

Inmaculada Serón Ordóñez
Universidad Pablo de Olavide

Theatre translation studies: An overview of a burgeoning field (Part I: Up to the early 2000s)

Abstract

This article presents and discusses the history of the study of play translation, including reader-oriented and performance-oriented translation. It seeks to show the development of this field since its early years until the verge of its recent burgeoning. Therefore, it is mostly organised chronologically and extends from the 1960s to the early 2000s. Together with a later article dealing with the last decade, it will provide a comprehensive overview of what was once a neglected field but is not so anymore.

1. *Introduction*

Although there are still voices that draw attention to it as an under-explored area of Translation Studies, theatre translation can hardly be considered neglected anymore. In fact, as the present series of articles will illustrate, the increasing attention it received in the 1990s was reinforced in the following decade and has ultimately led to a blossoming interest.

As a result, the area—which has even been referred to as a “discipline” in recent studies¹—is becoming difficult to keep abreast of, as

¹ See Alinne Balduino Pires Fernandes, *Travelling plays, travelling audiences: From Carr’s Irish Midlands to somewhere lost and found in Brazil*, in “Quaderns”, 19 (2012), p. 79, and Silvia Bigliuzzi, Peter Kofler, Paola Ambrosi, *Introduction*, in S. Bigliuzzi, P. Kofler, P. Ambrosi (eds.), *Theatre translation in performance*, Routledge, New York, 2013, p. 3.

has been suggested by Marinetti². Moreover, despite the fact that the overarching theory demanded for it over two decades ago by Susan Bassnett³ is yet to be attained⁴, significant advances have been made that may certainly prove fruitful not only for the area itself but also for other areas in Translation Studies.

These two reflections motivated the present series of articles, which aims to present and discuss the history and state of the art of the study of theatre translation in as comprehensive a manner as possible. While a number of useful current reviews are available, they either focus on particular topics or are more limited in space. My review is, in turn, limited in that I did not have access to certain sources, either due to the language barrier (that is the case of, for example, Czech, German and Polish sources) or because they were not available to me.

This study does not exclude so-called “translation for the page” (i.e. translation aimed at readers rather than spectators). Other authors refer to this concept as “drama translation”⁵; I have now avoided this term deliberately, given that it has also been used to designate «translation work for both the literary and theatrical systems»⁶. The term “theatre translation” has in turn been used for translation work which is «confined to the theatrical system alone»⁷; however, it seems to have been widely superseded by “stage translation” in recent allusions to this concept. Therefore, in my study, I have used “theatre translation”

² «The sheer breadth of scholarship published on and around theatre translation in recent years would make even a cursory review of all approaches and themes a gargantuan task» (Cristina Marinetti, *Translation and theatre: From performance to performativity*, in “Target”, 25, 3 (2013), p. 309).

³ Susan Bassnett, *Translating for the theatre: The case against performativity*, in “TTR: Traduction, terminologie, redaction”, 4, 1 (1991), pp. 99-111.

⁴ Its desirability is now being questioned (Cristina Marinetti, *Translation and theatre* cit., p. 312).

⁵ See Silvia Bigliuzzi, Peter Kofler, Paola Ambrosi, *Introduction* cit., p. 5.

⁶ Sirkku Aaltonen, *Time-sharing on stage: Drama translation in theatre and society*, Multilingual Matters, Clevedon, United Kingdom, 2000, p. 33.

⁷ *Ibidem*.

to refer to both page-oriented and stage-oriented translation of theatrical plays. The term “drama translation” has been used as a synonym, but as it often occurs with synonyms, they are not always interchangeable: “theatre translation” is a broader term that includes the translation of non-dramatic texts for the stage (e.g. dance theatre).

Opera translation is not a concern of this study, although references will be made to it as required. The study’s organisation is predominantly chronological, with a view to showing the area’s development in an accessible fashion. The scope of the present article extends until roughly 2003. The second and last article in the series will cover the last decade.

2. *The beginnings (1960s - 1970s)*

The study of theatre translation emerged in the 1960s among, on the one hand, theatre translators, and on the other, literary scholars. Over the decade, the discussion focused on performability. This topic derived from a long-established opposition in literary and theatrical circles, between the consideration of the theatrical play as a literary work that should be translated as such (i.e. in a faithful, scholarly manner) and its view as a text to be performed (and, therefore, to be translated with naturalness and comprehensibility in mind)⁸.

In 1961, Chekhov’s translator Robert Corrigan took up the topic in an essay entitled *Translating for actors*, where he asserted that the drama translators’ ultimate aim is to produce performable translations⁹. By “performable”, the author understood speakable: «everything must be

⁸ Mary Snell-Hornby, *Theatre and Opera Translation*, in P. Kuhlczak, K. Littau (eds.), *A companion to translation studies*, Multilingual Matters, Clevedon, United Kingdom, 2007, p. 106.

⁹ Robert W. Corrigan, *Translating for actors*, in W. Arrowsmith, R. Shattuck (eds.), *The craft and context of translation*, Texas University Press, Austin, Texas, 1961, p. 100.

speakable. It is necessary at all times for the translator to hear the actor speaking in his mind's ear»¹⁰

Later contributions in the decade broadened the definition of performability by adding other attributes. The scholar Jiří Levý, who in turn believed that drama translation was firstly for reading and, secondly, for performance¹¹, emphasised intelligibility¹² while also considering what is implied but not said (i.e. the “sub-text”, a notion developed by Stanislavski) as well as the different theatrical and acting traditions¹³. On his part, the translator Lars Hamberg highlighted: naturalness (although theatrical discourse differs from ordinary everyday speech, as Levý had rightly pointed out¹⁴ and translation scholars would later underline); the capacity to characterise not only the speaker but also time, place and social class; and the ability to lead the audience's attention in the desired direction¹⁵.

Hamberg believed that translators, like directors, had to know how to speak a line even if this had not been indicated by the playwright. His study belongs to a series of brief articles on theatre translation that appeared in “Babel” in the decade under review. The scholar Georges Mounin took part in this discussion, claiming that in order to produce performable translations, it was necessary to adapt the source text:

La traduction théâtrale, quand elle est écrite, non pas pour une édition scolaire, universitaire ou critique, uniquement faites pour être lues, mais quand elle est

¹⁰ *Ivi*, p. 101.

¹¹ Jiří Levý, *Drama translation*, in J. Levý, *The art of translation* (P. Corness, trans.), John Benjamins, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, 2011, p. 165. (Original work published in Prague in 1963 under the title *Umění překladau*).

¹² *Ivi*, pp. 129-134.

¹³ *Ivi*, pp. 134-140.

¹⁴ *Ivi*, p. 134.

¹⁵ Lars Hamberg, *Some practical considerations concerning dramatic translation*, in “Babel”, 15, 2 (1969), pp. 91-94.

écrite pour être jouée, doi[t] traiter le texte original de telle façon, qu'on se trouve toujours en présence d'une adaptation autant que d'une traduction¹⁶.

He had previously observed that it was possible to render the language without rendering the play, the latter requiring a dramaturgical—and not linguistic—activity¹⁷.

The 1970s saw two main contributions to the field, one by Ibsen's translator Michael Meyer and the other by translation scholar Susan Bassnett. Meyer¹⁸ added concision to the above list of attributes. Furthermore, he pointed out that it is essential to render both the drama text itself and the sub-text, and tackled the issue of so-called *literals*, or literal translations carried out in a team of two where one person does the literal and the other (frequently, a well-known playwright from the target culture who does not necessarily have knowledge of the source language) adapts this translation to the rules of the target theatrical system. Meyer diametrically opposed this working method, which is currently common practice in the United Kingdom. I will return both to it and to the notion of sub-text later, given that they have been discussed extensively over the decades and, in fact, are still current.

Susan Bassnett is one of the major contributors to the field, with contributions up to the present day. Her essay *Translating spatial poetry: An examination of theatre texts in performance*¹⁹ set out the basic

¹⁶ Georges Mounin, *La traduction au théâtre*, in "Babel", 14, 1 (1968), p. 8. In the 1960s, Mounin also explored the communicative exchange relationship between the actors and the audience from a semiological point of view (see Concepción Serón Ordóñez, *Las traducciones al español de Twelfth Night (1873-2005): estudio descriptivo diacrónico* (unpublished doctoral thesis), Universidad de Málaga, Málaga, Spain, 2012, pp. 154-155).

¹⁷ Georges Mounin, *Les problèmes théoriques de la traduction*, Gallimard, Paris, 1963, p. 14.

¹⁸ Michael Meyer, *On translating plays*, in "Twentieth Century Studies", 11 (1974).

¹⁹ Susan Bassnett, *Translating spatial poetry: An examination of theatre texts in performance*, in J. S. Holmes, J. Lambert, R. van den Broeck (eds.), *Literature and translation*, ACCO, Leuven, Belgium, 1978.

problems of translating for the stage and enquired into how to distinguish the gestural language that, in Bassnett's opinion, might be contained in the drama text. The author concluded that this gestural language might exist in a similar way to the sub-text, which is decoded by the actor and re-coded in the form of gestures. It was perhaps this conclusion that led her to explore theatre semiotics subsequently²⁰, before returning to theatre translation in a vehement manner with the next contribution that will be discussed.

3. *Laying the foundation (1980s)*

The 1980s were characterised by the appearance of the first books devoted to theatre translation, and 1980 was a milestone not only because of the publication of the very first one—a volume whose editor expressed her belief in “drama in translation studies” as a future discipline²¹—, but also due to Susan Bassnett's resounding complaint that theatre constituted one of the most neglected areas in the genre-focused study of translation. This complaint opens the section *Translating dramatic texts* in her monograph *Translation Studies*. Here, the author claimed that the drama text required a different translating methodology than the prose text, and regretted that drama translators' statements often implied that the methodology translators used was the same as that used for rendering prose texts²². Her claim was based on the assumption that the drama text—as opposed to the prose text—is *troué* («since it is only in performance that the full potential of the text

²⁰ Susan Bassnett, *An introduction to Theatre Semiotics*, in “Theatre Quarterly”, 10, 38 (1980).

²¹ Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt, *Introduction*, in O. Zuber-Skerritt (ed.), *The language of theatre: Problems in the translation and transposition of drama*, Pergamon Press, Oxford, United Kingdom, 1980; quoted in Susan Bassnett, *Translating for the theatre* cit., p. 105.

²² Susan Bassnett, *Translating dramatic texts*, in S. Bassnett, *Translation Studies*, Methuen, London, 1980, p. 120.

is realized»²³). Bassnett supported her claim by resorting to the notion of performability: «if the theatre translator is faced with the added criterion of *playability* as a prerequisite, he is clearly being asked to do something different from the translator of another type of text»²⁴. This brings up the dichotomy between translation for reading and for performance again. Bassnett underlined that drama translation required deciding «whether to translate the text as a purely literary text, or to try to translate it in its function as one element in another, more complex system»²⁵. The researcher delved into the process of translating for performance and explained that it seemed logical to assume that a theatre text contains distinguishable structural features that make it performable, apart from the stage directions themselves. They should be identified and rendered by the translator, who should also take into account that performance-related concepts such as the acting style, the playing space and the audience's role may vary from one culture to another and over time. The translating process, therefore, involves rendering, besides linguistic elements, paralinguistic elements (e.g. pitch, intonation, speed of delivery, accent²⁶) and «the gestural text that determines the movements an actor speaking that text can make»²⁷.

The collective volume *The language of theatre: Problems in the translation and transposition of drama* edited by Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt²⁸ contains essays by drama and translation scholars, by translators, and also by playwrights. It thus represented, in addition to a pioneering book, a significant opportunity for dialogue and enrichment between translation scholarship and practice, drama and, to a lesser ex-

²³ *Ibidem*. This image of a *troué* (or incomplete) text was borrowed from the theatre semiotician Anne Ubersfeld.

²⁴ *Ivi*, p. 122.

²⁵ *Ivi*, p. 120.

²⁶ Some of these were explicitly mentioned by Jiří Levý, *Drama translation* cit.

²⁷ *Ivi*, p. 132.

²⁸ Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt (ed.), *The language of theatre: Problems in the translation and transposition of drama*, Pergamon Press, Oxford, United Kingdom, 1980.

tent, theatre. The first chapter, by the scholar Reba Gostand²⁹, explains the various meanings of the term “translation” in the English-speaking theatrical world, such as interlingual translation and the transposition from the page to the stage. This latter concept is the subject of the two following chapters, written by playwrights. The ten remaining chapters in the book focus on interlingual translation, dealing predominantly with particular aspects of specific translations. The contribution by Franz H. Link³⁰ is the only exception. Link systematised the interdependence between translation, adaptation and interpretation of drama texts; in so doing, the researcher showed the complexity of drama and theatre, which led him to highlight the necessity for co-operation between playwright, translator, dramatic advisor, producer and scholar. Among the other contributions, many of which are still quoted today, it is worth mentioning those by Zuber-Skerritt³¹ and André Lefevere. The editor of the volume pointed out the desirability of testing the translations on the stage before accepting them as final versions. In her opinion, this would ensure both that the play is suitable for the target system and—in the case of modern plays—that it conforms to the playwright’s intention. Zuber-Skerritt also underlined the multiplicity of «non-verbal and non-literary aspects»³² to be considered, including music, lighting and the stage scenery. On his part, Lefevere³³ indicated the appropriateness of moving away from normative approaches for advancing with descriptive approaches, which he considered more promising.

²⁹ Reba Gostand, *Verbal and non-verbal communication: drama as translation*, in O. Zuber-Skerritt (ed.), *The language of theatre* cit., pp. 1-9.

³⁰ Franz H. Link, *Translation, adaptation and interpretation of dramatic texts*, in O. Zuber-Skerritt (ed.), *The language of theatre* cit., pp. 24-50.

³¹ Ortrun Zuber-Skerritt, *Problems of propriety and authenticity in translating modern drama*, in O. Zuber-Skerritt (ed.), *The language of theatre* cit., pp. 92-103.

³² *Ivi*, p. 92.

³³ André Lefevere, *Translating literature/translated literature: The state of the art*, in O. Zuber-Skerritt (ed.), *The language of theatre* cit., pp. 153-161.

In 1981, George E. Wellwarth defined the drama text as a how-to-do-it manual for the staging³⁴. The author postulated naturalness (which he termed “style”) and speakability (by which he meant ease of enunciation) as the two primary principles of drama translation; concision (“tautness of expression” in his terminology) was a third, secondary principle³⁵. Like Michael Meyer, Wellwarth utterly objected to the use of literals, which he found justifiable only in cases where it is virtually impossible to find a person who masters both the source and the target languages and cultures. The author concluded by acknowledging the complexity of drama translation: «The dramatic translator’s task is indeed an impossible one. He can only make an approach, and an altogether tentative approach at that»³⁶.

Zuber-Skerritt published another collective volume in 1984. This book supplemented her earlier one by giving the floor to adaptors, directors and actors, in addition to scholars, translators and playwrights. Indeed, it is the transposition from the page to the stage that the volume concentrates on, interlingual translation being referred to only sporadically.

1984 also saw the publication of the essays *Sprechbare Sprache – Spielbarer Text*, by Mary Snell-Hornby, and *Pragmatica e traduzione teatrale*, by Laurie Anderson. Snell-Hornby further investigated speakability and playability. In her conclusions, she highlighted, among other aspects, that theatre dialogue is an artificial language, «characterized by special forms of textual cohesion, by semantic density, highly sophisticated forms of ellipsis, often rapid changes of theme, and special

³⁴ George E. Wellwarth, *Special considerations in drama translation*, in M. G. Rose (ed.), *Translation spectrum: Essays in theory & practice*, State University of New York Press, Albany, New York, 1981, p. 140.

³⁵ *Ivi*, pp. 140-142

³⁶ *Ivi*, pp. 145-146.

dynamics of deictic interaction»³⁷. Her conclusions are partly based on interviews with a stage producer and an actor, and would later be framed by the author as part of a «holistic»³⁸ theoretical approach to theatre translation. This holistic approach builds upon the fact, pointed out in *Sprechbare Sprache – Spielbarer Text*, that «for the *spectator* in the audience[,] language and the action on the stage are perceived sensuously»³⁹, «what counts is the global sensory effect»⁴⁰. From this perspective, Snell-Hornby sees the drama text as a musical score, «which can only fulfil its proper potential within the ensemble of instruments and performers»⁴¹. Translation would be the creation of «a new dramatic ‘score’ for a performance that is coherent and acceptable within the target culture»⁴². The musical score metaphor has been considerably discussed and widely accepted, although some contend that it involves too rigid a relationship between text and performance⁴³. Jazz as a metaphor for drama translation, whereby the target text would be a performance on the source, has been proposed as an alternative by Mark O’Thomas⁴⁴. According to him, the attractiveness of this metaphor lies in jazz’s improvisation feature⁴⁵.

³⁷ Mary Snell-Hornby, “*All the world’s a stage*”: *Multimedial translation – constraint or potential?*, in C. Heiss, R. M. Bollettieri Bosinelli (eds.), *Traduzione multimediale per il cinema, la televisione e la scena*, CLUEB, Bologna, 1996, p. 33.

³⁸ Mary Snell-Hornby, *Theatre and opera translation* cit., p. 110.

³⁹ Mary Snell-Hornby, “*All the world’s a stage*” cit., p. 34.

⁴⁰ Mary Snell-Hornby, *Theatre and opera translation* cit., p. 110.

⁴¹ Mary Snell-Hornby, “*All the world’s a stage*” cit., p. 31.

⁴² Mary Snell-Hornby, “*Is this a dagger which I see before me?*” *The non-verbal language of drama*, in F. Poyatos (ed.), *Nonverbal communication and translation: New perspectives and challenges in literature, interpretation, and the media*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, 1997, p. 195.

⁴³ Eva Espasa has countered this criticism in Eva Espasa, *Masks, Music Scores, and Bourglasses: Rethinking Performability through Metaphors*, in S. Bigliuzzi, P. Kofler, P. Ambrosi (eds.), *Theatre Translation in Performance*, Routledge, New York, 2013, pp. 39-49.

⁴⁴ Mark O’Thomas, *Translation, theatre practice, and the jazz metaphor*, in “*Journal of Adaptation in Film & Performance*”, 6, 1 (2013), pp. 55-64.

⁴⁵ *Ivi*, p. 58.

Laurie Anderson⁴⁶ underlined that, because play translators work with texts written to be spoken/listened to, they have a narrower range of means at their disposal than translators of novels; for example, they cannot use footnotes. In *A textbook of translation* (1988), Peter Newmark also paid attention to this issue, pointing out that it is not possible for translators to transcribe words in order to exoticise the texts. Regarding the notion of sub-text, Newmark regrets that Michael Meyer, when distinguishing between the drama text and the sub-text, did not give any examples of the translation of the latter. He suggests translating the dialogue semantically, instead of communicatively, in order to transmit the implications of the source text clearly. Additionally, he proposes to use contemporary language—so that the characters can live—while trying to preserve stylistic differences, such as those in register and idiolect. In his opinion, the resulting version will be inferior to the original, but also simpler and, therefore, easier to understand. The author concludes by asserting that when a play is translated, it usually turns into an adaptation, rather than a translation, which recalls Mounin (1968) (see above)⁴⁷.

In 1985, Susan Bassnett⁴⁸ continued the discussion on the multiplicity of factors other than linguistic that are to be taken into account in drama translation, and criticised the pre-eminence given to the text as opposed to other sign systems which are involved in the creation of theatre. She went on to distinguish five basic strategies that, according to her, drama translators use when translating⁴⁹. These are: treating the play text as a literary work, using the source language cultural context as a «frame text» (for humoristic purposes), translating performability,

⁴⁶ Laurie Anderson, *Pragmatica e traduzione teatrale*, in “Lingua e Letteratura”, 2 (1984), pp. 224-235.

⁴⁷ Peter Newmark, *A textbook of translation*, Prentice Hall, New York, 1988.

⁴⁸ Susan Bassnett, *Ways through the labyrinth: Strategies and methods for translating theatre texts*, in T. Hermans (ed.), *The manipulation of literature: Studies in literary translation*, Croom Helm, London, 1985, pp. 87-89.

⁴⁹ *Ivi*, pp. 90-91.

using alternative verse forms to render the source language verse drama, and working in a team where there is either one native speaker of the source language and another of the target language, or a person with knowledge of the source language and the director and/or actors who will stage the play. In Bassnett's opinion, the last of these strategies is probably the most effective one. It has the major advantage of relating the translation process to performance-related problems such as those derived from different theatrical conventions and audience expectations. In addition, it «avoids the notion of 'performability' as a quality that can be added to the written text», since it «involves the translator simultaneously in the written and oral versions of the text»⁵⁰. The researcher's widely-quoted classification of strategies has been aptly criticised (and revised) by Marco⁵¹ on the basis that it mixes different criteria.

In the second part of her article, Bassnett undertook the search for a method for translating plays. The concept of gestural language had come to seem vague and imprecise to her. She consequently proposed to abandon it and explore deixis as an alternative solution⁵². Furthermore, the author dismissed both the idea that there is a single correct way of translating plays and the notion of performability:

Translating for the theatre is an activity that involves an awareness of multiple codes, both in and around the written text. [...] Because of this multiplicity, any notion of there being a 'right' way to translate becomes a nonsense. [...] It seems to me that the time has come to set aside 'performability' as a criterion for translating too, and to focus more closely on the linguistic structures of the text itself. For, after all, it is only within the written that the performable can be encoded and there are infinite (sic) performance decodings possible in any playtext.⁵³

⁵⁰ Susan Bassnett, *Ways through the labyrinth* cit., pp. 91-92.

⁵¹ Josep Marco, *Els gèneres teatrals*, in J. Marco, *El fil d'Ariadna. Anàlisi estilística i traducció literària*, Eumo, Vic, 2002, p. 237.

⁵² Susan Bassnett, *Ways through the labyrinth* cit., p. 98.

⁵³ *Ivi*, p. 101.

To a certain extent, it could be said that with this marked change in direction, Bassnett returned to her initial starting point, as the last sentence of *Ways through the labyrinth* reflects: «The written text, *troué* though it may be, is the raw material on which the translator has to work and it is with the written text, rather than with a hypothetical performance, that the translator must begin»⁵⁴. Her article draws on the work of semioticians such as Peter Bogatyrev, Tadeusz Kowzan, Patrice Pavis and Anne Ubersfeld.

Malcolm Griffiths also dealt in 1985 with the problems in translating plays⁵⁵. This theatre design scholar drew attention to the drama text's theatrical and ideological implications and, thus, to the need for translators to take into account theatre practice, cultural contexts and social history. Translation for the stage «requires as much familiarity with [these] as it does with spoken and written languages», he averred⁵⁶. The researcher additionally discussed the translator's low prestige in contradistinction to the preeminent role given to theatre directors in the British theatrical system, where he observed an increasing tendency to commission well-known playwrights to produce stage translations.

At the end of the decade, a new collective book appeared. *The play out of context: Transferring plays from culture to culture*, edited by Hanna Scolnicov and Peter Holland⁵⁷, is a clear example of how the interest in interculturality that emerged at the end of the 1980s and grew significantly in the following decades was reflected in the study of dra-

⁵⁴ *Ivi*, p. 102.

⁵⁵ Malcolm Griffiths, *Presence and presentation: Dilemmas in translating for the theatre*, in T. Hermans (ed.), *Second hand: Papers on the theory and historical study of literary translation*, ALW, Antwerp, 1985, pp. 161-182.

⁵⁶ *Ivi*, p. 171.

⁵⁷ Hanna Scolnicov, Peter Holland (eds.), *The play out of context: Transferring plays from culture to culture*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, United Kingdom, 1989/2007.

ma translation. For the fifteen authors contributing to the volume, the transfer of a play from one culture to another did not consist simply in translating the text, but instead implied both conveying the meaning and adapting the play to the new cultural setting in order to create new meanings. The generation of new meanings in theatre translation thus entered the scene of theoretical reflection⁵⁸. Today, it is also understood that the meanings of any given play are not fixed or stable; on the contrary, they are contingent on the context of reception or, in other words, constructed by the readers and spectators (including translators)⁵⁹.

Returning to *The play out of context*, the contribution by Patrice Pavis⁶⁰ has been particularly influential. For this theatre semiotician, translation implied the appropriation of a source text by a target text in a specific situation of reception. One example of such appropriation is provided by Werner Habicht in the same volume. Habicht⁶¹ analysed how the Nazi regime appropriated Shakespeare. The researcher showed the consequences that political and ideological pressures can have on the intercultural transfer of theatre. In the Third Reich, the production of Shakespearean plays was fostered on the grounds that they conveyed authority as well as loyalty to the state and social struc-

⁵⁸ For another example of this viewpoint, see Sirkku Aaltonen, *Drama translation*, in Y. Gambier, L. van Doorslaer (eds.), *Handbook of Translation Studies*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, 2010, p. 109.

⁵⁹ See, for example: Sirkku Aaltonen, *Time-sharing on stage: Drama translation in theatre and society*, Multilingual Matters, Clevedon, United Kingdom, 2000, p. 28; Phyllis Zatlin, *Theatrical translation and film adaptation: A practitioner's view*, Multilingual Matters, Clevedon, United Kingdom, 2005, p. 188; and Cristina Marinetti, *Transnational, multilingual, and post-dramatic: Rethinking the location of translation in contemporary theatre*, in S. Bigliuzzi, P. Kofler, P. Ambrosi (eds.), *Theatre translation in performance*, Routledge, New York, 2013, pp. 27-28.

⁶⁰ Patrice Pavis, *Problems of translation for the stage: Interculturalism and post-modern theatre* (L. Kruger, trad.), in H. Scolnicov, P. Holland (eds.), *The play out of context* cit., pp. 25-44.

⁶¹ Werner Habicht, *Shakespeare and theatre politics in the Third Reich*, in H. Scolnicov, P. Holland (eds.), *The play out of context* cit., pp. 110-120.

tures; that is to say, Shakespeare was interpreted according to Nazi totalitarian ideology.

On another subject, Pavis proposed the term “language-body” to refer to the indissoluble union of language and gestures in a theatrical play, which he emphasised. This concept has generally been welcomed by the research community and is commonly referred to in current literature. According to Pavis, the translator must render the language-body by finding an equivalent language-body in the target language and culture. The researcher recalls Newmark when he states that, in the case of classical works, the process often involves simplification and modernisation, which are necessary to restore the language-body of the source text together with its vitality and performability. This brings us to the 1990s.

4. *Subsequent growth (1990s)*

The new decade is marked by the appearance of a considerable number of monographs in addition to the ground-breaking collective book *Stages of translation* and to several innovative theoretical essays.⁶² The first work to be considered is the seminal monograph *Sociocritique de la traduction: théâtre et alterité au Québec (1968-1988)* (1990)⁶³, where Annie Brisset demonstrated that the transformations that plays undergo when they are rendered into another language can provide information about the prevailing discourse in the receiving theatre and soci-

⁶² For space reasons, I will skip *The dramatic touch of difference: Theatre, own and foreign* (1990), another collection of essays with interculturality as a central topic. Although it does not revolve around translation, this appears frequently on its pages as a valuable vehicle that enables (and, sometimes, even triggers) the travel of plays from one culture to another to create intercultural performances that arise out of the needs of the receiving culture. The volume was edited by the Theatre Studies researchers Erika Fischer Lichte and Michael Gissenwehler, as well as by the theatre practitioner and translator Josephine Riley.

⁶³ Annie Brisset, *Sociocritique de la traduction: théâtre et alterité au Québec (1968-1988)*, Le Préambule, Longueuil, Quebec, 1990.

ety. Indeed, the plays published or performed in translation in Quebec between 1968 and 1988 conform to the dominant ideology of this place and time (i.e. nationalism).

Two other similarly seminal monographs enquired in the 1990s into the links between drama translations and their socio-historical contexts. These are Romy Heylen's *Translation, poetics and the stage* (1993) and Sirkku Aaltonen's *Acculturation of the other: Irish milieux in Finnish drama translation* (1996). Based on an analysis of six French translations of *Hamlet* which date from between the 18th and the late 20th centuries, Heylen⁶⁴ suggested that in drama translation there is a sliding scale of acculturation that runs from the extreme where it is attempted to conserve as much as possible of the source culture, to the opposite pole, of complete acculturation. While the former strategy results in an «“exotic” and “bizarre”» target text⁶⁵, the latter one leads to a «familiar» translation⁶⁶. Between both extremes, a cultural compromise is found. Heylen proposed to observe translation from an acculturation perspective, taking into account the socio-historical conditions within which the target text was created, given that they inform the translator's activity (this is clearly illustrated by the translations in her corpus, which show influences of the theatrical and literary norms dictated at each moment in time by the audience's expectations and the literary establishment). Her analysis is deeply rooted in so-called Descriptive Translation Studies, as is, on the other hand, Ladouceur's⁶⁷ proposed model for the analysis of drama translations, which is based

⁶⁴ Romy Heylen, *Translation, poetics, and the stage. Six French Hamlets*, Routledge, London 1993.

⁶⁵ *Ivi*, p. 23.

⁶⁶ *Ivi*, p. 24.

⁶⁷ Louise Ladouceur, *Normes, fonctions et traduction théâtrale*, in “Meta”, 40, 1 (1995), pp. 35-36. The author applied her model to a corpus of translations and adaptations and concluded that these two categories of target texts share the same translation strategies—it is only their frequency and degree that vary (Louise Ladouceur, *Normes, fonctions cit.*, p. 37).

on Lambert and van Gorp's⁶⁸ scheme for the description of literary translations.

Sirkku Aaltonen⁶⁹, on her part, examined eight translations into Finnish of contemporary Irish plays, and concluded that acculturation is inevitable in drama translation. In her opinion, the target texts are products of the receiving theatrical system, in which translators impose new readings on plays. These new readings are determined by the discourses prevailing in the target culture.

The contributors to *Stages of translation* (1996)⁷⁰, including David Johnston, who is additionally the editor of the volume, were also of the opinion that the drama translator imposes his own reading of the play. Their view stemmed from the fact that choices need to be made between the numerous possible ways of rendering individual source text expressions. The volume marks a milestone in that all of the authors are theatre translators themselves (working for English-speaking theatre audiences); as a matter of fact, it may well be considered the first step in what has been referred to as the «practitioners' turn» in the study of drama translation⁷¹. While page-oriented translation is not discussed⁷², a wide variety of topics are covered. The inseparability of text and performance marks all reflections. Topics range from the differences between translating living and dead authors⁷³ to the need for the

⁶⁸ José Lambert, Hendrik van Gorp, *On describing translations*, in T. Hermans (ed.), *The manipulation of literature: Studies in literary translation*, Croom Helm, London, 1985, pp. 52-53.

⁶⁹ Sirkku Aaltonen, *Acculturation of the other: Irish milieux in Finnish drama translation*, Joensuu University Press, Joensuu, Finland, 1996.

⁷⁰ David Johnston (ed.), *Stages of translation: Essays and interviews on translating for the stage*, Absolute Classics, Bath, United Kingdom, 1996.

⁷¹ Alinne Balduino Pires Fernandes, *Travelling plays, travelling audiences* cit., p. 79.

⁷² Its validity is not questioned, though: «indeed, [...] any major foreign play should be published in both strict and freer form» (David Johnston, *Introduction*, in D. Johnston (ed.), *Stages of translation* cit., p. 9).

⁷³ See, in particular, the following contribution: Jacek Laskowski, *Translating the famous dead, the dead obscure and the living*, in D. Johnston (ed.), *Stages of translation* cit., pp. 187-198.

translator to collaborate with the director and the actors⁷⁴, as well as the issue of literals. With respect to literals, not only their use as raw materials for writers is considered; their use as texts for the directors to work on directly is also examined. Actually, two of the most-widely quoted contributions to the volume deal with these two uses of literals, where one use is dealt with in each. They are, respectively, Joseph Farrell's *Servant of many masters* and the interview with Laurence Boswell *The director as translator*⁷⁵. The (low) status of the stage translator emerges repeatedly in the book, which contains close to thirty contributions.

Returning to the beginning of the decade, in *Transposing drama: Studies in representation* (1991)⁷⁶, the drama researcher Egil Törnqvist looked not only at the transposition of drama from one language to another and from the page to the stage, but also at its adaptation to mediums other than the theatre, such as radio, television and film. To my knowledge, few studies explore this latter subject from a translational perspective⁷⁷. As regards the transposition from one language to

⁷⁴ See David Edney, *Translating (and not translating) in a Canadian context*, in D. Johnston (ed.), *Stages of translation* cit., pp. 229-238.

⁷⁵ Joseph Farrell, *Servant of many masters*, in D. Johnston (ed.), *Stages of translation* cit., pp. 45-55; Laurence Boswell, *The director as translator*, in D. Johnston (ed.), *Stages of translation* cit., pp. 145-152. For literals, see also the round table closing the volume (Various contributors, *Round table on translation*, in D. Johnston (ed.), *Stages of translation* cit., pp. 281-294) as well as the following interviews: Adrian Mitchell, *Poetry on stage*, in D. Johnston (ed.), *Stages of translation* cit., pp. 239-247; Ranjit Bolt, *Translating verse plays*, in D. Johnston (ed.), *Stages of translation* cit., pp. 249-261; and Nick Dear, *Translation as conservative writing*, in D. Johnston (ed.), *Stages of translation* cit., pp. 271-280.

⁷⁶ Egil Törnqvist, *Transposing drama: Studies in representation*, Macmillan Education, Houndmills, United Kingdom, 1991.

⁷⁷ Some contributions to the following volume examine the adaptation of either drama to film or, in the other direction, novel to drama: Francisco Lafarga, Roberto Dengler (eds.), *Teatro y traducción*, Universitat Pompeu Fabra, Barcelona, 1995. More recent studies on the topic are: David Johnston, *Valle-Inclán: The meaning of form*, in Carole-Anne Upton (ed.), *Moving target: Theatre translation*

another, Törnqvist⁷⁸ criticised translation scholars for having barely examined whether the sub-text that can be deduced from the source text can also be deduced from the target texts⁷⁹. In his opinion, the reason why many «correct» translations lack tension, life, lies probably in lack of sensitivity towards the sub-text. On the other hand, the author criticised translators for, among other aspects, omitting, adding and reorganising information in an unjustifiable manner, which he saw, interestingly, as «usurping» the director's role⁸⁰.

In 1995, Sirkku Aaltonen⁸¹ proposed a functional model for the analysis of performance-oriented drama translation by drawing on Film Studies and the functional model for product design developed by Victor Papanek in the 1970s. Papanek's model includes a wide range of factors beyond suitability for a specific purpose:

Although a product is designed to serve a particular need, it also reflects the social and historical circumstances of its creation and results from a particular combination of material and method of working. Functionality, as Papanek understood it, has the dynamic dimensions and inter-relationships of Method, Need, Telésis, Association, Aesthetics, and Use.⁸²

and cultural relocation, St. Jerome, Manchester, 2000, pp. 85-100; Sara Ramos Pinto, *How important is the way you say it? A discussion on the translation of linguistic varieties*, in "Target", 21, 2 (2009), pp. 289-307. Johnston analysed his own English translations for radio (besides those for the theatre) of three Spanish Golden Age dramas. Ramos Pinto looked into Portuguese translations for the stage, page and screen of Bernard Shaw's *Pygmalion* and Alan Jay Lerner's *My Fair Lady*.

⁷⁸ Egil Törnqvist, *Transposing drama* cit., p. 12.

⁷⁹ For a response to this query, see my commentary about Susan Bassnett's *Still trapped in the labyrinth: Further reflections on translation and theatre* (1998) at the end of this section.

⁸⁰ Egil Törnqvist, *Transposing drama* cit., pp. 170-173.

⁸¹ Sirkku Aaltonen, *Translating plays or baking apple pies: A functional approach to the study of drama translation*, in M. Snell-Hornby, Z. Jettmarová, K. Kaindl (eds.), *Translation as intercultural communication*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, 1997, pp. 89-97.

⁸² *Ivi*, p. 90.

Aaltonen suggested that a translated play text can be analysed through all of these dimensions of functionality, since they all have a role in shaping the text—it is only the emphasis given to the different factors that varies. Her model emphasises the importance of design and planning in translating drama.

A few other innovative theoretical essays should be mentioned, but before looking at them, I would like to make brief reference to Mary Snell-Hornby's *"All the world's a stage": Multimedial translation – constraint or potential?* (1996). In this essay, the researcher argues for the cooperation between translators (who, in her opinion, should be knowledgeable and experienced in theatre), producers and actors through a case study where she applies the notion of sub-text⁸³.

Turning to a later essay by the same author, in *"Is this a dagger which I see before me?" The non-verbal language of drama*⁸⁴, Snell-Hornby claims that the text's performability depends on its capacity for generating non-verbal action and effects within the framework of its interpretability as a system of theatrical signs. Revealing examples illustrate how visions, sounds and actions are created by the "dramatic score" of the text and how this could be taken into account by the translator. The study draws on Fernando Poyatos's research into non-verbal communication (e.g. paralinguistic, kinesic and proxemic elements). This research could reasonably be expected to provide further insights into theatre translation in the future⁸⁵.

Both Snell-Hornby and Sophia Totzeva use the concept of "theatrical potential", which the latter defined as a semiotic relation between

⁸³ Mary Snell-Hornby, *"All the world's a stage"* cit., pp. 35-44.

⁸⁴ Mary Snell-Hornby, *"Is this a dagger which I see before me?"* cit., pp. 187-201.

⁸⁵ In particular, I would refer the reader to: Fernando Poyatos, *Textual translation and live translation: The total experience of nonverbal communication in literature, theater and cinema*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, 2008; Fernando Poyatos, *El incierto destino del discurso verbal-no verbal en teatro y cine: el espectador ante la traducción interlingüística e intercultural*, in "Oralia", 13 (2010), pp. 197-214.

the verbal and non-verbal signs of performance⁸⁶. Theatrical potential can be seen as the capacity of a drama text to generate and integrate different theatrical signs in performance⁸⁷. As Totzeva has pointed out, for translation, this involves that a given meaning that can't be expressed in the target language could, perhaps, be expressed visually, through a non-verbal sign (in which case, the translator would have to include it in the stage directions)⁸⁸.

I will close this section by discussing Susan Bassnett's retrospective and prospective article *Still trapped in the labyrinth: Further reflections on translation and theatre* (1998)⁸⁹. Here, the researcher reviewed the notions of sub-text, acculturation and performability, as well as the duality of drama as literature and as theatre. Taking as a starting point Egil Törnqvist's query about the sub-text⁹⁰, Bassnett stated that there cannot be only one sub-text (or gestural/gestic/inner text), since there is not just one valid reading of the text. She emphasised the different theatrical conventions and audience expectations across countries; these led her to believe it completely uncertain that the inner text decoded in the target culture is the same as that decoded by actors in the source culture⁹¹. Bassnett also remarked that the gestural text is a notion of European theatre⁹². Regarding acculturation, the researcher agreed with Aaltonen on its inevitability⁹³, although she acknowledged the

⁸⁶ Sophia Totzeva, *Realizing theatrical potential: The dramatic text in performance and translation*, in J. Boase-Beier, M. Holman (eds.), *The practice of literary translation: Constraints and creativity*, St. Jerome, Manchester, 1999, p. 81.

⁸⁷ *Ivi*, p. 82.

⁸⁸ *Ivi*, pp. 83-90.

⁸⁹ Susan Bassnett, *Still trapped in the labyrinth: Further reflections on translation and theatre*, in S. Bassnett, A. Lefevere (eds.), *Constructing cultures: Essays on literary translation*, Multilingual Matters, Clevedon, Somerset, United Kingdom, 1998, pp. 90-108.

⁹⁰ See note 79 above.

⁹¹ Susan Bassnett, *Still trapped in the labyrinth* cit., p. 92.

⁹² *Ivi*, pp. 105-106.

⁹³ *Ivi*, p. 93.

emergence of acculturation-resistant practices with so-called “multicultural theatre”⁹⁴. As far as performability is concerned, in her opinion, this concept and the terms “adaptation” and “version” should be abandoned because they resist precise definition and are sometimes used for questionable purposes (for example, to justify translation strategies that imply a certain deviation from the source text)⁹⁵. Based on the assumption that the translator cannot be expected to have experience as a performer or a director in the source and target systems, and therefore cannot be expected to both decode the supposed source language gestural text and re-encode it in the target language, Bassnett proposed to observe the source text as literature and to leave non-verbal signs for the directors and the actors⁹⁶: «Once we accept that the written text is [...] merely one element in an eventual performance, then this means that the translator, like the writer, need not be concerned with how that written text is going to integrate into the other sign systems. That is a task for the director and the actors»⁹⁷. Nevertheless, the author considered it desirable that the translator—whom she expected to be an expert in the source and target theatrical terms⁹⁸—should collaborate with the producers, and pointed out that reading the text aloud can hardly be considered a performance⁹⁹. In terms of research, Bassnett suggested examining deixis or other elements characteristic of the dramatic literary genre (e.g. intonation and the nature of dialogue). She also advised to advance the study of drama translation history, which brings me to the turn of the century, when Raquel Merino published *Drama translation strategies: English-Spanish (1950-1990)* (2000).

⁹⁴ *Ivi*, p. 106.

⁹⁵ *Ivi*, pp. 95-98.

⁹⁶ *Ivi*, p. 92.

⁹⁷ *Ivi*, p. 99.

⁹⁸ *Ivi*, p. 92.

⁹⁹ *Ivi*, p. 107.

5. *Further development (the early 2000s), with a glimpse at the subsequent burgeoning*

Apart from Merino's historiographical study, to which I will return in a moment, no fewer than three prominent books on drama translation appeared in the year 2000; and research into the area accelerated in the 2000s to such extent that close to ten books and three special journal issues were published in only one year (2007), the overall numbers for the decade being over twenty books and six special journal issues. It is worth pointing out that from 2010 to 2013, four further special journal issues have appeared.¹⁰⁰

In her study of drama translation in Spain from 1950 to 1990, Raquel Merino¹⁰¹ posited the *réplique* as a basic unit for describing and comparing theatre texts (including both drama and performance texts)¹⁰². In order to analyse a corpus consisting of 150 English plays and their corresponding translations, the author combined this methodological tool and her own adaptation to drama of Lambert and van Gorp's¹⁰³ scheme for describing literary translations. The study revealed that interventionist strategies (namely additions and suppres-

¹⁰⁰ All the figures are based on my own records and restricted to the most relevant and quoted works. In this regard, it should be noted that one of the books published in 2007 (i.e. the collection of essays *Voices in translation: Bridging cultural divides*, edited by Gunilla Anderman) contains several contributions that deal with narrative literature and poetry; nonetheless, it is mostly devoted to drama.

¹⁰¹ Raquel Merino, *Drama Translation Strategies: English-Spanish (1950-1990)*, in "Babel", 46, 4 (2000), pp. 357-365.

¹⁰² The author defined the *réplique* as follows: «Unidad mínima estructural, menor que el acto, la escena o el episodio, compuesta por marco (el nombre del personaje y las acotaciones e indicaciones que acompañan al discurso de dicho personaje) y diálogo (el discurso escrito para ser declamado, verbalizado en el escenario.» (Raquel Merino, *Traducción, tradición y manipulación: teatro inglés en España 1950-1990*, Secretariado de Publicaciones de la Universidad de León, León, Spain, 1994, p. 182).

¹⁰³ See note 68 above.

sions) prevailed. Inmaculada Serón Ordóñez¹⁰⁴ has recently used Merino's concept of *réplique* as well as her adaptation of Lambert and van Gorp's scheme—in a revised form—to analyse sixteen Spanish translations of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night* which were produced between 1873 and 2005. While Merino selected for the microtextual analysis three target texts that were situated at either the “acceptability” or the “adequacy” pole (in Gideon Toury's¹⁰⁵ terminology), Serón Ordóñez has focused on five paradigmatic translations situated near the adequacy pole, in order to shed light on the evolution of Shakespeare translation when characterised by a strong respect for the original text. Her study concentrates upon how the selected translators rendered cultural references. Tolerance for alterity did not progressively increase or decrease with the passing of time, but instead fluctuated, although a certain degree of acculturation can be observed in all of the translations.

The choice as regards orienting the translation towards the source text or bringing it closer to the audience is a key topic in two of the three major books published in the year 2000—and, incidentally, continues to be a highly debated issue today. I will now look at those two books. *Moving target: Theatre translation and cultural relocation*¹⁰⁶, edited by Carole-Anne Upton, gathers a dozen articles on translation in contemporary theatre. These were written by translators, theatre directors and scholars. In the introduction to the volume, Terry Hale and the editor¹⁰⁷ set the important role that translation has played in the theatre since the Antiquity in contrast to the resistance of modern British stages to «explicitly foreign» plays¹⁰⁸. Regarding “domestication” and “foreignisation” (as two poles of a single spectrum of possibilities),

¹⁰⁴ Concepción Serón Ordóñez, *Las traducciones al español de Twelfth Night* cit.

¹⁰⁵ Gideon Toury, *Descriptive Translation Studies and beyond*, John Benjamins, Amsterdam/Philadelphia, 1995.

¹⁰⁶ Carole-Anne Upton (ed.), *Moving target* cit.

¹⁰⁷ Terry Hale, Carole-Anne Upton, *Introduction*, in C. A. Upton (ed.), *Moving target* cit., pp. 1-13.

¹⁰⁸ *Ivi*, p. 4.

the authors pointed out that the choice made by theatre translators has a greater impact than that made by translators of other literary genres¹⁰⁹. Contributions to the volume such as David Johnston's *Valle-Inclán: The meaning of form*¹¹⁰, Bill Findlay's *Translating standard into dialect: Missing the target?*¹¹¹ and Klaudyna Rozhin's *Translating the untranslatable: Edward Redliński's Cud Na Greenpoincie [Greenpoint Miracle] in English*¹¹² illustrate the range of possibilities between the two poles (from radical relocation, to negotiation and compromise, to the opposite extreme).

Other contributions to the volume underline the translator's capacity to mediate (or intervene) in political or ideological matters, including, but not limited to, censorship and feminism. One such contribution has recently elicited a response. I will briefly comment on this issue. In *Getting the word out: Issues in the translation of Latin American theatre for US audiences*¹¹³, Kirsten Nigro explained that, as a translator, she has deleted elements of the original play that could be received negatively in the target culture due to naïve preconceptions (while being acceptable for the source culture's audiences). Her interventionist attitude has been criticised as counterproductive self-censorship by Cormac Ó Cuilleanáin in her revealing essay *...comme des nègres: whitewashed in translation*¹¹⁴: «Eliding 'wrong' messages by rewriting the text [...] seems a peculiarly expensive solution [...] The source text

¹⁰⁹ *Ivi*, p. 7.

¹¹⁰ David Johnston, *Valle-Inclán* cit., pp. 85-100.

¹¹¹ Bill Findlay, *Translating standard into dialect: Missing the target?*, in C. A. Upton (ed.), *Moving target* cit., pp. 35-46.

¹¹² Klaudyna Rozhin, *Translating the untranslatable. Edward Redliński's Cud Na Greenpoincie [Greenpoint Miracle] in English*, in C. A. Upton (ed.), *Moving target* cit., pp. 139-158.

¹¹³ Kirsten Nigro, *Getting the word out: Issues in the translation of Latin American theatre for US audiences*, in C. A. Upton (ed.), *Moving target* cit., pp. 115-125.

¹¹⁴ Cormac Ó Cuilleanáin, *...comme des nègres: Whitewashed in translation*, in E. Ní Cuilleanáin, C. Ó Cuilleanáin, D. Parris (eds.), *Translation and censorship: Patterns of communication*, Four Courts Press, Dublin, 2009, pp. 184-204.

is taught to conform to current US fashions, while the hegemonic monoculture is further impoverished by having its naïve preconceptions accommodated and thereby reinforced»¹¹⁵. Turning to a different subject, the volume contains also an important contribution to the debate on performability—another burning issue today. In the essay in question, Eva Espasa, the author, argues for the relevance of this concept, which she understands as a concrete—as opposed to abstract—notation related to speakability and breathability and dependent on both ideological and power issues (more specifically, on how the theatre company understands the performance and on who decides what is performable)¹¹⁶.

Like *Moving target: Theatre translation and cultural relocation, Time-sharing on stage: Drama translation in theatre and society*¹¹⁷ has had considerable influence. A wide range of concepts of drama translation research was reviewed in this richly nuanced monograph. The author, Sirkku Aaltonen, in line with Bassnett that if there is a sub-text, it has to be infinitely variable¹¹⁸, and affirmed that texts do not carry any inherent fixed reading, since the readings are generated by the context¹¹⁹. Regarding the criticisms levelled at the terms “speakability”, “playability”, “performability” and “adaptation”, Aaltonen took a moderate stance: on the one hand, she argued that the former three had not ceased to play a major role in the reflections on the characteristics of theatre texts; on the other hand, she acknowledged that the latter term is needed to designate a particular approach to the foreign text

¹¹⁵ *Ivi*, p. 187.

¹¹⁶ Eva Espasa Borrás, *Performability in translation: Speakability? Playability? Or just saleability?*, in C. A. Upton (ed.), *Moving target* cit., pp. 49-62.

¹¹⁷ Sirkku Aaltonen, *Time-sharing on stage* cit.

¹¹⁸ *Ivi*, pp. 36-38.

¹¹⁹ *Ivi*, p. 28. See my commentary on *The play out of context: Transferring plays from culture to culture* (1989) in section 3 above.

«that makes additions, omissions and changes to the general dramatic structure of its setting, plot and characters»¹²⁰.

However, the most resounding contribution of the book is, perhaps, its emphasis on the allegedly egotistical nature of theatre translation. Aaltonen drew on Erika Fischer-Lichte's concept of "productive reception" to claim that translations originate in the target culture, in the interests of which the foreign texts are chosen and re-written. To put it in the author's own terms, the foreign plays are selected according to their «compatibility» with the discourses of the receiving society, and are adjusted to the conventions of this society's theatrical system—through, for example, acculturation—so as to be «integrated»¹²¹ into it. This means that the translation and production of a foreign play involves inevitably a «reaction to alterity». Aaltonen distinguishes three types of attitude towards the "Other": an attitude of reverence, one of rebellion and a last one of disregard. While in the case of the former attitude, the "Foreign" represents desirable cultural goods that could increase the target culture's cultural capital, in the case of the two latter attitudes, it is considered of less value and, thus, disguised, instead of respected. The author distinguishes three translation strategies according to the specific reaction to alterity: translating the text as a whole; translating only a part of it—the remaining part is either left out or altered; and creating a new play based on an idea or theme in the original play. These strategies are based on Brisset's¹²² distinction between *translation*, *reactualisation* and *imitation*.

Aaltonen also dealt with copyright law, advocating Lawrence Venuti's proposed concept of collective authorship to ensure the same "au-

¹²⁰ *Ivi*, p. 45.

¹²¹ In a later study, Aaltonen has explored how several Finnish plays were "reactualised" (or made relevant) for the English-speaking stage with a view to integrating them into the target theatrical system (Sirkku Aaltonen, "Ecce Homo" *reactualized*, in "Cadernos de Literatura Comparada" (Special issue "Teatro em tradução"), 12/13 (2005), pp. 65-97).

¹²² Annie Brisset, *Sociocritique de la traduction* cit.

thor” treatment for both the playwright and the translator. This call for collective authorship has been endorsed by other scholars (such as Johnston¹²³) in a research period when the status of the translator seems to be more in the limelight than ever.

Whereas the three subjects that I have underlined in this section as currently highly topical (i.e. domestication/foreignisation, performability and the status of the translator) are not new to the debate, the next subject to be added to the list is. I am referring to what Yvonne Griesel terms “theatre translation”, by which she means translation that takes place on the theatrical stage, e.g. surtitling and simultaneous interpreting. Griesel introduced the topic herself with *Translation im Theater*¹²⁴. This monograph, which is the last book from the year 2000 to be discussed, has been followed by a considerable number of studies by various authors; not least so because the new forms of theatre translation considered are increasingly used in contemporary theatre. They have the following peculiarities: the theatrical production as a whole is taken as the source text; they blur the boundaries between translation and interpreting; and their success is heavily dependent on aspects that fall outside the realm of translation itself¹²⁵.

Shortly after the year 2000, there appeared literature review articles on drama translation that both acknowledged the upsurge in interest in the area¹²⁶ and called for avoiding repetition of already gained

¹²³ David Johnston, *Securing the performability of the play in translation*, in S. Coelsch Foisner, H. Klein (eds.), *Drama translation and theatre practice*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt, 2004, pp. 29-31.

¹²⁴ Yvonne Griesel, *Translation im Theater: die mündliche und schriftliche Übertragung französischsprachiger Inszenierungen ins Deutsche*, Peter Lang, Frankfurt, 2000. It should be noted that Klaus Kaindl had previously addressed surtitling in the theatre in an essay mainly concerned with opera translation, which has its own specifics (Yvonne Griesel, *Surtitling: Surtitles an other hybrid on a hybrid stage*, in “Trans”, 13 (2009), pp. 120-121).

¹²⁵ Yvonne Griesel, *Surtitling: Surtitles an other hybrid* cit., pp. 123-124.

¹²⁶ Fabio Regattin, *Théâtre et traduction: un aperçu du débat théorique*, in “L’Annuaire théâtral”, 36 (2004), p. 156. Snell Hornby had already referred to this

knowledge, as well as for a common and clearly defined terminology: «La plupart des chercheurs [...] persistent à déplorer une absence d'intérêt pour la matière – ce qui les conduit à répéter, telles des formules magiques, des connaissances déjà acquises», complained Regattin¹²⁷; on his part, Che Suh explained that the proliferation of terminology suggested that researchers had been working in isolation, and went on to indicate that «with prior knowledge of others' works [...] they would be able to decide based on sufficient justification whether or not to coin new words»¹²⁸. Another literature review article concentrated on the dichotomy between translation for reading and for performance. The author, Ekaterini Nikolarea¹²⁹, claimed that Bassnett's final pro-readability position and Pavis's contrary pro-performability position are rooted in these researchers' belonging to two different schools of thought. Nikolarea underlined the blurred borderlines between reader-oriented and performance-oriented translation.

Meanwhile, further insights into drama translation were obtained. Mateo¹³⁰ drew attention to power relations, not only between cultures¹³¹ but also between the different participants engaged in translating for the stage, who include, besides translators, «impresarios, directors, designers, actors» and, also, the audiences¹³². With reference to

upsurge, although in a less vehement way (see Mary Snell-Hornby, “*All the world's a stage*” cit., p. 30).

¹²⁷ *Ivi*, pp. 156-171.

¹²⁸ Joseph Che Suh, *Compounding issues on the translation of drama/theatre texts*, in “*Meta*”, 47, 1 (2002), p. 53.

¹²⁹ Ekaterini Nikolarea, *Performability versus readability: A historical overview of a theoretical polarization in theater translation*, in “*Translation Journal*”, 6, 4 (2002), <http://www.bokorlang.com/journal/22theater.htm> (last accessed: 9th December 2013).

¹³⁰ Marta Mateo, *Power relations in drama translation*, in “*Current Writing: Text and Reception in Southern Africa*”, 14, 2 (2002), pp. 45-63.

¹³¹ These power relations had already been pointed out by other researchers such as Bassnett and Aaltonen (see Susan Bassnett, *Still trapped in the labyrinth* cit., p. 106, and Sirkku Aaltonen, *Time-sharing* cit., pp. 16-17).

¹³² Marta Mateo, *Power relations* cit., p. 51.

translations for the stage created by writers based on literals, Mateo rightly indicated that the defenders of this practice—which she calls “surrogate translation” following previous authors¹³³—seem to exclude the possibility that a translator may be fully capable of making his/her target text suitable for the stage, while, on the other hand, its opponents (like Bassnett) seem to overlook the fact that the notion of performativity (as an excuse hiding economic motivations) is not necessarily linked to it¹³⁴. Mateo also addressed the confusion around the terms used to describe the target texts, such as “translation”, “adaptation” and “version”. She explained that the different uses made of the two latter depend on the concept of translation that the individual speakers have, the reason being that those terms are used in opposition to the former one. Moreover, all three terms’ different uses depend on the interpretations given to them by the various agents involved in theatre translation, since a negotiation between these agents may occur. The researcher expects the boundaries between the concepts alluded to by means of these terms to remain blurred¹³⁵. As regards Bassnett’s conclusion that the translator «need not be concerned with how [the] written text is going to integrate into the other sign systems»¹³⁶, Mateo set it in contrast to the opposite view of most translators and warned that Bassnett’s «clear demarcation between the different agents’ roles might lead to a lack of unity in the final product, or else to undesirable changes being made — during the production process — in the text»¹³⁷. The author also tackled the issue of collective authorship, which she discussed in relation to the translator’s status and power and

¹³³ While Mateo points to Sirkku Aaltonen in *Time-sharing on stage* cit., Joseph Farrell already used the term in *Servant of many masters* cit. and may well have been the one to coin it.

¹³⁴ Marta Mateo, *Power relations* cit., pp. 54-55.

¹³⁵ *Ivi*, pp. 55-56.

¹³⁶ Susan Bassnett, *Still trapped in the labyrinth* cit., p. 99.

¹³⁷ Marta Mateo, *Power relations* cit., p. 56.

to his/her role in the theatrical system¹³⁸. She recognised the benefits of collective authorship: «[it] would reflect the translator's labour in the theatre system in a much fairer way and it would place him/her in less of a subordinate position to that of the original playwright»; nonetheless, in her opinion, the adaptation of translations by theatrical productions without acknowledging the translators would remain an unresolved issue¹³⁹.

In 2003, Sirkku Aaltonen argued that the lack of academic interest in theatre translation was at least partly due to its complexity as a research site¹⁴⁰. The ten years of continued intensive work that have followed are testimony, through numerous publications, to this complexity. They also testify to greater knowledge among researchers of others' work, although there is no cause for complacency¹⁴¹.

I will devote the second part of this study to the last decade, as mentioned in the introduction. In the following section, conclusions are drawn from what has been outlined in the present article.

6. Conclusions

Throughout the 1960s, a number of theatre translators and literary scholars engaged in an early discussion about drama translation that

¹³⁸ *Ivi*, pp. 57-59. In her discussion, Mateo resorted to Aaltonen's distinction between the "mediator" and "creator" statuses of translators in Finland, where mediators are the translators who «bow to the text» (Sirkku Aaltonen, *Translating plays or baking apple pies* cit., pp. 91-92).

¹³⁹ *Ivi*, p. 59.

¹⁴⁰ Sirkku Aaltonen, *Retranslation in the Finnish theatre*, in "Cadernos de Tradução" (Special issue "Tradução, retradução e adaptação"), 1, 11 (2003), p. 144. Like "*Ecce Homo*" reactualised (see note 121 above), this article looks at theatre translation from a reception perspective. It categorises (re)translations according to the precision of audience targeting.

¹⁴¹ I will illustrate this with an example taken from one of the most recent significant contributions to the field, a publication where literals are referred to by several authors as a new practice. As it has been shown in this article, literals were already rejected by Michael Meyer in the early 1970s.

yielded a list of attributes contributing to a translation's performability. A translated drama text needed to be speakable, intelligible and natural (albeit dramatic) if it was to be performed. In the mid-1970s, conciseness was added to the list by Michael Meyer.

During this period, literary scholars conceded that the requirements of the stage demanded that a series of adjustments be made to the drama text during the translation process. Apart from the above criteria, the Stanislavskian concept of sub-text was mentioned as something to be taken into account.

Within the then emerging discipline of Translation Studies, in 1978, Susan Bassnett tackled the problems of translating for the stage and set out to explore the gestural language, which, in her opinion, might be contained in the drama text in a similar way to the sub-text. In 1980, the researcher claimed that translating a drama text, as opposed to a prose text, involved rendering not only linguistic elements, but also paralinguistic features and the gestural text.

The 1980s saw further progress as regards the peculiarities of stage translation. The need to take into account theatre-related aspects such as music, lighting and the stage scenery was pointed out, as was (among other constraints) the impossibility of adding explanatory notes. Newmark proposed to use "semantic" translation to render the sub-text. Pavis contributed the notion of "language-body". The drama text was understood by different individual researchers as a manual for the staging or as a musical score to be performed.

During the decade when the first books devoted to drama translation appeared, emphasis was placed on the desirability of co-operation between the translator and theatre practitioners. Translations should ideally be tested on the stage. The use of literals, which had been condemned by Meyer in the 1970s, was objected to again.

In the second half of the decade, while Susan Bassnett changed direction by advocating that translators should concentrate on the written text, attention was drawn to ideological factors in theatre transla-

tion; for example, Pavis saw translation as the appropriation of the source text by the target culture. In addition, it began to be acknowledged that there was not only one valid reading of the source text.

These two new perspectives were widely adopted in the 1990s. Examples are the influential monographs by Annie Brisset (1990), Romy Heylen (1993) and Sirkku Aaltonen (1996). All of these works use descriptive approaches to research in Translation Studies. On another subject, Heylen introduced the notion of “acculturation”. The continuum between source-culture oriented and target-culture oriented translations has been much discussed later in the field.

The 1990s saw the proposal of two models for the analysis of drama translations, one by Ladouceur (1995) and the other by Aaltonen (1995). The presence of the translators in the discussion was stronger thanks to the publication of the collection of essays and interviews *Stages of translation* (1996), written entirely by stage translators.

New topics were raised and new insights into old topics were gained. This also holds true for the early 2000s, where translation that takes place on the stage (e.g. surtitling and simultaneous interpreting) is worth highlighting as a new topic.

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