text'. The anti-Semitic orientation and the powerful style of the pamphlet also inevitably links to the question of the potential danger of literature, perceived as a strong means of ideological manipulation, as well as the readiness of its source culture and target cultures to face the demons from a past world. Finally, the censorship applied on *Bagatelles* in translation can make one question the difference of representation of the author in the public imagination in its source culture as opposed to its target countries' cultures. While Céline is commonly approached in France as a dual author, foreign readers might lack the socio-cultural context

of his writings. Censorship in translation could therefore appear as an attempt to cover the author's representation up in the target cultures.

To what extent is the censorship applied to *Bagatelles pour un massacre's* translations into English and Italian symptomatic of the difficulty of reading Céline today, shaping the author's image paradoxically in the target cultures?

The first chapter of this dissertation will recount the personal, historical and ideological origins of the ST and situate it within the author's bibliography and French literary history. It will present the various themes at stake in *Bagatelles pour un massacre* and analyze its French reception and its evolution through time. The second chapter will focus on Céline's general standpoints on translation and will present a summary of his translated bibliography and situate the pamphlet in Célinian translation, evoking its 70-year history of publication and non-publication into English and Italian. A case study will consequently be dedicated to the Italian translation of 1938 during the Fascist regime to focus on the forms of censorship applied to the work, as it is particularly representative of the possible exploitation of ideological literature in translation. Finally, the last chapter's aim is to analyze the various translation problems at stake in relation to *Bagatelles pour un massacre*. The first part will look at the work's evolution through time. The strong idiosyncrasy of the text will be defined as well as the shift of target audiences to finally wonder whether the pamphlet can be still considered as ideologically dangerous today. Consequently, it will analyze the possible readings of the text, torn between the necessary duty of remembrance and the ethical problems it causes, and define the contradiction of the prohibited text becoming an object of fascination. Finally, the broader diffusion allowed by new technologies will be tackled, as it challenges the relevance of institutional censorship as well as the political reuses of ideological literature at a time in which the text can be translated by anyone and distributed freely.

I. The problematic Célinian pamphlet *Bagatelles pour un massacre*: a dark page in Céline's work and French history

1) Genesis of the pamphlets.

a) The place of ideology in Céline's life and works

Louis-Ferdinand Céline is a child of the French Third Republic who paradoxically honored and denied its political and ideological impact on him and his literature. His work has been deeply influenced by this period of constant social and political changes marked by the birth of different ideologies such as Nationalism, anti-Semitism and capitalism. Thus the pamphlets cannot be approached without understanding the socio-cultural factors that led to the formation of an anti-Semitic ideology in Céline and in France in the 20th century. He was born in 1894, year of Alfred Dreyfus' discriminatory condemnation. This political case divided France durably, between anti-Semitic blaming Dreyfus while basing their accusations on racial arguments and those who defended Dreyfus' innocence, such as the writer Emile Zola. Céline's childhood years have been greatly impacted by this polemical case (Godard, 2011, p.21). During his teenage years and his time as a soldier during the First World War, he additionally regularly read periodicals diffusing vulgarized information (*Lectures pour tous* and *Je Sais tout*), described by Céline's biographer Henri Godard as nationalists and revanchists, xenophobic, racists and anti-Semitic (Godard, 2011, p.34).

The author's ideological standpoints were also inspired directly by his family background. His father, Fernand Destouches, was himself an anti-Semitic whose interests led his son to, if not yet evident anti-Semitic orientations, a personal intuition towards the idea that the 'Jews' were a separate race (Godard, 2011, p.21). Céline's wife, Lucette Destouches, later confirmed his influence on the writer's ideology: 'C'était un homme mécontent qui, comme beaucoup de gens à l'époque, rendait responsable de tous ses malheurs les juifs et les francs-maçons. Louis l'a entendu en dire du mal toute son enfance comme un arrière-fond sonore' (Robert, 2001, p.53) [He was a unhappy man who, like many people at the time, blamed the Jews and the freemasons for his misfortunes. Louis heard him criticizing them during his whole childhood, as background music]. However, Henri Godard (2011, p.127) insists on the fact that before the publication of the pamphlets, the author never

clearly mentioned his anti-Semitic orientation. His first two novels, *Voyage au bout de la nuit* (1932) [Journey to the end of the night] and *Mort à Crédit* (1936) [Death on the Installment Plan] were filled with all kinds of denunciations for which the author was already commonly associated to the word 'scandal', notably concerning the First World War or the French colonial system (Winock, 1998, p.273). The first expression of his anti-Semitic standpoints appeared in the play *L'Eglise* published in September 1933 (Godard, 2011, p.13). In the third act of this play, Céline violently denounced the Jews' grasp on the League of Nations. At the time, the work was however received in a quite neutral way (Godard, 2011, p.129).

b) The origins of the pamphlets

Many contextual reasons could explain the maturation of such violent texts as *Bagatelles pour un massacre*. Both André Derval (2010, p.8) and Henri Godard (2011, p.220-223) agree on the elements that triggered Céline to write it. First, his novel *Death on the Installment plan* (1932), that he considered as a second *Journey to the end of the night* for which he had great hopes, was censored by his editor Denoël (Brami, 2002, p.313) and proved to be a 'relative commercial failure' (Derval, 2010, p.8). Denoël even tried to defend him in a text called *Apologie de Mort à Crédit* [Apology of Death on the Installment Plan] (Brami, 2002, p.317). On top of that, the greatest defenders of Céline's first novel, Léon Daudet and Lucien Descaves, did not support his second novel (Derval, 2010, p.8). Céline was greatly affected by this disavowal (Godard, 2011, p.222).

Contemporarily, the author's attempt to bring together two of his lifelong passions, ballets and writing, was a failure. He had started to write ballet arguments after his trip to USSR (Godard, 2011, p.228). His first ballet, later integrated in *Bagatelles*, was called 'La Naissance d'une fée' [The birth of a fairy]. It was refused by L'Opéra de Paris [Paris' Opera] (Godard, 2011, p.230) and by the Theater Mariinski in the summer 1936.

Those two disappointments undoubtedly motivated Céline to write *Bagatelles pour un massacre*. In the pamphlet, he refused to accept these failures as his own and attributed them to what he calls the Jewish plot of domination in the artistic world (Derval, 2010, p.9). He found a scapegoat for them: the Jew. Additionally, the abundance of anti-Semitic publications in France at the same period probably encouraged him to write *Bagatelles* (Godard, 2011, p.35). He started writing the pamphlet during the summer 1937 (Derval, 2010, p.8) and it was published on 28th December 1937 (Derval, 2010, p.8).

2) *Bagatelles pour un massacre*: Scandal or literary experiment?

Bagatelles pour un massacre has a unique place in French literature. Known as one of Céline's 'anti-Semitic pamphlets', the text should not be limited to this definition as it deals with a variety of themes, even if those are all serving Céline's wider conspiracy theory. This part's aim is to summarize the subjects tackled in *Bagatelles pour un massacre* while questioning its ideological purpose. First of all, the polysemic aspect of the pamphlet's title will be tackled. Thereafter, this part will attempt to qualify the literary genre of *Bagatelles*, between pamphlet and novel, to finally question the hypothesis of the pamphlet being a pure literary experiment. The themes will be summarized, that is, French literature, literary critics, and more importantly, anti-Semitism as well as the definitions proposed by the author of the Aryan, the Jews and their presupposed political and economic domination of France. Finally, the sources and references used in the pamphlet will be analyzed to conclude on the banality of the themes in *Bagatelles pour un massacre* in 1930's France.

a) A polysemic title

To begin with, the title *Bagatelles pour un massacre* is puzzling and polysemic. Both terms ('Bagatelles' [trifles] and 'massacre' [massacre]) have been interpreted in two distinct ways since its publication. 'Bagatelles' [trifles] is a noun used in French to designate a futile occupation devoid of seriousness (Dictionnaire de français Larousse, online). Céline's specialist Henri Godard explains the term 'bagatelles' [trifles] as a reference to the ballet's outlines contained in the text, 'La Naissance d'une fée' [The birth of a fairy], 'Van Bagaden', and 'Voyou Paul Brave Virginie' [Rogue Paul Brave Virginie] (2011, p.234). Concerning the 'massacre' of the title, it would be a reference to the Second World War to come (2011, p.255). Henri Godard bases his theory on the book's advert in 1938: 'pour bien rire dans les tranchées' [to laugh frankly in the trenches] (2011, p.255), concluding that this title really signifies that the book was written to entertain the future soldiers in the trenches, not to prefigure a genocide. However this theory is considered by other critics as an attempt to hide the gravity of the text. The 'massacre' could very well designate and prompt a potential massacre of the Jews as explained by André Derval who considers that the book is a 'véritable appel au pogrom' [true call to a pogrom] (2010, p.9). He is besides scandalized by the fact that some critics today are desperately trying to underestimate Céline's aim (2010, p.11). Derval thus validates the theory of the Céline's contemporary and critic Hanns-Erich Kaminski who said in 1938 (Derval, 2010, p.11):

Vous croyez peut-être que Céline emploie dans son livre le mot massacre comme une figure de rhétorique. Détrompez-vous ! [...] Cette fois-ci il ne s'agit pas d'une métaphore, mais du substantif dans son sens précis. Il désire le carnage des Juifs et il le demande.

[You maybe think that Céline uses in his book the word massacre as a rhetorical figure. Do not be so sure! [...] This time it is not a metaphor, but the substantive with its precise meaning. He desires the carnage of the Jews and he asks for it.]

b) An anti-Semitic pamphlet between novel, autobiography and literary manifesto

The understanding of the aims of *Bagatelles pour un massacre* is made even more complex because of the difficult identification of its literary genre, making of the text a peculiar occurrence in French literature (Brami, 2002, p.168). The text is composed of three ballet's outlines, excerpts of journals, polemical essays, letters, and literary and poetic descriptions. This plurality could, according to the Italian scholar Riccardo De Benedetti, 'facilmente riavvicinarlo alla narrativa e alla letteratura *tout court*' [easily bring it closer to narrative and literature *tout court*] (2011, p.27). The term 'pamphlet' often associated to it is not completely accurate if one considers the definition proposed by the *Oxford English Dictionary* (online): 'A small booklet of leaflet containing information or arguments about a single subject'. The book is certainly not small, as it contains more than 300 pages, and its subjects are plural. Thus the genre of the book itself is a polemical matter, with critics and writers wondering whether the book is really a political pamphlet or a pure literary experiment (Derval, 2010, p.13).

c) Situating the work between anti-Semitic manifesto and literary experiment

The intuition that the book is essentially a literary experiment can indeed be questioned. Céline's contemporaries and scholars over time have questioned the veracity of the pamphlet. One of the first to underline this idea was the author André Gide (1938, p.630), who considered it as a pure joke: 'il va de soi que c'est une plaisanterie. Et si ce n'était pas une plaisanterie alors il serait, lui Céline, complètement maboul' [It is evident that it is a joke. And if it was not a joke then he would be, him, Céline, completely nuts]. This debate around the potential danger of the pamphlets is directly linked to Céline's famous tirade in which he presented himself as essentially a stylist. In *Le style contre les idées*

(Céline, 1987, p.58-59), he explains that his famous 'petite musique' [little music], also known as a synonym of the 'Célinian style', is first and foremost:

émotion. [...] les idées, rien de plus vulgaire. [...] Ce n'est pas mon domaine, les idées, les messages. Je ne suis pas un homme à message. Je ne suis pas un homme à idées. Je suis un homme à style.

[emotion. [...] Ideas, nothing more vulgar. [...] It is not my field, ideas, messages. I am not a message man. I am not an ideas' man. I am a man of style.]

In his texts, this 'emotion' is conveyed through the use of a personalized 'argot', as well as the use of an unusual punctuation with occurrences such as '...!' and nominal sentences. The definition proposed by the author is extremely problematic if one tries to integrate the pamphlet in this definition, bringing the possibilities of it being a literary experiment devoid of ideology as imagined by André Gide. However, many Céline's specialists sustain that one should avoid falling for the author's self-definition. Henri Godard (1998, p.28) explained that this 'petite musique' [little music] is not a form devoid of content but instead a world of observations, emotions, and meaningful interrogations and concludes: 'Autant de choses qui, il est vrai, ne sont pas séparables de son style, mais sans lesquelles non plus ce style ne serait pas.' [So many things that, it is true, are not separable from his style, but without which his style would not exist.].

In several passages of *Bagatelles pour un massacre*, Céline attempts to dissect his prose as opposed to his contemporaries'. The language needs to be alive in order to represent life (2018, p.170). Only people who had a troubled and uneducated past as he claims to have had (Céline, 2018, p.70) can have access to this literary truth, that is a violent, crude representation of life conveyed by an emotive language, and can make the text stand as an organic body (Céline, 2018, p.171):

Je veux bien [...] de tous les genres, aucun ne me semble inférieur, à condition que la matière soit organique et organisée, que le sang circule, partout, autour et dedans à partir du cœur, respire avec les poumons, tienne debout, en somme, que le truc tourne avec un point de catalyse bien vivant, le plus vivant possible, insupportable !

[I accept every genre, none of them seems inferior to me, provided that the matter is organic and organized, that the blood circulates, everywhere, around and inside from the heart, breathes with the lungs, stands up, to summarize, that the thing turns around a point of catalysis well alive, as alive as possible, unbearable !]

He considers most of the French authors unable to reach this literary climax, as mentioned ironically in *Bagatelles* (2018, p.136): 'Ah! Le divin! Ah! Ce Gide enfin! ... Ce Maurras ! Ah ! Ce Maurois ! Qu'en dirait Proust ?' [Ah! The divine! Ah! This Gide finally! ... This Maurras! Ah! This Maurois! What would Proust say?]. The Goncourt prize incarnates the hate he has for lifeless French literature: 'le français goncourt, le français dégueulasse d'élégance, moulé, oriental, onctueux, glissant comme de la merde, c'est l'építaphe même de la race française' [The Goncourt French, the filthy French because of its elegance, well-shaped, oriental, unctuous, sleepery as shit, it is the very epitaph of the French race] (2018, p.136). His hatred for the Goncourt is linked to the fact that he did not get it for *Voyage au bout de la nuit* [Journey to the end of the night]. He lived this failure as a general non-understanding of his 'petite musique' [little music] (Godard, 2011, p.162). Finally, the educated French authors who went to the 'lycée' [high school] and the Jews, more than anyone else, are unable to attain this organic life of literature and can only write in a 'langage Robot' [robot language] (2018, p.140) that does not represent life because they were taught a classic and impersonal French. Céline's literary theories are however inextricably linked to his anti-Semitic manifesto and seem to contradict the possibility of the work being a pure literary experiment. In the essay 'Le français, langue de traduction' (2010, p.148), the academician David Fontaine states that Céline's conception of literature and the French language is Manichean and directly linked to his ideology.

He divides literary critics in two groups: 'Il existe une critique bienveillante et puis l'autre poisonneuse.' [There is a benevolent critic, and another which is poisonous.] (2018, p.24). He adds to this concept a sexual prejudice (2018, p.142), explaining that the more the Jewish critics are 'châtré, impuissant, stérile' [castrated, powerless, sterile], the more they dare to criticize. This confirms one of the ideas developed by Céline all along the pamphlet: the ability to write is somehow linked to a form of sexuality, and only virile men can have access to his ideal form of writing. His logic is that the sexually 'stériles' [sterile] Jewish critics cannot really understand, feel or judge true literature. To a certain extent, this confrontation

could also be understood as the author's refusal of any form of critic. He knows how to write, but the critics are unable to understand him because they are Jewish.

d) The anti-Semitic argumentation in *Bagatelles pour un massacre*:

The essential part of the book is however dedicated to anti-Semitic monologues based on the idea of a Jewish domination of the economic, political and artistic worlds. The conspiracy theory is the guiding thread of *Bagatelles pour un massacre*. Henri Godard (2011, p.262) considers that with *Bagatelles*, the author arrived at an ideological turning point: he does not describe his adversary as 'the Jews' anymore, but as 'the Jew'. This distinction is crucial as he is not confronting a religious community anymore, but a 'race', with its presupposed physical and psychological characteristics. According to him, the 'Jewish race' descends from the Africans or 'nègres' [negros] (2018, p.155). This supposed biological lineage can be seen in the following passage: 'c'est le sang du nègre qui passe...' [it is the blood of the Negro that runs...] (2018, p.232). However he seems to privilege Blacks: 'En Afrique, c'étaient des braves gens. Ici, ils me gênent, ils m'écoeurent' [In Africa, they were good people. Here, they disturb me, they disgust me] (2018, p.162). The historian Michel Winock (1998, p.278) explains that this description of 'the Jew' through intrinsic qualities clichés is commonly developed in the anti-Semitic propaganda of the Third Republic. Physically, he is supposed to have 'ces yeux qui épient, toujours faux à en blêmir... Ce sourire coincé... Ces babines qui se relèvent: la hyène... [...] Leur nez [...] de traître, de félon' [These lurking eyes, always terrifyingly false... This repressed smile... These raising chops: the hyena... [...] Their traitor's, felonious nose] (2018, p.232). All these physical characteristics are associated to a character trait: the lurking eyes could represent economic and political opportunism, the nose is said to be the one of a 'traitor' and finally, the metaphor of the hyena positions 'the Jew' as a predator of the 'Aryan race'. As it will be explained later on, 'the Jew' is systematically opposed to the 'Aryan', even though the Aryan is perceived as an initially perfect race deteriorating over time. The latter is nonetheless theorized as the central victim of the 'Jewish conspiracy' (2018, p.241): 'La France est une colonie juive' [France is a Jewish colony]. The conspiracy Céline endeavors to depict in the pamphlet majoritarily regards the management of the world's finances and politics. He explains in several parts of the text that the Jews' self-definition as martyrs does not stand and that they are only using it as pretext to undertake the world's domination: 'c'est un bidon phénoménal ce grand martyr de la race juive...' [It is a phenomenal baloney this great martyr

of the Jewish race...] (2018, p.63) and 'C'est méchant, tu sais, les martyrs...' [They are nasty, you know, the martyrs...] (2018, p.42).

Politically and financially, the 'Jewish conspiracy' is responsible of all the world's difficulties. The wars are provoked by the Jews who control all the nations. The First World War was orchestrated by them, and they sent the 'Français du sol' [French from the soil] to fight for them (2018, p.193): 'Une guerre pour la joie des Juifs! Je peux pas imaginer une humiliation qui soye pire que de se faire crever pour les youtres' [A war for the Jews' pleasure ! I cannot imagine a worse humiliation than to get oneself killed for the Jews] (2018, p.76-81) and 'Savez-vous que toutes les guerres, et pas seulement la dernière, sont préméditées par les Juifs, réglées par eux longtemps d'avance, comme papier à musique ?' [Do you know that all the wars, and not only the last one, were premeditated by the Jews, settled by them well in advance, like music paper?] (2018, p.193). He also develops his principal argument: if fewer Jews than Aryans were killed during the First World War, it is due to the fact that the men who ruled the army were Jews (2018, p.193). He states that during the Second World War to come, the Jews will militarily exploit the French to win against Hitler and not go on the battlefield themselves (Godard, 2011, p.255). He goes as far as saying on that he would prefer to be colonized by Hitler than being colonized by the Jews (2018, p.247). On top of that, the Jews control the countries and the international organizations (such as the SDN) using their political ideologies (2018, p.86). Financially speaking, Céline has no doubt that the Jews are controlling most of the world's industries. He presents in a two-page list the industries that he knows to be controlled by them ('Trust: des Banques et de l'Or. [...] De l'Alimentation [...] De l'Electricité [...] De l'Eau et du Gaz [...] De la Presse et du journalisme' [Trust: of the Banks and the Gold. [...] Of Food. [...] Of electricity. [...] Of water and gas. [...] Of the Press and journalism.]) and concludes 'Les Juifs sont bien nos tyrans' [Jews really are our tyrants] (2018, p.230-231).

However, if Céline's conception of 'the Jew' seems to be based on the recurrent clichés of the anti-Semitic propaganda of his time, he offers a personal definition of the Aryan. Even though he bases his judgment on the traditional anti-Semitic opposition of the Jews and the Aryans, the latter do not represent an ideal in his eyes (2018, p.90): 'Quant aux Aryens, c'est la détresse... Quel est l'animal, je vous demande, de nos jours plus sot?' [Concerning the Aryans, what a distress... What animal, I ask you, is more dumbfounded

nowadays?]. His most violent critique is nonetheless the fact that the French territory and people are manipulated by the Jews politically, financially and artistically, but they show no resistance to this occupation: 'Le public moderne [...] ne demande qu'à se régaler de merde juive' [The modern public [...] is only asking to really enjoy Jewish shit] (2018, p.152) or 'Il est temps, je crois, Aryens, de faire votre prière, de bien avouer que vous êtes tous condamnés, victimes heureuses, consentantes' [It is time, I think, Aryans, to say your prayer, to really admit that you are all doomed, happy victims, consenting] (2018, p.113). In *Bagatelles*, the Aryan is nonetheless superior to the Jew at all levels, biologically and intellectually. He summarizes this idea (2018, p.248) with a metonymy, 'Einsteins' standing for his global vision of 'the Jew': 'n'importe quel vinasseux ahuri truand d'Aryen [...] vaut encore cent mille fois plus, [...] et de n'importe quelle façon, [...] que vingt-cinq mille Einsteins' [any French full of cheap wine dim-witted crook of Aryan [...] is still worth a hundred thousands more, and in any way, [...] than twenty five thousands Einsteins].

e) The sources and references in *Bagatelles pour un massacre*: a unique occurrence of its time?

He attempts to depict the supposed Jewish conspiracy while using numerous sources in order to give his argumentation a scientific value. However these references are based on unreliable material, such as National Socialist's propaganda publications, anti-Semitic newspapers, or even scientific researches certifying the superiority of the 'Aryans' (Winock, 1998, p.279).

Among the sources used, Céline notably quotes the popular, nationalists and anti-Semitic periodicals *Lectures pour tous* and *Je Sais tout* (Godard, 2011, p.34), going as far as using the journals' pictures in one of the reeditions of the pamphlet in 1942 (Godard, 2011, p.35). He also quotes several times a famous text of the 1930s, the *Protocoles des Sages de Sion* [The Protocols of the Elders of Sion]. This text published at beginning of the 20th century supposedly exposed the Jews' plans to economically and politically conquer the world. André Derval (2010, p.15) explains that, whereas most of Céline's contemporaries knew those texts were false, Céline actually believed in their veracity. He used passages of the *Protocols* to validate his theory of a planned 'judaization' of the world: 'les Bourses du monde entier, les créances sur tous les gouvernements sont entre nos mains' [the stock exchanges from all over the world, the debt of all the governments are within our hands]

(2018, p.218). Among the other anti-Semitic readings that inspired the pamphlet, one can also find *Israël, son passé, son avenir* [Israel, its past, its future] written by Hubert De Vries or *Règne des Juifs* [Reign of the Jews] written by Henri-Robert Petit, both published in September 1937 (Godard, 2011, p.252).

To conclude on that point Michel Winock (1998, p.275) states that the great use of references in the pamphlet is symptomatic not only of the banality of anti-Semitism in the France of the 1930s and of the profusion of this type of literature, and says 'The little Célinian bomb was in reality only a big skyrocket in a fireworks display already tolerably well stocked at the end of the nineteenth century'. But some go as far as saying that this 'inspiration' is instead plagiarism, and that the pamphlet is nothing but a *collage* of unreferenced sources (De Benedetti, 2011, p.113). The Italian scholar Riccardo de Benedetti (2011, p.113) states: 'Se dovessimo andare alla ricerca di una vera e propria teoria della razza articolata da Céline, pensata da Céline (e non semplicemente eredita) [...] è certo che non la troveremmo.' [If we had to look for a true theory of the race articulated by Céline, thought by Céline (and not only inherited) it is sure that we would not find it.]. *Bagatelles pour un massacre* does not only reflect the literature of its time: it is the literature of its time, the gathering of a great number of sources depicting the anti-Semitism of 1930s France.

3) The publication of *Bagatelles pour un massacre* in France.

a) The history of publication of the pamphlet, from initial success to ghost texts

The pamphlet's reception has radically evolved, passing from best-seller in 1937, to defamatory text written by a disgraced writer and finally, 'ghost text' after the 1960s. *Bagatelles pour un massacre* was first published on 28th December 1937 (Derval, 2010, p.8). At the time, the book soon became a best-seller (Derval, 2010, p.9), contrasting with the catastrophic sales of *Death on the Installment plan* in 1936 (Godard, 2011, p.202). Two months after its publication, Céline wrote to his friend Karen Marie Jensen: 'Bagatelles se vend admirablement' [Bagatelles sells admirably] (Derval, 2010, p.8). Two years after publication, more than 76 000 copies had been sold (Godard, 2011, p.275) and in 1947, more than 86 000 copies (Derval, 2010, p.8). The pre-war period was synonym of great success for the writer (Winock, 1998, p.275). However, the publication of the pamphlet had durable consequences on Céline's life. He had been working for twelve years as a doctor

under the command of a Jewish doctor, and he resigned before the publication of *Bagatelles*, knowing that their collaboration would be impossible afterwards (Brami, 2002, p.205). A laboratory for which he was working in Paris also put an end to his contract (Brami, 2002, p.206). In May 1940, the author sustained the government of Vichy, and wrote for collaborationist newspapers (Brami, 2002, p.89). Céline left France out of fear on 17th June 1944 after the Normandy landings, with the help of the Third Reich's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Brami, 2002, p.69) and was hosted by Nazis' sympathizers (Brami, 2002, p.73) before reaching Copenhagen (Brami, 2002, p.84). In October 1945, a warrant was issued by the French Embassy to find Céline (Brami, 2002, p.85). He was arrested on 18th December 1945 (Brami, 2002, p.86). The charges against him related directly to the reeditions of his pamphlets, as well as the articles he wrote for collaborationist newspapers (Brami, 2002, p.89). He was sent to prison from December 1945 to June 1947 in Denmark (Brami, 2002, p.95). He denied the charges against him for the rest of his life (Brami, 2002, p.94), going as far as showing interest in the Holocaust's deniers' cause (Brami, 2002, p.94). After Céline came back to France in 1951, he had been completely forgotten and did not sell books anymore (Brami, 2002, p.51). The country in which he had published his pamphlets fifteen years before had ideologically changed, and he had been publicly repudiated for Collaboration during his absence. Unexpectedly, Gaston Gallimard, still full of remorse because he had lost the occasion to include Céline in Gallimard's catalog in the 1930s (Brami, 2002, p.31), decided to buy Céline's copyrights in 1951 and the latter accepted (Godard, 2011, p.473) provided that all of his books were published except for the anti-Semitic pamphlets *Bagatelles pour un massacre*, *Les Beaux draps*, *L'Ecole des Cadavres* (Derval, 2010, p.9) and *Mea Culpa* (Brami, 2002, p.49). Céline did not want them to appear in his catalog as he was afraid that he would not reconquer his literary success: if he never denied his anti-Semitic orientation, he was forced to hide it. After Céline's publication ban, those texts detained a particular place in French literature, evoked by Emile Brami (2002, p.49) as 'textes fantômes' [ghost texts]. In France, if the pamphlets have never been forbidden by the law, Céline's refusal to republish these texts has been strictly respected by his widow, Lucette Destouches, since his death in 1961 (Derval, 2010, p.9). She changed her mind in 2017, allowing Gallimard to publish the texts in a critical version (Besnier, 2018, para 2 of 8).

b) The reception of the pamphlet at the time of publication

Bagatelles pour un massacre became a best-seller and the French reception was rather positive (Godard, 2011, p.275). Henri Godard explains in *Céline* (2011, p.275) that 'une bonne partie de la population française, même cultivée, était, sinon au diapason de l'antisémitisme de Céline, du moins disposée à ne pas s'en choquer' [a great part of the French population, even educated, was, if not in tune with Céline's antisemitism, at least well-laid disposed to not being shocked]. Concerning the critics' reception, both Henri Godard (2011, p.276) and Michel Winock (1998, p.273) evoke the retrospectively surprising omission or banalization of the anti-Semitic content by the leftist journals. Winock even asserts that Céline 'received his strongest support from the left' (2011, p.276), for example from the satirical magazine *Le Canard Enchaîné*, notably because of the antimilitarism defended by Céline. Godard also states that some journals simply dissociated themselves from the anti-Semitic attacks of the book to focus on the parts on literary critics and the standardization of the French literature (2011, p.276). In *L'accueil critique de Bagatelles pour un massacre* (2010, p.15) [The critical reception of *Bagatelles pour un massacre*], Derval divides the positive comments in two groups: those who only approved of the literary value of the work, and those who only agreed with the ideas it conveyed. Nonetheless, the critics were far from being unanimous. The extreme right press globally appreciated the contribution of Céline to the anti-Semitic cause, but regretted his obscenities (Godard, 2011, p.276). The anti-Semitic violence of the text was also strongly condemned notably by the journalists Hanns Erich Kaminski, Victor Serge, and Charles Plinier (Derval, 2010, p.11).

c) The on-going debate on its publication

Since the pamphlets were taken out of publication in the 1950s (Derval, 2010, p.9), Céline and his works have been at the heart of national controversies. These debates have been revived in 2017 when Lucette Destouches, Céline's right holder, accepted a reedition of the three anti-Semitic pamphlets by Gallimard after 56 years of unavailability (Besnier, 2018, para 2 of 8). Gallimard's project encountered a strong opposition, notably from the French Jewish associations, which led the publisher to abandon of the reedition (Le Monde, 2018, para 7 of 9).

The reedition raised a central ethical problem as it is considered by many as an incitement to hatred towards Jews and other communities. The opponents consider it as a

threat and a celebration of the 1930's anti-Semitic France. This idea is supported by the CRIF or Conseil Représentatif des Autorités Juives de France [Representative Council of Jewish Authorities of France] (Knobel, 2018, online). On their website, the journalist Mark Knobel interviews the authors of the controversial book *Céline, la race, le Juif* (2017), Annick Duraffour and Pierre-André Taguieff, on the reedition. Their central argument is that the book is dangerous, 'plus de la propagande que de la littérature' [more propaganda than literature] and that the critics supposed to produce a commentary of the texts (Henri Godard) tend to 'disculper l'écrivain de toute dénonciation' [exonerate the writer from any kind of denunciation] (Knobel, 2018, para 4 of 19, online). The central opponent is Serge Klarsfeld, president of the association 'Fils et filles des déportés juifs de France' [Sons and daughters of the Jewish deportees of France]. He asserted that the pamphlets are 'meurtriers' [murderous] and risk to provoke or worsen a resurgence of anti-Semitism in France (Knobel, 2018, online). On 11th January 2018, the publisher Gallimard announced the suspension of the pamphlets' reedition after a month of intense polemic (Le Monde, 11 January 2018, para 1 of 9, online).

II. The Italian and English history of *Bagatelles*' translation: an 80-year story of censorship

To understand the peculiar status of *Bagatelles pour un massacre* [Trifles for a massacre] in Italy, Britain and the United States, it is necessary to redraw its place in the wider history of the translations of Céline in Italian and English. This part's aim is to describe the keen interest those target cultures have shown towards the works of Céline in translation in order to define the particularity of the pamphlet in Céline's bibliography abroad. This interest has to be defined as one-sided, since the author only had a scarce interest in literary translation and did not believe in its possibilities.

1) Céline and 'trouduction': a one-way interest

Céline's theory of translation can be introduced through the neologism he employed to designate it: 'trouduction' (Fontaine, 2010, p.134), a pun based on the French words 'traduction' [translation] and 'trou du cul' [asshole]. This pejorative neologism underlines the author's mistrust and lack of interest in translation confirmed in many of his works (Céline, 2018, p.146-147). This resentment is based on two ideas. On the one hand, translations into French are weakening the language, transforming it into an unemotional 'translationese' (Shuttleworth, 1997, p.164) which worsens the condition of the French language, considered by Céline as a dying language contaminated by foreign languages in translation, and struggling under the weight of its Greco-Latin inheritance (Fontaine, 2010, p.123). On the other hand, the translations from French into another language cannot seem to meet the expectations and render the 'langue royale' [royal language] (Fontaine, 2010, p.124) which is French. These two concepts derive from Céline's protectionist conception of the French. Céline Inglessis Margellos, one of Céline's Greek translators, creates a parallel between the author's political and linguistic standpoints (2010, p.210):

[...] celui-ci croyait que la langue française, sous sa forme authentique, plongeait ses racines dans le plus profond du sol national, qu'elle était le plus beau fleuron des Français, le glorieux étendard de leur identité. Il croyait aussi, comme les plus fervents détracteurs de l'héritage classique, [...] que contrairement à l'écrit, [...] les langues parlées, à commencer par le français, « langue royale » s'il en est, n'étaient ni interchangeables, ni

mutuellement pénétrables [...] ; pour tout dire, qu'elles n'étaient guère traduisibles.

[He believed that the French language, in its authentic form, had its roots in the deepest national ground, that it was the jewel of the French, the glorious standard of their identity. He also believed, as the strongest detractors of the classic heritage [...] that as opposed to written languages, the spoken one, French, to begin with, 'royal language' if there is one, were neither interchangeable, nor mutually penetrable [...]; to conclude, they were not translatable.]

With a logic reminiscent of his anti-Semitic theory, according to which the Aryan is being corrupted by all the flaws transmitted by the Jews, French used to be a great language, a 'langage vivant' [lively language] which transported intrinsically the greatness of its country. It was contaminated both by the 'français lycée' [High school's French] and translation, slowly transforming French into an inferior 'second language' or target language (Fontaine, 2010, p.123). This conception of translation entails two consequences. First, Céline's style cannot be translated properly. He confirmed this idea, saying that his 'style ne peut être apprécié à sa juste valeur que par un lecteur de langue française' [style can only be appreciated fully by a native French reader] (Roussin, 2005, p.331). It also induces that Céline was only interested in the pecuniary aspect of his translations. His correspondence with his American editor, Little, Brown, confirms this hypothesis. In most of their correspondence, Céline is concerned about the money and how much he is going to earn from his translations with insistent passages such as 'I hope you will sell plenty!' or even 'how many books? What is the amount? When the cash? I have spent plenty of money over here and I wished to know if I can go on spending' (Kaplan, 1994, p.379). Ironically enough, he never bothered to check the translations' quality even if he knew English well (Ifri, 2010, p.183).

2) Céline in translation: a succinct presentation of his translated works in Italy, Britain and the United States and the place of *Bagatelles pour un massacre* in Céline's translated bibliography

Donata Feroldi, one of Céline's Italian translators, underlined that 'Céline a été traduit tout de suite en Italie' [Céline has been translated right away in Italy] and 'C'est un des pays qui a traduit le plus largement les livres de Céline' [it is one of the countries that has

translated Céline the most] (Derval and Feroldi, 2010, p.358-359). In English, 'all of Céline's major novels now exist' (France, 2000, p.287) and he is even part of the few authors who benefited from retranslations (France, 2000, p.289). Thus the keen interest of Italian, British and American publishers and readers contrasts with Céline's scarce interest in translation. The following part offers a summary of the existing translations of Céline's works into Italian and into English to situate the problematic text *Bagatelles pour un massacre* in this corpus.

a) Céline in the English-speaking world

Céline's novels *Journey to the end of the night* (1932) and *Death on the Installment Plan* (1936) were translated almost immediately in Great Britain and in the USA. The first novel's rights were sold by Denoël as early as January 1933 and the English translation was published by Chatto and Windus in April 1934 in England (Mazet, 2010, p.233-235) and in the USA (Kaplan, 1994, p.374). Chatto and Windus worked conjointly with the American editor Little, Brown and the Céline's first translator, John Marks (Kaplan, 1994, p.375). *Death on the Installment plan* was consequently published in 1938 in the USA and in Britain (Kaplan, 1994, p.381). The translations of these novels highlight a crucial point concerning Céline's works in translation as they were both, at different levels in England and in USA, cleaned-up and censored versions of the source text (Mazet, 2010, p.236). This censorship concerned both the style and the content, which were morally problematic in England and in the USA (Mazet, 2010, p.239). Pascal Ifri explains while comparing the translations made by John Marks and Ralph Manheim of *Journey to the end of the night* (Ifri, 2010, p.185):

Il est évident que Marks a été obligé de prendre en compte la censure et le climat particulier qui existaient alors en Grande-Bretagne et aux Etats-Unis et qu'il n'était pas libre de rendre comme il l'aurait sans doute pu les audaces verbales de Céline.

[It is obvious that Marks was forced to take into consideration the censorship and the particular climate that existed in Great Britain and in the United States and that he was not free to render as he probably could have the verbal audacities of Céline.]

Precisely for that reason, both novels' first translations by Marks have retrospectively been criticized for their general unfaithfulness by Célinian specialists such as Ifri (2010, p.185), Mazet (2010, p.131) or Dickstein (1994, p.208). The style rendered into English is not even considered as representative of Céline's because of the heavy linguistic censorship, and also,

John Marks' numerous mistakes linked to misunderstandings of the ST. The register is not colloquial and informal anymore but rendered with rather Standard English (Ifri, 2010, p.191). One famous example of this attenuation of register is the extremely informal expression of *Journey to the end of the night* 'suintant des rouspignolles' [sweating our balls off] translated by Marks as 'all of a muck-sweat' (Ifri, 2010, p.191). However, if the linguistic problems and changes of register were probably made by the translator himself, the cut passages have been chosen by the British and American publishers, and they differ from one country to another (Mazet, 2006, pp.236-237). The American version has been censored much less than the British version (Mazet, 2010, p.237). Therefore, as Céline became more and more famous in the English-speaking world, his works called for a new translation, made by Ralph Manheim more than 30 years after their first publication (France, 2000, p.289). The shift from British English to American English is one of the main changes made by Manheim of the second translations (Kaplan and Watts, 1996, p.315-317). His version is unanimously said to be the most faithful version (Ifri, 2010, p.183).

However, the fact that Céline's works were very successful in the English-speaking world raises a central question when studying such a controversial author, who defined himself as 'pas un homme à idées. [...] un homme à style' [not a man of thoughts. A man of style.] (1987, p.67). It implies that most of Céline's English-speaking readers did not have access to a close version of his style before the 1970s; they might have adhered to his ideas or at least his vision of the world more than his stylistic innovations (Ifri, 2011, p.71).

Bagatelles pour un massacre in England and in the United States

All of Céline's works have been translated into English, sometimes more than once. *Bagatelles pour un massacre* (1937), along with the two pamphlets *Les beaux draps* [A nice mess] (1941) and *L'école des cadavres* [School for corpses] (1938), is part of the very few untranslated works into English. The author seemed to have predicted the inadequacy of *Bagatelles* for the English-speaking world and its socio-cultural context. In a letter to his translator John Marks, Céline explained as he wrote *Bagatelles pour un massacre* [Trifles for a massacre] in October 1937 (Mazet, 2010, p.262):

Le prochain livre? Hum! Les Juifs y sont bien mal traités ! Les anglais pas très bien non plus ! Il n'est pas destiné, je le crains, à me faire beaucoup

d'amis, mais certes beaucoup d'ennemis bien acharnés ! Qui le publiera en Angleterre ? Je ne vois guère d'éditeur !

[The next book? Hum ! The Jews are poorly treated in it ! The English as well! It is not meant, I am afraid, to make me a lot of friends, rather a lot of bitter enemies! Who will publish it in England? I cannot think of a publisher!]

He was right not to expect the same success for *Bagatelles* in English than in French. The correspondence between Céline and his American publisher Little, Brown allows for one to clearly understand the reasons of the refusal. The author sent his manuscript to Little, Brown a day before it was published in France, in December 1937 (Kaplan, 1994, p.381). In the letter accompanying it, Céline confirms the doubt he was describing to John Marks earlier: '*Bagatelles pour un massacre* – very strongly anti-Jewish. So – I doubt if you like to have it' (Kaplan, 1994, p.409). Furthermore he asked for the book to be translated by Robert Allerton Parker, since his official translator and friend John Marks was translating *Death on the installment plan* to be published in August 1938. His agent's answer is straightforward (Kaplan, 1994, pp.410-411):

My dear Céline,

We have now read the copy of the French edition of your new book, "*Bagatelles pour un massacre*" which you sent and you will not be surprised when we tell you that it does not seem advisable for us to contract with you for American publication.

As you indicated in your letter, this is a four-hundred page attack on the Jews written with your usual vigor and violence. It does not appear to contain any narrative of personal experiences except in the last forty pages. We feel that you have made statements which are unsupported by evidence and that its publication here will seriously damage your reputation as an outstanding author.

We hope, therefore, that you will abandon the idea of an English translation.

Hebert F. Jenkins' letter is a key document in the history of the pamphlet's publication in translation as well as in France. It seems to foreshadow the ethical, literary, political issues at stake with the publication of such a book. His agent's accusations are the same the work

faced in 2018: the text is nothing but an uncontrolled rage against the Jews. Jenkins also underlines the fact that the book is unclassifiable. It is neither a novel nor an autobiography: according to what standards should it be read, translated and sold? Finally, he strongly encourages Céline 'to abandon the idea of an English translation' as it would 'seriously damage' his 'reputation as an outstanding author'. And *Bagatelles pour un massacre* has indeed never been translated officially into English. The letter's conclusion is thus central as it seems to foresee the status the work now has in England and in the United States, an invisible if not forgotten book, and somehow the unfaithful image of the author tailored for the English-speaking target audience. The American scholar Dickstein said about Céline during a seminar around the problematic cultural transmission surrounding the French author's work: 'If Céline couldn't carry over the rhythm and virtuosity of his language into English, neither did he bear the heavy baggage of his social origins and political sins' (1994, p.208). Choosing not to translate the pamphlet into English was therefore orientating the English target audience further towards a stylistically and morally clean author that Céline was not.

b) Céline in Italian

Italy is probably one of the countries which translated Céline the most (Derval and Feroldi, 2010, p.358-359). The history of Céline's works in Italy can be retraced thanks to the bibliography established by Pietro Benzoni (2010, pp.20-23). The first works of Céline have been translated by the mysterious Alex Alexis and published by the Milanese Corbaccio (Benzoni, 2010, p.20): *Viaggio al termine della notte* [Journey to the end of the night] was published in 1933 and *Bagattelle per un massacro* [Trifles for a massacre], in 1938. However Benzoni (2010, p.4) explains that even though Céline has been translated precociously in Italy, he has not really been discovered by the Italian target audience before Giorgio Caproni's renowned translations of *Morte a credito* [Death on the Installment Plan] for Garzanti in 1964. Benzoni concludes (2010, p.4):

C'est donc la traduction de Caproni [...] qui représente le vrai départ de la diffusion de l'œuvre romanesque célinienne, qui sera par la suite presque entièrement traduite en italien ; au point que, dans certains cas, on dispose maintenant de plusieurs versions d'un même roman ; au point que l'on peut affirmer que Céline, en Italie, demeure, dans l'absolu, l'un des écrivains français le plus lu, le plus cité et le plus traduit.

[It is thus Caproni's translation which represents the true start of the diffusion of Céline's novels, which will then be almost entirely translated into Italian; to the extent that we now have several versions of a same novel; to the extent that we can assert that Céline, in Italy, remains, strictly speaking, one the most read, most cited and most translated French writers.]

The scholar Maurizio Makovec confirms Benzoni's theory in his book *Céline in Italia*. If Céline was translated in Italy from the 1930s onwards, he was strongly criticized for his nihilism that did not comply with the Fascist regime expectations (2005, p.18). Moreover, the Italian cultural world was more closed and provincial than in France in the 1930s, which partially limited the impact of *Voyage au bout de la nuit* [Journey to the end of the night] in translation. After Céline had been almost forgotten in the post-war era, Makovec (2005, p.18) asserts that Caproni's renowned translation of *Mort à Crédit* [Death on the installment plan] in 1964 introduced by the famous scholar Carlo Bo provoked a rediscovery of Céline's works in Italy.

In an approximate 80-year span, more than 20 different Italian translators have worked on Céline's bibliography. The most important translator remains Giuseppe Guglielmi, along with Gianni Celati and Ernesto Ferrero (Makovec, 2005, p.18), who translated seven of Céline's novels into Italian (Benzoni, 2010, p.20-21). Most of his translators agree on the main difficulty: his works are written in colloquial French, with the use of argot and non-grammatical expressions, as the omission of the negation. However Italian does not seem to have a satisfying equivalence for it, as mentioned by Giorgio Caproni (1996, p.55):

son convinto [...] che una lingua italiana atta a tradurre Céline sia ancora da inventare. [...] Un'invenzione [...] che avrebbe potuto fare coi secoli il popolo, se avessimo avuto una storia unitaria e quindi [...] una lingua popolare [...] unica da un capo all'altro della penisola.

[I am sure [...] that an Italian language able to translate Céline has still to be invented. [...] An invention that the people could have done with the passing of the centuries, if we had had a united history and therefore [...] a unique popular language identical from one part to another of the peninsula.

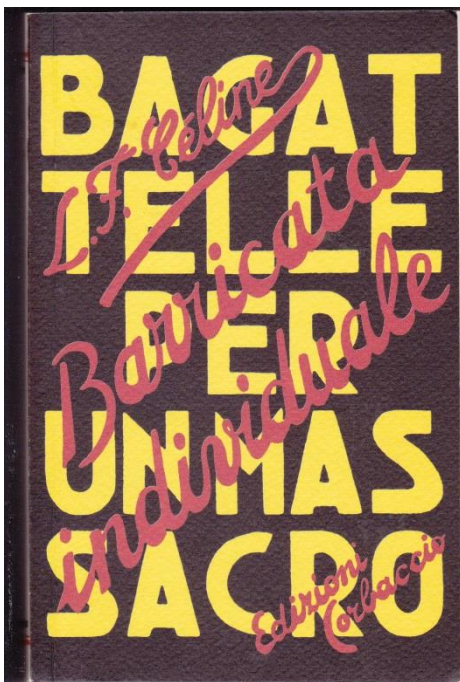
Imitating Céline's popular language is therefore prevented by the nature of Italian itself: unlike French, standardized many centuries before, the popular language in Italy is embodied by the use of regional dialects. Translating Céline's stylistic innovation through dialects would therefore create new geographical and social networks of meaning within the texts that did not exist in the ST. Ultimately, it could prevent access to the texts because of their linguistic difficulties.

Another interesting aspect is that if his novels benefited from several translations, the pamphlets too have been translated more than once in Italy. This is the case of *Mea Culpa*, translated three times in less than 20 years, by Delfina Provenzali in 1975, Giorgio Raboni in 1982, and Flaviano Pizzi in 1990 (Benzoni, 2010, p.20).

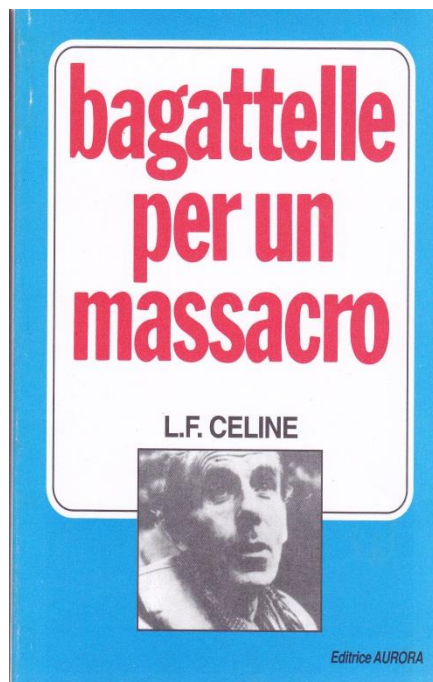
Bagatelles pour un massacre in Italy

The destiny of *Bagatelles pour un massacre* [Trifles for massacre] in Italy is representative of the interest the country has always had for Céline. It differs radically from the treatment the pamphlet received in the English-speaking world, and even in France. Whereas the pamphlet has been out of publication in France (Derval, 2010, p.9), three different translators worked on it in Italy and it was published four times. The first translation was issued only a few months after the ST, and it was considered as Céline's second publication in Italy after *Viaggio al termine della notte* [Journey to the end of the night] in 1933 since *Morte a Credito* [Death on the Installment Plan] went completely unnoticed (Makovec, 2005, p.31). The publisher Corbaccio had the text translated by Alex Alexis during the 'Ventennio fascista' [the Fascist period] and it was issued in April 1938 (De Benedetti, 2011, p.86). The pamphlet was reedited several times before being taken out of publication in 1945. This edition is peculiar because of the major censorship applied to fit the regime's requirements. A third of it had been cut (De Benedetti, 2011, p.88). This version will be analyzed further in the next subpart. Then, in 1976, an anonymous translation was published by Aurora, based in Caserta in Campania, preceded by an introduction by Francesco Leonetti, Italian writer and extreme Leftist activist during the struggles in May 1968 (Makovec, 2005, p.148). Makovec (2008, p.148) defines this edition as illegal. The only legal translation of *Bagatelles pour un massacre* published after the Fascist edition was the edition Guanda of 1981 (Makovec, 2005, p.148).

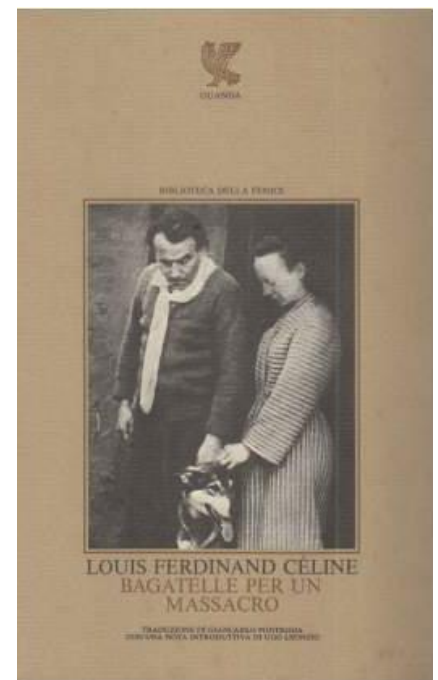
Guanda decided to republish the pamphlet with a new translation that would not distort the ST as the Fascist regime's version. They first asked for the translator Giovanni Raboni to work on it, but he refused. It is not known whether he had other projects or if his refusal was an ethical choice (De Benedetti, 2011, p.88). Giancarlo Pontiggia, a young poet, was chosen to translate the pamphlet for the third time (De Benedetti, 2011, p.88). The book was available for three months, with only a few thousand copies sold (De Benedetti, 2011, p.108). Céline's right-owner protected the book in translation just as she did in France. She confirmed her decision in the book *Céline Secret* (2001, p.128): 'J'ai interdit leur réédition et, sans relâche, intenté des procès à tous ceux qui, pour des raisons plus ou moins avouables, les ont clandestinement fait paraître, en France comme à l'étranger' [I have forbidden their reedition and, tirelessly, sued all of those who, for more or less respectable reasons, published them secretly, in France and abroad]. Thus this third publication led to a judiciary case in April 1982 called 'Destouches Almanzor Lucie VS Ugo Guanda 7749' and the book was withdrawn before a trial even had to be started (De Benedetti, 2011, p.6). Céline and his pamphlet gained an infamous notoriety with the judiciary case's scandal (Makovec, 2005, p.149): 'Non si è mai parlato nel nostro paese così tanto di Céline come in quel periodo' [No one has ever talked as much about Céline in our country as during this period].



Corbaccio (1938)



Aurora (1976)



Guanda (1981)

3) Case study: the translation of *Bagatelles pour un massacre* [Trifles for a massacre] during the Fascist period in Italy

This case study will be dedicated to the first Italian translation of *Bagatelles pour un massacre* [Trifles for a massacre] published in April 1938 by Corbaccio. This version is one of its most singular translations as it was produced during il 'Ventennio fascista' [Fascist period] and reduced to 2/3 of the ST in order to fit the various requirements determined by Mussolini's regime (De Benedetti, 2011, p.86). First a short history of the publishing business in Fascist Italy and of the publisher Corbaccio will be presented in order to situate the origins of the censorship applied to the pamphlet. The censored passages will be described thematically. Then, the conclusion will explain the insertion of the text in the wider process of national construction of Fascist Italy.

In his book *Censorship and literature in fascist Italy* (2007), Guido Bonsaver presents for the first time a comprehensive history of censorship under Fascism. One of the main characteristics of the regime's imposed censorship is that it did not follow precise rules as it was unsure of the changing moral and civil values it wanted to embody and the different censoring actors disagreed on several aspects (Bonsaver, 2007, p.3). Thus there is no stable pattern to analyze translations produced under the Fascist regime. They have to be analyzed individually to delineate the consequences of the censorship applied to them and make assumptions on the regime's interests in it.

With the beginning of Fascism in 1922, the control that already existed on the press slowly began to take into consideration published books and later on, translations, to regulate the 'fascistization of institutions and public opinion' in Italy (Bonsaver, 2007, p.18). What started as a simple 'Ufficio Stampa' [Press Office] in 1924 became the 'State Secretariat for the Press and Propaganda' in 1934 and finally, the 'Ministry for the Press and Propaganda' in June 1935 (Bonsaver, 2007, p.114). The latter was clearly inspired by Hitler's regime (Bonsaver, 2007, p.120). Technically, the censorship in the 1930s was applied following a certain number of principles defined in the Article 112 of the *Testo Unico di Pubblica Sicurezza* [Single Text on Public Security] (1926): censorship was required 'if the publication contains any elements that are contrary to the political, social, and economic organization of the state, or damaging to the prestige of the State and public property, or offensive to national sentiment' (Bonsaver, 2007, p.37). At the beginning, the prefects acted

as the regime's censors with the purpose to read and report eventual problems. From 1931 on, they had to send three copies of each book published to the Ministry of the Interior (Bonsaver, 2007, p.23). As explained by Bonsaver, 'Mussolini had already begun a progressive centralization of the control over cultural production' (2007, p.22). Foreign literature was not spared from the state's control. Two types of books were particularly monitored, 'foreign authors deemed unsuitable to be circulated either in the original or in translation' and 'Italian anti-fascist exiles published abroad' (Bonsaver, 2007, p.88). This definition did not apply to Céline's pamphlet as it was eventually translated. Another crucial characteristic of Fascist censorship is that no pre-publication authorization was required to buy the rights of a foreign book and publish it (Bonsaver, 2007, p.89). However, if the book did not fit the regime's expectations, the Italian publishers faced consequent losses (Rundle, 2005, p.68). Between 1934 and 1939, publishers thus started to work using 'a preventive form of censorship' on their translated works (Bonsaver, 2007, p.101). Christopher Rundle's essay 'Importazione avvelenatrice: la traduzione e la censura nell'Italia fascista' (2005) [Poisoned importation: translation and censorship in Fascist Italy] situates the first real campaign against translations by the Italian regime in 1934-1935, that is three years before the publication of *Bagattelle per un massacro* [Trifles for a massacre]. In January 1937, the Ministry of Propaganda started dealing with translations separately from the rest of the published literature: publishers needed to ask for an authorization before buying the rights of a book. Céline's pamphlet must therefore have been authorized by the government prior to its publication.

The publisher Corbaccio, which published *Trifles for a massacre* in 1938, was known by the regime's censors. Created in 1918 and managed by the socialist Enrico dell'Oglio (Bonsaver, 2007, p.39), it was part, along with Gobetti and Monanni, of the three publishers declared as 'anti-fascists' as they dealt with 'anarchist philosophers and socialist intellectuals' (Bonsaver, 2007, p.27). Corbaccio's series were divided between commercial novels and political essays. It focused on the anti-Fascist debate and therefore became victim of the regime's repression which forbade or took out of publication several of his books such as Antonio Pescazzoli's *Il fascismo senza mito* [Fascism without myth] in 1925 (Bonsaver, 2007, p.40). Bonsaver's theory is that Corbaccio decided to 'guarantee the survival of his publishing enterprise by toning down the anti-Fascist content of his list' and

that 'had almost given up any hope to give voice, however indirectly, to criticism against the regime' (2007, p.42). Céline's pamphlet is published in April 1938, in this political and editorial context.

The situation of *Corbaccio* at the time of its publication explains the important censorship applied to the pamphlet. The text was modelled, like most of the published material of its time, according to the Fascist regime's expectations. The following part's aim is to summarize and analyze the consequences of censorship on the text and its implications.

Alexis' translation of *Bagatelles* is striking mainly because of the numerous and repeated linguistic attenuations. The translator seems to have noticed the many translation problems surrounding Céline. At the end of his translation, he decided to leave an entire page in French with a footnote saying: 'Abbiamo lasciato in francese questo passaggio "delirante" e intraducibile, che può dare un'idea dello stile originale dell'opera' [We decided to leave in French this 'crazy' and untranslatable passage, that can give an idea of the original style of the work]. This unusual occurrence is a first hint at the translator's consciousness of the difficulty of translating Céline's style, probably worsened by the editorial and political guidance he had to follow which forbade him to translate the text as he could have. The fact that this untranslated passage comes 25 pages before the end could also appear as a partial confession of failure: the choice of this particular passage as 'untranslatable' is far from evident, considering the stylistical complexity of the entire book. Additionally, Alexis' translation has many stylistic qualities and respects faithfully the Célinian punctuation, with occurrences such as '!...'. However the book is considerably toned down. He essentially expurgated the sexual, scatological and rude passages. The attenuations of those lexical fields can be justified by the regime's rules on morality and decency of the *Testo Unico di Pubblica Sicurezza* [Unique text of Public Security] of 1926: 'offensivi del sentimento nazionale, del pudore o della pubblica decenza' [against the national sentiment, prudishness and public decency]. There are too many occurrences of censorship for all of them to be mentioned here, however, two general tendencies can be observed throughout the translation. The first is a constant attenuation of the sexual verbs and expressions. For instance, 'encuguler la moumouche' [to fuck the fly] (Céline, 2018, p.9), which means doing a lot of efforts for a small result, is changed into 'fare l'amorino col moscerino' [to make love with the small fly] (Céline, 1938, p.9). When an 'éjaculation'

[ejaculation] (Céline, 2018, p.88) is mentioned, the Italian version only evokes a 'sfogo' [outburst] (Céline, 1938, p.91). Later on, 'une autre paire de couilles' [another pair of balls] (Céline, 2018, p.155) is transformed into 'un altro paio di maniche' [another pair of sleeves] (Céline, 1938, p.187). The most probable hypothesis is that these attenuations were carried out by the translator himself, who must have suspected the incompatibility of these passages with the editorial policies. However, the other tendency is not as evident. The most vulgar passages have simply been cut, leaving an inconsistent TT. These cuts were most probably ordered by the publisher after the translation was complete in order to ensure the publication. It concerns notably sexually explicit passages, as the passage in which a character states 'Toutes les mignonnes veulent se taper des youtres' [all the girls want to bang Jews] (Céline, 2018, p.38) which simply disappears in the TT. Another one concerning the masturbation of a dog by a man is censored (Céline, 2018, p.39). Finally, Céline extensively describes what he considers to be the intrinsic quality of women: 'La femme est une traîtresse chienne née... [...] La femme, surtout la française, raffole des crépus [...], ils vous ont des bites surprenantes !' [Women are infinite traitors, born bitch... [...] Women, especially French, are fond of bearded men, [...] they have surprising cocks!] (Céline, 2018, p.77). The whole passage has been cut in the middle of the text. The same tendencies can be observed with the scatological passages of the text. The sentence 'Elle pourra chier autant qu'elle voudra, la critique' [Critics can shit all they want] (Céline, 2018, p.256) is attenuated in the TT : 'Potrà spettegolare tutto che vuola, la Critica...' [Criticisms can gossip all they want...] (Céline, 1938, p.288).

If the linguistic censorship is important, the most evident cuts concern the political situation. The references to Mussolini, Fascism or Italy are systematically taken out of the text, as well as the passages on Hitler. One is not surprised to see the passages 'Nous sommes en plein fascisme juif' [We are in the middle of Jewish Fascism] (2018, p.149) and 'le Juif est dictateur dans l'âme, 25 fois comme Mussolini!' [The Jew is a dictator in the soul, 25 times like Mussolini!] censored in Corbaccio's translation. However, even the most innocent references to Italian history are carefully removed. This is the case with 'l'empire romain' [the Roman Empire] (Céline, 2018, p.217) mentioned alongside the Egyptian empire and many others, is purely and simply erased from the list. Later on, when Céline evokes the complete stranglehold of the Jews in politics and economics, 'Milan' (2018, p.127) is

removed in an enumeration. The Fascist ideological and political positions also forced the publisher or the translator to censor the passages on Hitler, Mussolini's inspiration. (Bonsaver, 2009, p.109). To mention some examples, 'devant les mitrailleuses d'Hitler' (Céline, 2018, p.76) [in front of Hitler's machine guns] simply become 'dinanzi alle mitragliatrici' [before the machine guns] (Céline, 1938, p.94) and sentences such as 'ces croisades hitlériennes' [those Hitlerian crusades] (Céline, 2018, p.77), 'bien plus féroces qu'Hitler!' [even more ferocious than Hitler] (Céline, 2018, p. 251) are taken out of the TT. Understanding why the pamphlet was even accepted for publication is not an easy task. Many of Céline's statements are not consistent with the Fascist ideology. Nonetheless the treatment of Italy and the Fascism in the translation leads one to assume that as long as Italy is not at stake, strong criticism can be tolerated. The pamphlet being a book dealing essentially with the French situation, it was not a particularly virulent enemy for the Fascist regime.

Finally, this censored translation is deeply marked by the manipulation enforced by the Fascist regime in its creation of a national identity. The censored passages on religion and anti-militarism are representative of the will of creating a literature that would instruct the Italian people according to the regime's expectations, and more importantly, that would not introduce contradicting ideologies. For instance, there were no official links between the Vatican and the Italian Propaganda's organisms but it is clear, through the influence it had on the publications of this period that Catholicism had to be dealt with in a very careful way (Bonsaver, 2007, p.128). The criticisms of Catholicism are thus eradicated from the pamphlet's translation. Once again, the occurrences are attenuated when possible: 'un enfant de Marie' [a child of Mary] (Céline, 2018, p.58) becomes 'un tipo qualunque' [a random guy] (Céline, 1938, p.76). But considering the great number of complete cuts, religion appears to be particularly sensitive. The following occurrences were all removed in the target text: 'Une entourloupe pire que le pucelage de la Sainte Vierge!' [a dirty trick, worse than the Blessed Virgin's virginity!] (Céline, 2018, p.76), 'Et Lisieux !... et le Pape !' [And Lisieux !... and the Pope !] (Céline, 2018, p.131), 'Le médecin du pape doit être juif... c'est une tradition... Le Vatican est un ghetto comme les autres [...] quand on ne veut plus d'eux [...] où les Juifs [...] trouvent-ils refuge ? Mais au Vatican !' [The Pope's doctor must be Jew... it is a tradition... The Vatican is a ghetto just like any other... when we do not want

them anymore, when do the Jews find a refuge? Well, at the Vatican!] (Céline, 2018, p.239). The second theme, anti-militarism, is more subtly dealt with. Bonsaver explained in his book: 'Fascist Italy was no place for anti-war sentiment' (2007, p.90). The following passage is representative of that trend, as it was completely cut:

On se réglera avec vos os... On ira en cars admirer les lieux où vous fûtes sonnés pour les Juifs, on ira guincher sur vos tombes, vos épouses chéries et les youtres. Ils viendront sur vos charniers dégueuler le dimanche, on s'enculera sur votre martyr. Ce sera comme ça la survie, le souvenir ! (Céline, 2018, p.79)

[We will make a feast of your bones... We will go by bus to admire the places where you were killed by the Jews, we will dance on your tombs, your beloved wives and the Jews. They will come on your mass grave to puke, we will fuck on your martyr. Your survival, your remembrance will be like that!]

To conclude, the translation of *Bagatelles pour un massacre* [Trifles for a massacre] is problematic as the drastic censorship apparent throughout the whole book can make one wonder why the book was even translated. The only spared themes are anti-Semitism, which represents most of the work, and the criticism of communism and the USSR. Those themes seemed to fulfill the regime's criteria regarding what served the national and ideological construction of Italy. One of the few cuts concerning communism seems to confirm that hypothesis. At the beginning of the pamphlet, Céline says with an ironic tone:

Moi je me sens communiste sans un atome d'arrière-pensée ! Car vois-tu chaque jour communiste davantage ! aujourd'hui plus qu'hier et bien moins que demain... Vous connaissez ce mirliton ? Mais alors tout le monde ! et ensemble... j'insiste ! sans exception !... aucune ! sans sursis ! ... pas une fausse note ! pas un soupir dans ce grand chœur ! Je me sens communiste de toutes fibres ! de tous les os ! [...] (Céline, 2018, p.70)

[I feel communist without any kind of second thought ! Because you see, every day a little more communist! Today more than yesterday and much less than tomorrow... Do you know this tune? But everyone! And together... I insist! Without exception!... None! Without reprieve!... Not a wrong note! Not a sigh in this great choir! I feel communist from every fiber! Every bone!]

If one looks at the rest of the work, which strongly criticizes the whole communist system, this extract is most certainly ironic. However the Italian edition does not include this passage whereas it included all the other parts dealing with criticisms of communism. Whether the text was misunderstood by the translator or the publisher is a possibility, but they might as well have taken this passage out fearing that it would be misunderstood as a direct invitation to communism. To conclude on the anti-Semitic passages being almost all kept, it is necessary to mention that by the time the book was published in 1938, the Fascist regime was getting closer to the German policies, notably regarding racial laws (De Benedetti, 2011, p.89). The text was toned down, as Italy was not yet used to Céline's virulence, but the content was only introducing what was going to happen in Italy by the end of the year 1938 (De Benedetti, 2011, p.90).

III. Reading *Bagatelles pour un massacre* in translation today: issues of relevance and the inefficiency of institutional censorship

This chapter's aim is defining the numerous theoretical issues at stake with *Bagatelles* in translation while proposing possible readings of it today to finally discuss the inconsistency and maybe inefficiency of censorship at the time of new technologies.

The following quote of Lucette Destouches (Robert, 2001, p.128-129), Céline's rights-owner, brings out the central themes to be dealt with in this chapter:

Ces pamphlets ont existé dans un certain contexte historique, à une époque particulière, et ne nous ont apporté à Louis et à moi que du malheur. Ils n'ont de nos jours plus de raison d'être.

Encore maintenant, de par justement leur qualité littéraire, ils peuvent, auprès de certains esprits, détenir un pouvoir maléfique que j'ai, à tout prix, voulu éviter.

[These pamphlets existed in a certain historical context, in a particular period, and they only brought misfortune to Louis and me. They have do not have any purpose today.

Even now, because of their literary quality, they can, to some minds, hold an evil power that I, at all costs, wanted to avoid.]

The 'certain historical context' mentioned is the global anti-Semitic pre-Holocaust era in France. In translation, the discrepancy between the time of publication of the ST and the times of its subsequent translations can be defined through an analysis of the evolution of its reception through time. The peculiar case of this pamphlet and its translations will lead one to define the strong stylistical and ideological idiosyncrasy of the text to finally question its potentially dangerous nature preventing its publication in France and in translation. This analysis will deal as much with the stylistical danger as the ideological one, as Céline's powerful style is often conceived as a threatening carrier of its propagandistic content.

The second part of this chapter will question the affirmation of Lucette Destouches according to whom the pamphlets 'do not have any purpose today' and consider the possible alternatives to the 70-year-old censorship (Robert, 2001, p.129). *Bagatelles* could not be read by the actual target audience as Céline's contemporaries would have. One

possible way of reading it today would be to integrate it in the international duty of remembrance. Finally, this part will focus on the contradictory effects of censorship, transforming the literary text into an object of fascination because of its inaccessibility.

Finally, the third part will deal with the issue of censorship at the time of new technologies leading to contradictions in publication. The pamphlet has acquired a particular place online with the emergence of numerous anonymous and/or committed translations supporting notably the anti-Semitic causes. Furthermore this part will present the conspiracy theorist publisher Omnia Veritas which offered a reedition of the pamphlets in 2018 in French, English, and Italian.

1) *Considering Bagatelles pour un massacre today, in France, Italy, USA and England*

a) *Bagatelles pour un massacre: a text too idiosyncratic to be translated at all?*

In the early 1990s, André Lefevere and Susan Bassnett instigated the 'cultural turn' which introduced the focus on the cultural, historical and ideological implications of translation and 'the power exercised in and on the publishing industry in pursuit of specific ideologies' (Munday, 2008, p.167). In the pamphlet's case, this cultural angle of translation studies is necessary in order to understand the ethical issues at stake in its translations and publications through time.

The Professor of Translation Studies Christina Schäffner (2003, p.24) proposes a definition of the importance of the socio-political context on translation:

Translators work in specific socio-political contexts, producing target texts for specific purposes [...]. This social conditioning is reflected in the linguistic structure of the target text. That is, the target text will reveal the impact of social, ideological, discursive, and linguistic conventions, norms and constraints.

One could add that these 'socio-political contexts' and 'specific purposes' vary through time and influence the reception of the source text and target texts. As explained by Nicholas Karolides (2011, p.vii): 'The book does not change: the social climate does'. In other words, the ST and its translations are interpreted according to extra-textual material (literary criticism, political and/or social orientation of a given culture) according to which various power relationships, such as censorship, can be developed around a given work.

The time of publication of *Bagatelles* in France is in itself problematic. Michel Winock (1998, p.275) defines this period as follows: 'in the France of the 1930s, anti-Semitism enjoyed real respectability; it belonged to a cultural and political tradition that was dictatorial; it was a commonplace passion'. This passion was unequal in the various countries in which the pamphlet was translated, and differed radically in post-War France itself. In Italy, anti-Semitism at the end of the thirties is 'estraneo alla cultura dominante del Ventennio, e per estensione, dell'identità culturale in Italia' [foreign to the dominant culture of the Fascist period, and by extension, to the cultural identity in Italy] (De Benedetti, 2011, p.99). The gap between the popularity of anti-Semitism in France and in the United States was underlined by Céline's publisher Jenkins in his letter of refusal in January 1938: 'It does not seem advisable for us to contract with you for American publication' (Kaplan, 1994, p.410). The pamphlet's short-lived period of political and ideological relevance in France (from 1937 to 1945) might have been even shorter in translation. Right after the War, with the slow growth of public awareness towards the horrors of the Holocaust, *Bagatelles* has been interpreted in a radically different way (Winock, 1998, p.75). The trial of Céline, at the Courts of Purge in 1945, did not try the author because of presumed acts of collaboration but rather for the publication of the pamphlet (Winock, 1998, p.275). To be precise, the first edition of 1937 was not the one at stake. The Court reproached to Céline to have accepted its reedition in 1943, during the Occupation (De Benedetti, 2011, p.55). The diachronic factor is crucial here, as the accusations underline the fact that the first edition of the pamphlet was published in a time in which publishing such a text was not considered as particularly meaningful, whereas the second edition of 1943 could have been considered as an adhesion or even a form of collaboration to the Nazis' projects (De Benedetti, 2011, p.56). Riccardo de Benedetti asserts that the status of the pamphlet's translations might be even more problematic than the ST's second edition. He takes the examples of the German, Polish and Italian translations, all published in 1938 in countries that were enacting racial laws and using the text as part of the anti-Semitic propaganda (2011, p.58). The analysis of the Fascist translation in the previous chapter seems to confirm this hypothesis, as the anti-Semitic tirades are the only untouched passages of this considerably expurgated translation. The pamphlet's reception therefore evolved significantly overtime in France and abroad.

Through time, it has completely disappeared from the French literary market, except for the rare editions of 1937 and 1943 (De Benedetti, 2011, p.14). They have yet never been published officially into English (Kaplan, 1994, p.381), and the Italian translations are considered commercial failures (Makovec, 2005, p.31). One could therefore wonder if *Bagatelles* is, stylistically and ideologically speaking, too idiosyncratic to be translated at all.

b) The shift of target audience

The evolution of the work's reception through time is also characterized by a radical shift of target audience, which eventually led to a hierarchical classification of the readers that should or should not have access to it in the source language and in translation. At the time of publication of the ST, it was considered in France as a mass pamphlet, adapted to any kind of reader, as confirmed by the jovial and light-hearted publicity created for its publication: 'pour bien rire dans les tranchées' [to have a good laugh in the trenches] (Godard, 2011, p.155). The number of copies sold (86 000) between 1937 and 1947 in France also attests the large audience aimed at (Derval, 2010, p.8). The important expurgation of the Fascist translation bear witness of the will of the Italian dictatorial regime of making the work accessible to anyone by censoring it to make it conform to the regime's promulgation of racial laws, somehow integrating it in its future political plans (De Benedetti, 2011, p.86). However, in the English-speaking world, it never had this kind of status before and during Second World War because of Chatto & Windus' and Little, Brown Co. refusal of publication (Kaplan, 1994, p.409). In those countries, one can assume that the work already was qualified as dangerous and problematic, a status it only started to reach in Italy and France after the 1950s. In what one could consider as the pamphlet's 'second life' or post-War reception, the attempts to publish it once more in Italy in the 1980s (De Benedetti, 2011, p.1) and in France in 2018 (Besnier, 2018, para 2 of 8) underlined the reconsideration of the target audience of the work. Contemporarily, this pamphlet tends to be defined as dangerous, because of the virulent anti-Semitic tirades proffered by Céline in his idiosyncratic and powerful style, as explained by Michel Winock (1998, p.279): 'Bagatelles represents the marriage between the most advanced literature and the most reactionary prejudices'. The malleability of the target audience seems to be at the heart of Céline's right holder's justifications of her refusal to republish the pamphlet: 'Encore maintenant, de par

justement leur qualité littéraire, ils peuvent, auprès de certains esprits, détenir un pouvoir maléfique'. [Even now, because of their literary quality, they can, to some minds, hold an evil power] (Robert, 2001, p.129).

The scholars Henri Godard and Patrick Kéchichian, both in favor of the French reedition of *Bagatelles*, explained that there would be two ways of considering the pamphlet's publication today. The first one would be to wrongly define it as a celebration of Céline's ideology, and the second to present it as an object of study, published along with a consequent critical apparatus ('Céline et nous', *Répliques*, France Culture, 19 February 2011). However, there does not seem to be an in-between: the text is either dangerous or to be studied. This idea presupposes two distinct target audiences: a malleable one, which could be wrongly influenced by the publication of the pamphlet without any addition of critical material, and the scholars, supposedly able to analyze it as they are aware of its socio-political context and towards whom the potential critical versions seem to be particularly oriented. This distinction only follows the hierarchy which naturally imposed itself after the text was taken out of publication. The same principles ruled the publication of Adolf Hitler's *Mein Kampf* in its source country, Germany (Karolides, 2011, p.120). De Benedetti defines *Bagatelles*'s dual target audience as follows (2011, p.29):

[...] quel duplice regime che distinguerebbe tra le prerogative dello studioso, libero di accedere dove e quando vuole alle fonti di ciò che critica ed esamina, e quelle del lettore, vittima di interdizioni che altri hanno decretato in virtù di una presunta superiore capacità di valutazione e moralità.

[This double regime which would differentiate between the prerogatives of the scholars, free to access where and when they want to the sources they are criticizing and examining, and those of the readers, victims of prohibitions that others have enacted on the basis of presupposed superior ability of evaluation and morality.]

Paradoxically, if the pamphlet is unavailable in Italian and English, a wide range of extra-textual sources (literary criticism, collection of the sources used by Céline in the pamphlet, and essays) is available in those languages on a book that no one should potentially have access to (De Benedetti, 2011, p.29). In France, one can notably mention André Derval's *L'accueil critique de Bagatelles pour un massacre* [The Critical reception of

Trifles for a massacre] (2010). In Italy, De Benedetti's book *Céline e il caso delle Bagatelle* (2011) is entirely dedicated to the pamphlet's history of publication and analyzes its content thanks to Giancarlo Pontiggia's translation that has since long been taken out of publication. The situation is even more paradoxical in the English-speaking countries, in which one can have access to the numerous books of the scholar Alice Kaplan's on the case of the pamphlet, such as *Reproductions of Banality: Fascism, Literature and French intellectual life* (1986), without having ever had access to the text itself.

c) Can a 70-year old text still be considered as dangerous?

This hierarchy of the target audience brings the question of the potential dangerous aspect of literature. This distinction between the scholars and the 'normal reader', potential victim of the pamphlet's argumentation, implies its intrinsic danger. This part will question the forms of danger that can be attributed to the pamphlet in French and in translation.

The unavailability of *Bagatelles* in translation is due to both preventive and repressive forms of censorship. In Italy, with the 1980s' editions, one can observe a repressive form of censorship operated 'after the printing or publishing of specific material, which is considered subversive or damaging to the common good, in order to repress or ban it from circulating around the country' (Leonardi, 2008, p.84), the authorities being in this case Céline's right holder (see the trial Destouches Almanzor Lucie VS Ugo Guanda 7749 in the second chapter). In the case of the American and English markets, Little Brown Co.'s refusal in the United States (Kaplan, 1994, pp.410-411) appears rather as a preventive censorship in which 'authorities review any material before publication or dissemination in order to prevent, alter, or delay its appearance' (Leonardi, 2008, p.84). Peter Fawcett (1995, p.177) defines censorship in translation as:

the site of a variety of power plays between the actors involved [...] for a wide variety of reasons, ranging from the desire to save money to the desire to control behaviour, from the desire to follow perceived norms to the desire for cultural hegemony.

Translation therefore implies various powers, and censorship prevents all forms of moral, ideological, political and economic risks. The most evident risk is *Bagatelles'*

ideological content. If Céline seems not to have taken part directly in the Nazis' genocidal project, at the time of the author's trial the superintendent Charasse argued that his pamphlet certainly did not make the situation any better for the oppressed peoples by giving its consensus to the genocidal project (De Benedetti, 2011, p.57). Today, the reason of the censorship of the pamphlet is still essentially ideological, but also stylistical. The pamphlet was certainly not the only book uttering anti-Semitic attacks in 1930s' France, but it was the only one written by a great author, with the style of a great author (Winock, 1998, p.279):

Bagatelles represents the marriage between the most advanced literature and the most reactionary prejudices. In the end, that is the real scandal: the content of the book stemmed from ordinary racism, but its style was that of a great writer.

In France, Lucette Destouches allowed for the pamphlets to be published for the first time in 2018 (Besnier, 2018, para 2 of 8). However the Jewish associations, notably the Conseil représentatif des entités juives de France [Representative council of Jewish entities in France] took over Lucette Destouches's struggle to keep the text away from publication. They define the intrinsic danger of the book as 'une légitime inquiétude à l'idée que ces textes appelant à la haine contre les Juifs et d'autres groupes humains puissent être en vente libre sur le territoire français' [a legitimate concern towards the idea that these texts inciting racial hatred against the Jews and other human groups can be sold over the counter on the French territory] (Knobel, 2018, para 1 of 19). In Italy, the aborted publication of the pamphlet of 1981 by Guanda inspired the same kinds of fears (Makovec, 2005, p.149). It created a 'scandalo di molti' [scandal for many people] during which 'ognuno ha scritto la sua: [...] Alberto Moravia, Enrico Filippini, Guido Ceronetti, Sandra T. Menzella' [everyone has taken part: [...] Alberto Moravia, Enrico Filippini, Guido Ceronetti, Sandra T. Menzella] (Makovec, 2005, p.149). If one adds the context of recent resurgence of anti-Semitism in Europe, the pamphlet's danger cannot be ignored (Willsher, 2016, para 12 of 16).

Apart from the ideological danger of it, another problem is how to introduce it in France and in translation after 70 years of almost total censorship. The Céline who wrote *Journey to the End of the Night* (1932) and *Death on the Installment Plan* (1936) was considered as an anti-militarist, a humanist and left-oriented writer before the publication of his pamphlets (Brami, 2002, p.91). This conception has been protected by his publishers and Lucette

Destouches through the censorship imposed on the pamphlet internationally. If in France and Italy, the 'anti-Semitic Céline' is well-known and placed in systematic opposition with the 'genius writer', one could argue that the English-speaking audiences do not have the same conception of the author as the target audiences who effectively had access to the pamphlet at some point in their history. This appears clearly in an interview given by the Jewish American writer Philip Roth: 'Even if his antisemitism made him an abject, intolerable person – to read him, I have to suspend my Jewish conscience, but I do it because antisemitism isn't at the heart of his books.' (Willsher, 2016, para 10 of 16). Anti-Semitism is at the heart of the pamphlet, but in a country that never published it, it is nothing but a literary ghost, that Roth does not feel necessary to include in Céline's bibliography.

The ideological danger of the pamphlet is also linked in translation to a crucial aspect: the economic risk. The work might be in itself too idiosyncratic to sell at all today, as shown by the economic failures of the Italian translations (Makovec, 2005, p.31). At a larger scale, the sole publication of *Bagatelles* might have economic repercussions on the publisher, by being labelled as 'anti-Semitic publisher' like Gallimard in 2018 (Dupuis, 11 January 2018, online), and on the sales of Céline's novels in general by affecting indelibly the author's reputation internationally. This was indeed Céline's fear when he refused the reedition of the pamphlet after 1945 (Derval, 2010, p.9).

2) Censorship: duty of remembrance and impossibility to read Céline today

a) The necessity of the duty of remembrance: a unique text describing its period

The evolution of the reception of *Bagatelles pour un massacre* thus calls for a reconsideration of its 'skopos' in translation. This term introduced by Hans J. Vermeer designates the purpose of a given translation and therefore (Munday, 2008, p.113), the necessary recontextualization of the offer of information proposed by the ST in the target text and culture. The pamphlet has been translated, during its 7-year period of political and ideological relevance, as an ideological and political pamphlet during the Fascist era. However, because of its strong idiosyncrasy and obsolete character, the text should not contemporarily be read as such.

The on-going debate on Céline's 'anti-Semitic pamphlets' led to the idea that the only legitimate way to make up for the text's ideological potential danger would be to integrate it

in the process of national remembrance. This concept is defined by the philosopher Christophe Bouton (2014, p.54) as follows:

l'obligation de se souvenir de certains événements passés, en général des événements meurtriers comme des guerres, des génocides. [...] il varie en fonction des situations historiques de chaque pays, et c'est pourquoi il a une dimension politique, il s'intègre [...] à la vie éthique, l'ensemble des mœurs propres à chaque peuple.

[The obligation to remember some past events, in general deadly events like wars, and genocides. [...] it varies in function of the historical situations of each country, and that is why it has a political dimension, [...] it is integrated [...] in the ethical life, the set of customs of each people.]

The pamphlet being deeply rooted in the history of the French anti-Semitic culture which was involved the horrors of the Holocaust, the pamphlet is not only problematic because of the author's personal opinions, but also as a testimony of the problematic ideology of France and Europe in the pre-war period. This is confirmed by Michel Winock (1998, p.284): 'Céline's history, beginning with *Bagatelles pour un massacre* is first of all a collective history: that of French anti-Semitism, which soon ran into the blind alley of Collaboration'. Thus publishing and translating the pamphlet could be a step in the construction of a collective history, which is not simply made of the heroic history of the European Resistance. In an article published by the Guardian on Céline's contradictory reputation, Kim Willsher (online, para 12 of 16) supposes that the controversy around the pamphlet and Céline is in fact the debate of a nation on its shameful history: 'It has made him symbolic of a continuing struggle to accept and digest the prevalence of widespread antisemitism in France before and during the Second World War'. And this hypothesis might be valid in translation too. The Italian writer Ernesto Ferrero asserted in *La Stampa* in 1992: 'Ma forse la vera colpa dello scrittore [...] resta quella d'aver rivelato a se stesso l'uomo del nostro secolo, avergli messo sotto il naso un ritratto che più veritiero e impetuoso e ripugnante non può essere' [But maybe the real guilt of the writer [...] is to have revealed to himself the man of our century, to have put under his nose a portrait that could not be more true and impetuous and repulsive]. This standpoint adds a new dimension to Willsher's hypothesis: France does not appear as the only nation at stake in this process of accepting

past mistakes. Ferrero conceives the author's guilt as global, and implicitly, turned to Italy as well, being the guilt of 'the man of our century'.

Despite the difficulty to accept the ambivalence of Céline as a writer, publishing and translating *Bagatelles pour un massacre* in the 21st century as part of the national and international process of remembrance would allow for one to have access to a rare historical source which offers a better understanding of the growth of anti-Semitism. The pamphlet can indeed be seen as a unique testimony of the one of the most shared ideologies of its time, as explained by De Benedetti (2011, p.23): 'L'interdizione sottrae alla nostra consapevolezza culturale una delle possibilità che abbiamo non solo di ricordare ciò che è accaduto ma, soprattutto, di comprendere i meccanismi culturali e ideologici del suo accadere' [The interdiction takes away from our cultural awareness a possibility that we have not only to remember what happened but, more than that, to understand the cultural and ideological mechanisms leading to it].

b) The boomerang effect: the prohibited book as an object of fascination

The impossibility to read the pamphlet in its source language and in translation paradoxically confers to it a greater visibility and a darker status, transforming *Bagatelles* into an object of fascination. Michael Holquist, in *Corrupt originals: The Paradox of Censorship* (1994, p.14), defines the paradox of censorship as 'Some of the contradictions energizing the paradox of censorship can be grasped in the ritual prohibition "Don't think of a white bear," which when invoked makes it impossible not to think of a white bear'. Thus the prohibition 'Do not think about reading Céline's anti-Semitic pamphlets' leads to contradictory consequences. The pamphlet has been controversial in France, Italy and the English-speaking world since the end of the Second World War. The book's notoriety is thus based more on its aura than by its content itself (Chesneau, 1974, p.125).

The interdiction in itself is a source of fascination. The literary quality and the content of a prohibited or inaccessible book are somehow mythicized and rendered secondary as they are hidden behind the phenomenon of prohibition. This is explained by Benedetti (2011, p.31) according to whom the inaccessibility of *Bagatelles* conferred to it a dangerous aura:

Il testo non [...] disponibile pubblicamente, di fatto scomparso dai luoghi della fruizione abituale dei libri, le librerie, e rifugiatosi in qualche biblioteca, continua e conserva una vita sotterranea; si distribuisce per

canali impropri, aumentando il degrado della sua condizione di illegibilità [...] nella zona intermedia del proibito e del maledetto.

[The publicly unavailable text, in fact gone from the usual places of enjoyment of the books, the bookshops, and [...] in some libraries, keeps having an underground life; it is distributed through improper ways, emphasizing its condition of unreadability [...] in the intermediate zone of prohibition and curse.]

The prohibition fuels the desire to read what is inaccessible, leading precisely to what the censor tried to prevent, 'un pouvoir maléfique' [the evil power] (Robert, 2001, p.128-129). One could add the fact that the prohibition of the 'dangerous' book leads to the creation of conspiracy theories and instrumental uses of the text which, in the conspirators' minds, bears a truth repressed by institutions. These conspiratorial behaviors have also been observed regarding Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, as explained by *The Guardian's* editorial on the publication of the German critical edition in 2016 (12 January 2016, online, para 3 of 4):

This new publication is thus useful: it goes one step further towards demystifying the roots of the evil that unfolded. Exposure, not hiding, is the best way to neutralise the conspiratorial thinking and sinister fascination that can be aroused by a forbidden object.

The neutralization of the conspiracy could apply to Céline's pamphlet, considering the numerous illegal publications and misuses of the pamphlet since the 1960s in France and in Italy (Makovec, 2005, p.148).

3) Is censorship still possible at the time of new technologies?

Lucette Destouches, when discussing her will to forbid the pamphlets' diffusion in their source language and in translation before 2018, argued: 'J'ai conscience à long terme de mon impuissance et je sais que, tôt ou tard, ils vont resurgir en toute légalité, mais je ne serai plus là et ça ne dépendra plus de ma volonté.' (Robert, 2001, p.128-129) [I am aware of my helplessness in the long run and I know that, sooner or later, they will resurface lawfully, but I will not be there and it will not depend on my will anymore]. This declaration underlines the fact that Céline's right holder was mistaken on the pamphlets' diffusion as she did not take into consideration an essential contemporary diffusion mean, the Internet.

a) A broader diffusion of the text not limited by any form of legal pressure

The scholar Michael Cronin (2013, p.1) explained that ‘the effects of digital technology and the internet on translation are continuous, widespread, and profound’. Among those effects, the ‘prodigious expansion in information diffusion’ (Cronin, 2013, p.65) has changed the way in which one has access to literature in translation. *Bagatelles pour un massacre* is nowadays freely and illegally distributed on the Internet in French and in many other languages (Louis, 2011, p.87).

The source text is, to begin with, available on various web-based platforms. The website ‘Internet Archive’, self-described as ‘a [...] non-profit, is building a digital library of Internet sites and other cultural artifacts in digital form’ proposes a complete digital version of the source text, like the French website ‘Pour l’Histoire’. The sharing platform Scribd also offers a complete E-book of *Bagatelles pour un massacre*, and on Youtube, an audiobook of the entire work is available. It appears directly in Google Search. One can observe the same phenomenon in English and Italian translation. The online publishing house ‘AAARGH’ offers an English translation of the work called *Trifles for a massacre* produced in 2006 by an anonymous translator, as well as the Italian translation by Giancarlo Pontiggia originally published in 1981 by Guanda (De Benedetti, 2011, p.88). The English translation is even quoted by the scholar Neil Levi in his book *Modernist Form and the Myth of Jewification* (2013) as a valid and regular translation.

The availability of the pamphlets online could therefore make one question the relevance of the debate around the pamphlets’ reedition in French and in translation. Jean-Paul Louis (2011, p.87) asserts: ‘Rien n’est plus simple que de se les procurer aujourd’hui, en achetant des éditions pirates sur Internet ou des éditions d’époque chez des libraires anciens : ce sont des livres très courants, étant donné leurs tirages importants’ [Nothing is easier than to get hold of them today, by buying a pirated edition on the Internet or vintage editions at second-hand bookshops: they are very common books, considering their high print-runs]. Thus a curious target audience can instantly have access to *Bagatelles pour un massacre*, freely and in a wide range of languages.

These new means of diffusion bring the question of the validity of the translations available online. They are mostly produced by anonymous and sometimes non-acknowledged translators, as anyone can offer a new translation online. Finally, most of

these translations are presented for a particular 'skopos' (Munday, 2008, p.113) unacceptable today, that is revisionism.

b) The exploitation of *Bagatelles pour un massacre* by the revisionist websites and publishers

The text made accessible freely in French and in translation on the Internet is subjected to ideological exploitations, which is paradoxically what Céline's right holder and Gallimard's opponents in 2018 tried to avoid by forbidding the text's publication. The emergence of the pamphlet's online editions in various languages is mostly linked to radical groups such as revisionist, anti-Semitic and pro-conspiracy movements (De Benedetti, 2011, p.122). This part will focus on the case of the 'AAARGH' and 'Omnia Veritas' online publishing houses, mentioned earlier as they provide both the English and Italian translations of the pamphlet on the Internet. According to its website, 'AAARGH' has been created in 1996 and its acronym stands for 'L'Association des Anciens Amateurs de Récits de Guerres et d'Holocaustes' [The Association of Former Amateurs of War Narratives and Holocausts]. The association defines itself as: 'Le phare du révisionnisme à la française, c'est quatorze ans de travail, une documentation de plus de 60.000 pages, plus de 600 livres – 200 brochures' [The lighthouse of French revisionism, it represents fourteen years of work, a documentation of more than 60.000 pages, more than 600 books – 200 brochures]. In the website archive, the English and Italian translations of the three pamphlets *Bagatelles pour un massacre*, *L'école des Cadavres* and *Les Beaux draps* are freely available in a catalogue containing titles such as 'An Austrian Engineer's Report on the "Gas Chambers" of Auschwitz and Mauthausen' by F. Holtzhäuser, a supposed scientific article explaining the impossibility of the gas chambers' existence, or *La Controverse sur l'extermination des juifs par les Allemands* [The controversy on the Jews' extermination by the Germans] by Jean-Marie Boisdefeu. The website has now been taken down in France but remains accessible to the rest of the world (Dumout, 2008, para 2 of 6). AAARGH's translations of *Bagatelles pour un massacre* are still available online.

The other publishing house, Omnia Veritas, did not restrict its diffusion to the internet. It offers source texts and translations of a variety of pro-conspiracy and revisionists texts, such as *The Controversy of Zion* by Douglas Reed, or Hitler's *Mein Kampf*, presented as a normal book, said to have been written under a great 'emotional stress', without any mention of the horrors of the Holocaust in the summary. The great particularity of this publishing house is

that, despite its clear revisionist intentions, it managed to render *Bagatelles pour un massacre* broadly available in French, English, Italian and Spanish on commercial websites such as Amazon, without encountering any form of resistance.

Conclusion

Bagatelles pour un massacre is therefore a singular work in the literary world. The violence with which the author's anti-Semitic theories are exposed is reinforced by the powerful style conveying them. The ideology of the pamphlet had its roots in the anti-Semitic France of the Third Republic and it was a best-seller during this period. In Fascist Italy, *Bagatelles* was integrated to the process of creation of racial laws whereas in England and in the United States, it was already seen as irrelevant in 1937 and it has never translated. After the Second World War, the author's proximity with the Nazis and the Collaborationists' made the pamphlet ethically problematic and it was taken out of publication. Considered by many as a dangerous text, censorship appeared as the best solution to avoid its diffusion in France as well as in Italy and in the English-speaking world.

The censorship imposed on *Bagatelles pour un massacre* in translation had paradoxical consequences. The very purpose of censoring, that is banning the text from publication, was not fulfilled and rather brought to it a greater notoriety in France and Italy. In the United States and in England, the total absence of the pamphlet in Céline's bibliography created the improper image of 'spotless' author in the collective imagination. Finally, the spread of new technologies called into question all the precedent debates on the pamphlet's publication by making it easily accessible to all in a variety of languages. It pointed out the presently ineffectiveness of institutional censorship, eventually encouraging the misuse of the pamphlet's translations in favor of threatening causes such as the anti-Semitic propaganda.

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