

Institution: King's College London		
Unit of Assessment: 28 Modern Languages and Linguistics		
Title of case study: Translating for Performance: Spanish- and Portuguese-language Theatre and Song		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: 2007–2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Professor Catherine Boyle	Professor of Latin American Cultural Studies	From 1990
Professor David Treece	Camoens Professor of Portuguese	From 1987
Period when the claimed impact occurred: 2015–2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N		

1. Summary of the impact

King's research in the translation of Spanish- and Portuguese-language drama and popular song has made a unique and innovative intervention in performance practices. Rather than translators having a secondary, ancillary role providing inert 'texts', we have repositioned translation at the active centre of the creative and performance process, promoting partnerships and collaborations between researcher-translators, artists, performers and audiences. With an understanding of how, in theatre and song translation, language *performs* the reinvention of meaning across cultures and contexts, the research has generated new dynamic translations, rehearsal methodologies, artistic approaches and audience experiences, benefiting performers, directors, producers, companies, publishers and audiences.

2. Underpinning research

Our research addressed the unique possibilities and challenges posed by translating for performance as opposed to translating fiction or poetry for private consumption by individual readers. In the process of developing translation methodologies for performance, we have come to understand how academic knowledge must be actively positioned in interaction with live creative processes in real time, and how the researcher-translator as mediator between cultures and academic knowledge must be engaged as a practitioner through collaboration with artists, actors and producers.

1. The researcher-translator as collaborating practitioner

Our work on the distinct but allied disciplines of theatre and song translation has emerged in the context of practice-based research and translation in partnership with theatres, dramaturges, actors and singer-songwriters. We have forged methodologies for the study of theatre as a complex process of production [1,2]: this 'thick' cultural analysis informs the approach to translation and performance of song-texts [5,6]. Starting from deep linguistic and cultural understanding of context, we show how the researcher-translator mediates between cultures and communicates across different stages of interpretation and interrogation of the text to move it from one locus of performance to another.

2. Translating from cultural extremity

Our research shares a common concern with the 'transportation' of artworks from Latin America (often emerging from cultural extremity and political conflict) that seem distant from the experiences of UK audiences and practitioners. We developed this work on 'Translating Cultural Extremity' [3] with theatre practitioners in the context of the Out of the Wings Collective, and in exploration of the song repertoires that voiced resistance to Brazil's repressive 1964–85 military dictatorship [4]. As they re-tell narratives from a foreign locus of performance, breathing new life into them in different settings, translators necessarily also disrupt, intervene in, and transform the languages in which those unfamiliar experiences are narrated. We argue that interdisciplinary

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methodologies are required so that translation for performance from cultural extremity may effectively relate and traverse the distinct cultural-historical, socio-political, intellectual and creative contexts of the original and receiving performance settings.

3. Language performing meaning

Our research also addressed how the translator's grasp of the performative character of the spoken and sung word contributes to the artists' dialogue with new audiences, enhancing their ability to mobilise and articulate ideas and feelings comparable to those experienced in earlier performances [1,5]. The challenge of recreating artistic experience in another cultural setting is to engage the power of language as uniquely embodied in the live, real-time settings of dramatic and musical performance. Our research described the acts of translation possible and necessary to realise this potential, as well as detailing the specific role of textual translation and language in this process, as a partner to performance [6].

3. References to the research

1. Boyle, C., with Johnston, D. (2007). *The Spanish Golden Age in English: Perspectives on Performance*. London: Oberon Books. This includes Boyle's essay, Perspectives on Loss and Discovery. Reading and Reception, pp.61–74.
2. Boyle, C. (2016). Los desafíos de la traducción de la imaginación dramática. In C. Oyarzún & C. Opazo (Eds). *Galemiri. Colección de Ensayos Críticos*. Santiago: Ediciones Universidad Católica, pp.125–143.
3. Boyle, C. (2017). Minando la traducción: marginalidad, memoria y traducción del extremo cultural. *Revista Cuadernos de Literatura*, 21(42) Dossier: Cuerpos que no caben en la lengua, 199–218. DOI:10.11144/Javeriana.cl21-42.mtmm.
4. Treece, D. (2013). Guns and Roses: Brazil's Music of Popular Protest, 1958–68. In D. Treece. *Brazilian Jive: From Samba to Bossa and Rap*. London: Reaktion, pp.113–58.
5. Treece, D. (2018). Bringing Brazil's resistance songs to London: words and music in translation. *Veredas: Revista da Associação Internacional de Lusitanistas*, 27, 68–84. DOI:10.24261/2183-816x0427.
6. Treece, D. (2019). Language-In-Song, Language-As-Song: New Perspectives From Brazil On Song Translation Theory And Practice. *Santa Barbara Portuguese Studies 3: Theory and Practice of Translation in the Portuguese Speaking World*. https://sbps.spanport.ucsb.edu/sites/default/files/sitefiles/03_David.pdf

Indicators of quality

- 1 and 4 are books commissioned by the publishers. 1 arises from the research and practice developed in the Royal Shakespeare Company's Spanish Golden Age season (2004).
- 3 and 4 have been republished on request in other languages.
- 3, 5 and 6 are peer reviewed.
- 2 was commissioned by the series editors and was peer-reviewed.

4. Details of the impact

King's research has responded practically to the challenges of translating from cultural extremity in the Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking world, resulting in three key impacts:

i. **Transforming artistic practices and stimulating new forms of artistic expression** (see particularly 2.1 above): this innovative, research-driven collaborative approach to performance translation engages with the cultural knowledge and experience of local artists, practitioners and audiences in both source and target cultures.

ii. **Making the work of Spanish and Portuguese artists more accessible to UK audiences through new theatre repertoires and publishing initiatives** (see 2.2 and 2.3 above): workshops and experimental public readings and performances provided the practical framework for eliciting and integrating collaborators' collective feedback into the evolving translation process.

iii. **Enhanced audience understanding and experience** (see 2.2 and 2.3 above) of how, in performance, the translated language of drama or song is embodied in the artists' voices, gestures and narratives and the affinities and resonances its performance has with contemporary local or international contexts.

Two King's projects supported these impacts, both on a broad scale and at a more specialised level: (i) The **Out of the Wings Collective (OOTW)** entails a translator network, extensive

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publication initiatives, public readings and workshops building on the work of the AHRC-funded database resource *Out of the Wings* (2008–12 www.outofthewings.org). Founded by Boyle, OOTW has c300 international members comprising researchers, translators, actors, directors and producers. OOTW has developed a wide range of activity and impact since January 2015. (ii) ***The São Paulo Tapes: Brazilian Resistance Songs (TSPT)*** involves artistic and audience collaborations centred on a single repertoire, that of London-based vocalist, songwriter and journalist Mônica Vasconcelos. Funded by Arts Council England and King's, Treece's collaboration with her produced English commentaries and translations for *The São Paulo Tapes* (2017), a CD of selected 'resistance songs' from the 1964–85 dictatorship period, leading to workshops (totalling 85 participants, two-thirds British with a smaller number of Brazilians and other nationalities, comprising family museum-goers, jazz aficionados, students, arts audiences and tourists), creative rehearsals (involving six musicians) and collaboration with spoken-word poet Francesca Beard to develop new material inspired by the repertoire.

Transforming artistic practices and stimulating new forms of artistic expression

OOTW created a pioneering infrastructure of international networks for developing and sharing methodologies for theatre translation. As one commentator says: *"I've been incredibly grateful to be part of the collective and it really is a collective. They are translators and directors and actors all working towards the same goal of making the best translation possible [...] so that it is equivalent to the performance that it would have if it was in its native language"* [A.1, Lanna Joffrey]. Since January 2015, monthly readings of new translations by established and emerging translators have brought together participants from c20 countries. The model for this network has been shared with practitioners in other languages, including German, French and Chinese, fulfilling the initial goal of OOTW to create an exportable model for theatre translation. Translations by established and emerging translators from the UK, US, Europe, Spain, Portugal and 10 Latin American countries read at the monthly table-read (60 in total) often go on to full readings in the annual Festival, where workshops and rehearsals train translators, directors and actors in dealing with a translated text in performance. This has led to full productions (see below) and to new practices engaging with different forms of expression.

Specific examples of the impact of Boyle's research on translating extremity on practice include the creation in 2011 of the Head For Heights Theatre Company. Funded by Arts Council England (2017, 2019, 2020) and by the British Council (2018, 2020), the company has developed a translation process for full professional productions through workshops with professional and non-professional actors, movement training and directed dramatic readings of translated texts. Changes to artistic method are confirmed by a workshop participant who reported that Head For Heights *"introduced me to new ways of looking at a text and has shown me a new way of directing"* [A.2]. The specific role of translation was highlighted when another commented on how workshops *"introduced me to the 'art' of translating plays"*. The impact of workshops that foregrounded translation in performance on professional development was described: *"I have learned a tremendous amount by their example and my network of theatre translators has grown exponentially from zero to a large number of people all around the world who I can call on for feedback and advice and that's just priceless. It has taken what was a little-known fact about me – that I'm bilingual – and turned it into a selling point. It has brought me more work both as a translator and as an actor"* [A.6, Gigi Guizado]. Testimony to direct impact on directorial practice came from Laurie Steven, with whom Boyle collaborated in London and Ottawa on a production of Jacinto Benavente's *Los intereses creados/The Bonds of Interest*. Steven highlighted Boyle's approach to the complexities of source and target cultures, languages and text, which meant she was able to *"appreciate and accommodate Odyssey's [Steven's theatre company] style of mask and movement work, the impact of performing in open-air spaces, our approach to Commedia dell'Arte, our need to reach a contemporary North American audience accustomed to masked performance, and my directorial vision"*. Steven noted the impact of this approach on her own practice: *"As the director [...] I was so much further ahead walking into rehearsals with a deep grasp of the play, a grasp that was the result of our work together"* [A.4].

At the level of individual artistic practice, Mônica Vasconcelos (TSPT) benefited from Treece's intervention as a researcher/song-translator both in the rehearsal room and in mediating her engagement with local UK audiences (*"I now consider the contribution of the translator as indispensable to my work as a Brazilian artist in London"*). Vasconcelos comments revealingly that this new way of thinking about translation transformed how she works with her multilingual, cross-

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cultural team of Brazilian and British musicians, together with performance poet Beard: *“Being able to rely on expert English translations of my Portuguese lyrics has been hugely beneficial to myself and the non-Portuguese speakers in the team. They have a profound impact, bringing us closer together, deepening our communication and cohesion as a band”* [A.3].

The resilience and creativity of the infrastructure of OOTW and its methodology of translating for performance is evidenced by the development of online productions in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Two examples are: the collaboration with Head For Heights for the online readings of two new Chilean plays, *Painecur* by La Familia Teatro (June 2020) and *Mistral G. (1945)* by Andrés Kalawski (July 2020). Both *Painecur* and *Mistral G. (1945)* built on workshops with authors, Chilean and UK actors, and the Head For Heights team to develop the translations (December 2019) and were rehearsed and produced via Zoom. Another project, *Ceremonias pandémicas* (October 2020), grew from a play by Cuban Abilio Estévez and brought together practitioners from seven countries to provide an online experience of theatre in translation. One further key impact of these initiatives was that they provided work opportunities for actors, translators and producers during the pandemic. In a more abstract yet equally profound sense, the impact of the collaborative approach to performance translation in these circumstances is vividly noted by a collaborator: *“theatre and performance have the power to cross-over beyond screens, travelling impossible distances, arriving like a blow to our hearts and minds”* [A.5, Alfonso Santistevan].

Making Spanish and Portuguese-language artworks more accessible to UK and international audiences through new repertoires, productions and publishing initiatives

Creative rehearsals involving Vasconcelos with the TSPT band, Treece as translator and poet Francesca Beard led to 13 new pieces of music/poetry and 5 studio audio recordings (2017) to create resistance music and poetry for our time. Treece appeared on a radio interview (‘Cerys on 6’, BBC Radio 6 Music, 5/11/2017, average audience 600,000) to talk about the new repertoire. With additional translations by Treece, new arrangements of TSPT songs by Harvey Brough for the Vox Holloway choir also resulted in three collaborative productions in 2018/19 [B.1,B.2].

OOTW monthly table-reads have produced c60 new translations since January 2015 by a group of established and emerging international translators. Since 2016, an annual Festival has showcased 20 new plays from Spain, Portugal and Latin America (<https://ootwfestival.com/>). Workshopping translations in OOTW and showcasing work in the Festivals has led to 20 productions, predominantly in the UK, but with some international reach: the translation of Colombian Rafael Guizado’s *The Rooftop* (OOTW Festival 2017 & 2019) was continued by Gigi Guizado in Las Vegas for The Lab LV (2020) [B.3]. Director Kate O’Connor, says of *Cuzco*, by Víctor Sánchez Rodríguez (Spain), translated by William Gregory (Theatre503 London, 2019): *“without OOTW I wouldn’t have found this text at all”* [B.5].

Omnibus Theatre, with its mission to ‘give voice to the underrepresented and challenge perceptions’, and more explicitly the Cervantes Theatre, which ‘aims to bring the best Spanish and Latin American culture to London and to British audiences’, have turned to OOTW for their programming in order to support their missions, allowing them to offer *“rare chance[s]”* to see *“affecting and still relevant work”* [B.4, review of *Mad Man Sad Woman* by Juan Radrigán (Chile), translated by Boyle at The Space, London (2017)]. Translation is key to the work of the Cervantes Theatre, which performs both in Spanish and in English, and which in 2019 produced *The Eyes of the Night* by Paloma Pedrero (Spain), translated by Boyle. Reviews of the performance acknowledged the significance of productions with translation at their core: *“having it performed on different nights in two different languages, that in itself, opens up a perspective that is powerful”*. The playwright is quoted in this review as saying: *“all productions should do this”* [C.1]. Foreign Affairs Theatre also situates translation at the centre of their work, ‘looking beyond the English language’ to share stories from ‘around the globe’ with ‘local audiences’. Their production of Cláudia Barral’s *The Blind One & the Mad One* (Brazil), translated by Almiro Andrade, appeared in the Untold Collectiv Latin American Season at the Actors Centre, London (2020).

New translations of plays have led to significant publications. Some are in academic or specialist journals, like *The Mercurian* (2020), which published Sophie Stevens’ translation of *Her Open Eyes*, by Raquel Diana (Uruguay, OOTW Festival 2019) or *Asymptote*, which approached OOTW for new drama and in 2020 published *Fernando and his Grandmother* by Armando Nascimento (Portugal), translated by Susannah Finzi (OOTW Festival 2019). The target audience of other publications is more general. For instance, *The Oberon Anthology of Contemporary Spanish Plays* (Oberon Books, 2018) features *The Sickness of Stone* (OOTW Festival 2016) and

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Cuzco (OOTW Festival 2017) translated by William Gregory, a finalist in the 2019 Premio Valle-Inclán award for literary translation from Spanish. Oberon Books (now Bloomsbury) commissioned OOTW to oversee *Nelson Rodrigues: Selected Plays* (Oberon Books, 2019), the first major anthology of works by the Brazilian dramatist, in new translations. The launch at the Brazilian Embassy in June 2019 received a Focus Brasil Award. *The Oberon Anthology of Contemporary Argentinian Plays* (Oberon Books, 2019), which introduces new Argentine playwrights to the Anglophone world, was commissioned by the Instituto Nacional de Teatro via the Argentine Embassy. Edited by Boyle, it won a Programa SUR translation award and all eight translations are by OOTW members. The launch took place in collaboration with the Roundhouse Theatre. OOTW is currently working on publication (in February 2021) of five plays from its Festivals.

Enhancing audience understanding and experience

Experiencing a play in two languages led a reviewer to say of *The Eyes of the Night* by Paloma Pedrero, translated by Boyle: “*this is an interesting production that stirs many emotions and begs many questions*”. Foregrounding the process of translation and its embodiment in performance, she noted “*perspectives of the text are similar in intention and yet surprisingly different in how the emotions are conveyed according to the language spoken*” [C.1]. The power of presenting source and target language in performance is also described by Harvey Brough, arranger and director of *The São Paulo Tapes* for his Vox Holloway choir in 2018/19: “*One particularly wonderful song, ‘Angelica’, worked fantastically, in that Mônica sang it in Portuguese throughout (naturally), the choir shadowing her in English. This was incredibly powerful, and David’s translation was a huge part of that*” [C.4].

Translation workshops for TSPT enhanced participant experience and understanding of Brazilian song repertoires and their contribution to cultural resistance under Brazil’s 1964–85 dictatorship. Workshops targeted a diversity of audiences by selecting venues across community, music and educational settings (Horniman Museum, Vortex Jazz Club and King’s). Feedback showed how the methodology of the workshop, incorporating live performance, participant responses and translator-led discussion, stimulated insights into the complex thematic and lyrical dimensions of compositions otherwise only apprehended musically by non-speakers of Portuguese: “*It’s fantastic to have a discussion about the words as well as the sounds. When she was saying ê andá pacatárandá, that to me sounds like people marching, the sound of their feet beating on the ground*” [C.3, workshop film, B.1,2]. With average ratings for participants’ understanding of the repertoire rising from 3.8/10 to 8.3/10 over the course of the workshop, feedback detailed their effectiveness in challenging/changing views about the songs (rated 8.4/10). Among the key takeaway ideas reported, the highest number related to: (a) understanding of the songs’ ‘stories’ and historical/political context; (b) resistance and artistic creativity under conditions of political oppression and censorship; (c) the role of the music/musicians in realising the songs’ communicative power in performance; and (d) the importance of the lyrics, and the lyrical/musical interaction, in appreciating and interpreting the songs and their contemporary and international resonances in relation to human rights violations, threats to democracy and racism [C.2].

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

A. Transforming artistic practices – testimonials from: artists (A.1, A.3 and A.6); workshop participants (A.2); directors (A.4); and playwrights (A.5).

B Making Spanish- and Portuguese-language artworks more accessible. B.1 TSPT report, B.2 TSPT creative outputs; B.3 OOTW report; B.4 reviews; B.5 testimonial, B.6 testimonial.

C Enhancing audience understanding and experience. C.1 Review; C.2 TSPT workshops evaluation, C.3 TSPT critical friend reviews; C.4 testimonial.