

Jorge Braga Riera 2009: *Classical Spanish Drama in Restoration English (1660-1700)*. Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins. xv + 330 pp. ISBN: 978-90-272-8905-6.

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The fact that Shakespeare's Globe Education programme of events for spring 2012 featured *La vida es sueño* (*Life Is a Dream*) by Pedro Calderón de la Barca is but one example of the revitalized Anglo-Saxon interest in Spanish classical drama. What makes this example especially significant is that in 'Shakespeare Found in Translation', as the said programme was called, Calderón was accompanied by John Fletcher and Francis Beaumont, with their play *Bonduca*, and by Thomas Kyd, with *The Spanish Tragedy*. The three plays made up Globe Education's 'Read Not Dead' season —and were thus performed preceded by introductory seminars. The choice of Calderón for the Globe's 'Read Not Dead' series, which is focused on Shakespeare's contemporaries and usually features English plays, reveals the magnitude of the British theatre system's current interest in Spanish classical drama and, therefore, testifies to the relevance of Jorge Braga Riera's monograph *Classical Spanish Drama in Restoration English (1660-1700)*.

Back in the mid-2000s, Braga Riera was wise enough to anticipate the renewed popularity of Spanish Golden Age drama among English-speaking theatre-goers. Being aware that the only precedent of such popularity was to be found in the seventeenth century, when Spanish theatre entered England, he undertook a doctoral thesis on the translation of Spanish Golden Age drama into English at that time in history. Now, he offers English readers a fascinating study based on his dissertation, which won the EST Young Scholar Award 2007.

The monograph is not limited, however, to a seventeenth-century context. Far from this, Braga Riera makes constant allusions to contemporary theatre and provides numerous examples from both periods, showing an intimate knowledge of the theatre systems of both Spain and England in these periods. His study is rooted in so-called Descriptive Translation Studies, as clearly explained in the introduction. The author aims to describe the relationships between, on the one hand, a selection of English translations of Spanish comedies and, on the other, their source texts. Emphasis is placed on the need for translation researchers to take into account the function that any given translation was to fulfil in the target culture. Braga Riera's ultimate aim is to determine the reasons underlying certain decisions made by the translators in his corpus, as well as to ascertain the degree of acceptance of various translation mechanisms during the English Restoration.

The first chapter is devoted to drama translation, given that its peculiarities may have a considerable influence on the way in which plays are rendered. The author delves into translation theory and its application to drama, highlighting the cultural dimensions of translation. It is worth mentioning that he compares other scholars' ideas on theatre translation with his own findings, which leads him to enrich the existing literature by adding new knowledge that can help us better understand the area. For instance, he points out that two of Susan Bassnett's (1985: 90-91) drama translation strategies, namely, translating the play purely as a literary text and translating it in a team, did not have a place in the seventeenth century. The first chapter contains also a comprehensive discussion of the particularities of drama translation, from phonological and syntactic specificities, gestures and stage characteristics (e.g. stage dimensions, props, lighting and music) to the influence of the audience, critics and/or censors and the role of culture and of the translator. Terminological controversies such as whether 'adaptation' or 'version' should be used for the rendering of plays are likewise dealt with, and the author's position is stated.

The second chapter brings the reader to the translation of Spanish Golden Age comedies in seventeenth-century England. An enlightening opening section reviews drama translation theory as it was in this socio-historical context. John Dryden, with his pioneering taxonomy of translation methods ('metaphrase', 'paraphrase' and 'imitation'), stands out among other translators such as Denham and Cowley. Attention is paid not only to their statements but also to their profiles, motivations, translating competence and translated works. Two different periods are identified as regards practice: one where literal translation was the norm and a second one characterised by greater freedom to stray from the source text. The second section of Chapter 2 is focused on the reception of Spanish drama and starts with an introductory overview of the state of theatre in seventeenth-century England. Spanish influence is most noticeable as from 1660, which is why the Restoration period is given prominence in the rest of the section —and in the book as a whole. The first two subsections cover, respectively, the period preceding the closing of the theatres at the start of the English Civil War (1600-1642), and the years between the beginning of this conflict and the end of the Interregnum (1642-1660); the Restoration period (1660-1700) is the subject of the final three subsections. The information is thus presented in a logical manner. Furthermore, the developments of English theatre are explained against the political and social background in England and Spain, as well as against the relationships between both countries. In addition, abundant examples of Spanish influence, as observed in the work of playwrights and/or translators, are provided.

Chapter 3 opens the second and main part of the book, that is, the study of the above mentioned corpus. The plays selected include all those performed during the Restoration which have been preserved and are considered in the existing literature to be translations of, and not just works inspired by, Spanish Golden Age plays. These are: *The Adventures of Five Hours* (first performed in 1663), Samuel Tuke's translation of Antonio Coello's *Los empeños de seis horas*; *Elvira, or the Worst Not Always True* (1664), George Digby's translation of Calderón's *No siempre lo peor es cierto*; *Tarugo's Wiles, or, the Coffee-House*

(1667), Sir Thomas Sydeserf's translation of Agustín Moreto's *No puede ser el guardar una mujer*; and *Sir Courthly Nice, or It Cannot Be* (1685), John Crowne's translation of the same play by Moreto. A further play, *An Evening's Love; or the Mock Astrologer*, rendered by Dryden (1668), was added to the corpus on the basis of evidence found by Braga Riera that it is a translation of Calderon's *El astrólogo fingido*.

After setting out the corpus selection criteria, the author offers brief but informative introductions to the translations selected and a biographical sketch of each of the translators. Perhaps the most interesting information here is that all of the translators were close to the court of Charles II and willing to satisfy their king with their translations. The descriptive analysis of the corpus follows, and commences by looking at plots, lists of characters and titles, although I will attend to the structure of the translations first, which is the subject of the last section of Chapter 3.

The three acts of the Spanish originals turn into five acts in the English translations, in keeping with English theatrical tradition, which also rules the plays' length. The translations are significantly longer than the originals because English shows —lasting approximately three hours— did not include any playlets to accompany main productions, unlike Spanish shows —lasting two to three hours. The introduction of music and dance, a prologue and an epilogue —all of which are typical elements of Restoration theatre— went a long way towards making up the additional length of the translations. Added scenes counteracted the shortening or suppression of the frequent, lengthy monologues in the originals. All of these shifts, together with alterations in the order of events and in events themselves, contributed to the plays' dynamism, which suffered due to the translators' decision to ignore the original versification —a complex combination of verse forms such as the *redondilla* and *romance*. According to Braga Riera, their translating into prose or blank verse might reflect their intention “to prevent English audiences from hearing their characters express themselves in such an apparently artificial fashion” (121), besides time constraints and a lack of literary ability. Another interesting aspect that the author points out is the translators' extensive use of stage directions. In the originals, these are scarce and less detailed, in line with Spanish Golden Age conventions. The translators acted in accordance with their own theatre tradition when they opted to offer plentiful indications of how to perform the plays.

Returning now to titles, lists of characters and plots, the new segmentation into five acts led Samuel Tuke to develop his comedy's action in five hours, instead of the original six, and, as a result, to translate *seis* (six) as ‘five’ in the title. On their part, the four remaining translators converted the simple titles of their respective comedies into double titles, generally by highlighting one of the characters in the added part. In this regard, Braga Riera conveniently reminds us that “English theatre . . . traditionally gave less importance to action and more to the description of the characters” (97).

All of the translators added characters (mainly minor) and made significant changes to the action in order to adjust it to the target audience. However, the earlier ones (Tuke, Digby and Sydeserf) followed the original plots more closely than the later ones (Dryden

and Crowne), which supports Braga Riera's claim that an evolution towards greater freedom to deviate from the original can be observed in the history of translation in seventeenth-century England.

Chapter 4 focuses on the extra-linguistic factors that influenced the translations. Given that no visual records of the stage representations are available, the translations themselves are the primary source of information, and the socio-historical context in which they were performed stands as an auxiliary source. Many of the gestures in the originals are well suited to the English audiences of the time, which is why gestures were usually maintained. In fact, the translators often added gestures similar to the original's, as well as others typical of their own theatre system (e.g. bows and curtsies). The latter were aimed at adapting the plays to the target culture.

Braga Riera argues that the translators bore in mind the theatre building where their translations would be performed. Among other evidence, the incorporation into the action of scenic elements that cannot be found in the original, such as a balcony, is particularly noteworthy. With reference to Tuke's translation, Tim Keenan has claimed that "the stage itself dictates the staging, to the extent that [certain] possibilities would probably not have occurred to Tuke" (2007: 28). Braga Riera could have used this article by Keenan to support his otherwise convincing reasoning.

Regarding the introduction of songs, the author points out that it was one way of appealing to the potential spectators and, therefore, should not be attributed only to aesthetic or literary reasons. Allusions to garments that were commonly used in Spanish classical theatre but differed from those used in Restoration theatre were often omitted and sometimes made up for with references to garments proper to the latter. It is worth mentioning that in his analysis of garments, Braga Riera provides an example of how the semiotic value of certain allusions may be used to the translator's advantage: Tuke translated "Flora, ponte el manto luego" as "Flora, run quickly . . . [*Exit Flora*]" (166). He also provides examples of the influence of the audience, critics and patrons on the translations, and speculates on the possible economic and (self-)censorship factors affecting them. A section on the translators' profiles follows, where we learn that the original authors' names do not appear on the covers of the translations, which were presented as plays written by the translators themselves, although the original authors were sometimes mentioned in the prologues, epilogues or dedications. Braga Riera considers the translators especially suited to carry out the translations on the grounds of their command of Spanish, their familiarity with theatre and their links to the court of Charles II. Chapter 4 concludes by highlighting the influence exerted by the English theatrical tradition and by the translators' concept of translation. The latter can be observed not only in the texts themselves but also in the statements about translation by some of their authors, and it favours the rendering method that Dryden termed as "imitation".

Chapter 5 analyses the translation of proper nouns and cultural references so as to determine how the translators responded to the cultural content in the originals. The treatment of character names evolves over time from 'foreignising' to 'domesticating'

techniques. This is true both for characters participating in the action and for characters only alluded to, although the trend is less uniform in the case of the latter. Toponyms also exhibit a trend towards domestication, with omission and creation of new, original place names as the prevailing techniques. The cultural references looked at include clothing (e.g. *enaguas*, *faldriquera* or the aforementioned *manto*), dwellings (*reja*, *oratorio*), stage objects (*puchero*, *rosario*), locations (*casa de las postas*, *convento*), dishes (*berzas*, *empanada de figón*) and coins (*maravedís*, *reales*), as well as forms of address, insults, religious invocations, proverbs and historical allusions. Their treatment varies depending on both the type of reference involved and the translator, but in general omission and creation techniques prevail again. In Braga Riera's opinion, this can be explained to a certain extent by the difficulty in rendering cultural references, the demands of the target culture and the omission of scenes and introduction of entirely new ones.

The sixth and last chapter examines how the translations depict, on the one hand, humour present in the originals, and, on the other, the typical motifs of Spanish classical drama, that is, love/women and honour. Most of the attention is concentrated on comicity and, despite the lack of visual records of the stage representations, humour conveyed through non-textual elements is not neglected; in fact, pages awarded to this category of humour more than double those awarded to textual humour. The non-textual aspects considered range from intonation, gestures and characters' appearance and movements (chases, concealments, etc.) to the use of buffoons, props, music and lighting, and the deliberate suspension of illusion. Interestingly enough, the translators make greater use of certain types of elements, such as gestures, garments and props. Omissions of non-textual comic aspects abound, and are often made up for. The same is true for textual aspects conveying humour (e.g. wordplay, metaphors, neologisms and asides), which are frequently substituted by analogous elements.

Despite the divergent treatment of love in the Spanish and English literary traditions, the translations respect the comedies' portrayal of love, although their female characters tend to be more daring, in accordance with Restoration society and drama. Honour is present in the originals as a family's reputation, an individual's social rank and a lady's chastity. These three concepts were familiar to Restoration spectatorship, so they were all respected, and the translations, like the originals, subject the couples' happiness to a father or brother having his honour restored.

The analysis of the translations is followed by a succinct 'Afterword' where Braga Riera reviews the revival of Spanish Golden Age drama on Anglo-Saxon stages as of 2009. He concludes by affirming that "[the twenty-first] century . . . will surely see *Siglo de Oro* theatre become more international than ever" (312). One cannot but agree, in light of the events referred to in this review's opening paragraph.

It goes without saying that *Classical Spanish Drama in Restoration English (1660-1700)* makes a significant contribution to the field of Translation Studies, which had not yet turned its eyes to the translation of Spanish classics into Restoration English, an area only explored so far from a literary-comparative perspective, and by less in-depth studies.

My one query is that comprehension is sometimes hindered by the manner in which the information on the translations is presented, which feels excessively fragmentary. Nevertheless, the author achieves his goals comfortably, and one can hardly think of a more suitable person to conduct a study of how contemporary translators are rendering Spanish classical comedies for English-speaking audiences.

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