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**Translation of Dialect and Cultural  
Transfer: an Analysis of  
Eduardo De Filippo's Theatre**

**by**

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the  
degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Italian

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*Dedico questa tesi alla mia città  
e alle sue contraddizioni irrisolte.*

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## **DECLARATION**

I declare that this thesis is my own work and that it has not been submitted for a degree at another university. I declare that in Chapter Two I have incorporated material drawn on my MA dissertation submitted in 2006 at the University of Warwick.

## **ABSTRACT**

The thesis sets out to examine cultural transfer from Neapolitan dialect into English, in the translations of plays by the contemporary Neapolitan playwright Eduardo De Filippo (1900-1984). It involves a comparative textual analysis of English translations of a selection of De Filippo's plays in order to identify the translation strategies employed by each translator to represent Neapolitan cultural identity. Eduardo De Filippo can be defined as one of the most prominent contemporary Italian playwrights who employed dialect to portray characters who trespassed the boundaries of both Neapolitan and Italian society and to address social issues which were comprehensible to a vast public. In fact, his innovative contribution resided in the ability to bring vernacular theatre to national and international level. Thus the objective of the study is to bring to light the universality of De Filippo's message albeit the limited linguistic medium and to show how his theatre is represented in the Anglo-Saxon milieu. The aim of previous critical studies on the matter has been to focus on the stage representations of De Filippo's oeuvres, without particular emphasis on the analysis of the dialect. Drawing on a variety of theatre as well as translational frameworks (critical work on translation and in particular on theatre translation, the polysystem theory, the descriptive approach, anthropology, and sociolinguistics) I argue that dialect theatre represents an autonomous genre, separate from standard Italian theatre, which needs to be accounted for in translation, and in particular that the domestication of the language reduces the cultural impact of the original plays. The thesis is the first study to suggest that lexicological issues reflect the interpretation of the Neapolitan society in the translated texts and to provide evidence of the appropriation of Neapolitan culture by the receiving theatrical system through the linguistic choices made in translation.

## INTRODUCTION

*Io mi sono accorto che più le commedie sono in dialetto e più diventano universali.*

**Eduardo**

### **Eduardo De Filippo: A New Style in Comedy<sup>1</sup>**

‘It is sometimes debated how far we need to know an author’s background in order to judge his work. I should think we need to know it whenever we should otherwise be in danger of taking something as his personal contribution when it is a representative product of his time and place’.<sup>2</sup> Eric Bentley’s words taken from the essay ‘Son of Pulcinella’, written in 1950, seem to be very pertinent to a definition of Eduardo De Filippo (1900-1984) as one of the most prominent exponents of both Neapolitan and Italian theatre. Pirandello, De Filippo, and Fo are, indeed, the most represented among the very few contemporary Italian playwrights who have made a breach in the international theatrical panorama. In this introduction to my thesis which focuses on the cultural transfer in translation of Neapolitan into English, I will discuss the role of De Filippo’s theatre, highlighting its innovative approach which blends elements of traditional and modern theatre. I shall also illustrate the objectives and methodology of the thesis, and conclude this part with a historical outline of Naples and of Neapolitan dialect in order to set up a frame to my investigation.

De Filippo’s theatre needs to be framed in the broader context of Italian and European theatre at the beginning of the twentieth century. Themes such as the conflict

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<sup>1</sup> The citation has been taken from Fiorenza Di Franco, *Il Teatro di Eduardo* (Rome: Universale La Terza, 1975), p. 26.

<sup>2</sup> See Eric Bentley, ‘Son of Pulcinella’, in *In Search of Theatre* (New York: Atheneum, 1975), pp. 281-295 (p. 289).

between individuals and society, non-communication, isolation and injustice were dominant in this panorama, in which new issues were being brought forward by cultural intelligentsias in different countries.<sup>3</sup> From a different viewpoint, in Italy the Futurist movement played an important innovative role, especially in the conception of a ‘total’ theatre, which professed the need for theatre to achieve an interaction between actors, lights, costumes and musical effects. The idea of the histrionic actor, who used improvisation and physicality as the basis of acting, common to the genre of *varietà*,<sup>4</sup> became the emblem of

teatro futurista, e più in generale, modello di ogni tipo di teatro non passatista; con Marinetti, il varietà diventa un «mito culturale», l'ultimo residuo del mito della *commedia dell'arte* e del teatro come esercizio miracoloso della spontaneità verso la perfezione tecnica'

as was announced in the *Manifesto del teatro di varietà* in 1913.<sup>5</sup>

These new ideas reached Naples as well, where the Neapolitan writer, poet and painter Francesco Cangiullo (1884-1977), took part in the creation, with Marinetti, of the

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<sup>3</sup>For example, James Joyce published *Dubliners* in 1906 and *Ulysses* in 1921. Samuel Beckett was born in 1906 and would become one of the main writers of the so called ‘theatre of the absurd’ of which *Waiting for Godot* (1953) is one of the most famous examples. On this point see Roberto Reborà’s ‘Introduction’, in *Teatro di Samuel Beckett* (Verona: Mondadori, 1970), p. 8.

<sup>4</sup> Franca Angelini, in her *Il teatro del novecento da Pirandello a Fo* (Rome: Editori Laterza, 1976), p. 121 argues that the main centres of production of this type of theatre were Rome and Naples, where actors such as Ettore Petrolini and Nicola Maldacea developed specific techniques in this sense, which would be adopted also by Raffaele Viviani, the De Filippo brothers and Totò, although *varietà* actors were present in other regions as well, since ‘dialettalità’ was the main feature of this popular genre.

Günter Berghaus, in his *Italian Futurist Theatre, 1909-1944* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), p. 6 points out that ‘[a]fter several years of experimentation with the format of the *serate*, Marinetti felt the need to go beyond the use of theatre as a means of provocation and propaganda. The *serate* had offered an effective theatrical formula, but once established, it was not easy to avoid repetition. Therefore Marinetti began to search for a new model, which would offer more variety and open up new possibilities. He found this in a form of popular theatre usually referred to as music-hall, variety, cabaret, or *café-concert*. [...]. In the 1920s, the movement’s main operation shifted from Milan to Rome and a new artistic phase, usually referred to as Second Futurism, began.

<sup>5</sup>See Angelini, *Il Teatro del novecento da Pirandello a Fo*, p. 120.

manifesto of 'Teatro della sorpresa' published in 1921. It is not at all surprising, that Eduardo De Filippo, who was developing as a playwright, was influenced by this cultural turmoil, and opened up to a European perspective.

Other elements prevalent in European theatre, such as introspection and interiority are essential factors in De Filippo's theatre. As Anna Barsotti observes:

il filo rosso che collega le diverse prove della sua drammaturgia è quello stesso che attraversa, con il *leit-motiv* della «comunicazione difficile», la drammaturgia europea del Novecento, da Pirandello a Ionesco a Beckett... [...] ne deriva l'oscillazione costante fra la rappresentazione dell'*individuo* isolato in un mondo che non lo capisce e la resa dei suoi tentativi di costruire un rapporto di *comunicazione con gli altri*.<sup>6</sup>

We will see in the subsequent chapters that the theme of non communication is at the basis of *Natale in casa Cupiello* (1931) where the male protagonist Luca Cupiello lives in a separate world oblivious to the problems destroying his family. Likewise, in *Napoli milionaria!* (1945) Gennaro Jovine leads a separate life from his family who has to turn to illicit traffic to survive starvation during the war. De Filippo's ability to depict human nature in all its facets, to denounce social injustice, and at the same time to emphasize values such as honesty, family, tolerance puts him among the most representative authors of the Italian twentieth-century panorama.

One of the most distinctive elements of De Filippo's theatre is the use of a minimalist style of acting in comedy. This genre was and still is often associated with over gesticulation and loudness. Conversely, De Filippo's innovative acting style was based on

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<sup>6</sup> See Anna Barsotti, 'La lingua di contraddizione nel teatro di Eduardo: colore delle parole e temperature dei silenzi', in *Eduardo De Filippo, Atti del convegno di studi sulla drammaturgia civile e sull'impegno sociale di Eduardo De Filippo senatore a vita*, ed. by Elio Testoni (Catanzaro: Rubbettino, 2004), pp.35-64 (p. 38).

silence and minimal physicality. His advice to training actors has become a milestone in acting techniques:

prova a entrare in scena e a interessare il pubblico al personaggio che devi interpretare, senza parlare. Se dopo un minuto dalla sala parte una voce che ti chiede: “Mbè?”, paga la penale al capocomico e cambia mestiere.<sup>7</sup>

Eduardo's stillness has been admired also by critics such as Michael Billington and Eric Bentley. The former in England and the latter in America both praised the '*pianissimo*', which was so distant from the stereotyped idea of Italian acting.<sup>8</sup> Gennaro Jovine in *Napoli milionaria!*, Luca Cupiello in *Natale in casa Cupiello*, Antonio Barracano in *Il sindaco del Rione Sanità*, just to name a few, represent anti-heroes who use their eyes and their silence to create magisterial theatrical effects. In this way the comic element is the result of estrangement from the actual acting which indeed is often tragic.

Although De Filippo's theatre has a strong link with Naples, where all his plays take place, this does not make it parochial, since its themes cross Neapolitan boundaries and extend to the whole of Italy and even beyond it. For this reason he appears to be the spokesperson of an entire population and its expectations and frustrations. In fact, he is known by the Italian community and by scholars of Italian theatre simply as Eduardo.<sup>9</sup> The numerous stage productions in different countries, such as England, France, Russia,

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<sup>7</sup> Cited in *Eduardo: polemiche, pensieri, pagine inedite*, ed. by Isabella Q. De Filippo (Milan: Bompiani, 1985), p. 159.

<sup>8</sup> See Eric Bentley, 'Son of Pulcinella', p. 291. See also Michael Billington, 'Family at War with Itself', in *The Guardian*, 29 June 1991, in Chapter Four, p. 160.

<sup>9</sup> The elimination of his surname from the company's name and the adoption of his forename as his future art name coincided with two important events: his separation from his brother Peppino which put an end to the *Compagnia Teatro Umoristico I De Filippo*, and the beginning of the *Cantata dei giorni dispari* with a less comic and more dramatic repertoire. See on this point Maurizio Giammusso, *Vita di Eduardo* (Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 1993), p. 179. The fact that De Filippo is known in theatre simply by his first name has generated a sense of familiarity between audiences and the author.



Romania, Japan, Germany, Hungary, Spain, just to name a few, prove the extensive interest in this author and the worldwide resonance of his theatre.<sup>10</sup>

### **Translating Dialect: Objectives and Methodology**

In this thesis I set out to demonstrate how Eduardo De Filippo employed Neapolitan dialect to transmit cross-cultural values, using language to assert the need to give voice to local cultures, and how his plays have been domesticated in translation. It involves a comparative textual analysis which examines the cultural transfer from Neapolitan dialect into English in the translations of four plays by the contemporary Neapolitan playwright. For this purpose, I have identified the following plays: *Natale in casa Cupiello*, (1931), *Napoli Milionaria!*, (1945), *Filumena Marturano*, (1946) and *Il sindaco del Rione Sanità*, (1960). I have selected these plays because they can be described as ‘typically Neapolitan’ insofar as they seem to be imbued with all the stereotypes of the Mediterranean culture. Indeed, given that they are written in dialect, the language is by definition localized; likewise, the subject matter, being closely linked with the Neapolitan milieu, can be easily framed within cultural stereotypes. From a linguistic viewpoint they clearly show how De Filippo juxtaposed dialect and standard Italian to convey familiarity in the former and formality in the latter, whereas from a content perspective, they illustrate De Filippo’s thought as they contain the major themes of his theatre; social justice, the crisis of the family and non communication which rightly confer on it an intercultural valence as they were dominant

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<sup>10</sup> See Fiorenza Di Franco, *Il teatro di Eduardo*, p.28, who observes that in an interview, in 1973, to the *Corriere della Sera*, after the London production of *Saturday, Sunday, Monday*, Eduardo commented on his satisfaction with the performance and enthusiastic reception: ‘«Le mie commedie sono state rappresentate un po’ dappertutto nel mondo. Fin’ora – dato che il mio continuo impegno teatrale non mi consente di viaggiare a capriccio – ero riuscito ad assistere a messe in scena di lavori miei solo a Parigi e in Russia. [...] Qui a Londra, invece ho saputo realizzare il mio sogno: martedì scorso, al «National Theatre» dove si recita *Saturday, Sunday, Monday* sono stato uno spettatore qualunque. [...] Al finale del secondo atto, quando Rosa Priore, provocata dalle ingiuste accuse del marito, esplose in una rabbia disperata, Joan Plowright è stata talmente scattante, talmente brava e vera, che gli occhi mi si sono riempiti di lagrime»’.

themes of twentieth century theatre. The readings of the translations have been integrated with interviews with some of the translators who provided background information about their works.<sup>11</sup>

The thesis will investigate the implications of the translators' choices in the receptor theatrical system in terms of the portrayal of Neapolitan culture. My approach will draw on theories which consider translation a bridging vehicle between cultures. In fact this body of scholarship opens up a narrow approach to De Filippo's theatre moving from words to a wider context. The methodological tools I will employ are borrowed from the descriptive approach based on the polysystem theory, which sees translation as one of the literary systems in a given society.<sup>12</sup> In particular, the manipulation of the written text to fit it into the target cultural system, so that it adheres to its norms and poetics, will be a key factor in the analysis of the translated playtexts. Through the textual examination I intend to demonstrate that the rendering of the source text is primarily determined by the target theatrical and cultural system's norms and conventions, which aim to neutralize the alterity of the foreign text and to bring it closer to the expectations of the receiving audience. In fact, I argue that the cultural stereotypes embedded in the target milieu guide the choices of the translators, whose work is deemed successful if it fulfills the audience's and critics' expectations.<sup>13</sup> Through my analysis of the play texts I shall demonstrate how lexicological issues reflect the interpretation of a given culture, and that the extent of the cross-cultural transfer is linked to and dependent on the choices made in translation. Hence, I will show

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<sup>11</sup> I have exchanged emails, carried out a telephone interview and met personally respectively Carlo Ardito in relation to *Il sindaco del Rione Sanità* (translated as *The Local Authority*); Mike Stott with reference to *Natale in casa Cupiello* (translated as *Ducking Out*) and Timberlake Wertenbaker regarding *Filumena Marturano* (translated as *Filumena*). I also conducted a telephone interview with Beatrice Basso who co-translated in American English *Filumena Marturano*.

<sup>12</sup> A thorough outline of the theoretical background is contained in the following chapter.

<sup>13</sup> See on this point Ortrun Zuber, 'Problems of Propriety and Authenticity in Translating Modern Drama', in *The Languages of Theatre: Problems in the Translation and Transposition of Drama*, ed. by Ortrun Zuber (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1980), pp. 92-103.

how the representation of Neapolitan culture follows the canons of the receptor culture which, while framing it in the comic genre, stresses the element of passion and Mediterranean fervor. I will in particular investigate the effects, in terms of cultural transfer, of domestication through language standardization. At the opposite end of the spectrum I will also analyze the cultural appropriation of the source text through its relocation in the two forms of cultural identification and of local transposition. I will argue that the neutralization of the linguistic factor and the reiteration of preconceived representations of Neapolitans help the target culture reinforce its supremacy over the foreign text both in terms of reaffirming its language and in toning down or eliminating altogether the otherness of the plays. I believe that De Filippo's choice to write in Neapolitan dialect needs to be accounted for in translation, insofar as, while having explicit cultural significance, it is employed for specific stylistic reasons, especially where it is juxtaposed to standard Italian. The translation of dialect cannot follow the same canons as translation of standard language because the two genres have a different nature and characteristics. What is more, it is important to stress that translators of dialect need a language competence specific to the particular dialect used in the source text in order to grasp the cultural nuances of the language which otherwise are missing in translation. In this sense I disagree with the common belief, which is at the basis of theatre translation practice in Great Britain and in the United States that the translator's competence refers primarily to the target language irrespective of the source language. In this thesis I will argue that the translations are not successful as the neutralization of dialect through the use of standard English reduces both the theatrical and cultural impact of it and eliminates the distinctiveness of the source text. What is more, I claim that the assimilation of Neapolitan to a working class local idiom, as in the Scouse adaptation of *Napoli milionaria!*, while determining a cultural shift domesticates the source text.

The thesis is divided into five chapters. Chapter One addresses the linguistic issue of dialects as opposed, or rather juxtaposed, to standard language in order to provide a backdrop to the examination, and provides a historical outline of theatre dialect in particular to discuss its relevance in both the Italian and British cultural and theatrical systems. In addition, in this chapter I give an overview of the debate among scholars on translation when applied to theatre and the *mise en scène*. In particular I will illustrate the concept of translation and cultural transfer which is a fundamental methodological tool in my analysis. In the four chapters that follow I conduct a parallel textual analysis of different translations, carried out at different times, of the original texts, where I look at examples of British and American English highlighting linguistic differences between the two. In Chapter Two I will examine *Il sindaco del Rione Sanità*, looking at the neutralization of cultural features and at the rendering of stage directions. Since this play is particularly emblematic of Neapolitan culture, as it portrays the ways Neapolitan Camorra administers self-justice to fill the gaps of an inadequate legal system, the focus will be on the transfer of such cultural elements, and I make the claim that literal translation fails to convey the cultural transfer inherent in the play. In Chapter Three I will carry out a comparative textual analysis of four translations of *Filumena Marturano*, one of which is in American English, comparing the different strategies and discussing the possible reasons behind each translational choice. In Chapter Four I will analyze the adaptation into Scouse of *Napoli Milionaria!*, and I will discuss the issue of cultural appropriation through the reinterpretation of the source text, which proposes the social stereotype of excitable working class. I will also analyze an American translation to demonstrate how the target text has been designed to follow the target culture's theatrical expectations and conventions. Finally, in Chapter Five I will explore the adaptation of *Natale in casa Cupiello*, discussing the total acculturation of the

play which has been relocated in West Lancashire creating a domestic form of Neapolitan theatre.

### **The Neapolitan Scenario**

In this section, I will focus on the Neapolitan theatre tradition, and I will conclude this chapter by giving an insight into Neapolitan history and language both of which contributed to the formation of De Filippo's theatre. Therefore, I will begin with an overview on the history of Naples, in order to highlight the factors which contributed to the development of its culture. The geographical characteristics of the city, which lies on the coast providing easy access to and control of the sea, together with the extraordinarily favorable climate, made it an object of interest for the major military and political powers in history. It is indicative that the area where Naples was built was known as 'Campania Felix'.<sup>14</sup> The name of the city, first *Partenope* and then *Neapolis*, reveals its origins as one of the Greek settlements in the south of Italy. Subsequently, in 308 B.C. Naples came under Roman protection, thriving as a cultural center and a holiday resort of wealthy Romans. After the decline of the Roman Empire, the city was conquered first by the Byzantines, and then by the Lombards. During the VIII century Naples was involved in various battles to stop the invasion from Arabic pirates coming from Sicily and Africa. In fact, in 846, with the help of the fleets of Gaeta, Amalfi and Sorrento the duke Sergio defeated the invaders at Punta Licosa. During the subsequent hundred years Naples developed as one of the most important centers of culture and art in Italy. Its commerce also expanded exporting to the

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<sup>14</sup> Paolo Izzo, in his *L'indole naturale de' napoletani: L'arte di vivere del napoletano oltre il tempo e i luoghi* (Naples: Stamperia del Valentino, 2004), p. 27 explains that in 1792 Giuseppe Maria Galanti published '*Descrizione di Napoli*, nel quale si poteva leggere: «*Gli abitanti di Napoli, che vivono sotto un clima salubre e brillante, che godono su un terreno feracissimo di varj generi opportuni alla vita umana, che vengono ricolmi di grandissime felicità, sono naturalmente dediti a festive allegrezze, e molto disposti ed inclinati alla pigrizia e alla mollezza. Il piacere è la passione loro dominante, al quale si consagrano con eccesso*»'.

East its extremely refined textiles and importing oriental carpets from Arab countries.<sup>15</sup> Later, it came under the rule of the Norman emperor Frederick II (Frederick I of Sicily), who built the University of Naples in 1224, making the city one of the major cultural centers of Europe, and setting it as a place of intellectual progress and scholarship. In 1266, the French, under Charles of Anjou made Naples the capital of the kingdom. From then on, Naples' commerce and industry flourished throughout the fourteenth century, and during the *Aragonese* domination it expanded its cultural and political importance. In 1503, Naples entered into the possession of the Spanish Habsburgs who ruled through their *vicere* and imposed heavy taxation on the population, which in 1647, under the leadership of Masaniello,<sup>16</sup> rebelled against the rulers and proclaimed the republic. The republican power lasted only a few months as the Spanish regained power until 1707. During the war of the Spanish Succession, the city fell under the Austrians' power. The city was regained by the Spanish Bourbons in 1734, when Charles of Bourbon conquered Naples and made it the capital of his Kingdom of Two Sicilies.<sup>17</sup> The history of Naples continued with more fighting for its dominium, until the French Revolutionary army in 1799 expelled Charles's son, Ferdinand IV, and proclaimed a republic. From 1808, Joachin Murat maintained control until a new restoration of the Bourbons, whose power was challenged during the

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<sup>15</sup> See the 'Cenno storico' by Alessandro Cutolo, in *Napoli e dintorni* (Milan: T.C.I., 1976), p. 22.

<sup>16</sup> Roberto De Simone, in his *I segreti di Eduardo*, (Naples: Prismi, 1996), p. 37 discusses the language employed in the play *Tommaso d'Amalfi*, which is about the rebellion led by Masaniello. In this play Eduardo, who wanted to represent a historical character from the Neapolitan tradition, used a variety of languages for different characters. For example, 'Masaniello e sua moglie Bernardina si esprimono in vario modo: in alcuni momenti essi parlano in dialetto naturalistico; in altri momenti, più epicamente, si esprimono in versi; in altri ancora, recitano un dialetto «arcaico» quasi di sapore rituale'.

<sup>17</sup> It is interesting to note that during this long period of foreign domination the population suffered heavy exploitation, in contrast with the richness of the court life. In *The New Encyclopedia Britannica*, XXIV, 15<sup>th</sup> edition, (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica, 1997), p. 746 there is a description of such a contrast: 'Naples now burgeoned as a potent European capital, its implacable divisions of wealth and poverty thrown in relief by 18th century illumination. It is significant that, despite the importance of preceding Neapolitan artist, it was only with the 18<sup>th</sup> century that Naples developed its own school of painting. Scholars and statesmen from that era – such Giambattista Vico, Pietro Giannone, Bernardo Tanucci, Ferdinando Galiani, and Gaetano Filangeri – are of universal rather than exclusively Neapolitan distinction. Another period of prolific construction is commemorated in Bourbon public edifices – including the royal palaces of Portici and Caserta – and in private mansions'.

revolution of 1848, led by the Neapolitan middle class. In 1860 Francis II, the last Bourbon king of Naples, was driven out of the city by Garibaldi's invading army. Subsequently, Naples joined the Kingdom of United Italy under King Emmanuel I in 1860.<sup>18</sup> After Unification, Naples and the South were left behind in the process of economic and cultural development. The prejudice regarding the backwardness of this part of the country, together with a sense of uneasiness, are clearly portrayed in the letters written in 1870 by the writer Renato Fucini

inviato a Napoli per evidenziare un presunto divario di civiltà tra il Nord d'Italia ed il Meridione [...] . Quella che risultò dall'impegno del Fucini fu una nuova recisa smentita dei luoghi comuni che avevano stritolato l'immagine di Napoli fin dal precedente secolo XVIII ad opera degli improvvisati cronisti da *Grand Tour*.<sup>19</sup>

The condition of neglect of the *Mezzogiorno*, which persisted during and after the two World Wars, has been highlighted by historians and intellectuals, and the role of political disinterest in the onset and strengthening of crime and social disorder in the South is the object of an ongoing debate.<sup>20</sup> A thorough historical analysis is not the objective of the present chapter; nonetheless the outline of the turbulent historical events which over the centuries have been part of Naples' history helps delineate some of the elements that permeate the Neapolitan culture. First and foremost, the lack of paid employment is at the basis of the *tira a campare* philosophy. Indeed, the expression 'vivere alla giornata' comes from the habit of occasional work, which would produce the 'giornata' or daily wage,

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<sup>18</sup>*The New Encyclopedia Britannica*, p. 746.

<sup>19</sup> See Izzo, *L'indole naturale de' napoletani*, p. 25.

<sup>20</sup> For a clear summary of Neapolitan history, see *The New Encyclopedia Britannica*, pp. 742-747.

sufficient to allow the family to get by day by day.<sup>21</sup> This reflects on the fatalism and a certain disillusion that characterize Neapolitans. As Marotta pointed out in 1948, and it could be repeated today,

a Napoli sono così le cose: nessuno le fa o le suscita, e tuttavia esistono o si verificano egualmente; solo chi vuole e sempre vuole e fortissimamente vuole una cosa, a Napoli non l'avrà mai.<sup>22</sup>

The second element connected to the historical background of Naples, is its multifaceted nature. Both the language and the themes of Neapolitan culture reflect the different civilizations that influenced it, and are the result of a multiracial amalgam, stratified throughout the centuries, which represents 'il trionfo della contaminazione culturale ed

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<sup>21</sup> Izzo, in his *L'indole naturale de' Napolitani*, pp. 42-43 cites Renato Fucini who, in 1878, writes in his book *Napoli ad occhio nudo: Lettere ad un amico*: '«Sono troppi quelli che abbisognano di lavoro, di fronte al movimento industriale e commerciale del paese, ove molti, lo ripeto, rimangono involontariamente inoperosi; ma quando offriamo loro da lavorare, è un'atroce calunnia, almeno ora, il dire che lo ricusano perché hanno mangiato[...]; per cui quando hanno da lavorare lavorano, e la loro opera è intelligente e produttiva al pari di quella di qualunque altra popolazione della penisola»'.

On the same subject, in 1948 Gennaro Marotta, in his *San Gennaro non dice mai no* (Cava dei Tirreni: Avagliano, 1995), p. 55 points out that 'povera di industrie e ricchissima di sole [...] Napoli è una città di artigiani'. Their skills are nonetheless employed for the benefit of other parts of the country where Neapolitan craftsmanship is largely underpaid. Marotta continues on p. 57 by telling us about a shoemaker, named don Vincenzo, who '[q]uando [...] aveva finito la sua partita di scarpe si issava su un camion fra due casse e andava a venderla a Roma. Aveva una clientela di negozionati sopraffini e stemmati, i quali usufruivano della esclusività del modello e rivendevano per dodici o quindicimila lire un paio di scarpe che pagavano a don Vincenzo, metà in contanti e metà in cambiali, dalle cinque alla seimila lire. Belle scarpe, veramente, e portavano un nome straniero evocatore di maestose fabbriche americane o inglesi, quel che di oltremarino e d'imperiale, di austero e solido con cui i piedi di ogni latitudine subito fraternizzano'.

The situation has remained unchanged for half a century, and the exploitation of underpaid craftsmanship is still an active practice, as reported by Roberto Saviano who, in his *Gomorra* (Milan: Mondadori, 2007), p. 44 describes a similar event happened to a tailor, by the name of Pasquale, who made an evening dress which the film star Angelina Jolie wore in Los Angeles at the Oscar Ceremony. Saviano writes: 'Pasquale aveva una rabbia, ma una rabbia impossibile da cacciare fuori. Eppure la soddisfazione è un diritto, se esiste un merito questo dev'essere riconosciuto. Sentiva in fondo, in qualche parte del fegato o dello stomaco, di aver fatto un ottimo lavoro e voleva poterlo dire. Sapeva di meritarsi qualcos'altro. Ma non gli era stato detto niente. Se n'era accorto per caso, per errore.[...] Non poteva dire "Questo vestito l'ho fatto io". Nessuno avrebbe creduto a una cosa del genere. La notte degli Oscar, Angelina Jolie indossa un vestito fatto ad Arzano, da Pasquale. Il massimo e il minimo. Milioni di dollari e seicento euro al mese'. Interestingly, Burberry men's fine leather gloves are manufactured in the area of 'Materdei', in the heart of Naples.

<sup>22</sup> Marotta *San Gennaro non dice mai no*, p. 154.



etnica'.<sup>23</sup> Such influences on the one hand are visible in Neapolitan music, architecture and figurative arts, on the other they are most evident in the structure of the dialect, which draws on French, Spanish, German and Arabic. The complexity of Neapolitan dialect will be examined in the next section, where I shall illustrate the different nuances of its structure.

### **A Brief Outline of Neapolitan Dialect**

The complexity of Neapolitan is visible also in its morphosyntactic structure, which is the result of diverse historical and cultural elements. In particular, a diastratic element in the linguistic structure of Neapolitan dialect can be observed, which is expressed by a multiplicity of registers and syntactic structures. Indeed

nella storia linguistica di Napoli, in realtà , secondo quanto appare sia dalle testimonianze esplicite sia dalla documentazione dei testi, la variazione diastratica ha rappresentato un aspetto costante, almeno a partire dall'epoca in cui la città è assunta al ruolo di capitale di un vasto Regno, caratterizzata da un composita realtà sociale.<sup>24</sup>

Such stratification was particularly visible during the Aragonese domination, when the city flourished culturally and practiced linguist experimentation, which resulted in a separation between written and refined language and spoken and unrefined language, characterizing lower strata of the population. In 1589, the scholar Giovan Battista Del Tufo distinguished between ‘ “il parlar goffo” [e] “il favellar gentil napoletano” [che è] del tutto comparabile al

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<sup>23</sup> Izzo, *L'indole naturale de' Napolitani*, p. 16.

<sup>24</sup> See Nicola De Blasi, 'Notizie sulla variazione diastratica a Napoli tra il '500 e il 2000', in *Bollettino linguistico campano*, 1 (2002), pp. 89-128 (p. 90).

toscano e superiore a quello di Milano.<sup>25</sup> The coexistence of two different vernaculars is expressed in the literary productions of that period and later, insofar as Neapolitan authors such as Del Tufo and Basile drew on the dialectal and popular elements in their productions. Indeed, during the sixteenth century, Neapolitan dialect became more clearly defined as a language with different characteristics, according to the social status of the speakers. In this panorama emerges a distinction between

un dialetto italianizzante e un dialetto plebeo, che in qualche modo continua a evolversi per proprio conto [...]. Il dialetto parlato, forse proprio in questa fase, comincia a proporsi quasi come un dialetto “integrale”, meno esposto all’interferenza con l’italiano e orientato in direzione opposta, in una sorta di polarizzazione.

La stratificazione tra varietà percepite come diverse favorisce la straordinaria fioritura del dialetto letterario napoletano, ma è anche vero che [...] il napoletano, al di fuori della letteratura, è sempre più avvertito come varietà inferiore.

During the eighteenth century, Neapolitan dialect was regarded as a language which, in a way, could compete with the Tuscan vernacular, and this led, in 1776 to the creation of a treatise *Del dialetto napoletano*. It is documented that, in this period, Neapolitan, which in the past had been in use among lawyers and in the bureaucratic language, had become more and more Italianized, so that the difference between spoken, unrefined language and written, sophisticated language became more evident.<sup>26</sup> The linguistic gap mirrored the cultural gap among the strata of the population, to the point that during the rebellion of 1799, the fliers distributed to illiterate people were written in dialect, and aimed at establishing a sort of complicity between rebels and lower classes even though the leaflets

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<sup>25</sup> De Blasi, ‘Notizie sulla variazione diastratica a Napoli tra il ’500 e il 2000’, p. 98.

<sup>26</sup> De Blasi, ‘Notizie sulla variazione diastratica a Napoli tra il ’500 e il 2000’ p. 103.

were not actually being read by the population. During the second half of the nineteenth century, variations within spoken Neapolitan become more apparent, and are documented in Papanti (1875) by three different translations in Neapolitan of the novel *Re di Cipri*.<sup>27</sup> the first one, by Raffaele D'Ambra, follows the literary written tradition; the second one, by Luigi Settembrini, follows the spoken tradition, and the third one, by Duca di Castelmonte Carafa D'Andria, follows the *dialetto volgare*. The three versions highlight orthographic differences, indeed

D'Ambra preferisce l'articolo *lo*, mentre Settembrini e il Duca d'Andria optano per la forma aferizzata: il secondo preferisce 'u (pur ricorrendo anche alla preposizione *a li*), che forse gli pare più "volgare" di 'o (e allo stesso modo una 'nu invece di 'no').<sup>28</sup>

These translations underscore the debate among Neapolitan intellectuals, at the end of the nineteenth century, on the orthographic variations of the determinate article, until the prominent author and actor Salvatore Di Giacomo opted for the aphaeretic versions. The differentiation within Neapolitan dialect continued until the beginning of the twentieth century, when nuances were discussed between a 'popular' Neapolitan and a 'bourgeois' Neapolitan. The 'Italianization' of the dialect became more widespread during the twentieth century, and was visible especially in theatre, including De Filippo's theatre.<sup>29</sup> In contemporary Neapolitan, on the other hand, the contraposition between 'popular' Neapolitan and 'bourgeois' Neapolitan has been overcome, and the new dialect is the result of influences from the popular variety. What is more, an interesting phenomenon is the localization of Italian. Indeed, in the course of the twentieth century on the one hand

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<sup>27</sup> *Decameron* I, 9, cited in De Blasi, 'Notizie sulla variazione diastratica a Napoli tra il '500 e il 2000', p. 105.

<sup>28</sup> De Blasi, 'Notizie sulla variazione diastratica a Napoli tra il '500 e il 2000', p. 105.

<sup>29</sup> De Blasi, 'Notizie sulla variazione diastratica a Napoli tra il '500 e il 2000', p. 110.

standard Italian has become widely spoken, whereas dialect has been progressively abandoned by certain strata of the population; on the other hand, a diastratic differentiation of local Italian may be detected. From a sociological viewpoint, it can be noticed that the predominant use of dialect does not represent a choice, but it is a necessity, related to a lower level of education as the speakers are not equipped to use both standard Italian and dialect freely; ‘non è pertanto eccessivo affermare che a Napoli il vasto radicamento del dialetto e la sua eccezionale vitalità si combinano con un disagio socioculturale’.<sup>30</sup>

With regard to the variety of registers, Roberto De Simone, a musicologist and music director, has identified three different types of Neapolitan, which are still in use. A first type of dialect can be defined as ‘domestic’ ‘quello in uso quotidianamente, praticato all’interno delle quattro pareti di una stanza, [...] viene espresso con toni medio-bassi.’<sup>31</sup> A second type of dialect could be called ‘*da strada o da cortile*’ [...] connotato da un tono di voce medio-alto [...] e si presenta di per sé con un notevole tasso di teatralità’. The third type of dialect is called ‘*dialetto della ritualità*: quello espresso principalmente nei canti tradizionali [...] e, per alcuni aspetti, sembra collegarsi al dialetto letterario’.<sup>32</sup>

The literary dialect, on the other hand, derives from the combination of these three types of dialect, and the first literary dialect work is *Lo cunto de li cunti* by Giambattista Basile (1575-1632).<sup>33</sup> All the different types of Neapolitan are somewhat different from each other in terms of grammatical structure, vocabulary and pronunciation. In particular *Lo cunto de li cunti*, published between 1634 and 1636, set the language which would be

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<sup>30</sup> De Blasi, ‘Notizie sulla variazione diastratica a Napoli tra il ’500 e il 2000’, p. 119. Examples of this social unevenness are given by Marcello D’Orta in his books *Io, speriamo che me la cavo* (Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 1990), and *Dio ci ha creato gratis* (Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 1992), which are two compilations of essays written by the pupils of a primary school in one of Naples’ deprived areas. The approximate Italian used by the children, mainly translated from dialect, while producing exhilarant results, highlights the inability to master the standard language.

<sup>31</sup> De Simone, *I segreti di Eduardo*, p. 8.

<sup>32</sup> De Simone, *I segreti di Eduardo*, p. 9.

<sup>33</sup> See Giambattista Basile, *Lo cunto de li cunti*, ed. by E. Raimondi, trans. by Benedetto Croce (Turin: Einaudi, 1976).

employed in the eighteenth century by *opere buffe* or *opere comiche*. It is important to note that after the unification of Italy, the debate on the use of Neapolitan was still very active, to the point that the *Accademia dei Filopatrìdi*, in 1879 published a booklet with the title *Il dialetto Napolitano si deve scrivere come si parla?*, which in the introduction said:

L'Accademia dei Filopatrìdi, fondata in Napoli nello scopo di studiare ed illustrare gli scrittori del nostro dialetto, stabilire le regole dell'ortografia e rendere morale il teatro, in varie tornate discusse sul tema importante: «Se il dialetto napolitano deve scriversi come si parla dal popolo. La questione di carattere controverso, fu trattata da campioni favorevoli e contrari con molto calore».<sup>34</sup>

As to the themes of Neapolitan theatre, from the beginning, they had always been comic, inasmuch as irony and parody were the leitmotiv of this genre. In this sense, the ability to laugh about everything, including their own misfortune, typical of Neapolitans, was transfused into theatre and, throughout the centuries, has reached modern authors such as Eduardo Scarpetta and his son, Eduardo De Filippo. A different discourse was initiated by Salvatore Di Giacomo and other artists, who created 'un nuovo tipo di teatro dialettale di carattere drammatico, che poi venne chiamato «Teatro d'Arte» (gli intenti di tale teatro si collegavano palesemente al verismo di tipo verghiano)'.<sup>35</sup> Alongside dramatic theatre, the *Varietà* created other artistic forms such as the *macchietta* or the *bozzetto comico*, which were sometimes alternated with the dramatic ones in the same production, mixing drama with folklore or caricature. Contemporary Neapolitan theatre uses dialect in a more

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<sup>34</sup> De Simone, *I segreti di Eduardo*, p. 12.

<sup>35</sup> De Simone, *I segreti di Eduardo*, p. 17.

proletarian way, its language is strongly influenced by neologisms, and, though distant from De Filippo's language it may be, remains among the most heard of localized voices.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> See Chapter One for examples of new contemporary Neapolitan dramaturgy.

## CHAPTER ONE

### DIALECT AND CULTURAL TRANSFER

#### **Translating Drama or Translating Theatre?**

Drama, by definition has a double status, as text and as performance. It is generally believed that the written text, also referred to as drama text or play text, is in direct relation with performance, since in the majority of cases the play's final destination is the stage. What is more, a play depends on other elements like movements, gesture, speech rhythms, music and so forth which allegedly destine it to a performance.<sup>1</sup> Such a perspective, though, seems not to take into account those plays with stylistic elements which make them pieces of literature. I refer in particular to the plays by Luigi Pirandello and Eduardo De Filippo which contain extremely detailed stage directions which go beyond the instruction of actors and reveal the presence of the author who speaks through his own voice and not through the voice of the actors.

In fact a number of scholars have underlined the dramatic text's complexity as a literary as well as a visual and aural medium, as suggested by Egil Törnqvist, who places drama in two different, though overlapping, semiotic systems, hence its 'hybrid existence', which in terms of translation raises a series of problems, the most obvious one being the closeness between text and stage performance.<sup>2</sup> The predominance of either element is not a purely academic question; on the contrary it has direct practical consequences in terms of the freedom of the translator/dramaturge to distance herself or himself from the written text.

Another consequence of the preponderance of the performance text over the play text is that

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<sup>1</sup> Ortrun Zuber, 'Problems of Propriety and Authenticity in Translating Modern Drama', p. 92.

<sup>2</sup> Egil Törnqvist, in his *Transposing Drama: Studies in Representation* (London: Macmillan Education, 1991), p. 11 argues that 'the double status of drama as verbal text (for the reader) and audiovisual experience (for the spectator) means that the translator of plays, unlike someone translating novels or poetry, deals not only with two languages, but also with two audiences'. On the same point see also Sirkku Aaltonen, *Time-Sharing on Stage: Drama Translation in theatre and Society*, (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2000).

the performance text is indeed autonomous from the written text as it belongs to a different system altogether.<sup>3</sup> The interrelation between the dramatic text and *mise en scène* has been extensively discussed by the semiotician Patrice Pavis whose poststructuralist approach considers dramatic text and performance as parallel, independent elements, and considers performance to be one of the ‘concretizations’ of the written text. He asserts that the

*mise en scène* does not have to be faithful to a dramatic text. The notion of faithfulness, a cliché of critical discourse, is pointless and stems in fact from confusion. Faithfulness to what? [...] If producing a faithful *mise en scène* means repeating, or believing one can repeat, by theatrical means what the text has already said, what would be the point of *mise en scène*?<sup>4</sup>

It follows that ‘a playable theatre translation is the product not of linguistic, but rather of a dramaturgical act’,<sup>5</sup> insofar as it is produced for the stage and nothing else. I am departing from this assumption, since my argument is that such a perspective, by shifting the attention to the performance, undermines the role of the play text and allows any sort of arbitrary modifications of it to suit the needs of the target culture.

Among other scholars, Susan Bassnett, through the imaginative metaphor of the labyrinth, describes this intricate relationship between play text and performance, where the element of performance gives rise to questions of adherence to norms and conventions of the target theatrical system, and suggests that, in order to overcome problems of ‘gestural language’ that is to decipher the so called performance text, a collaborative approach seems

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<sup>3</sup> Egil Törnqvist, *Transposing Drama*, p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Patrice Pavis, *Theatre at the Crossroads of Culture*, trans. by Loren Kruger (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 26.

<sup>5</sup> Pavis, *Theatre at the Crossroads of Culture*, p. 140.



to be the most appropriate one.<sup>6</sup> In taking into consideration such a perspective, I believe that only through the cooperation between the translator and the other participants in the *mise en scène* can the drama text be fairly brought to the stage. In fact, why it is undeniable that theatre is a sociocultural event which is imbued with the culture of the system it belongs to, the same can be said for drama translation, which reflects and undergoes the constraints of the culture it serves, namely the target culture. However, I argue that such a descriptive approach does not exclude the need for considering the source text the starting point which needs to be accounted for. In a postmodern and postcolonial era such as the one we live in today, it would be anachronistic to claim that the source text is sacred and untouchable, as different times require different approaches and offer different perspectives. Nonetheless, any arbitrary manipulation to fulfill personal agendas or neo-colonial theater policies needs to be questioned and eventually challenged. For this reason I will concentrate on the linguistic aspects of the English translations to show how the relevance of dialect as a powerful medium which resists the flattening of standard language has been in most cases neutralized to fit in with the receptor culture's theatrical canons. I will also show that the distinction between translation and adaptation, far from being purely lexicological, very often reflects the personal agendas of British and American theatre which, by advocating the so called dramaturgical power, on the one hand undermine the role of translators on the grounds of their 'scholarly' connotations, which make them incapable of producing graspable and speakable texts. On the other it confers on

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<sup>6</sup> On this point see Susan Bassnett-McGuire, 'Ways Through the Labyrinth: Strategies and Methods for Translating Theatre texts', in *The Manipulation of Literature* ed. by Theo Hermans (London: Croom Helm, 1985), pp. 87-102 (p.90). In this essay, the author looks at one of the strategies to translate drama as 'using the S[ource]L[anguage] cultural context as frame text'. Referring to the staging of Eduardo De Filippo's *Filumena Marturano* in the 70s, she argues that 'this type of translation [...] involves the utilization of T[arget]L[anguage] stereotypical images of the SL culture to provide a comic frame. [...] The result of this type of translation is to create a massive ideological shift: the frame tells British audiences that the play is primarily 'about' comic foreigners'. On the same point see also Susan Bassnett, 'Translating for the Theatre: Textual Complexities' *Essays in Poetics*, 15 (1980), 71-83.

dramaturges and directors total power of redefinition of the source text to suit the target cultural system and in this way annihilate the otherness of the foreign text.

### **Dialect Theatre and Standard Italian Theatre**

Since dialect theatre draws attention to its own linguistic register, I shall give an outline of dialects in Italy. First and foremost it is important to specify the meaning of the word dialect in Europe and in Italy, as this is at the basis of the attitude towards dialect in different countries. In modern Europe the word 'dialect', especially in Anglophone and Francophone countries, refers to what in Italy and in scientific terms is indeed called '*varietà regionale: i dialectes francesi o i dialects anglosassoni sono il modo di parlare il francese o l'inglese in una certa regione*'.<sup>7</sup> In Italy, the word *dialetto* is different, as it refers to the idiom spoken locally, which is different from the '*lingua comune, che è invece parlata comunque più che locale, utilizzabile ed utilizzata in tutte le regioni del paese. In generale, i dialetti italiani sono profondamente diversi dalla lingua comune*'.<sup>8</sup> The difference between countries like France or England, where the language of Paris or London became the national idiom lies in the historic outcome of Italy between the fourteenth and seventeenth century, which saw the political fragmentation of Italy.<sup>9</sup> After Unification, the creation of a standard Italian language, derived from Tuscan dialect, generated a lively debate since the unified language did not take into account the multifaceted Italian linguistic system. This was due to the wrong presumption that linguistic unification corresponded to cultural unification.<sup>10</sup> In fact, Italy was a country with strong and deeply rooted cultural differences, which are reflected in the variety of dialects spoken throughout the country and are seen in the cultural diversity. Consequently,

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<sup>7</sup> See Tullio De Mauro & Mario Lodi, *Lingua e dialetti* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1993), p. 13.

<sup>8</sup> De Mauro & Lodi, *Lingua e dialetti*, p. 14.

<sup>9</sup> De Mauro & Lodi, *Lingua e dialetti*, p. 31.

<sup>10</sup> See Antonio Gramsci, *Letteratura e vita nazionale* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1971), p.139.

standard Italian was employed mainly in literary language, whereas the spontaneity of the spoken language relied more on dialects. Indeed, it can be quite easily argued that the majority of the Italian population considered Tuscan a second language, learned through imitation or study, whereas the dialects constituted a more familiar register.<sup>11</sup> As has been acutely noted, the use of dialect in literature is tied to political crisis where standard language does not offer a reliable means of expression or it is even seen as inadequate to represent the needs of the people. Indeed, authors such as Carlo Goldoni, Carlo Porta and Giuseppe Gioacchino Belli were in their prime during the years approaching the French Revolution, while a revival of dialects in recent years has followed the disastrous years of Fascism.<sup>12</sup> This is why Pier Paolo Pasolini, whose first dialectal works were produced during Fascism, chose dialect as a literary language. He declared his own

disagio dinanzi alla lingua nazionale, di cui avverte la sterilità, mentre il dialetto friulano, dialetto materno, gli appare una realtà corposa, fisica, portatrice di una tradizione di vita e cultura autentica.<sup>13</sup>

Due to the fact that dialect drew largely on the oral tradition, it was used especially in poetry and theatre where it could be exploited at its best, since recitation was the main element of these forms of art. It is clear, hence, that the language question was at the basis of the dichotomy of Italian cultural development, in the sense that the literary system developed alongside the spoken and written one, largely connected to dialects which, apart from a few authors among whom were also Porta, Belli, Salvatore Di Giacomo and

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<sup>11</sup> See Hermann W. Haller, *The Other Italy: The Literary Canon in Dialect* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1999), p. 16.

<sup>12</sup> See *Il dialetto da lingua della realtà a lingua della poesia*, ed. by Mario Chiesa & Giovanni Tesio (Turin: Paravia, 1978), p. 27.

<sup>13</sup> See Tullio De Mauro, *L'Italia delle italiche* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1987), p. 177.

Eduardo De Filippo, never gained literary status. Indeed, a serious debate on dialect literature was started only in the 1840s by G. Ferrari and reawakened later by Benedetto Croce who advocated equal rights to the two literary systems.<sup>14</sup> In fact the need for a standard language was the result, first of the diffusion of printed books and then of the need to build a national identity in the wake of the European nationalist movements, which culminated in the French revolution and inspired the Italian Risorgimento. We will see further on in this chapter that the issue of dialect, far from being purely aesthetic, implied serious political agendas with the assertion of local identities through a resistance to imposed unifying policies.<sup>15</sup>

In view of what has been outlined above, we need to frame dialect theatre within two main issues in Italian culture. On the one hand the creation and development of a national *koinè*; on the other the language question underscoring the presence of a multilingual nation where different cultures coexist within the country. Indeed, even before Unification, during the Risorgimento theatre had a strong didactic function aiming to promote the Italian language and to instill nationalist ideals. For this reason authors such as Silvio Pellico and Alessandro Manzoni wrote tragedies whose themes were meant to arouse the people's pride.<sup>16</sup> But, dialect was by and large the language used by the people, whereas Italian was considered almost a dead language. Therefore the flourishing of the dialect theatres established

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<sup>14</sup> Haller, *The Other Italy*, pp. 4-5.

In his essay 'La letteratura dialettale riflessa, la sua origine nel Seicento e il suo ufficio storico' Croce considers '«la letteratura dialettale d'arte non come lotta contro lo spirito nazionale, ma anzi come un concorso alla formazione e al rassodamento dello spirito nazionale»'. Cited in Chiesa & Tesio, *Il dialetto da lingua della realtà a lingua della poesia*, p. 4.

<sup>15</sup> When the Fascist regime banned the use of dialects in both written and spoken forms, it revealed a deliberate intention to build a sense of nationalism which had to get rid of local diversities in view of the promoted imperialism.

<sup>16</sup> This was the aim of *Adelchi*, by Alessandro Manzoni or *Francesca da Rimini* by Silvio Pellico, who would become an emblem of the Italian Risorgimento. See on this point Chiesa & Tesio, *Il dialetto da lingua della realtà a lingua della poesia*, p. 40. See also Ferdinando Taviani, 'The Romantic Theatre', in *A History of Italian Theatre*, ed. by Joseph Farrell and Paolo Puppa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 207-222 (p. 212).

a distinction between a theatre for the whole of Italy but not based on an actually spoken language, and theatres which provided a voice for languages that were actually spoken but were peculiar to a region [which] would have profound and lasting consequences for the history of Italian dramaturgy and theatre.<sup>17</sup>

After Unification the didactic role of theatre was combined with the aesthetic function of pure enjoyment. Indeed, its 'strategy of consent-building for the newly formed state' aimed to 'reduce linguistic diversity, by undermining dialects' and to encourage 'integration of different regional cultures and traditions'.<sup>18</sup> Conversely, many authors preferred dialect theatre as all over Italy dialect comedy was regarded as superior to comedy in standard Italian because of the variety of characters and especially because of the naturalness of the dialogues.<sup>19</sup> The national theatre in the end produced works which lacked a communicative element, that is the conversational language, which only dialect could provide. As a result,

from the second half of the nineteenth century until the early twentieth century, particularly in Piedmont, Lombardy and the Veneto, dialect theatre constituted, paradoxically, one of the first significant chapters in the history of theatre in the newly united Italy.<sup>20</sup>

Giovanni Toselli (1819-1886), who wrote *La Cichina 'd Moncalè*, an adaptation of Silvio Pellico's *Francesca da Rimini*, had turned to dialect theatre because he believed that this genre best represented local cultures and used a language more familiar to the vast majority

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<sup>17</sup>Taviani, 'The Romantic Theatre', in *A History of Italian Theatre*, p. 215.

<sup>18</sup> See Paolo Puppa, 'The Theatre of United Italy', in *A History of Italian Theatre*, pp. 223-234 (p. 223).

<sup>19</sup> Chiesa & Tesio, *Il Dialetto da lingua della realtà a lingua della poesia*, p. 41.

<sup>20</sup> Roberto Cuppone, 'The Dialect Theatres of Northern Italy', in *A History of Italian Theatre*, pp. 235-243 (p. 235).

of Italians.<sup>21</sup> Similarly, Sicilian theatre was born in Palermo in 1863, with *I mafiusi di la Vicaria*, written by two Sicilian actors, Gaspare Mosca (1825-?) and Giuseppe Rizzotto (1825-95), whose first aim was the production of plays in Sicilian language with Sicilian characters, using the *verista* register, as did other *verista* authors such as Giovanni Verga, Luigi Capuana and Federico De Roberto.<sup>22</sup> Nino Martoglio, one of the most prominent dialect theatre authors in Italy, was the first to use the code-switching technique to typify different characters, a technique which created successful comic effects through ‘miscommunications and malapropism’.<sup>23</sup> In the textual analysis that will follow in this thesis I will show how code-switching was employed by De Filippo who underscored the characters’ access to higher or lower codes in relation to their role in the play. As to Luigi Pirandello, he also began his career as a playwright with dialect theatre and his doctoral thesis was a philological study of his native dialect from Agrigento.<sup>24</sup> His own dialectal production was very successful as proven by the acclaimed plays *Pensaci Giacuminu!*, *Liolà*, *‘A birritta cu i ciancianeddi* and *‘A giara*,<sup>25</sup> although he later rejected such a genre which, except in Naples, in the South was associated with illiteracy, cultural deprivation and oppression.<sup>26</sup> As a final remark, it can be argued that, across Italy, dialect theatre represented a resistant factor, both in political and social terms, since its themes were mainly social injustice and social protest. Besides, the language used was blatantly

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<sup>21</sup> Chiesa & Tesio, *Il Dialetto da lingua della realtà a lingua della poesia*. On the choice of dialect instead of standard Italian see also Giovanni Antonucci, *Eduardo De Filippo: Introduzione e guida allo studio dell’opera eduardiana: Storia e Antologia della critica*, (Florence: Le Monnier, 1980).

<sup>22</sup> See Antonio Scuderi, ‘Sicilian Dialect Theatre’, in *A History of Italian Theatre*, pp. 257-267. It is worth noting that dialect was used in the second half the nineteenth century in the novel as well by authors such as Giovanni Verga, Antonio Fogazzaro and Caterina Percoco. It is important to point out that, until the *dramma borghese* was represented in dialect theatre, many authors used dialect to denote mainly peasantry and comic registers, and to obtain folkloristic effects.

<sup>23</sup> Scuderi, ‘Sicilian Dialect Theatre’, p. 261.

<sup>24</sup> Scuderi, ‘Sicilian Dialect Theatre’, p. 263.

<sup>25</sup> Eduardo acted in two of Pirandello’s plays, *Liolà*, translated into Neapolitan by his brother Peppino, and *Il berretto a sonagli*. He also adapted the novel *L’abito nuovo* which was premiered after Pirandello’s death in 1937 at *Teatro Manzoni* in Milan. See on this point Antonucci, *Eduardo De Filippo: Introduzione e guida allo studio dell’opera eduardiana*.

<sup>26</sup> Haller, *The Other Italy*, p. 22.

reaffirming local diversification as opposed to both linguistic and cultural standardization. We will see in the next section that, given the rebellious nature, the Fascist regime strongly opposed dialects by declaring their ban from the official language.

### **Dialect Theatre under Fascism**

In the previous section we have seen how at the basis of Italian theatre there has always been linguistic and cultural separation. After the First World War Italian theatre was in a very unstable position, aggravated by the rise of a new escapist form of entertainment represented by the talking cinema and by the poor financial support offered by the Fascist authorities.<sup>27</sup> What is more, the backwardness of the Italian school system was the main reason for a lack of 'intellectual and linguistic sophistication of theatre audiences. Their demand was chiefly for variety shows and low-to-middle-brow comedy, preferably in their local dialect'.<sup>28</sup> It is emblematic that in 1931 theatre historian Silvio D'Amico published an article with the title 'La crisi del teatro' lamenting the lack of professionalism among actors and the scarcity of state support.<sup>29</sup> At the basis of such a crisis there were two fundamental factors; the use of theatre to create a fictitious national unity and a strong censorship exerted with the aim to control dissidence. These elements had the effect of flattening the characteristic individuality of Italian theatre which became muffled and servile to the regime. Paternalism and xenophobia, characteristic of Italian Fascism reflected also on the

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<sup>27</sup> On the relationship between theatre and cinema Pirandello wrote in 1929 a seminal essay entitled 'Se il film parlante abolirà il teatro', where he lamented the general infatuation for the talking film which was believed to become a substitution for theatre. He considered this idea sheer heresy as he claimed that theatre was the natural expression of life whereas it was cinema that was trying to become a photographic, mechanical reproduction of theatre. See *Luigi Pirandello in the Theatre: a Documentary Record*, ed. by Susan Bassnett and Jennifer Lorch (Chur: Harwood Academic, 1993), p. 154.

<sup>28</sup> See Doug Thompson 'The Organisation, Fascistisation and Management of Theatre in Italy, 1925-1943', in *Fascism and Theatre: Comparative Studies on the Aesthetics and Politics of Performance in Europe, 1925-1945*, ed. by Günter Berghaus (Oxford: Bergam Books, 1996), pp. 94-112 (p. 95).

<sup>29</sup> Doug Thompson, 'The Organisation, Fascistisation and Management of Theatre in Italy, 1925-1943', p. 96. See also Clive Griffiths, 'Theatre under Fascism', in *A History of Italian Theatre*, pp. 339-349.

obsessive imposition of canons of *italianità* which were not substantiated by a real consensus. Indeed ‘the poverty of the ideology to be conveyed by Fascist theatre should not be allowed to mask the much more effective, elaborate, framework constructed to control theatre in all of its aspects’.<sup>30</sup> While the attempt to create a ‘teatro di massa’ failed due to the essentially elitist nature of Italian theatre, a strict control on theatre production was exerted through censorship which was officially established by the ‘Testo unico della legge di pubblica sicurezza 6 novembre 1926 n° 1848’.<sup>31</sup> In the name of order and discipline the regime created a series of limitations on the content of plays in case they showed signs of subversion or criticism of the state policies. The hostility towards any representation which undermined the splendour of the Italian spirit and questioned patriotism was manifested through the rejection on the one hand of foreign theatre and foreign literature and on the other of dialects and dialect theatre, as they challenged the idea of nationalism. As a result playwrights, who saw their creative vein heavily restricted, and who did not want to abjure their ideals to the propagandist demands of the regime, progressively decreased their production as a much lighter form of entertainment filled the repertoire, although ‘the spirit of such dramatists as Ugo Betti and Eduardo De Filippo was not snuffed out’.<sup>32</sup> It is not surprising then, that in 1935 the Theatre Inspectorate (the *Ispettorato del Teatro*) was created as an official body with the specific function of theatre censorship.

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<sup>30</sup>Doug Thompson, ‘The Organisation, Fascistisation and Management of Theatre in Italy’, 1925-1943’, p. 99.

<sup>31</sup>Maurizio Cesari, in his *La censura nel periodo fascista* (Naples, Liguori, 1978), p. 20 quotes the text of the censorship law which recites as follows: ‘... Senza licenza dell’autorità di pubblica sicurezza del circondario non si possono dare in luogo pubblico o aperto al pubblico, rappresentazioni teatrali o cinematografiche, accademiche, feste da ballo, corse di cavalli, né altri simili spettacoli o trattenimenti [...]. Le opere, i drammi, le rappresentazioni coreografiche e le altre produzioni teatrali non possono darsi o declamarsi in pubblico senza essere state prima comunicate al prefetto della provincia. Questi può proibire la rappresentazione o la declamazione per ragioni di morale o di ordine pubblico [...]. L’autorità locale di pubblica sicurezza può sospendere la rappresentazione o declamazione già incominciata di qualunque produzione che, per circostanze locali, dia luogo a disordini’.

<sup>32</sup> Clive Griffiths, ‘Theatre under Fascism’, p. 347.



There were two main reasons at the basis of Fascism's intolerance towards dialect theatre. The first one was related to the linguistic policy that required first and foremost language unity, since multilingualism was the most evident sign of social and political fragmentation. While there was a plurality of idioms the creation of a nationalist spirit was out of the question. Consequently, since language was the expression of local identities 'la «nuova Italia» doveva essere intransigentemente unitaria, per cui i giornali dovevano evitare di parlare di regionalismo o di dialetti'.<sup>33</sup> The first step was, therefore, the elimination of bilingualism through the imposition of standard Italian. From an initial approach which used translation from dialect into Italian as a didactical tool,<sup>34</sup> the regime became more and more disinterested to this method, until in 1931 it officially forbade the use of dialect in the press, since 'i dialetti sono considerati come «principale espressione» del regionalismo e come «residuo dei secoli di divisione e di servitù della vecchia Italia»'.<sup>35</sup> The elimination, in 1934, of dialect from school syllabi coincided with a parallel increased authoritarianism, which eventually led to linguistic autarchy, aimed at eliminating any intrusion into the national language, including dialects.<sup>36</sup> This trend, during the 'ventennio' was extended to all types of communication, including the press, cinema and theatre, where dialect was openly opposed. In particular the press had to avoid any reference to dialects and regionalisms, as

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<sup>33</sup> Cesari, *La censura nel periodo fascista*, p. 34.

<sup>34</sup> Gabriella Klein, in her *La politica linguistica del fascismo* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1986), pp. 38-40 points out that the philosopher and scholar of pedagogy Giuseppe Lombardo-Radice, who was the general director of primary education between 1922 and 1924, provided the theoretical support to the 'riforma Gentile' implemented in 1923. This method, called '«Dal dialetto alla lingua», suggested that the starting point for the learning of standard Italian had to be the 'dialetto materno', since the innate bilingualism of pupils represented an advantage in the learning process. Interestingly, such an approach was supported also by Benedetto Croce, though for aesthetic and literary, rather than cultural, reasons.

<sup>35</sup> Klein, *La politica linguistica del fascismo*, p. 52.

<sup>36</sup> Klein, *La politica linguistica del fascismo*, p. 53.

eventuali articoli favorevoli ai dialetti, alle concezioni regionali provinciali aut campanilistiche, alle divisioni et particolarismi vecchia Italia saranno immediatamente sequestrati [...]. I giornali devono evitare di incoraggiare la creazione di un vocabolario romanesco [...]. Il termine «interregionale» non deve più comparire e, al suo posto, va detto «interprovinciale».<sup>37</sup>

While dialect theatre was disliked by the regime for linguistic reasons, the subject matter was equally looked at with suspicion, if it was not ‘celebratory, eulogistic, paternalistic, monumental’,<sup>38</sup> as expected. Conversely, its comic nature did not fit the triumphal image of national theatre, whilst its more or less open provocations represented a definite threat. Indeed, also the De Filippis were under the scrutiny of the regime since between

il 1936 e il 1941, si susseguono le denunce al Ministero degli interni sul presunto atteggiamento antifascista dei De Filippo, mentre nel 1943 è lo stesso Ministero a trasmettere alla Questura di Roma una relazione fiduciaria per accurate e riservate indagini sul comportamento antifascista dei fratelli De Filippo.<sup>39</sup>

Something similar happened to Raffaele Viviani, when in 1941 his play *Masaniello* was initially rejected by the censor, and only after substantial cuts was it accepted for performance.<sup>40</sup> It must be noted, however, that the regime did allow some dialect theatre

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<sup>37</sup> Quoted from the Archivio Centrale dello Stato, in Cesari, *La censura nel periodo fascista*, p. 35.

<sup>38</sup> Thompson, ‘The Organisation, Fascistisation and Management of Theatre in Italy, 1925-1943’, p. 109.

<sup>39</sup> See Elio Testoni, ‘Introduzione’, in *Eduardo De Filippo: Atti del convegno di studi sulla drammaturgia civile e sull’impegno sociale di Eduardo De Filippo senatore a vita*, pp. XVII-LXXI, (p. XXXV). The author, points out that in 1944 ‘i De Filippo saranno inclusi nella lista dei deportati al nord e sfuggiranno all’arresto per il provvidenziale avvertimento di Totò’, p. XXXV.

<sup>40</sup> Gianfranco Pedullà, in his *Il teatro italiano nel tempo del fascismo*, p. 328 illustrates, in this particular case, the reasons for rejection, which were expressed by the censor Zurlo with these words: « Quanto a *Masaniello* devo dirvi in tutta sincerità, e beninteso senza entrare nel merito artistico del lavoro, che apprezzo perfettamente i vostri intendimenti, i quali appaiono chiari nella seconda parte del dramma. Ritengo però che mettere in scena una rivoluzione popolare determinata dal caro viveri e dai balzelli è nel momento attuale

performances, for different reasons which were linked to the promotion of folklore, as in the case of the 'Festa di Piedigrotta', which reinforced the populist attitude. Moreover, the vast popularity of actors such as the De Filippo brothers and Totò, who attracted large audiences, could not be denied, even by the regime, therefore these companies were allowed to perform, though without any financial support.<sup>41</sup> Nonetheless, as will emerge from the analysis this thesis offers, Eduardo's theatre was clearly antifascist both in its subject matter and in its language. It is worth noting that his works were appreciated also by authors who expressed dislike for dialect theatre such as Massimo Bontempelli, who went to all the performances of the De Filippo brothers and wished that they would perform their works throughout Italy.<sup>42</sup> On this point it is interesting that De Filippo's works such as *Natale in casa Cupiello*, written in 1931, which describes the crisis of the family, and in that sense was in clear contrast with the celebratory attitude towards the family of the regime, not only escaped censorship, but obtained an extraordinary success. This was due to the fact that, in the panorama of comic dialect theatre, De Filippo distinguished himself because his realist dramas brought to the stage 'the economic and social transformation of a city and its people. As metaphors for human behavior and suffering they had universal

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poco opportuno... Con ciò non intendo affatto proibire il dramma, ma soltanto di rinviarne l'autorizzazione a più opportuno momento'. On the censorship of Viviani's works see also Franca Angelini, *Il teatro del novecento da Pirandello a Fo* (Rome: Laterza, 1976).

<sup>41</sup>Pedullà, in his *Il teatro italiano nel tempo del fascismo*, p. 331 points out that 'sul fronte del trattamento economico riservato al teatro dialettale fu emblematica l'esperienza della Compagnia dei fratelli De Filippo per lunghi anni esclusa dalle sovvenzioni pubbliche a causa dell'uso del napoletano in scena. «La Compagnia De Filippo ha fatto presente a questo ufficio – scriveva De Pirro nel novembre 1941 – la sua intenzione di rappresentare la commedia *Il diluvio* di Ugo Betti. Tale lavoro verrà recitato in lingua italiana e con la speciale regia dell'autore». Il direttore generale del teatro propose quindi una sovvenzione straordinaria di 2.000 lire motivata dal «particolare carattere di tali recite e dal fatto che la Compagnia De Filippo non ha mai ricevuto sovvenzioni ministeriali»'.

Maurizio Giammusso, in his *Vita di Eduardo* (Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 1993), p. 130 gives an account of Eduardo's position towards the obstructive attitude of the regime regarding dialects and dialect theatre: 'nel '37, approfittando del fatto che il Regime aveva dichiarato guerra ai dialetti, durante una riunione di capocomici domandò ad un funzionario se il «sabato teatrale» toccava pure a lui:

«Perché no?» chiese il funzionario.

«Perché la mia è una compagnia dialettale» rispose Eduardo.

«No. Cioè sì, ma è tollerata», ribatté il funzionario.

«E allora, se debbo essere un tollerato, disdico tutti i contratti», concluse il capocomico'.

<sup>42</sup> See Fiorenza Di Franco, *Eduardo* (Naples: Gremese, 2000), p. 11.

appeal and were performed internationally'.<sup>43</sup> Since De Filippo portrayed also the lower middle class, which was the emerging class, it best represented the spirit of the times; moreover, we will see how both his themes and his acting style deprovincialized Neapolitan theatre and contributed to bring it to national level. It goes without saying that the importance of Neapolitan theatre, the only one which survived the decline of dialect theatre after thriving during the first decades of the twentieth century, is confirmed by the fact that still today the Neapolitan theatrical production is flourishing with new vitality. Finally, it is important to make a reference to contemporary Neapolitan playwrights such as Enzo Moscato, (1947-) whose best known plays are *Carciuffolà*, *Scannasurice* and *Signurì signurì* (1982) and *L'Opera segreta. Omaggio all'universo di Anna Maria Ortese* (2004), and Annibale Ruccello, (1956-1986) whose first and very successful work is *Le cinque rose di Jennifer* (1980); with *Ferdinando* (1985) he won two prestigious IDI awards in 1985 and in 1986 respectively for best playscript and best production.<sup>44</sup>

### **Dialect and Theatre in Antonio Gramsci**

Within the panorama described in the previous section, it is important to give an account of the perceptive contribution on the issue of language and theatre made by Antonio Gramsci. His views on the tie between language and cultural awareness, and on theatre as a political means provide a theoretical support to the claim of my thesis that the use of dialect carries strong cultural and political implications.

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<sup>43</sup> Haller, *The Other Italy*, p. 47.

<sup>44</sup> The IDI award is bestowed by the Istituto del Dramma Italiano. It is worth mentioning the successful London Italian Theatre Season, created and directed by Mariano D'Amora, which on 27 April 2009, at the *Leicester Square Theatre*, presented *Shakespeare Re di Napoli*, written in seventeenth century Neapolitan and directed by the author Ruggero Cappuccio. The Neapolitan actors Lello Arena and Claudio De Palma played the leading roles. During the previous season, *Malacarne*, by the Neapolitan playwright Fortunato Calvino, was staged at the *Riverside Studios* on 1 October 2008.

The social relevance of theatre in encouraging intellectual activity and in promoting political consciousness is one of the core aspects of Antonio Gramsci's thought.<sup>45</sup> He believed that theatre, far from being an escapist activity, was as important to the development of society as commerce and science, since theatre was the place where spectators can engage themselves in 'una occupazione cerebrale che completi la vita, che non riduca l'esistenza a un puro esercizio di forze muscolari'.<sup>46</sup> His involvement as a theatre critic was very much part of his political militancy. Indeed, the starting point was the idea that theatre is a source of cultural enrichment insofar as it creates that self-awareness which allows individuals to understand and value the outside world.<sup>47</sup> His activity as a political journalist, therefore, is parallel to the one of theatre critic, since for Gramsci politics and theatre were intertwined.

As I have stated before, ever since Italy became a unified country in 1861 the language question, through Manzoni, Ascoli and other prominent exponents of the intellectual arena, had equated with the problem of how to obtain linguistic homogeneity as tangible evidence of political unification. When Italy was unified, illiteracy was estimated to be around 75 per cent and, in 1911, it was still very high, especially in the South. In fact in Sicily and Sardinia it reached rates of 58 per cent in comparison with Turin, where it had been brought down to 11 per cent.<sup>48</sup> This condition of illiteracy and socio-economic underdevelopment affected primarily agricultural societies, where standard Italian was still seen as an alien language, while in the more developed industrialized North language did not

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<sup>45</sup> Guido Davico Bonino, in his *Gramsci e il teatro* (Turin: Giulio Einaudi Editore, 1972), p.11 points out that Gramsci's first review as a theatre critic is dated 13<sup>th</sup> January 1916, when he published an article in *L'Avanti* entitled 'La falena di Bataille al Carignano'. His activity as a journalist coincided with his involvement as a political commentator, since '[n]el '16 Gramsci scrive quasi duecento articoli: oltre un centinaio si riferiscono a Torino e ai suoi problemi: una cinquantina s'occupano di politica nazionale e internazionale: altri cinquanta sono recensioni teatrali'. See Davico Bonino, *Gramsci e il teatro*, p. 12.

<sup>46</sup> Antonio Gramsci, *Letteratura e vita nazionale* (Rome: Editori Riuniti, 1971), p. 304.

<sup>47</sup> Davico Bonino, *Gramsci e il teatro*.

<sup>48</sup> See Peter Ives, *Language & Hegemony in Gramsci* (London: Pluto, 2004).

represent a crucial problem, also due to a greater similarity between Northern dialects and the new standard language. However, according to Gramsci, the unification of the language was only one of the external manifestations of national unification and, at any rate, it was the effect and not the cause of it.<sup>49</sup> In other words, not only is it impossible to separate linguistic developments of a nation from its political evolution, ‘ma anzi sono il risultato («il portato») delle contemporanee vicende, politiche, sociali e culturali, che si svolgono al suo interno’.<sup>50</sup> Gramsci observed that in Italy dialects played an essential role in communication, and this was a diastatic phenomenon, affecting the lower strata of the population as well as the intellectuals. Dialect influenced written language as well, because ‘anche la così detta classe colta parla la lingua nazionale in certi momenti e i dialetti nella parlata familiare, cioè in quella piú viva e aderente alla realtà immediata’.<sup>51</sup>

Language is an expression of a world-view, with all its social and philosophical implications; this is particularly evident in a country like Italy where regionalism implies the existence of a wealth of different dialects juxtaposed with standard Italian. Gramsci claimed that those who only spoke dialect, or had a limited understanding of the national language, inevitably had a parochial, fossilized and anachronistic world-view when compared with the major currents of thought on the international panorama.<sup>52</sup> However, acknowledging such a limitation was not in contrast with his support of dialects, but it was justified by his concern that, while dialects played a significant role in linguistic evolution and cultural identities, they were also the expression of social and cultural delays, especially in those areas of the country which had traditionally been neglected, namely the South. Besides, the widespread use of dialect, which was still the main form of

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<sup>49</sup> Gramsci, *Letteratura e vita nazionale*, p. 139.

<sup>50</sup> See Franco Lo Piparo, *Lingua intellettuali egemonia in Gramsci* (Roma, Bari: Laterza, 1979), p. 36.

<sup>51</sup> Gramsci, *Letteratura e vita nazionale*, p. 212.

<sup>52</sup> See Antonio Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere* (Turin: Giulio Einaudi editore, 1975b), p. 1377.

communication between people, implied that people who spoke different dialects had also a different view of life. Peter Ives points out that

such linguistic differences were distributed along North-South lines in Italy, not unlike the economic, social and cultural differences. It is important to note that the industrialized regions of Northern Italy had dialects, which were comparatively similar to each other, but quite different from those of the South.<sup>53</sup>

As a result, the similarity between the standard language, derived from the Tuscan dialect, and the rest of the Northern dialects, contributed to widen the gap between the North and South of the country where dialects had a completely different structure, and where the standard language was almost unintelligible. The necessity to overcome social and economic inequalities due to lack of language skills did not mean, for Gramsci, to abolish or, in any way, undermine the importance of dialects. On the contrary, in his article published in 1918 'A Single Language and Esperanto' he expressed his general objection to the imposition of a national language by a dominant élite ignoring people's social, economical, political and geographical differences, because this would have represented 'an attempt to suppress their creativity, productivity, intelligence and ultimately their humanity'.<sup>54</sup> The contempt towards dialects shown by the Fascist Regime, which has been analyzed in the previous section, was a typical expression of dictatorial repression, which eliminated all manifestations of local diversities smuggling the ban of dialects and foreign words from the official language with ideas of power and national identity. Indeed, the 'crisis of Piedigrotta', mentioned by Gramsci about the decline of Neapolitan poetry during Fascism, refers to the cultural impoverishment determined by that repression. What was

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<sup>53</sup> Ives, *Language & Hegemony in Gramsci*, p. 84.

<sup>54</sup> Ives, *Language & Hegemony in Gramsci*, p. 57.

lost from Neapolitan poetry was its realism and sentimentalism; sneer had replaced laughter, and irony had become a mechanical exercise.<sup>55</sup>

For Gramsci, language as a measure of the level of development and power achieved by a given society, and as an expression of cultural hegemony is intertwined with theatre which, while giving a representation of linguistic homogeneity, has a social role in the creation of a sense of national belonging. We have seen how both during the Risorgimento, and in the aftermath of the Italian unification ‘un teatro di prosa, nel senso affermatosi in età moderna negli altri maggiori paesi europei, che parlasse alla gente dei suoi problemi vivi e veri, in lingua italiana era impossibile’.<sup>56</sup> This situation had been determined by the previously mentioned appalling levels of illiteracy in the second half of the nineteenth century. It is worth mentioning that among those who could indeed read and write only 2.5% used standard Italian; however, apart from people living in Rome and Tuscany, who actually used standard Italian, among the rest of these individuals only 0.8% used it predominantly in writing.<sup>57</sup> Hence dialect theatre, which used the language spoken by the vast majority of the population, had flourished all over the country, especially in the form of comic folkloristic theatre. In his extensive activity as a theatre critic, Gramsci commented on more than one occasion on the necessity for playwrights to use dialect in order to be closer to their audiences, since they found it more accessible than standard language. He noticed that some of Capuana’s plays were originally written in standard Italian, but had to be translated into dialect and only then did they become successful.<sup>58</sup> On

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<sup>55</sup> Gramsci, *Letteratura e vita nazionale*, p. 129.

<sup>56</sup> De Mauro, *L’Italia delle italie*, p. 55.

<sup>57</sup> De Mauro, *L’Italia delle italie*, p. 53.

<sup>58</sup> Gramsci, *Letteratura e vita nazionale*. See also Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, p. 2234.



the other hand, in Pirandello's case, dialect was a choice rather than a necessity,<sup>59</sup> although Gramsci observed that

*Liolà* di Pirandello in italiano letterario vale ben poco [...]. In realtà, in Italia esistono molte lingue «popolari» e sono i dialetti regionali che vengono solitamente parlati nella conversazione intima, in cui si esprimono i sentimenti e gli affetti più comuni e diffusi.<sup>60</sup>

Since the language used in theatre reproduced spoken language, it had to sound authentic in order to evoke real images and generate historical consciousness. As long as the linguistic backwardness remained unresolved, a national theatre, in a modern way, which addressed real problems and could speak to the entire population, was not possible.

Gramsci's skepticism towards dialect theatre is only in apparent contrast with his position of support to dialects. His concerns regarded the inability of Italian theatre to address the population through a common idiom, given the linguistic fragmentation of the country. As has been illustrated, although dialects reflect limited ability in the use of standard language, this plurilinguism must be seen as a 'grande fatto di cultura nazionale capace di garantire il volto internazionale dell'Italia'.<sup>61</sup> In fact, Gramsci recognized that while dialect theatre in general remained folkloristic, Sicilian theatre, operating a resistance to cultural leveling, had its own autonomy, and was appreciated in the North as well as the

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<sup>59</sup> Alessandro d'Amico in his 'Pirandello e il Teatro', in *Luigi Pirandello: Maschere nude*, ed. by Alessandro d'Amico (Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 1986), pp. XXV-LXIX argues that, initially, Pirandello was encouraged to write in dialect by the actor Nino Martoglio, who in 1907 asked him to write two plays in dialect for his company with Sicilian actors. The comedies were entitled *La giustizia* and *'U flautu*, and were never staged. In 1915, he translated into dialect *Lumie di Scilia* for the actor and capocomico Angelo Musco. The play was represented in Catania at the *Arena Pacini*. Later he wrote a Sicilian version of *Lumie di Sicilia* (1915), *Pensaci, Giamuminu!* (1916), *'A birritta cu 'i ciancianeddi* (1916), *Liola* (1916), *'A giarra* (1916), *La patente* (1917), *'U ciclopu* (1918), *Glauco* (1918), *Ccu i nguanti gialli* (1921). Dialect was employed as a medium juxtaposed to standard Italian, as proved by the Italian versions of some plays, such as *Pensaci Giacomino*, *La patente*, *Il berretto a sonagli* and *La giara*.

<sup>60</sup> Gramsci, *Letteratura e vita nazionale*, p. 176.

<sup>61</sup> De Mauro, *L'Italia delle Italie*, p. 62.

Centre of Italy.<sup>62</sup> Gramsci's disillusion towards the impact that such a theatre could have on the Italian political system came from the role that he gave to theatre as an essential element of culture. He believed that theatre's political value comes from what theatre actually *means* and from what it can *become*.<sup>63</sup> In fact, he assigned to dialect theatre the role of conveyor of political opposition, in the same way as dialects were destabilizing factors, provided it was not degraded to secondary means of artistic expression.<sup>64</sup> In this sense, the described folkloristic connotation of dialect theatre rendered it unable to establish itself as a coherent alternative to so called national theatre. Indeed, during the years of the regime, dialect theatre had acquired a position of escapist and populist entertainment which had completely debased its revolutionary role. On the other hand, we have seen how the nationwide notoriety of Musco, Petrolini and Totò, and the wide resonance on the national and international scenario of Pirandello and later of Eduardo De Filippo underscore the significance of dialect theatre in demarginalizing local cultures.<sup>65</sup>

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that the plurilinguism inherent in dialect theatre is an element of internationalization of Italy and of any other multicultural country. Indeed, the prolific dialect theatre which developed throughout the twentieth century is still thriving, and in the majority of cases has lost the folkloristic nature lamented by Gramsci, as can be observed in a new generation of regional artists who use dialect to address important issues in contemporary Italy.<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Davico Bonino, *Gramsci e il teatro*, p. 62.

<sup>63</sup> Davico Bonino, *Gramsci e il teatro*, p. 26.

<sup>64</sup> Davico Bonino, *Gramsci e il teatro*, p. 61.

<sup>65</sup> De Mauro, *L'Italia delle Italie*.

<sup>66</sup> See on this point Paolo Puppa, 'The Contemporary Scene', in *A History of Italian Theatre*, ed. by Joseph Farrell and Paolo Puppa (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 379-393.

## **Dialects and Standard English in England**

In the previous sections we have seen that, despite the problematic relationship between dialects and standard Italian, the former have always been looked on as the true language of the people who turn to dialect, on the one hand, in their domestic environment when they need to express their intimate sentiments, and on the other as a means of sarcasm and parody. As I have noted before, until the last few decades, dialect speakers were distributed across all levels of society, until the advent of new ways of cultural communication have pushed dialects into a secondary position<sup>67</sup> in respect of standard Italian. I have argued that plurilinguism is the quintessential expression of Italian culture, since it is based in its history. I have also pointed out that the language question which dominated Italian linguistic history is indicative of such a dichotomy and it is also indicative of the attitude of the ruling classes which have tried to achieve a unified written and spoken language regardless of sociocultural premises and of the social valence of dialects.

The valence of dialects in England is, conversely, rather different insofar as they have always been regarded as inferior to standard English and, most importantly, the accents associated with them denote strong social differences. Indeed, the received pronunciation (RP) ‘in its nineteenth-century sense of ‘accepted in the best society’,<sup>68</sup> still determines the way speakers are socially perceived. Yet, standard English and its accent is only spoken by a small number of people, that is 12 or 15 per cent of the population of England, who are also the most educated and powerful.<sup>69</sup> It is interesting to note that standardization occurred in England ‘under the solid industrial and imperial expansion of

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<sup>67</sup> On this subject Paolo Coluzzi, in his article ‘Endangered minority and regional languages (‘dialects’) in Italy’, in *Modern Italy*, 14, I, February 2009, pp. 39-54, starting from the premise that traditional cultures are linked to local languages in an ‘ecological relationship’, and that, according to Ron Crocombe ‘cultural uniformity is not likely to bring peace: it is much more likely to bring totalitarianism’, argues that the word ‘dialects’ is somewhat derogative and suggests the term ‘regional language’ which must not be confused with ‘regional Italian’ that is regionalized variation of standard Italian.

<sup>68</sup> See Arthur Hughes and Peter Trudgill, *English Accents and Dialects* (London: Edward Arnold, 1980), p. 3.

<sup>69</sup> See Peter Trudgill, *The Dialects of England* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), p. 2.

the nineteenth century and this provided the background to its promotion in mass education'.<sup>70</sup> In fact, it was during the Victorian era that the term standard English was coined in order to create a clear separation between the language of the dominant class and other spoken languages which were progressively marginalized.<sup>71</sup> As Gramsci maintained, language imposition is a political act, and this is true also of standard English which was the expression of a certain ideology at a given time. In fact, in England, although there were different language variations, they were degraded to sub-standard forms in order to assert the superiority of the language of the ruling classes, as is demonstrated by Murray, the Victorian lexicographer and dictionary maker, who affirmed the dominant role of British English over other forms of spoken English. The fact that the language of Chaucer and Shakespeare had been quite different from standard English was a totally ignored fact.<sup>72</sup> In this sense received pronunciation was a political act to formalize the superiority of middle class language over the working class. The dominant class was based in London, where trades flourished, as commerce was the way to buy land and acquire prestige and political influence. In this sense the so-called East Midland dialect, which included Oxford and Cambridge, was a class dialect rather than a regional dialect.<sup>73</sup> The same attitude towards that type of dialect that is standard English was kept with regard to pronunciation, for which the model was once again London.

It is worth mentioning that at the time of the rise of standard English, similarly to what happened in Italy after Unification, the majority of the population spoke different dialects which continued to be spoken throughout the country. In fact, during this period there was a surge of dialect literature in Lancashire, Yorkshire and the North-East.

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<sup>70</sup> See Marnie Holborow, *The Politics of English: A Marxist View of Language* (London: SAGE, 1999), p. 3

<sup>71</sup> Holborow, *The Politics of English: A Marxist View of Language*, p. 185.

<sup>72</sup> Holborow, *The Politics of English: A Marxist View of Language*, p. 153.

<sup>73</sup> Williams, quoted in Holborow, *The Politics of English: A Marxist View of Language*, p. 158.

Dialect appeared in popular literature, in serialized form, albeit sometimes not very realistically. This literature was immensely popular, with as many as 100,000 copies of serial fiction by Dickens and Reynolds being sold. [...] Dialect almanacs flowered in the period 1860-1914 with a style and contents far removed from mainstream Victorian morality.<sup>74</sup>

Despite a new attitude towards dialects in contemporary England more inclined to accept different spoken idioms and their relative pronunciation, the social connotation given to regional variations is still strong nowadays. We will see that the uneasiness towards the very word 'dialect' leads people to talk about accents as a differentiating factor, and among them Liverpudlian is often considered to be at the bottom of the range.<sup>75</sup> It is not surprising then, that there are no English productions of dialect theatre of significance, whereas translation into dialect of foreign theatre is rather limited, apart from Blake Morrison's adaptation of Goldoni's *Il servitore di due padroni* into Yorkshire dialect, and Peter Tinniswood's *Napoli Milionaria* into Scouse. It is indicative that the most prolific production of dialect translation comes from Bill Findlay and Martin Bowman's Scottish translations of Michael Tremblay's Quebecois dramas *The Guid Sisters*, *The Real World?*, *Hosanna*, *The House Among The Stars*, *Forever Yours*, *Marie-Lou* and Quebec playwright Jeanne-Mance Delisle's *The Reel of the Hanged Man*. Bill Findlay translated also Gerhart Hauptmann's *The Weavers*, whereas Martin Bowman co-translated with Montreal

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<sup>74</sup> Holborow, *The Politics of English: A Marxist View of Language*, p. 169

<sup>75</sup> On the subject I quote Shelagh Rixon, who works in the Centre for Applied Linguistics at the University of Warwick and is currently researching the ways in which Young Learners are supported in their first steps in decoding written English. In a correspondence on the subject she observes that 'it is already an issue to have a regional accent [less so now, but still] let alone to be using dialect forms, and there are numerous studies on 'most acceptable and least acceptable' accents, with [...] Birmingham and Liverpool usually down at the bottom'.

playwright Wajdi Mouawad a dramatization of Welsh's *Trainspotting*.<sup>76</sup> As Findlay argued, this was due to the fact that in Scotland translators operate in a more hospitable environment than England since they can draw on a variety of spoken and literary dialects,<sup>77</sup> which have encouraged more innovative theatre productions.

After this historical overview of dialects and dialect theatre, and before I embark on the analysis of the translations of De Filippo's plays, in the next section I am going to set up the theoretical and methodological premises of my study. In particular, I shall outline some scholarly contributions on translation theory and on theatre translation, and I shall focus on the concept of cultural transfer which has gained central attention in recent years.

### **Translation as Cultural Transfer: The State of the Debate**

Translation is an activity innate in human beings. Conceptualising elements from the natural world, conveying units from one language into another, and transforming a message from one semiotic system into another one are all forms of translation.<sup>78</sup> Although, such quintessential activity of the human brain has always been regarded as secondary in respect to the creation of a new concept, when one looks at both processes of production ex novo and reencoding into another system, either of words, images, music or gesture, it appears that they are both governed by the same principle; that is the transfer of an idea from one system into another which results in a new product. When it comes to the transposition of one language into another there are various factors involved other than the simple utterance,

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<sup>76</sup> See Martin Bowman, 'Scottish Horses and Montreal Trains: The Translation of Vernacular to Vernacular', in *Moving Target: Theatre Translation and Cultural Relocation* (Manchester: St. Jerome, 2000), pp. 25-33.

<sup>77</sup> See Bill Findlay, 'Translating into Dialect', in *Stages of Translation*, ed. by David Johnston (Bath: Absolute Classics, 1996), pp. 199-219. See also by the same author 'Translating Standard into Dialect: Missing the Target?', in *Moving Target*, pp. 35-46. For other translations into Scots see also Gunilla Anderman, 'Voices in Translation', in *Voices in Translation: Bridging Cultural Divides* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2007), pp. 6-15 (p. 10).

<sup>78</sup> I refer here to the classification provided by Roman Jakobson of intralingual, interlingual and intersemiotic translation.

as language is not isolated from the context in which it is created and used. On the contrary it is the result of a series of conditions which operate on its formation and its manifestation. Such conditions are cultural as well political, so that a given language is more than a conglomerate of linguistic signs. Despite its indisputable importance in human communication, and although it has been practiced ever since Roman times, as documented by Cicero's testimony,<sup>79</sup> and was at the centre of literary activity throughout the Middle Ages, the Renaissance and during the long period of European political turmoil until today, translation was not regarded as a discipline in its own right until the 1970s, when, thanks to systematic theorizing,<sup>80</sup> Translation Studies began to establish itself as an academic branch, and was no longer seen simply from the practitioner's viewpoint or as a form of language learning.<sup>81</sup> Even before this crucial moment in the study of translation, a wealth of translation theories had developed to look at the phenomenon of transfer between languages.

Initially, attention focussed on the exact linguistic correspondence between original and translation, where the former had an undisputed supremacy over the latter. The core of the debate lay on the question of faithfulness to the original, even among those more tolerant scholars like Schleiermacher who, on the one hand favoured an approach which moved the reader towards the translation, on the other expected the translation to be faithful to the original.<sup>82</sup> Subsequently, the concept of equivalence in meaning introduced a wider

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<sup>79</sup> It was Cicero who in the first century BC introduced a different perspective in translation, moving away from the dogma that translation consisted of a word-for-word rendering and offering the alternative of sense-for-sense translation. See on this point Mary Snell-Hornby, *Translation Studies: an Integrated Approach* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1995), p. 9. See also *Translation/History/Culture: a Sourcebook*, ed. by André Lefevere (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 4.

<sup>80</sup> See Edwin Gentzler, *Contemporary Translation Theories* (London, New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 92 who explains that James Holmes's essay 'The Name and Nature of Translation Studies', written between 1972 and 1975, is 'generally accepted as the founding statement for the field'.

<sup>81</sup> See Jeremy Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies* (London: Routledge, 2001). See also Susan Bassnett, *Translation Studies*, 3rd edition (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 1.

<sup>82</sup> See Mary Snell-Hornby, *Translation Studies: An integrated approach* p. 10. See also Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility* (London: Routledge, 1995), p. 20.

perspective insofar as it questioned the dichotomy ‘faithful-free’ introducing a dynamic element which stressed the importance of the role of the reader as a receptor of the translation.<sup>83</sup> As a result of the normative approach, looking at the validity of translation in terms of good or bad, the question of equivalence remained at the heart of the matter until the 1980s when the linguistic perspective was challenged by scholars such as André Lefevere, Theo Hermans, Gideon Toury<sup>84</sup> and Susan Bassnett, who belong to the so called “Manipulation School”. It is indicative that the title of a seminal anthology of essays, edited by Theo Hermans, which is considered almost a manifesto of this line of thought, was *The Manipulation of Literature*.<sup>85</sup> These scholars, who dealt exclusively with literary translation, elaborating Holmes’ descriptive approach to translation, shifted attention to the target text claiming that all translated texts reflect the cultural and social norms of the system to which they belong, and are by nature manipulations of the source texts. Therefore, unlike the linguistically oriented school, they saw translation as ‘not intended equivalence but admitted manipulation’.<sup>86</sup> We will see how their approach, based on disciplines such as Comparative Studies, History, Psychology, and Sociology emphasizes the cultural constraints that act upon language, and therefore on translators, and that translation is an act of cultural appropriation of the source text by the receiving culture. By drawing on the concept of polysystem<sup>87</sup> as developed by the Israeli scholar Itamar Even-

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<sup>83</sup> The seminal contribution to this approach comes from Eugene Nida who elaborated the concepts of formal and dynamic equivalence. For a thorough illustration of Nida’s thought see Jeremy Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies*, p. 41.

<sup>84</sup> Gideon Toury’s collection of papers *In Search of a Theory of Translation*, published in 1980, consolidated the new descriptive trend in Translation Studies. See on this point Gentzler, *Contemporary Translation Theories*, p. 134.

<sup>85</sup> See Theo Hermans, *The Manipulation of Literature* (London: Croom Helm, 1985).

<sup>86</sup> Snell-Hornby, *Translation Studies: An integrated approach*, p. 22.

<sup>87</sup> Itamar Even-Zoar introduced the term ‘polysystem’ in a series of papers collected in 1978 as *Papers in Historical Portics*. See Gentzler, *Contemporary Translation Theories*, p. 105. In his *Polysystem Studies*, in *Poetics Today* 11, 1, Spring 1990, p. 9, Even-Zoar describes the polysystem as follows: ‘The idea that semiotic phenomena, i.e., sign-governed human patterns of communication (such as culture, language, literature, society) could more adequately be understood and studied if regarded as systems rather than conglomerates of disparate elements has become one of the leading ideas of our time in most sciences of man.



Zoar, the new school of thought adopted a descriptive standpoint, which questioned the validity of the normative approach, and stressed the fact that any translation is an act of acculturation or appropriation of the source text by the target culture.<sup>88</sup> It is clear that the focal point is the centrality of culture, insofar as ‘because language is the expression of a culture, many of the words in a language are inextricably bound up with that culture’.<sup>89</sup> According to these scholars, decoding the language coincides with decoding the culture in which that language is embedded in order to reencode it into the target culture, which is the ultimate beneficiary of the translated text. As a result, the analysis of translated literature focussed on the target text, as an autonomous entity with its own characteristics and its own strength, and not merely as a reproduction of the source text. The crucial consequence of such an approach was that the translator, who for centuries had been relegated to a secondary position, became an active producer of literature, a subject who had to be visible. Although the descriptive approach has the undeniable merit of having brought into light the cultural element in translation, and of having highlighted the position of translators in determining cultural interchange, I depart from their radical conclusion which considers the translated text independent of the source text once it has entered the realm of the target

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Thus, the positive collection of data, taken bona fide on empiricist grounds and analyzed on the basis of their material *substance*, has been replaced by a functional approach based on the analysis of *relations*. Within the polysystem, which is by definition a sociocultural entity, literature is influenced by the constant tension between various factors acting in the polysystem, and translated literature is one of the aspects of literary production, which can influence the development of it and at the same time is influenced by the same norms that govern the polysystem.

<sup>88</sup> André Lefevere, one of the major exponents of this school of thought, in his *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* (London: Routledge, 1992a) introduced the concept of translation as rewriting, which implies that the act of translating is a creative act and is not hierarchically subordinate to the source text. He argues that literature is used more often in the rewritten form than in the original language, thus rewriters play an essential role in shaping and reshaping a given culture. He also suggests that the process of rewriting does not happen in isolation, but undergoes a series of constraints, mainly ideological, which influence the formation of the final product. See also by the same author *Translating Literature: Practice and Theory in a Comparative Literature Context* (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1992b), p. 14. Moreover, Gideon Toury in his essay ‘A Rationale for Descriptive Translation’, in *The Manipulation of Literature*, p. 19 claims that ‘translators operate first and foremost in the interest of the culture into which they are translating and not in the interest of the source text, let alone the source culture’.

<sup>89</sup> See André Lefevere, *Translating Literature*, p. 17.

culture. Indeed, I believe that the source text represents one of the two elements in a rapport where two voices speak with equal resonance.

The adherence to the linguistic canons of the receiving culture has as a corollary the respect of its linguistic and stylistic norms, which require that the translated text be fluent in order for the reader not to experience any linguistic or stylistic strangeness.<sup>90</sup> What was, and still is, required is that the translator becomes invisible, and acts as a glass pane through which the original text is seen. Drawing on the distinction I have mentioned which was outlined by Friedrich Schleiermacher, Lawrence Venuti, challenges such a prerequisite that is at the basis of a domesticating method, since it reflects an ethnocentric perspective, and calls for a resistant approach which, through foreignization, emphasizes the presence of the translator and reinforces the otherness of the translated text.<sup>91</sup> The power, the poetics, the ideology and the patronage of the target cultural system are the constraints which operate on translators, who feel obliged to meet the requirements fixed by the target milieu, thus producing translations which aim to domesticate the source text in order to make it acceptable by the receptor readers.<sup>92</sup>

As appears from the above overview, in translation studies there has been a progressive shift from a prescriptive approach to a descriptive one.<sup>93</sup> In other words,

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<sup>90</sup> Lawrence Venuti, in *Rethinking Translation*, (London: Routledge, 1992), p. 4 argues that 'a translated text is judged successful – by most editors, publishers, reviewers, readers, by translators themselves – when it reads fluently, when it gives the appearance that it is not translated, that it is the original, transparently reflecting the foreign author's personality or intention or the essential meaning of the foreign text'.

<sup>91</sup> See on this point Lawrence Venuti, *The translator's invisibility*, p. 305. Here he suggests a 'resistant strategy', which produces an estrangement effect on the target-culture reader. The resistant approach is at the basis of feminist discourse in translation as suggested by Barbara Godard who, in her 'Theorizing Feminist Discourse/Translation', in *Translation, History & Culture*, ed. by Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere (London: Cassell, 1990), pp. 87-9 (p. 94) asserts that 'the feminist translator, affirming her critical difference, her delight in interminable re-reading and re-writing, flaunts the signs of her manipulation of the text'.

<sup>92</sup> Lefevere, in his *Translation/History/Culture*, p. 8 maintains that translation is a complex matter which needs to be framed within the political and cultural boundaries of the receiving culture, which is regulated by the mentioned key factors of power, patronage, ideology and poetics. The interaction of these elements determines which works will be translated and the norms which will regulate the action of the translators.

<sup>93</sup> A thorough outline of this innovative approach is contained in Gideon Toury's seminal book on the matter, *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1995), p. 54.

attention has moved from equivalence between the source and the target text, to the function of the translated text in the recipient milieu. In the last few decades, a consistent number of translation scholars have adopted a cultural perspective observing that any translated work is to be looked at in the cultural context of a given society. We will see further on that the so called ‘Cultural Turn’, promoted by Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere,<sup>94</sup> has brought a considerable innovation to the study of translated texts, stressing the role of power and ideology in the production and reception of all types of writings, including translation. These theories have developed and expanded the deconstructionist approach which is epitomized by Roland Barthes’s essay ‘La mort de l’auteur’, where he questions the concept of authorship, insofar as it is a product of a capitalist ideology, whose literature centres on the person of the author.<sup>95</sup> This methodological approach is at the basis of the subsequent school of thought which, on the one hand stressed the importance of the target culture and on the other questioned the centrality of the source text, and consequently its predominant position in the translation process. We will see how such an approach, in theatre translation, leads to the rejection of any separation between translation, adaptation, and version insofar as they are all forms of rewriting. We will also see that the issue of empowering the translators’ creativity is tightly linked to the one of copyright and professional recognition of translators, whose contribution to the target audience’s cultural broadening is crucial, though greatly undervalued.

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<sup>94</sup> See on this point Bassett’s essay ‘Culture and Translation’, in *A Companion to Translation Studies*, ed. by Piotr Kuhiwczak and Karin Littau (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2007), pp. 13-23. Another enlightening publication on the matter is *Translation, History & Culture*. In particular, Mary Snell-Hornby’s essay ‘Linguistic Transcoding or Cultural Transfer? A Critique of Translation Theory in Germany’ advocates the need for a cultural approach in translation. In her *Translation Studies: An Integrated Approach*, p. 42 Snell-Hornby calls for a bicultural translator since ‘if language is an integral part of culture, the translator needs not only proficiency in two languages, he must also be at home in two cultures. In other words, he must be bilingual and bicultural’.

<sup>95</sup> See Roland Barthes, ‘La mort de l’auteur’, in *Le bruissement de la langue* (Paris : Seuil, 1984), pp. 61-67.

I am now going to illustrate in more detail the concept of cultural transfer as it has been elaborated by translation scholars. As emerges from the above outline, when during the eighties and nineties in translation studies scholars pointed out that translation is not a mechanical activity, detached from the world, but takes into account the cultures involved in the process, the study of translation 'moved on from a formalist approach and turned instead to the larger issues of context, history and convention'.<sup>96</sup> As a result, other disciplines, such as sociology and anthropology, which had flourished for more than a century, began to be taken into account in the translating process, stressing the need to look at communication from a holistic viewpoint.<sup>97</sup> Tylor's definition of culture, given in the book *Primitive Culture*, still represents a landmark in British anthropology:

Culture or Civilization, taken in its wide ethnographic sense, is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society'.<sup>98</sup>

Later, this definition has been expanded and enhanced by the contributions of other scholars, among whom Clifford Geertz, who stressed the interpretative element of anthropology. He points out that social anthropology has an ethnographic basis and it is

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<sup>96</sup>See *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation*, ed. by Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere, (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1998), p. 2. On this point see also Mary Snell-Hornby who in her essay 'Translation as a cross-cultural event', in *Translation Studies: An integrated approach*, p. 39 points out that for centuries translation has been regarded as a process between languages seen as sets of symbols, without taking into account that language is an integral part of culture in its 'anthropological sense to refer to all socially conditioned aspects of human life'.

<sup>97</sup> See Susan Bassnett, 'The Translation Turn in Cultural Studies', in *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation* (Clevedon, Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters, 1998a), pp. 123-140 (p. 123).

<sup>98</sup> Cited by Talal Asad, 'The Concept of Cultural Translation in British Social Anthropology', in *Writing Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1986), pp. 141-164 (p. 141).

primarily interpretative of social discourse.<sup>99</sup> Borrowing from Parsons, he describes culture as:

a system of symbols by which man confers significance upon his own experience. Symbol systems, man-created, shared, conventional, ordered, and indeed learned, provide human beings with a meaningful framework for orienting themselves to one another, to the works around them, and to themselves.<sup>100</sup>

This interpretation helps understand the complexity of the relationship between cultures which, through their languages, represent voices of different realities. In fact, as a premise of his study on the Italian linguistic structure, Tullio De Mauro provides a descriptive definition of culture which coincides with

tutte quelle forme di vita che non sono bell'e date nel patrimonio genetico, ma si sviluppano solo in particolari contingenze, per spinte che portano a utilizzazioni imprevedibili del patrimonio genetico di una specie.<sup>101</sup>

From a reading of these authors it is evident that the link between culture and language is the starting point for any analysis of the interrelation between translated texts as is pointed out by Asad who, in discussing 'cultural translation', asserts that it 'is not merely a matter of matching sentences in the abstract, but of learning to live another form of life and to speak another kind of language'.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>99</sup> See Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973), p. 20.

<sup>100</sup> Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures*, p. 250.

<sup>101</sup> De Mauro, *L'Italia delle Italie*, p. 8.

<sup>102</sup> Asad, 'The Concept of Cultural Translation in British Social Anthropology', p. 149.

From a different perspective, the image of the hourglass suggested by Patrice Pavis<sup>103</sup> describes effectively how the source culture reaches the target culture. During this transfer the source culture can be destroyed and assimilated by the target culture, or it can be totally integrated in the target culture. In both cases there will be little left of the source culture. I would argue that these are the risks if translation is seen as a reproductive act rather than an act of mediation, aiming to achieve an intercultural result that is to bring different cultures together maintaining their respective identities. Interestingly, the shift of attention to the cultural aspect of translation has generated a contentious debate on the role of the translator and whether he or she should be considered a mere repeater of the source culture or rather hold a creative position as a culture conveyor. Whilst, on the one hand the role of the translator as creative as that of the author is still the object of fervent discussion, on the other hand eminent scholars maintain that both author and translator, in different ways, contribute to the diffusion of ideas and culture.

At the basis of the concept of translation as cultural transfer is the function of the translated text in the receiving culture which determines the translator's choices.<sup>104</sup> According to this body of scholarship, once we have established that faithfulness refers to the function of the translated text in the target culture, which has to correspond to the function of the text in the source culture, the concept of 'loss' becomes irrelevant, since translation does not mean reproduction, but transfer. However, I would like to stress that all cultural elements of the source text are to remain within the target text. Therefore, the fulfilment of the objective of translation, that is the encounter of cultures, depends on the choices that translators make in the conversion of a text from one language into another. An

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<sup>103</sup> See Patrice Pavis, 'Toward a Theory of Culture and the *Mise en Scène*,' in *Theatre at the Crossroads of Cultures*, pp. 1-23.

<sup>104</sup> See Susan Bassnett 'Culture and Translation: Why did Translation Studies Take a Cultural Turn?', in *A Companion to Translation Studies*, pp. 13-23 (p. 14).

original approach to translation has been suggested by Maria Tymoczko in her study on English translations of early Irish literature. She challenges the theoretical methods based on binary classifications and suggests a metonymical interpretation of translated works. Her starting point is the anthropological view that considers translation a means of introducing the Other in a given culture. Her perspective is particularly interesting when applied to minority languages, of which dialects are an example, insofar as she rightly points out that 'the use of a minority-language is a matter of cultural power: of resistance to foreign dominance and foreign cultural assertion'.<sup>105</sup> In the case of minority languages, therefore, translation plays a crucial role since it represents the crossing point between the source and the target culture inasmuch as the source culture is represented through the translated text. In particular, translations

form images of whole cultures and peoples, as well as of individual authors or texts, images that in turn come to function as reality. When such representations are done for a people themselves, they constitute a means of inventing tradition, inventing the nation, and inventing the self.<sup>106</sup>

Borrowing from Lefevere's concept of translation as rewriting, Tymoczko notes that in oral tradition as well as in mythic literature, the metonymic aspect of retelling is particularly evident. It is important to note the similarity between oral and dialectal tradition, since both have a strong localised cultural base. It follows that translation of a particular work of a particular author represents metonymically all works of the same author and of the same

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<sup>105</sup> Maria Tymoczko, *Translation in a Postcolonial Context: Early Irish Literature in English Translation*, (Manchester: St. Jerome, 1999), p. 17.

<sup>106</sup> Tymoczko, *Translation in a Postcolonial Context*, p. 18.

genre. I am now going to quote a long extract which I believe is functional to my argument in relation to dialect translation:

the discourse about rewriting and about the metonymic aspects of literature being developed here is a particularly potent framework for the discussion of the translation of a non-canonical or marginalized literature. Since there are many types of non-canonical or marginalized literatures, it should be made explicit that here I am primarily speaking about literature that is marginalized because it is the literature of a marginalized culture. [...]. There are often, in fact, massive obstacles facing translators who wish to bring the texts of a marginalized culture to dominant-culture audience: issues related to the interpretation of material culture (such as food, dress, tools) and social culture (including law, economics, customs, and so forth), history, values, and world view; problems with the transference of literary features such as genre, form, performance conventions, and literary allusions; as well as the inevitable questions of linguistic interface. For all these reasons the information load of translations of such marginalized texts is often very high – in fact it is at risk of being intolerably high. Because neither the cultural content nor the literary framework of such texts is familiar to the receiving audience, the reception problems posed by marginalized texts in translation are acute.<sup>107</sup>

The translational problems regarding the ‘information load’ concern also dialect literature and consequently dialect theatre, insofar as they are expressions of marginalized, resistant cultures, whose cultural elements are not familiar to the majority of people of dominant cultures. When applied to the textual analysis of the plays, this hermeneutic approach will allow me to show that the cultural representation of Neapolitan theatre, that is the ‘material culture’ and the ‘social culture’, metonymically represents Neapolitan dialect culture as a

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<sup>107</sup> Tymoczko, *Translation in a Postcolonial Context*, p. 47.



whole, and it is either domesticated, or it is acculturated. In particular, the peculiarities of Neapolitan culture are either neutralized through the standardization of the language or are incorporated in the receptor system. In particular I claim that the translated texts metonymically represent Neapolitan culture according to domestic stereotypes and preconceived ideas about such a culture.

Moving now to theatre translation, it has been pointed out by many scholars that the debate on the cultural relevance of translation has almost exclusively regarded literary translation, whereas theatre translation has received very limited attention. Indeed, Gunilla Anderman, in her contribution to the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, notes that ‘only limited scholarly attention has hitherto been devoted to the translation of drama, probably owing to the special problems confronting the translator for the stage’.<sup>108</sup> Similarly, Mary Snell-Hornby points out that until the 1980s theatre translation was neglected in academic studies because the drama text was seen as a work of literature.<sup>109</sup> In spite of the critical neglect, it is widely recognized that theatre translation is a powerful means of cultural transmission as it uses a variety of paratextual elements which reinforce the message transmitted by the text. The difficulty in approaching theatre translation derives primarily from the mentioned duality of the drama text which belongs to two different realms: literature and performing arts; consequently it is not easy to allocate this genre in a specific theoretical context.

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<sup>108</sup> See Gunilla Anderman, ‘Drama Translation’, in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, (London: Routledge, 1998), p. 71.

<sup>109</sup> Mary Snell-Hornby, ‘Theatre and Opera translation’, in *A Companion to Translation Studies*, pp. 106-119 (p. 106). See also Phillis Zatlin, *Theatrical Translation and Film Adaptation A Practitioner’s View* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2005), who also laments the paucity of works on theatre translation, although she acknowledges a recent growing interest by scholars in the subject. On the same point see Patrice Pavis’ essay ‘Problems of translation for the stage: Interculturalism and post-modern theatre’, in *The Play Out of Context: Transferring Plays from Culture to Culture*, ed. by Hanna Scolnicov and Peter Holland (Cambridge University Press, 1989), pp. 25-44.

Notwithstanding the problems described above, the cultural transfer at the basis of theatre translation has been and still is at the centre of the debate among scholars, because it brings important consequences in terms of role and status of translators. Such problems are strictly related to questions of speakability, or playability/actability of the theatre text.<sup>110</sup> I am now going to give my own contribution by discussing scholarly works which look on both topics as facets of the same issue that is the transmission of the message contained in the source text to the audience. A collection of essays, edited by Hanna Scolnicov and Peter Holland<sup>111</sup> examines the transfer of plays between cultures in terms of conveyance of meanings within the new cultural context. An important contribution was given by Patrice Pavis who, as we have seen, looks at translation of the play text in relation to the *mise en scène*. He discusses two different schools of thought on the matter, one considering translation as independent of the future *mise en scène* to be decided by the director; the other considering the *mise en scène* as subordinate to the translation which commands it, and he opts for the second view. Since culture is

semiotic appropriation of social reality, its translation into another semiotic system poses no problem, once we set up an interpretative relation. The difficulty in establishing this interpretative relation lies in evaluating the distance between source and target cultures, and in choosing the attitude to adopt towards the source culture.<sup>112</sup>

This process, in theatre, passes through what happens on stage, which is mediated by the language as well; therefore the message of the source text is read through a combination of

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<sup>110</sup> On this point Mary Snell-Hornby in her essay 'Theatre and Opera Translation', p. 110 argues that '[t]he key words, much discussed over the last 20 years but still only vaguely defined, are *performability/actability* (*jouabilité/Spielbarkeit*)[...], *speakability* (*Sprechbarkeit*), and in the case of the opera or musical *singability* (*Sangbarkeit*). What is considered performable, speakable or singable depends to a great extent on the theatrical tradition and on the acting styles of the language community involved'.

<sup>111</sup> Solnicov and Holland, *The Play Out of Context*.

<sup>112</sup> Pavis, 'Problems of translation for the stage: Interculturalism and post-modern theatre', p. 37.

elements both textual and ‘gestural’. Pavis concludes his essay by stressing the fact that theatre translation cannot be considered a purely linguistic activity, as it affects the *mise en scène* as a whole. In particular, he points out that the play text is much more than a series of words; it is imbued with ideological, ethnological, and cultural elements, which are intertwined with it.<sup>113</sup> A different viewpoint is expressed by Gershon Shaked who describes the process of acknowledging foreign theatre from the audience’s perspective of encountering unknown cultures and the relative linguistic and cultural issues linked to it. He stresses the element of prejudice inherent in the approach to foreign cultures which prevents the viewer from becoming aware of different realms to his or hers.<sup>114</sup> Shaked concludes that theatre can be seen as a gateway to cultural awareness and closeness. In fact, since the transfer of a foreign play happens between ‘two social paradigms the transmitting paradigm sends its message to the paradigm of the addressee, which accepts or rejects it’.<sup>115</sup> Taking into account the view described above, I will show in the textual analysis how the target culture’s preconceived attitude towards the ‘Foreigner’ has determined the translators’ choices in the translations of De Filippo’s plays.

From the same socio-cultural perspective, Annie Brisset discusses the process of domestication carried out in theatre translation in Quebec between 1968 and 1988. Seen as a means to create political self-awareness, translation into Joual of French theatre established the predominance of Quebecois culture over French Canadian dominant discourse; thus theatre translation was used as a means to conform the foreign text to the discourse of the receiving society.<sup>116</sup> She argues that, in order to overcome the difficulties in dealing with the ‘Foreigner’, the norms system of a given society incorporates and

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<sup>113</sup> Pavis, ‘Problems of translation for the stage: Interculturalism and post-modern theatre’, p. 42.

<sup>114</sup> Gershon Shaked, ‘The play: gateway to cultural dialogue’, in *The Play Out of Context*, pp. 7-24.

<sup>115</sup> Shaked, ‘The play: gateway to cultural dialogue’, p. 23.

<sup>116</sup> Annie Brisset, *A Sociocritique of Translation: Theatre and Alterity in Quebec, 1968-1988* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), p. 8.

assimilates it so that any destabilizing element is annihilated.<sup>117</sup> In particular the use of a local language and the acculturation of foreign theatre helped assert Quebecois' identity.

The need to fill the gap between the written and gestural language of theatre has led to the identification of the element of performability which determines translational choices. Consequently, a wealth of publications has addressed this problem which in turn is closely connected to that of adaptation versus translation. Although the term 'performability' has never been clearly defined it is at the basis of various translation strategies whose function is, indeed, to achieve a performable text in line with cultural and acting conventions of the target culture.<sup>118</sup> For example, in 2000 Eva Espasa published an overview<sup>119</sup> which looks at different definitions of performability and translators' strategies to justify or oppose such practice. Espasa argues that the multitude of subjects involved in the process of the *mise en scène* is natural to theatre and does not represent an obstacle to translation, therefore she puts 'theatre ideology and power negotiation at the heart of performability, and make[s] such textual and theatrical factors as speakability and playability relative to it'.<sup>120</sup>

Taking from the readings of some theatre scholars, I maintain that the terms performability or speakability are used by playwrights and directors to produce plays which fulfil their own and the audience's expectations, rather than representing the source text in

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<sup>117</sup> The same view is shared by Lawrence Venuti who, in his *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an ethics of difference* (London and New York: Routledge, 1998), p. 81 argues that '[i]t is worth emphasizing that, apart from discursive strategies, the very choice of a foreign text for translation can also signify its foreignness by challenging domestic canons of foreign literatures and domestic stereotypes for foreign cultures'.

<sup>118</sup> See Susan Bassnett-McGuire, 'Ways Through the Labyrinth: Strategies and Methods for Translating Theatre Texts', in *The Manipulation of Literature: Studies in Literary Translation*, ed. by Theo Hermans (London & Sidney: Croom Helm, 1985) pp. 87-102.

<sup>119</sup> See Eva Espasa, 'Performability in Translation: Speakability? Playability? Or just Saleability?', in *Moving Target: Theatre Translation and Cultural relocation*, pp. 49-62.

<sup>120</sup> Espasa, 'Performability in Translation: Speakability? Playability? Or just Saleability?', p. 58.

the target culture.<sup>121</sup> I would like to turn to an illuminating essay by Joseph Farrell on the theme of adaptation as a form of appropriation of the play text which is justified by performance needs. The essay, entitled ‘Servant of Many Masters’, examines how in British theatre, translation is often intended as transformation of the original where this does not ‘conform to the expectations of the commissioning body’.<sup>122</sup> Farrell carries out his analysis arguing that translation and adaptation are in conflict with each other, since the former is meant to create an encounter between cultures, whereas the latter is aimed at producing a palatable performance, regardless of the original message or purpose of the play, and he concludes that in order for the translator to transpose the source text’s nuances into another language without the ‘robotic, ‘academic’, approach’, it is paramount that he or she possess a deep knowledge of the source language.

As I have noted before, De Filippo’s plays are altogether different from ordinary comedies insofar as the comic effect comes from an understated humour expressed through dialect. This is, thus, one of the fundamental elements of the play which need to be accounted for in translation. Joseph Farrell analyzes literary style in an essay which looks at the novel by the Sicilian contemporary author Vincenzo Consolo, *Il sorriso dell’ignoto marinaio*. He points out that an author’s style is part of the features which have to be preserved in translation,<sup>123</sup> and he considers dialect one of the stylistic features of this novel. Although I do not share the same view, advocated by Farrell, on the invisibility of the translator who does not rewrite the source text but reproduces it, I believe that his point on the preservation of the author’s style is an important statement, especially in theatre translation where play texts are manipulated primarily to create a style suitable to the target

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<sup>121</sup> See for example also Susan Bassnett, ‘Still Trapped in the Labyrinth: Further Reflections on Translation and Theatre’, in *Constructing Cultures*.

<sup>122</sup> See Joseph Farrell, ‘Servant of Many Masters’, in *Stages of Translation* (Bath: Absolute Classics, 1996), pp. 45-55 (p. 49).

<sup>123</sup> See Joseph Farrell, ‘The Style of Translation’, in *Voices in Translation: Bridging Cultural Divides*, ed. by Gunilla Anderman (Cleveland: Multilingual Matters, 2007), pp. 56-65 (p. 58).

audience. We will see that one of the main characteristics of the translations of De Filippo's plays is the alteration of rhythm and dialogues which drastically modifies the style of the original.

Another essay which explores the concept of adaptation from the adaptor's perspective has been written by Nick Dear, who reiterates the idea of adaptation as a form of domestication of a given play for the sole purpose of audience entertainment and in line with the requirements of the theatre industry.<sup>124</sup> The same perspective is shared by David Johnston who claims that 'in the final analysis it is an experiential rather than a linguistic loyalty which binds translator to the source text'.<sup>125</sup> I argue that this 'experiential' loyalty is the result of the mentioned constraints that act upon the translator whose aim is to fulfil the receiving audience's expectations.

In 2005 Phyllis Zatlin published a thorough monograph on the state of translation theory and practice both in theatre and cinema.<sup>126</sup> In the first chapter, entitled 'No Lack of Conflict' she illustrates various problems related to theatre translation, including censorship, claiming that

there are always varieties of censorship, or attempted censorship, in every country of the world, for economic if not political reasons.[...]Theatre directors may decide that a play should be silenced because it will not attract sufficient spectators.<sup>127</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> See Nick Dear, 'Nick Dear: Translation as Conservative Writing: In Conversation with David Johnston' in *Stages of Translation*, pp. 271-280. The author makes it clear that he is not interested in rendering the style of the original as this is a characteristic of fine translation usually done by poets.

<sup>125</sup> See David Johnston, 'Theatre Pragmatics', in *Stages of Translation*, pp. 57-198 (p. 59).

<sup>126</sup> Zatlin, *Theatrical Translation and Film Adaptation A Practitioner's View*..

<sup>127</sup> Zatlin, *Theatrical Translation and Film Adaptation A Practitioner's View*, p. 10. See also Lawrence Venuti, who, in his *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 308 points out that 'every step in the translation process – from the selection of foreign texts to the implementation of translation strategies to the editing, reviewing, and reading of translations – is mediated by the diverse cultural values that circulate in the target language, always in some hierarchical order'.

The second chapter entitled 'Out of the Shadows: The Translators Speak of Themselves', is particularly enlightening on the function of translators in theatre. She discusses the role of theatre translators and claims that, whilst performability is a prerequisite for any theatre translation, whose aim is to represent the play text on stage, nonetheless the role of the translator is paramount and cannot be substituted by the director. She describes the phenomenon, common especially in England and the United States, of commissioning literal translations which are subsequently adapted by the playwright or director and points out that the role of the translator cannot be abolished in the stage production; on the contrary, she suggests a collaborative approach between directors and translators who need to become involved in the whole production rather than being exploited, undervalued and altogether eradicated from it.

In the same vein, an important contribution on the subject with reference also to the cultural value of the translation process has been made by Mary Snell-Hornby. She illustrates how stage translation is closely linked to the nature of the dramatic text, which consists of two different components: the stage directions and the dialogues. Snell-Hornby, then, analyzes the structure of the dramatic text, which she defines as a 'multimedial' text depending 'on other non-verbal forms of expression, both acoustic and visual'.<sup>128</sup> For this author 'performability' or 'speakability' in stage translation, is the result of a combination of various elements, such as rhythm, syntax and vocal elements, which make the text performable or speakable. With reference to the problem of translation versus adaptation, Snell-Hornby points out that considering translation as a dry, mechanical transfer of one language into another, whereas adaptation implies a creative act, presupposes that the former be considered a second rate skill in comparison with the original production of a dramaturge or director.

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<sup>128</sup> Snell-Hornby, 'Theatre and Opera Translation', p. 108.

A seminal contribution to the debate has been given by Sirkku Aaltonen who analyzes Finnish drama translation and argues that, in order to enter the target theatrical system foreign theatre must be acculturated, since ‘in translation, foreign theatre is integrated into the domestic polysystems, and the Foreign in the plays is made intelligible to new audiences’.<sup>129</sup> Taking into account the authors mentioned above, I argue that in order to be accepted by the receptor audience, the foreign drama must conform to the target system’s theatrical conventions and norms. Therefore, the play text is manipulated first at word level and then during the *mise en scène*, in order to make it as close as possible to the target culture’s parameters.

I am now going to look at contributions by scholars on the matter of dialect theatre in the wake of recent interest in the cultural aspect of vernacular theatre, which is seen as a medium to convey not only foreign cultures, but also different nuances within the same culture. A large number of authors have drawn attention to the fact that in countries such as Germany, Italy, Spain or Quebec dialect represents the heart of the local communities and therefore has to be accounted for when it is translated into another language. In 1996 Bill Findlay published an essay on translation into Scots of plays written in Québécois. In the first part of his essay he points out that dialect is regarded in England as a second rate medium and therefore ‘dialect writing stands outside the English literary mainstream, in both historic and contemporary terms’.<sup>130</sup> On the other hand he argues that Scots represents one of the possible means Scottish authors use when expressing themselves. In Scotland dialect on the one hand co-exists with English and on the other contributes to differentiating and securing Scottish cultural independence from England. He shows how translating into dialect is part of the Scottish theatre tradition and then goes on to explore examples of

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<sup>129</sup> Sirkku Aaltonen, *Acculturation of the Other: Irish Milieux in Finnish Drama Translation* (Joensuu: Joensuu University Press, 1996), p. 18.

<sup>130</sup> See Bill Findlay, ‘Translating into Dialect’, in *Stages of Translation*, pp. 199-219 (p. 200).



foreign theatre which use dialect rather than standard language, among which one can count Goldoni and Fo. Findlay concludes the first part of his essay by reiterating the validity of such a methodological choice, which is more able to convey the meaning of the play than standard language. In the second part he goes into detailed illustration of the translations into Scots of *joual* Quebecois plays by Michel Tremblay carried out by himself and Martin Bowman. He illustrates the nuances of the dialect employed to express class, time, or generation related elements present in the original, which find ‘unforced Scottish equivalent’.<sup>131</sup> In 2000, Findlay wrote another essay which analyzes the process behind the more radical choice of translating standard language theatre into Scots. He begins by arguing that since ‘dialect translations are a relative rarity in English-language theatre beyond Scotland, little has been written about the process of translating drama into dialect’,<sup>132</sup> and then continues explaining that rendering standard language into dialect was motivated by ‘the nature of the play’, in so far as the colourfulness of dialect could, in his opinion, better render the subtleness of the original play.

I felt a personal identity with the play’s period and milieu such that, from a translation point of view, I initially ‘heard’ it in the Scots dialect of my own formative years. This instinctive response on first reading the play resolved into a deliberate choice once I had established the further parallels between Cousse’s upbringing and my own, and once I had considered textual and extra-textual factors more fully.<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>131</sup> Findlay, ‘Translating into Dialect’, p. 211.

<sup>132</sup> Bill Findlay, ‘Translating Standard into Dialect: Missing the Target?’, in *Moving Target*, pp. 35-46 (p. 35).

<sup>133</sup> Findlay, ‘Translating Standard into Dialect: Missing the Target?’, p. 37.

Findlay concludes his essay stressing the role of the translator as a ‘cultural relocator’<sup>134</sup> and the need to take into account the audience’s perspective albeit preserving the spirit of the play.<sup>135</sup>

With regard to the playwright Eduardo De Filippo, Stefania Taviano underscores the fact that ‘the theatrical system of the receiving society affects the way in which play texts are translated and put on stage to the point where the encounter with the Other always goes through a domestic filter to make it adhere to target cultural values’.<sup>136</sup> In particular, she examines the strategies employed to portray Italian society, namely the use of what she calls ‘accent convention’ and actors’ over-gesticulation, together with the already mentioned comic effect.

In her enlightening article, Manuela Perteghella examines issues related to strategies and methods employed by translators of dialect theatre and their repercussions on the target language text. In particular she describes how techniques such as rendering of source language dialect into target language dialect could be motivated either by instances of ‘linguistic “freedom”’,<sup>137</sup> as in the case of Scots translations of *joual*, or by misconception of the source culture, which is represented through the use of a local regional dialect that makes it more accessible to the target audience, as happens in the translation of *Napoli milionaria!* by De Filippo.<sup>138</sup> In the latter example, Neapolitan-ness was rendered with a

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<sup>134</sup> Findlay, ‘Translating Standard into Dialect: Missing the Target?’, p. 45.

<sup>135</sup> The much debated concept of the spirit of the play has been used by translators for different reasons, ranging from justification of their arbitrary translation choices to the objective which translators should pursue when transposing a play from one culture to another. In the latter case the spirit of the play stands for the message embedded in the source text, which should be preserved in translation, regardless of any target culture agendas. In the present thesis such term will be referred to taking into account this interpretation.

<sup>136</sup> See Stefania Taviano, ‘Italians on the Twentieth Century Stage: Theatrical Representations of Italianness in the English-speaking World’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Warwick, 2001), p. 149.

<sup>137</sup> See Manuela Perteghella, ‘Language and politics on stage: Strategies for translating dialect and slang with references to Shaw’s *Pygmalion* and Bond’s *Saved*’, *Translation Review*, 64 (2002), 45-53 (p. 47).

<sup>138</sup> Perteghella, ‘Language and politics on stage’, p. 47.

parallel local socio- cultural entity which, if on the one hand made the play more familiar to the British audience, on the other did not represent the source culture.<sup>139</sup>

In her monograph published in 2005 Gunilla Anderman<sup>140</sup> looked at the works of some of the most prominent European playwrights, and at the choices made by English translators, in order to explore translation issues related to the *mise en scène*. In chapter seven, among other playwrights, her analysis covers also translations of plays by De Filippo. She provides a thorough overview of productions of De Filippo's plays and the response of both critics and audiences. In particular she draws attention to the acculturation process operated by Mike Stott in his adaption of *Natale in casa Cupiello* entitled *Ducking Out*, which he relocated in West Lancashire, his own birthplace. I will analyse this adaptation in Chapter Five. Anderman continues by showing how a similar strategy was adopted in Peter Tinniswood's translation of *Napoli milionaria!*, employing 'Liverpudlian accents'.<sup>141</sup> The analysis of this adaptation will be the subject of Chapter Four. In both cases dialect was translated with a localised language carrying a specific accent, thus operating an assimilation of the original play to the target culture. Anderman argues that initially Italian-ness had been represented following a preconceived idea of Italian culture as one inclined to comedy and hedonism, with strong reference to food, enhancing the foreignness of the plays. Such representation was followed by the mentioned domestication aimed at creating an 'English Eduardo',<sup>142</sup> and to render it more suitable to an English audience.

I am going to conclude this overview on dialect theatre by examining a recent work carried out on the subject by Marvin Carlson who has discussed 'heteroglossia' as the new

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<sup>139</sup> For an overview on dialect theatre translation see also Phyllis Zatlin's monograph *Theatrical Translation and Film Adaptation: A Practitioner's View*.

<sup>140</sup> Gunilla Anderman, *Europe on Stage: Translation and Theatre* (London: Oberon Books, 2005).

<sup>141</sup> Anderman, *Europe on Stage*, p. 261.

<sup>142</sup> See on this point also Gunilla Anderman, 'Voices in Translation'.

phenomenon of the twentieth century theatre. In the introduction to his study Carlson illustrates the distinction between language and dialects, explaining that dialects are subdivisions of languages and that languages as well as stage languages are social constructions. In particular he claims that

languages on the stage as elsewhere are recognized and coded as languages by their employment of features culturally related to that construction rather than by comprehension or non comprehension. This same process of social construction continues to apply in the separation of languages from dialects.<sup>143</sup>

He also maintains that *stage accent* or *stage dialect* is designed to convey the idea of linguistic and social diversity and is generally exaggerated in respect of the actual dialect it claims to portray. Furthermore, the representation of an alien language generally responds to a clear 'artistic convention, which adjusts and qualifies reality in the interests of consensual strategies of reception'.<sup>144</sup> Particularly interesting with regard to the present thesis is Chapter two, which begins with a quotation from Crystal's *Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics*. The entry on *dialect* defines it as:

a regionally or socially distinctive variety of language, identified by a particular set of words and grammatical structures [...].The distinction between "dialect" and "language" seems obvious: dialects are subdivisions of language.<sup>145</sup>

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<sup>143</sup> See Marvin Carlson, *Speaking in Tongues: Language at Play in the Theatre* (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press, 2006), p. 9.

<sup>144</sup> Carlson, *Speaking in Tongues*, p. 13.

<sup>145</sup> Carlson, *Speaking in Tongues*, p. 62.

Carlson argues that a combination of social, historical, cultural and geographical factors determine the prevalence of one dialect over others which reaches the status of language with the consequence that 'the less successful dialects are then necessarily relegated to inferior positions in the cultural hierarchy, which of course includes their use in the theatre'.<sup>146</sup> A different use of dialect in theatre by the dominant language is to bring in an element of otherness, to create a sense of foreignness and a comic effect, as in what is defined as postcolonial theatre. A third type of dialect theatre has different dialects that coexist in the same play, as in some cases of Swiss theatre. Carlson's analysis points out how in Italy very little attention has been devoted to dialect theatre despite the great variety of examples. Such a lack of attention seems to be the expression of the relations between language and power. His historical illustration of dialect theatre offers a comprehensive picture of the evolution of this genre from the Florentine tradition up to contemporary forms, highlighting comedy as the natural expression of dialect theatre through the renowned *commedia dell'arte*. Carlson claims that the contrast between standard language theatre and dialect theatre must be traced back to the split that occurred in the sixteenth century between the *commedia dell'arte* and the *commedia erudita* in so far as professional actors distanced themselves more and more from learned amateurs who felt the pressure from literary scholars and academics towards the use of 'standardized and elevated literary language'.<sup>147</sup> Carlson's historical overview of dialect theatre underscores the importance of national identity, the main drive during the Risorgimento, as the basis, on the one hand, of language unification, and, on the other, of revaluation and encouragement of regional cultures and languages:

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<sup>146</sup> Carlson, *Speaking in Tongues*, p. 62.

<sup>147</sup> Carlson, *Speaking in Tongues*, p. 77.

thus, some of the same pressures that led toward unification, political, cultural, and linguistic, also encouraged throughout Italy a new interest in regional languages and traditions, hitherto taken for granted but now threatened with disappearance by assimilation. The same sense of national identity that was being felt throughout Europe at this time also operated throughout Italy on a more local level, encouraging a new interest in, and consciousness of the culture of smaller regions and communities.<sup>148</sup>

Furthermore, Carlson suggests that realism, and later *verismo*, more than any other intellectual movement, fuelled dialect theatre whose interest was more in cultural and social commitment than in literary issues. Indeed, ‘the role of dialect in the theatre had shifted from linguistic playfulness, comic juxtaposition, and social satire to an attempt to relate more directly and with greater verisimilitude to social concerns of a dialect-speaking target audience’.<sup>149</sup>

This comprehensive outline of Italian dialect theatre ends by exploring twentieth century dialect theatre, whose major exponents are Luigi Pirandello, Eduardo De Filippo and Dario Fo. With regard to Pirandello’s experience with dialect theatre, the monograph points out that his initial interest in dialect theatre is discussed in the seminal essay ‘Teatro italiano’, published in 1909, where Pirandello explains that a poet chooses to write in dialect either because he is unable to do it in standard language, or because this is a stylistic choice or else because certain feelings or images are so deeply rooted in a given community that only dialect can effectively express them; or else even that what is being represented is so local that it could only be expressed through a linguistic medium which represents that particular area.<sup>150</sup>

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<sup>148</sup> Carlson, *Speaking in Tongues*, p. 89.

<sup>149</sup> Carlson, *Speaking in Tongues*, p. 92.

<sup>150</sup> Carlson, *Speaking in Tongues*, p. 97.

It is worth mentioning that the bilingualism found in De Filippo' works is described by Carlson as one of the most flourishing and most characteristic in the late twentieth-century Italian theatre panorama. According to the author, De Filippo managed to create a popular theatre which would attract 'the traditionally marginalized, boisterous, and irreverent dialect theatre, with its close ties to the socially and politically disenfranchised, into the mainstream of Italian theatrical culture'.<sup>151</sup> The chapter closes with a reference to Dario Fo's exhilarating use of grammaiole, and its importance in re-establishing the validity of local dialects in contemporary theatre. Fo's national and international success therefore, confirms that dialect theatre still maintains great expressive power which in no way weakens its social and cultural value.

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<sup>151</sup> Carlson, *Speaking in Tongues*, p. 102.

## CHAPTER TWO

### TRANSLATING NEAPOLITAN DIALECT: FROM LANGUAGE TO CULTURE

*Lo sforzo di tutta la mia vita è stato quello di cercare di sbloccare il teatro dialettale portandolo verso quello che potrei definire, grosso modo, Teatro Nazionale Italiano.*

**Eduardo**

#### **Introduction<sup>1</sup>**

This chapter sets out to discuss translation strategies in the English translation by Carlo Ardito of the play *Il sindaco del Rione Sanità*. Through a textual analysis of the most salient moments in the play, I intend to examine how De Filippo's use of dialect is rendered into English. In particular, I will look at examples where the cultural element has special relevance to ascertain how Carlo Ardito's translation renders Neapolitan culture into English and what the implications for the target text are. In addition, I will discuss the phenomenon of language domestication that is the neutralization of the vernacular. What is more, I will examine how cuts of parts of the text influence the representation of the characters, and I will highlight the effects that standard English and cuts have on the transmission of the cultural message to the receiving milieu. I would tentatively suggest that in vernacular theatre, dialect, with its long reach back into the past, communicates more of history and tradition than standard language does in the 'teatro in lingua', and that dialectal expressions are powerful media to convey the message embedded in the play. Vernacular comes from an oral tradition, and therefore its lexicon is a portrayal of the culture it originates from. In this chapter I shall illustrate,

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<sup>1</sup> In this chapter I have incorporated material drawn from my MA dissertation submitted in 2006 at the University of Warwick. The citation opening this chapter has been taken from Isabella Quarantotti De Filippo, *Eduardo: polemiche, pensieri, pagine inedite* (Milan: Bompiani, 1985), p. 172.



through specific examples, how dialect expressions imply a wider cultural discourse, and from this standpoint I will argue that the standardization of the language determines an appropriation of the cultural message of the source text which becomes embedded in the target culture. Indeed, ‘translators must constantly make decisions about the cultural meanings which language carries, and evaluate the degree to which the two different worlds they inhabit are “the same”.’<sup>2</sup> The main consequence of such a process of language acculturation is the ‘toning down’ of the source text in order to make it more accessible to English theatre audiences.<sup>3</sup> Although this attitude is still widely present in contemporary theatre translation, there are some translators who have shown attention to the voices coming from foreign and especially vernacular theatre. Among these are the previously mentioned Bill Findlay and Martin Bowman who translated into Scots works by Québécois Michel Tremblay in order to portray the richness of the characters which is a key aspect of their complexity.<sup>4</sup> This example confirms the idea that while English theatre audiences are kept within the limited boundaries of a domestic representation of the Other for reasons mainly related to box office the Scottish experience suggests that foreign vernacular theatre can indeed be successfully rendered through a medium different from standard language. Another example of vernacular rendering is the English translation of De Filippo’s *Napoli milionaria!* by Peter Tinniswood, which will be discussed further on in the thesis.

The methodological approach I have adopted will entail a comparison between words or phrases in both texts; therefore, extracts from both the source and target text will be juxtaposed and analyzed in order to draw attention to the variations in the cultural message of the English version. In particular, I will concentrate on the rendering of culturally bound expressions to show how the standardization of the

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<sup>2</sup> See Sherry Simon, ‘Introduction’, in *Culture in Transit: Translating the Literature of Quebec*, ed. by Sherry Simon (Montréal: Véhicule Press, 1995), p. II.

<sup>3</sup> Anderman, ‘Voices in Translation’, p. 9.

<sup>4</sup> See Bill Findlay, ‘Translating Tremblay into Scots’, in *Culture in Transit: Translating the Literature of Quebec*, pp. 149-16 (p. 157).

language eliminates their specificity, and I shall go on to show how cuts to the stage directions and to the dialogues reduce the impact of the discourse of the source text.

### **Eduardo De Filippo's Theatre and its Language**

The theatrical panorama, when Eduardo began to write in the 1920s was very intricate, both in terms of genres and in terms of language. As to the language, Eduardo chose the 'modello scarpettiano', which used the 'domestic' type of Neapolitan, used in everyday life, which I have already illustrated in the 'Introduction'.<sup>5</sup> Writing vernacular theatre was for Eduardo a clear cultural choice, in the sense of using vernacular as a language, and not purely as a folkloristic factor. In particular, he used dialect to give voice to a whole group of people who had been left behind in the process of cultural development. The people in question were, in the first place, *gli ignoranti* the 'ignorant' people, by which he meant those fringes of the population who, due to lack of education, had fallen prey to arrogant power or had opted for a life of expediency, making the principle of *tira a campare* their lifestyle. The Italian word *ignoranti*, refers to people who lack education and are characterized by unrefined behaviour which is the result of such a lack. What is more, their worldview is rather limited and they are easily influenced by the dominant ideology. The play *Il cilindro*, describes this condition, at the basis of the renowned Neapolitan 'arte di arrangiarsi'. Referring to the magic power of the top-hat, Agostino, one of the characters, says:

Maestà. Questo è un cappello che in qualunque momento, non si sa mai come vanno le cose, può salvare il trono di vostra maestà. Prima di tutto, la potenza di questo cappello la potranno capire solamente gli uomini istruiti. Gli analfabeti lo troveranno esagerato per la loro condizione, e non si permetteranno mai non dico di portarlo abitualmente, ma nemmeno di metterselo in testa per un solo momento». Il cilindro, dunque è il

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<sup>5</sup> See Introduction, p. 16.

simbolo dell'autorità che mette in soggezione gli ignoranti, che alla sua vista rinunciano anche a quello che è dovuto.<sup>6</sup>

Through the magnifying lens of the city of Naples, Eduardo's theatre analyses human nature as a whole, and Naples, though dissected, is never caricaturized.

Neapolitan, therefore, was seen by Eduardo as a language in its own right, capable of depicting the human world, beyond the boundaries of Naples. However, Eduardo's acting style offered a different representation of Neapolitan culture, still confined within the exaggerated acting of *commedia dell'arte*, which underlined its comic aspect. In fact, Eduardo employed in his plays the 'domestic' type of dialect, leaving out the

turbolenze dei lazzi a soggetto, ed esigendo toni di voce basso-medi accoppiati ad una ritmica dosata e ricca di pause. Nacque, insomma, un tipo di recitazione dialettale più moderno, più in linea con le tendenze del teatro italiano ed europeo.<sup>7</sup>

Hence Eduardo's acting style was both innovative and powerful, his meaningful *silenzi* were praised by critics<sup>8</sup>, who, like Eric Bentley, noticed that this acting style was so powerful and yet so different from the stereotyped Italian style he was expecting:

this is not acting at all, we cry; above all, it is not Italian acting! voice and body are so quiet. *Pianissimo*. No glamour, no effusion of brilliance. No attempt to lift the role off

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<sup>6</sup> Fiorenza Di Franco, *Il teatro di Eduardo*, p. 95. Since I could not identify an English word with such an anthropological meaning, I used a literal translation with inverted commas, to show its approximation of meaning.

<sup>7</sup> De Simone, *I segreti di Eduardo*, p. 21.

<sup>8</sup> Di Franco, in her *Il teatro di Eduardo* (Rome, Bari: Laterza, 1975), p. 8 cites Renzo Tian who admired such a silence: «Chi fra i suoi spettatori non è rimasto preso nel linguaggio dei suoi silenzi, dei suoi sguardi, delle sue pause, delle sue smorzature? Similarly, Dario Fo, in his *Manuale minimo dell'attore*, (Turin: Einaudi, 1987), p. 256 expressing his view on the misconception of Italian theatre's language by foreign theatre, brought as an example Eduardo's acting style in *Sabato, domenica e lunedì*, where 'non c'era niente di descrittivo nei suoi gesti, e nella sua voce, niente di naturalistico, tutto era inventato in una straordinaria sintesi ed economia... e ti inchiodava alla sedia'.

the ground by oratory and stylization, no attempt to thrust it at us by force of personality.<sup>9</sup>

This acting style, which was realistic and anti-naturalistic, contributed to give national and international relevance to Neapolitan theatre, a popular genre by definition, localized both for language and themes. Indeed, Eduardo's acting was carefully studied and meticulously executed, in order to give a natural result, which was instead pure fiction, and produced that estrangement effect, typical of some schools of modern theatre<sup>10</sup>.

From a linguistic viewpoint, Eduardo's theatre is the expression of a solid dialectal linguistic culture, where traditional structures and vocabulary are preserved and kept alive. The originality of his language, particularly in the plays of the second phase of his production, lies in the use of both dialect and standard language. This code-switching depends essentially on register, since familiar and informal contexts are generally rendered in dialect, whereas erudite or official language is expressed almost exclusively in standard Italian; indeed, Eduardo used dialect in the more personal moments of the play, leaving standard Italian or an Italianized dialect to clarify his concepts.<sup>11</sup>

On the other hand, this linguistic dual structure is not the only innovative element. Since Eduardo's dramaturgy derives from his being primarily an actor, his language 'non è solo verbale, ma consiste nella fisicità dei corpi, all'interno di un sistema dove il rapporto

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<sup>9</sup> Bentley, 'Son of Pulcinella', p. 291.

<sup>10</sup> On the strength of Eduardo's understated acting style, Anna Barsotti in her 'La lingua di contraddizione nel teatro di Eduardo: colore delle parole e temperature dei silenzi', in *Eduardo De Filippo, Atti del convegno di studi sulla drammaturgia civile e sull'impegno sociale di Eduardo De Filippo senatore a vita*, pp. 35-64, (p. 55) explains that 'anche il silenzio fra una battuta e l'altra, o addirittura fra un parola e l'altra, caratterizza la scrittura scenica eduardiana, ma anziché provocare distrazione nel pubblico attira la sua attenzione, suscitando disagio (con sé stessi) e curiosità. Più che pause, piccole voragini, strappi talvolta ricuciti da ripetizioni in italiano o in dialetto (a seconda dei casi) della parola che ha preceduto quel silenzio'.

<sup>11</sup> De Simone, *I segreti di Eduardo*, p. 23.

fra la sala e il palco è fondamentale e immediato'.<sup>12</sup> In this sense, communication happens at both word and eye level, where silence is the key element to generate pathos.

As to the characters, they are not confined to the Neapolitan world, instead they are anti-heroes who represent facets of all human characters, and this is why Eduardo's themes can be appreciated, through translation, by a vast, multinational audience. It is important to note that

il riconoscimento avviene perché questi uomini e queste donne, se sono immerse nel nostro tempo (così da avere tratti in comune con i personaggi di Pinter, e Wilder, Ionesco e Brecht, Beckett e Sartre) sono anche drammatici simboli dell'uomo in assoluto: la loro condizione è la condizione umana, il loro destino questo di Everyman.<sup>13</sup>

Depicting Naples' "teatralità", which is the quintessence of Naples and the Neapolitans, makes Eduardo's theatre trespass the Italian boundaries. The term "teatralità" needs to be put in a wider context, which is not strictly physical, as it refers to the Neapolitan's ability to see life as a play.<sup>14</sup> This perspective was in line with the new trend at the beginning of the twentieth century, which had begun to question the univocal meaning of existence.

Let us now consider a little further the tremendous innovative strength of Eduardo's theatre which reflects its power to create a new language, as has been underscored by Fo who highlighted Eduardo's ability to make himself understood by everyone, despite the use of dialect.<sup>15</sup> The complexity of his language derives from the ability to portray the tragedy of life through laughter, but he did it in an understated

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<sup>12</sup> Anna Barsotti, 'La lingua di contraddizione nel teatro di Eduardo: colore delle parole e temperature dei silenzi', p. 38.

<sup>13</sup> See Agostino Lombardo, 'Eduardo De Filippo: da Napoli al mondo', in *Eduardo e Napoli Eduardo e l'Europa*, ed. by Franco Carmelo Greco (Naples: Edizioni scientifiche italiane, 1993), pp. 23-30 (p. 25).

<sup>14</sup> Lombardo, 'Eduardo De Filippo: da Napoli al mondo', p. 25. The *teatralità* of Naples will be discussed in details in Chapter Five.

<sup>15</sup> Barsotti, 'La lingua di contraddizione nel teatro di Eduardo: colore delle parole e temperature dei silenzi', p. 42.

way, through the so called ‘eresia dialettale’ which stops ‘il naturalismo dei comportamenti esibiti, frazionando i meccanismi abituali del discorso, e aprendo vuoti, pause, silenzi attivi attraverso cui evocare profondità poetiche: tensioni’.<sup>16</sup> Dialect is used in a minimalist, anti-naturalistic, way and yet, and this is particularly evident during the thirties, its colourfulness, juxtaposed with the ordinary theatre language of his times, becomes ‘un contraltare all’antilingua recitativa che tendeva ad uniformare, secondo il colore grigio scuro<sup>17</sup> imposto dalla cultura dominante, il panorama dei nostri palcoscenici’.<sup>18</sup> Eduardo’s silence is used not only as a stage language, but is a form of communication. In *Le voci di dentro*, for example, Zi’ Nicola, on the one hand refuses to speak, and on the other has his own alternative linguistic code made of pyrotechnic sounds.<sup>19</sup> It is important to bear in mind that Eduardo was author, actor and director of his plays, which show the different perspectives involved in the *mise en scène*, and which are carefully orchestrated in his works through the stage directions, the dialogues and the special and meta-theatrical effects.

According to Benedetto Croce, historians can rely on certain literary oeuvres, inasmuch as they may convey common feelings. Similarly, some playwrights can become ‘mediatori del comune sentire, in relazione a eventi di vasta risonanza. Eduardo indubbiamente va annoverato tra questi autori’.<sup>20</sup> He was, for the viewers, like a travelling companion, who invited them to meditate upon historical and moral issues, and created a new language which became a unifying factor both in Italy and abroad. The renowned closing line of *Napoli Milionaria!* «Ha da passa’ ‘a nuttata» (The night will come to an end), uttered by Gennaro Jovine at the end of the final act, has been considered a

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<sup>16</sup> Barsotti, ‘La lingua di contraddizione nel teatro di Eduardo: colore delle parole e temperature dei silenzi’, p. 40.

<sup>17</sup> The words ‘grigio scuro’ are taken from the poem entitled ‘E pparole and refer to the need to rediscover the real color of words which has been lost.

<sup>18</sup> Barsotti, ‘La lingua di contraddizione nel teatro di Eduardo: colore delle parole e temperature dei silenzi’, p. 45.

<sup>19</sup> ‘La lingua di contraddizione nel teatro di Eduardo: colore delle parole e temperature dei silenzi’, p. 58.

<sup>20</sup> Quoted by Federico Frascani, in his essay ‘Eduardo e Napoli’, in *Eduardo e Napoli Eduardo e l’Europa*, ed. by F. C. Greco (Naples: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1993), p. 80.

general statement of positive hope throughout Italy, and has become part of the Italian language. This was a declaration of hope at a time when, at the end of World War II, Naples had been left devastated not only as a city, but as a community. With these words Eduardo gave a general message of optimism to the whole country and to future generations. The power of his language as a means to create and spread new language lies in its poetic force, using words, either to materialize sentiments, or to stigmatise human deficiencies, and it does so through irony and paradox, which produce a cathartic result using comic effects. Eduardo's attention to the words and their meaning is shown for example in the play *Ditegli sempre di sì*, where Michele, the protagonist, insists that people call things with their name since '[c]'è la parola adatta, perché non la dobbiamo usare?'.<sup>21</sup> In fact, Eduardo creates a language without words, just with his body, as he suspends the action almost in a slow motion, and by doing this he obtains an estrangement effect, as can be observed in *Gli esami non finiscono mai* or in *Le voci di dentro*.<sup>22</sup>

I would like to emphasize that the vast resonance of his theatre derives also from his social and political commitment in promoting culture through dialect. By using a linguistically circumscribed means, he reaffirms regional identities bringing them to national level. It is important to draw attention to the cultural significance that the affirmation of local dialects, in contrast with standard Italian, carries. In this sense, Eduardo leads the debate on the importance of language and local identities alongside Luigi Pirandello and Dario Fo. Further on in this thesis I shall illustrate how Eduardo's

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<sup>21</sup> De Filippo, *Ditegli sempre di sì*, I, VI, 324, in *Eduardo De Filippo Teatro, Volume primo, Cantata dei giorni pari*, ed. by Nicola De Blasi, and Paola Quarenghi, I edn., I Meridiani (Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 2000), pp. 307-353.

<sup>22</sup> See Anna Barsotti, *Eduardo, Fo e l'attore del Novecento* (Rome: Bulzoni, 2007), p. 57.

social commitment was expressed through *Il sindaco del Rione Sanità* as well as in *Napoli milionaria!* and *Filumena Marturano*.<sup>23</sup>

### **Translation of Dialect**

What has been said so far explains why dialect theatre has a strong presence in Italian theatre, where the vast multitude of dialects overshadows the importance of a standard language. However, due to its vernacular nature, there are specific translation problems, which need to be addressed. One of the most discussed topics is that of untranslatability of certain words or phrases which sometimes have no correspondence in the target language. In these instances, the translator is faced with the dilemma between omitting the word or phrase and finding an expression in the target language which conveys the message of the source text only up to a certain extent. In fact, some words or phrases appear to have a meaning so embedded in the source culture that whatever substitute might be found in the target language may never fully render the actual meaning. Nonetheless, it is important to underline that omitting the translation of culture-bound items or standardizing them to fit them into the target culture framework would considerably diminish the valence of both the source and the target text. If, on the one hand, translation aims mainly at serving the target culture, on the other this does not entail a reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values, as suggested by Venuti's concept of domestication.<sup>24</sup> On the contrary foreignization makes the translator visible stressing the unfamiliar element of the source text and preserving its autonomy from the supremacy of the target culture.<sup>25</sup> The concept of 'resistancy', elaborated by Venuti, is enlightening on the function of translation, when the foreignizing method is applied:

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<sup>23</sup> For a thorough analysis of Eduardo's social commitment see Elio Testoni's essay, 'La critica e la drammaturgia civile di Eduardo del periodo 1945-1950', in *Eduardo De Filippo, Atti del convegno di studi sulla drammaturgia civile e sull'impegno sociale di Eduardo De Filippo senatore a vita*, pp. 65-95.

<sup>24</sup> Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*, p. 20.

<sup>25</sup> Munday, *Introducing Translation Studies Theories and Applications*, p. 146.



resistancy seeks to free the reader of the translation, as well as the translator, from the cultural constraints that ordinarily govern their reading and writing and threaten to overpower and domesticate the foreign text, annihilating its foreignness. Resistancy makes English-language translation a dissident cultural politics today, when fluent strategies and transparent discourse routinely perform that mystification of foreign texts.<sup>26</sup>

In this way, the source text is valorised and the reader is guided towards it, receiving the same message as the reader of the source language. In other words, the reader is aware of the presence of a foreign text, but at the same time experiences a sense of familiarity with a foreign milieu. Acculturation of the text, rendering it 'fluent' or speakable, creates, on the contrary, an effect of transparency where the Other is minimized.<sup>27</sup> In view of this 'resistant approach', the translated text adopts a language which,

rather than transgressing the limits imposed by society, is *resistant* within the dominant culture [and] subverts strategies centred on the 'exotic' nature of foreign plays by focusing instead on their political role in stimulating and provoking theatre audiences.<sup>28</sup>

Translating dialect, therefore, may require different strategies, which will produce different results on the target language receivers, whether dialect is translated with another dialect, with slang, with standard language or with a mixture of all. Strategies above word level are particularly important when dealing with idiomatic expressions, fixed sentences and proverbs, since these lexical items are frequent in dialectal literature, as they constitute great

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<sup>26</sup> Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*, p. 304.

<sup>27</sup> Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*.

<sup>28</sup> See Stefania Taviano, 'Staging Italian Theatre: A Resistant Approach', in *Voices in Translation*, pp. 46-56 (p. 47).

part of its traditional background based essentially on spoken language. In this sense, the use of idioms, fixed phrases and proverbs becomes natural in a medium of cultural transfer such as dialectal theatre. As Machiavelli said talking about comedies,

il linguaggio di commedia deve essere vivo e naturale se vuol risultare efficace essendo, le commedie, della sorte di quelle cose che senza scrivere i motti e i termini proprii patrii, non sono belle.<sup>29</sup>

For this reason, the way they are rendered or the fact that they are not rendered in the target language will determine the reception and the perception of the source message.

## The Play

Before I discuss in detail Carlo Ardito's translation, I shall give a brief outline of the play. *Il sindaco del Rione Sanità*<sup>30</sup> is a drama, in which characters are apparently 'normal', without extremes, and where a crescendo in suspense, right from the first scene, leads to the climax at the end of the story.<sup>31</sup> It is a play in three acts, which was written in 1960. The premiere, staged by the company *Il Teatro di Eduardo*, was at the *Teatro Quirino* in Rome on the 9<sup>th</sup> December 1960.<sup>32</sup> The play was extremely well received and some critics declared this the best play ever written by the author.<sup>33</sup> Ruggero Jacobbi defined Barracano 'forse il più affascinante fra i personaggi creati ed interpretati da Eduardo: con una dignità, un dolore represso, una potenza scenica

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<sup>29</sup> Cited in Chiesa and Tesio, *Il dialetto da lingua della realtà a lingua della poesia*, p. 38.

<sup>30</sup> The original version to which I will refer is *Il sindaco del Rione Sanità*, published in *Eduardo De Filippo Teatro, Volume terzo, Cantata dei giorni dispari, Tomo secondo*, ed. by Nicola De Blasi e Paola Quarenghi, I edn., I Meridiani (Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 2007), pp. 821-913.

<sup>31</sup> See Anna Barsotti, *Eduardo drammaturgo. Fra mondo del teatro e teatro del mondo* (Rome: Bulzoni, 1995), p. 419.

<sup>32</sup> Di Franco, *Eduardo*, p. 200.

<sup>33</sup> See Ovidio Pagliara, *L'Avvenire d'Italia*, 10 December 1960, in 'Nota storico-teatrale', in *Il sindaco del Rione Sanità*, in *Eduardo De Filippo Teatro*, pp. 791-820 (p. 818).

indimenticabili',<sup>34</sup> and compared this 'dramma realista' to Spanish theatre. There were only a few reservations about the third Act which was considered too prescriptive and melodramatic.<sup>35</sup> As De Blasi observes 'si tratta però di critiche marginali in un coro di consensi che riguardano, prima di tutto, la creazione di un personaggio memorabile, magnificamente interpretato'.<sup>36</sup> Eduardo's stillness was once more highly appreciated as it contributed to give an anti-naturalistic tone to the performance. The public too gave an enthusiastic response. After Rome, during the season of 1960-61, the play was staged in Naples, Reggio Emilia, Bologna, Florence, and subsequently in Milan and Florence and each performance was sold-out.

One of the most significant themes of Eduardo's theatre is justice. When, in 1972, he received the «Premio Internazionale Feltrinelli per il Teatro» at the Accademia dei Lincei, he declared that at the basis of his theatre there is always «il conflitto tra l'individuo e la società»<sup>37</sup> in the sense that everything begins from an emotional impulse, in response to an external stimulus. *Il sindaco del Rione Sanità* was written to denounce dysfunctions in the administration of justice, which often results in injustice and to denounce the plague of the mafia in its Neapolitan version of *Camorra*. Writing this play was part product of Eduardo's social commitment, since he believed that, as a dramaturge, he had the duty to use his art to raise awareness on social issues and he did so by bringing them to the government's attention.<sup>38</sup> Noticeably, Eduardo said that,

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<sup>34</sup> See Ruggero Jacobbi, 'È ritornato Eduardo con un grande personaggio', *Corriere della Sera*, 12 January 1962.

<sup>35</sup> See Raul Radice, "«Il sindaco del rione Sanità» applauditissimo al Teatro Quirino", *Il Giornale d'Italia*, 10 December 1960, and Giorgio Prosperi, 'Se non col cuore, con la forza ammonisce Eduardo De Filippo', *Il Tempo*, 10 December 1960.

<sup>36</sup> De Blasi, 'Nota storico-teatrale', p. 811.

<sup>37</sup> See Maurizio Giammusso, *Vita di Eduardo* (Milan: Mondadori, 1993), p. 350.

<sup>38</sup> Another play with strong social reference is *De Pretore Vincenzo*, which refers to the long, today still unresolved, problem of juvenile delinquency. The protagonist of the play explains that he is a thief who steals 'ma solamente pe campà.../ Senza nu padre che ti manda a scola, / vivendo abbandonato mmiez' 'a via, / facendo solamente 'e capa mia.../ si sa che poi finisci p'arrubbà!'. See *De Pretore Vincenzo*, in *Eduardo De Filippo Teatro, Volume terzo, Cantata dei giorni dispari, Tomo secondo*, ed. by Nicola De Blasi, and Paola Quarenghi, I edn. I Meridiani (Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 2007), pp. 201-272 (p. 267).

although the protagonist is Neapolitan, he could be of any nationality insofar as his characteristics are *sic et simpliciter* human.<sup>39</sup>

The protagonist, Antonio Barracano, is a local *padrino* who governs crime in the district where he lives administering his own justice in a system parallel to the official one. Eventually he will be killed by Arturo Santaniello, an evil man who makes the life of his son Rafiluccio such a misery that the young man decides to kill his father, but before doing this, he seek advice from Barracano. Indeed, the desire to resolve the conflict between father and son will prove fatal for him.

The finale of the drama establishes a new principle, in contrast with the one suggested by the protagonist, which denies every legitimacy of private justice based on connivance and silence.<sup>40</sup> This new viewpoint is reinforced by the theatrical setting. The play begins with a sort of ritual, executed in total silence, where the characters appear to set the table for dinner, but instead they are preparing an improvised operating table. It ends with a monologue, in which doctor Della Ragione, who has been the accomplice of don Antonio for thirty years, curing wounds resulting from the unlawful settling of private disputes, decides to break the code of silence and writes the only true medical report of his career, in which he declares the real cause of Barracano's death, knowing that this will trigger a feud.

Antonio Barracano is the most complex and most loved of Eduardo's characters, who represents a whole class of 'ignorant' people who cope with the danger of society by taking the law in their own hands.<sup>41</sup> The character is based on a real person, a man called Campoluongo, whom Eduardo met years before writing the play, during one of his performances at the *Teatro Sannazaro*. Eduardo's character epitomizes the *padre-padrino* who defends ignorance against the arrogance of power. The hero, or rather the

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<sup>39</sup> See Fiorenza Di Franco, 'L'impegno civile di Eduardo De Filippo in : *De Pretore Vincenzo, Il Sindaco del Rione Sanità, Il Contratto*', in *Eduardo De Filippo: Atti del convegno di studi sulla drammaturgia civile e sull'impegno sociale di Eduardo De Filippo senatore a vita*, pp. 97-114 (p. 106).

<sup>40</sup> See Anna Barsotti, *Eduardo drammaturgo. Fra mondo del teatro e teatro del mondo*, p. 421.

<sup>41</sup> Barsotti, *Eduardo drammaturgo. Fra mondo del teatro e teatro del mondo*, p. 411.

anti-hero, Barracano is, nonetheless, constrained between action and non-action, without producing any positive result. He disregards official justice and claims to solve disputes through his own law, and to become a sort of Super-father («Don Antonio è 'o pate nuost. È 'o pate 'e tutte quante! È 'o pate 'e Napule»),<sup>42</sup> who uses his authority to keep at bay, and at the same time protect, his children-citizens; yet, this is an illusory idea, which will be the cause of his death.<sup>43</sup>

Antonio Barracano summarises Eduardo's conception of language and theatre. He mixes dialect and Italian, the former to underline domesticity and daily life; the latter to emphasize solemn and official language, but above all, his silence speaks volumes. He is enigmatic, introverted and, although totally dedicated to his family and protégés, he is defined as a «bestia», a beast in captivity whose real essence emerges only through his '*sguardo agghiacciante... sguardo d'acciaio ... sguardo tremendo ... di quegli occhi vigili*'.<sup>44</sup> He also creates a new language, where the mirror is renamed 'O scostumato', 'O parlanfaccia'.<sup>45</sup> Likewise, when he describes his ideal world he creates the oxymoron 'un mondo che gira lo stesso, ma un poco meno rotondo e più quadrato',<sup>46</sup> describing a new concept of justice. From the actor's perspective

*Il sindaco del Rione Sanità* può essere letto come un altro esperimento di Eduardo verso un tipo di drammaturgia che pare forzare a tratti i limiti tradizionalmente assegnati alla parola teatrale, rarefacendo e in qualche caso annullando il dialogo, per lasciare il campo ai modi di una comunicazione più impalpabile, fatta di sguardi e di gesti, nella quale l'interprete presta il proprio carisma al personaggio e viceversa.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> De Filippo, I, 39.

<sup>43</sup> See Sergio Travi, 'Eduardo: la morte, i santi, i sogni', in *Eduardo e Napoli Eduardo e L'Europa*, ed. by Franco Carmelo Greco (Naples: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1993), pp. 173-196.

<sup>44</sup> De Filippo, I, 413. See illustration n. 1 at the back of this Thesis.

<sup>45</sup> De Filippo, I, 837.

<sup>46</sup> De Filippo, III, 905.

<sup>47</sup> De Blasi, 'Nota storico-teatrale', p. 795.

During the three acts Antonio Barracano goes through a metamorphosis. In the first act, he is an impenetrable person, who is worshipped by his family and protégés. In the second act, Barracano identifies himself with Rafiluccio, the young man who has come to seek advice before he kills his evil father. He remembers when he was a young man, and sought revenge killing the man who used false witnesses to send him to jail. Now he “speaks”, and acts in a more human way (he even cuts a piece of mozzarella and offers it to Rita, the starving girlfriend of Rafiluccio) and starts a ‘dialogue’ with the other characters. In the third act, he goes through his last metamorphosis, becoming a sort of martyr who has to die for the benefit of his own people.<sup>48</sup> The epilogue of the play shows Eduardo’s social commitment in using theatre to denounce the inequalities of society and to speak out on difficult themes such as the ill administration of justice and other thorny subjects such as illegitimacy or prostitution.

**Language and Culture in Translation: a Textual Analysis of *The Local Authority*,  
by Carlo Ardito**

The English translation, with the title *The Local Authority*, was published twice, in 1976 by Hamish Hamilton, and in 1992 by Methuen Drama. In 1976 a radio adaptation of this translation was broadcast by the BBC, with Paul Scofield playing Antonio Barracano. After that production the play was never staged.<sup>49</sup>

Before I proceed to the textual analysis, I would like to comment on the English title *The Local Authority* which translates the original *Il sindaco del Rione Sanità*. The foreign element represented by the name of the district where the protagonist operates has been substituted with a more general reference to a vague power exerted in an undefined place. It contrasts with the source text which refers to a socially deprived area of Naples, renowned for its illicit traffics and crime. Although this presents a difficult

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<sup>48</sup> Barsotti, *Eduardo drammaturgo. Fra mondo del teatro e teatro del mondo*.

<sup>49</sup> I received this information from Carlo Ardito with an e-mail sent to me on 27 August 2006.

problem to solve, since there is a clear reference to a specific place, the standardization in the English title seems to reduce the extraneousness of the play by framing it within a more neutral context, so that the cultural impact is softened right from the beginning. In the course of this chapter I shall illustrate how the standardization of the language and the elimination of cultural references operate in the same direction.

I shall begin by discussing the role of the stage directions. As I have mentioned before, Eduardo paid painstaking attention to the physical description of characters and settings. Each stage direction represents an introduction, creating the precondition for the development of the scene. Sometimes they serve to explain Eduardo's ideas; in other cases they address the actors, to describe to them the psychological framework of the characters. In this play as well we can see how the first two and a half pages of the play are devoted to the description of the place and of the operation which is taking place, defining the movements of each character almost as the choreography of a dance.<sup>50</sup>

The use of stage space, cues, action timing and settings are essential in the creation of suspense, which builds up from the very beginning of the first act until the climax of the final scene of the third act. From this perspective, stage directions are key elements of the play, and their translation is crucial as they are functional to the full understanding of the scene.

For example, at the beginning of Act One, the opening description of the setting of the play translates the word '*rigoglioso agrumeto*'<sup>51</sup> (lush orange grove) as '*lush olive groves*'.<sup>52</sup> Although olive trees describe a classic Mediterranean scenario, this type of cultural adaptation operates a manipulation of the source text which aims at making it

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<sup>50</sup> The use of stage directions as an introduction to the play is visible in other oeuvres as well. See for example the opening of *Filumena Marturano*, *Napoli milionaira!*, *La grande magia* or *Natale in casa Cupiello* which are introduced by long and extremely detailed stage directions. Similarly, Pirandello took great care in defining both the scenario and the characters' personality through very detailed staging directions.

<sup>51</sup> De Filippo, I, 823.

<sup>52</sup> De Filippo, I, 5.

more intelligible to the target language reader/spectator. In fact, the same translation is present further on, in Act Two, when Rafiluccio explains that Rita, her fiancée, is resting ‘dietro il secondo frutteto, a destra’.<sup>53</sup> This is translated as ‘at the back of the olive grove, at the far end’. It is clear, therefore, the assimilation between olive groves and Mediterranean setting, in line with a general idea of such countries, although the source text refers to orange and lemon trees, which constitute typical Neapolitan vegetation. Another contraction of stage direction has been made in Act Two:

RITA (*annuisce con due brevi cenni del capo poi conferma*) Sì. (*Ma un singhiozzo improvviso provoca in lei il solito pianto lamentoso e rassegnato. E prosegue come può, mentre trae di tasca un logoro fazzoletto per asciugarsi gli occhi e soffiarsi il naso*) (De Filippo, II, 875)

RITA (*nods quickly*) Yes. (*She breaks into tears*). (Ardito, II, 57)

Here the description of the body language of the girl is important to understand her resignation and hopelessness, which is underlined by the description of the handkerchief as ‘logoro’ adding further misery to the character’s portrayal.

Further on, on the improvised operating table is laid a ‘*candido lenzuolo*’ (freshly laundered sheet), which is described simply as ‘*a sheet*’, whereas the adjective shows a professional attitude and care for hygiene. The omission of such a reference may lead one to think that in English culture only a clean sheet would be used for this purpose. On the other hand, one has to take into account that the adjective shows attention to this particular element, which stresses the professionalism of the operation. Interestingly, further on Immacolata uses a handkerchief ‘*candido di bucato*’ to muffle Palummiello’s mouth, before the bullet is extracted from his leg, and this is translated as

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<sup>53</sup> De Filippo, II, 866.



‘a spotless white handkerchief’, stressing the element of cleanliness in the procedure. Another explanation of this inconsistency could be a ‘slip of the pen’, which may occur also to the most accomplished translators.

On a more psychological level, the stage directions at the end of Act Two are almost an omen of the outcome of the play. This is a crucial point in the plot. Rafiluccio tells Antonio about his intention to kill his father, which has become an obsession for him. Here his feelings are in turmoil, given the gravity of his purpose, and Antonio is aware of this. The feelings of the two characters are precisely described in the stage directions which introduce Rafiluccio’s words first:

*dando sfogo a una disperazione sincera che l'intimo dubbio di una decisione gli ha fatto crescere dentro. (De Filippo II, 894)*

*giving vent to his despair. (Ardito, II, 75)*

and Antonio’s words later:

*si è incupito, le parole infuocate di Rafiluccio lo hanno riportato nello stato d'animo in cui si trovava allorché l'idea di far fuori Gioacchino, il guardiano della tenuta Marvizzo, s'impossessò di lui. Non sa sfuggire a quel turbamento e gli vien detto, quasi senza volerlo. (De Filippo, II, 895)*

*RAFILUCCIO's words have reminded him of GIACCHINO. (Ardito, II, 76)*

Antonio’s decision to talk to Arturo is fundamentally guided by the memory of his own desperation, as a young man, when his conviction was the result of false witnesses who had misled the judge. The stage directions describe such a condition through the words

‘intimo dubbio’, ‘incupito’, ‘parole infuocate’ and ‘turbamento’. From this perspective, they are crucial, as, on the one hand they refer to the final dialogue of the Second Act generating a crescendo in the tension, and on the other they illustrate the reasons behind the characters’ action.

Let us now move to the linguistic aspect of the play. I would argue that the linguistic register is of great importance in Eduardo’s theatre, as it defines the characters’ relationships and reflects on the language used by them. When Dr. Della Ragione addresses Geraldina, polite though he may be, he is assertive and decisive, ‘«Geraldí, le forbici»’, accentuated by the shortening of the name which implies familiarity and urge to action. In Ardito’s translation, ‘«Geraldina, scissors please»’, using the full name, and adding the word “please”, on the one hand alters the rhythm and register of the sentence, on the other introduces an English form of politeness, which contributes to create an effect of ‘transparent fluency’. Similarly, in Act One, when Dr. Della Ragione cuts short the squabble between the wounded *camorrista* and his attacker, he is clearly annoyed by the futility of the quarrel and says: ‘Non m’interessa. La bacinella!’. Ardito’s translation reads ‘I am not interested. Basin, please’. In both cases the target language overcomes the source language and somehow modifies the tone of the discourse, which is certainly more in tune with the audience’s expectations, but departs considerably from the original.

The change of register present in the following lines shows the subtleness of the language which can be easily overlooked in translation. While addressing Geraldina during the operation, Dr. Della Ragione uses a straightforward imperative. On the contrary, although Immacolata is the maid, her age requires respect despite her status. Therefore the pronoun *voi*, instead of *tu* is used: ‘Immacola’, mettete una poltrona fuori. *Immacolata esegue*. Gli mettete una coperta addosso. Appena riviene se ne va’. This has been translated as ‘Immacolata, put a chair out. IMMACOLATA *complies*. Cover him up

with a blanket. The moment he comes to, he can go'. It can be argued that the translation does not seem to convey this shift in register as the straight imperative does not express the respectfulness present in the source text.

The relationship between the characters is precisely constructed throughout the play, even when they are not talking directly to each other. It is interesting to see that when *donna* Armida is mentioned, her position as the mistress of the family is undisputed and therefore everybody addresses her in a reverential way, even in ordinary situations, or when talking about her. The following extracts show how, though in different ways, Immacolata and Gennarino, one of the sons, talk of Armida in an affectionate and respectful way, showing their concern for her health after she has been bitten by one of Antonio's dogs.

GENNARINO No. Dopo la medicazione, siccome mamma soffriva e non ce la faceva a tornare un'altra volta in macchina fino a qua, Amedeo ha pensato bene di portarsela a casa sua. Ha detto: «Domani, appena si sente meglio, la metto in automobile e l'accompagno». Pure perché mamma si lamentava e se tornava qua, subito dopo il pronto soccorso, si svegliava papà e buonasera.

IMMACOLATA Verso le tre Amedeo ha telefonato dicendo che 'a signora Armida si sentiva meglio e che s'era assopita. (De Filippo, I, 832)

GENNARINO No. When they'd finished with her she wasn't really well enough to stand the car journey back here, so Amedeo took her to his place. He said that the moment she felt better, tomorrow possibly, he'd bring her home. Just as well she stayed there, because she wasn't at all well when we left the hospital, then father would have woken up and heaven help us... (Ardito, I, 14)

Here a few observations are necessary. The words 'mammà' and 'soffriva' put the attention on Armida, who is the object of the family's concern. On the other hand, the pronoun 'she', and the words 'wasn't really well enough' as well as 'to stand the car journey back here' instead of 'non ce la faceva a tornare' shifts the attention away from Armida. What is more, the use of the pronoun instead of the word 'mammà' or similar reduces the reverential tone of the dialogue, as the use of the pronoun in the English version, without acknowledging the person in question, implies a different register altogether. Interestingly, the reverential form has been used with Antonio Barracano who is referred to as 'father'.

Similarly, register plays an important role in Act Two in the dialogues between Antonio Barracano and Arturo Santaniello, the evil father of Rafiluccio. In the beginning the tones are reverential, with a lot of formalities exchanged between the men as in the following dialogue:

ANTONIO Voi siete Arturo Santaniello?

ARTURO A servirvi.

ANTONIO Mi favorite, per carità (De Filippo, II, 881)

and in the next one:

ANTONIO Dunque, don Artu', io vi ho incomodato per chiedervi un favore personale e per contribuire con il mio intervento alla composizione di una vertenza che non piace a nessuno, nemmeno a voi se fate ricorso ai sentimenti sani di un uomo onesto quale siete.

ARTURO Dite pure don Anto'. Qualunque cosa, sono a vostra disposizione per servirvi.

ANTONIO Voi mi favorite. Ecco qua, so che fra voi e vostro figlio non corre buon sangue. (De Filippo, II, 886)

As the conversation progresses it is clear to Antonio that his interlocutor is a selfish man and has no sense of fatherhood. Therefore, the atmosphere becomes tense and the tones more hostile, to the point that Arturo tells Antonio to mind his own business and not to interfere with his private life.

ANTONIO Avete parlato tutto sbagliato. Ma non mi riferisco a queste ultime cose che avete detto: da quando siete entrato fino adesso.

ARTURO Questa è una vostra opinione.

ANTONIO Statte zitto. Quando parl'io: statte zitto. D'altra parte se parlavate giusto sarebbe stata la stessa cosa... e già... perché voi, nei miei confronti, siete andiccappato da nu fatto: mi siete antipatico.

ARMIDA (*prevedendo il peggio*) Madonna! (*Scambia occhiate con Amedeo e cenni d'intesa*)

ANTONIO Panettie', a me «Fatevi i fatti vostri» non me l'ha detto mai nessuno.

ARTURO Perché forse non siete mai entrato nel vivo di una questione che riguarda un fatto privato di famiglia.

ANTONIO Perché ti ho accordato confidenza, e tu t'hê pigliato 'o dito cu tutt' 'a mano. La confidenza che ti ho dato t'ha fatto scurdà 'o nommo mio. È meglio ca t' 'o ricordo: io mi chiamo Antonio Barracano. (De Filippo, II, 891)

Ardito's translation reads as follows:

ANTONIO I'm not very happy about a single word you've said, Don Arturo. Not just these last few words, but your whole conversation, ever since you came in.

ARTURO You've a right to your opinion.

ANTONIO Be quiet. When I am talking, mind you keep absolutely quiet. But I suppose

I'd have been unhappy at anything you said, anything at all. The fact is, you are severely handicapped in any dealings you may have with me. You see, I can't stand the sight of you.

ARMIDA (*fearing the worst*) Oh, my God! (*Exchanges glances and private signs with AMEDEO, who leaves the room*).

ANTONIO And another thing. No one's ever told me to mind my own business.

ARTURO Perhaps this is the first time you've taken an interest in private family matters.

ANTONIO I gave you an inch and you took an ell. I spoke to you with some familiarity, and for some reason you forgot who you were dealing with. I'll remind you: my name is Antonio Barracano. (Ardito, II, 73)

Here, the change in register is obtained through two linguistic features: the use of *tu* instead of *voi*, and the switch between standard language and dialect in the more crucial moments of the dialogue. This is visible especially in the lines 'Statte zitto. Quando parl'io: statte zitto.' and 'Perché ti ho accordato confidenza, e tu t'hê pigliato 'o dito cu tutt' 'a mano. La confidenza che ti ho dato t'ha fatto scurdà 'o nommo mio. È meglio ca t' 'o ricordo: io mi chiamo Antonio Barracano'. In the former example, 'statte' is the second person singular, whereas 'stateve' is the second person plural. It is worth noticing also the epithet 'Panettie', referring to the job of his interlocutor, with a clearly derogative tone, which adds hostility to the dialogue. The standardization in the English translation, on the one hand neutralizes such a powerful effect, and the rhythm of the dialogue is somewhat slowed down; on the other hand it leaves the feature of the code-switching unresolved. On the contrary, this technique reinforces and at the same time highlights the change of register, which juxtaposes dialect to standard language when the tone becomes more assertive and intimidating. The use of the word 'andicappato', followed by 'nu fatto' for example, far from referring to a disability, shows the intention

to stress the position of inferiority of the interlocutor and the supremacy of the speaker who is not afraid to speak dialect, and uses standard Italian to give more incisiveness.

As I have already illustrated, eyes play an important role in Eduardo's theatre as they are more eloquent than words, and establish a new concept of stage language in Neapolitan theatre, where over gesticulation is predominant in representing Italian characters. For example, in Act One, when Geraldina and Della Ragione are firstly introduced to the reader the former 'negli occhi grandissimi e neri ha uno sguardo sconcertante per la sua impenetrabilità', and the latter has 'occhi furbissimi, carattere freddo, fatalista', translated respectively as 'the look in her dark eyes is disconcerting because of its impenetrability' and 'very intelligent eyes though he is cold and fatalist by nature'. Further on in Act One Antonio is called to end a usury matter. He deals with it by making the usurer accept imaginary money corresponding to the amount owed to him. Even on this occasion his eyes play a crucial role insofar as they speak a thousand words. Again, his weapon is his look, which is defined as 'sguardo d'acciaio', 'sguardo tremendo', translated as 'steely gaze' and 'hypnotic look'. In the dialogue between Barracano and Arturo Santaniello, in the crucial scene of the Third Act, where a cheque in compensation for the wrong sustained by Santaniello's son is unexpectedly produced in front of the old man, the stage directions accurately describe Barracano's eyes:

ANTONIO (*per un attimo gli lampeggiano gli occhi e li punta tremendi su Santaniello*)

Vi siete dimenticata la firma... volete firmare? (De Filippo, III, 910).

ANTONIO (*to Arturo*) You forgot to sign it... would you mind? (Ardito, III, 90)

It is clear that, once again, Antonio speaks with his eyes and his interlocutor feels intimidated by this man whose will power is exerted without the need of physical violence. In this case the omission from the stage direction of the reference to Antonio's

terrifying look reduces the impact of the line, which is weakened even further by the phrase ‘would you mind?’, as the imperative tone is completely neutralized. Even in this case the introduction of the domestic form of courtesy has altered the meaning and the rhythm of the source text.

### **The Language of Dialect**

As I have already illustrated, in a vernacular play sociolect is indicative, not only of the social status of the speaker, but also of the relationship between characters, who use Neapolitan or standard Italian according to a particular situation or rapport. What is more, less educated characters tend to speak dialect or make mistakes when they speak standard Italian, as in the words ‘di *setti* mesi’ (the correct form being ‘di *sette* mesi’) referring to Rita’s pregnancy.<sup>54</sup> The expression: ‘seven months gone’,<sup>55</sup> translates with slang<sup>56</sup> a grammatical error. This strategy is one of the possible options to render the social connotation of the source language speaker in the target language. It could be argued that slang does not always equate with illiterateness, and that, especially in contemporary language, there is a certain degree of contamination between standard language and slang across all social classes. Perhaps, at the time of this translation such a mixture was not common; therefore the use of slang had a specific socio-cultural valence. It is undeniable that theatre translation is particularly susceptible to become dated, as theatre language is very close to spoken language, which changes more rapidly than written language. For this reason the linguistic features of translated plays tend to reflect stylistic and cultural conventions of a specific time. Having said that, in the play under examination slang is not one of the features, even when the *camorristi* speak. On

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<sup>54</sup> De Filippo, II, 867.

<sup>55</sup> Ardito, II, 50.

<sup>56</sup> See the example in John Ayto, *Oxford Dictionary of Slang* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 20: ‘Winifred Holtby: brought her to the Home, four months gone, and won’t be fifteen till next March, (1931)’.



the contrary, what characterizes lower class speakers is the simplicity, almost naivety of their language.

In another passage, Antonio Barracano's humble origins are also emphasized as in the words: 'Pane e latte è la piú migliore colazione',<sup>57</sup> where there are two references to his social background: bread with milk, which is extremely basic and unsophisticated and is reinforced by the grammar mistakes. Ardito's translation 'I tell you, bread and milk is the best possible breakfast one could have',<sup>58</sup> reveals an attempt by the speaker to show linguistic refinement, even though he ends up using syntactically awkward English. However, it does not have clear grammar errors, which are a significant feature in the source text as it appears also in the phrase 'Io, sapete, sono umilo di origina',<sup>59</sup> which has been translated as: 'Yes, I come of humble stock'.<sup>60</sup>

I am now going to address a different matter which concerns the translatability or rather the untranslatability of culture-bound expressions such as idioms and fixed expressions. Idioms represent a large part of Neapolitan dialect, and contribute to its wealth in expressiveness and meanings. Communicative translation is the main instrument a translator has to render idioms insofar as it is

produced when, in a given situation, the S[ource]T[ext] uses a S[ource]L[anguage] expression standard for an equivalent target culture situation, and the T[arget]T[ext] uses a T[arget]L[anguage] expression standard for an equivalent target culture situation.<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> De Filippo, I, 839.

<sup>58</sup> Ardito, I, 22.

<sup>59</sup> De Filippo, II, 884.

<sup>60</sup> Ardito, II, 65.

<sup>61</sup> See Sándor Hervey, Ian Higgings and Stella Cragie, *Thinking Italian Translation* (London and New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 16.

In the following lines there is a typical example of an idiomatic word that in this case is *fesso* which, somehow, summarizes the Neapolitan worldview. It is important, however, to give a definition of the word 'fesso':

entrato al pari di tanti altri vocaboli partenopei nell'uso comune della patria lingua, questo termine costituisce un vero grattacapo per chi intendesse rintracciarne origini lessicali, etimologiche, e senso determinato [...]. Si dirà che io esageri, ma a me pare che in questa ineffabile parola sia racchiuso tutto lo spirito dell'inconfondibile filosofia del popolo di Napoli. Una filosofia fatta di sopportazione, di gaiezza, di lepido umorismo e persino di vanteria golosa!<sup>62</sup>

This concept is at the basis of the two different expressions «fare fesso», to fool somebody, and «non/ farsi fare fesso», not being fooled,<sup>63</sup> and is present in other plays, such as *Bene mio e core mio*, and *Non ti pago*. In the following extract, the two *camorristi* Palummiello and 'o Nait, after shooting each other, are taken to Barracano's house, where Dr. Della Ragione is going to remove the bullet from Palummiello's wounded leg. The two men, though acting outside the law, are rather naïve and this is underscored by their simple language.

PALUMMIELLO Io non l'ho riconosciuto: l'ho scambiato per un passante volenteroso.  
Se no ti sparavo.  
'O NAIT Ma ti potevo lasciare a terra senza sapere la gravità della ferita?  
PALUMMIELLO Grazie. (*Con uno sforzo tende la mano a 'o Nait*).  
'O NAIT (*gliela stringe affettuosamente*) Per carità, è dovere. Adesso devi pensare solo a guarire.  
PALUMMIELLO Quando guarisco ti sparo.  
'O NAIT E perché io so' fesso? (De Filippo, I, 828)

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<sup>62</sup> This definition by Giulio Caizzi is found in Fiorenza Di Franco, *Il teatro di Eduardo* (Rome, Bari: Laterza, 1975), p. 80.

<sup>63</sup> Di Franco, *Il teatro di Eduardo*, p. 80.

PALUMMIELLO I didn't recognise him at first. I just thought he was a stranger passing by. If I'd known it was him I'd have shot him good and proper.

NAIT I couldn't have left you lying there, not knowing how bad you were.

PALUMMIELLO (*putting out his hand with an effort*) Thanks.

NAIT (*shakes hand effusively*) Don't mention it, mate. I had to do it. Now all you've got to think about is getting better.

PALUMMIELLO When I'm well again I'll shoot you, and I won't miss next time.

NAIT But why? Are you short of target practice? (Ardito, I, 10)

The translation 'E perché, io so' fesso?' with 'But why? Are you short of target practice?' substitutes an idiomatic expression with a clause, which gives an explanation of the speaker's possible inner thoughts. Therefore, Ardito's rendering seems to break away from the tenor of the discourse and leaves unresolved the translation of this culturally loaded element. A few lines further on, when 'o Nait suggests singing a song, to overcome the excruciating pain, Palummiello replies 'E chi se fida 'e cantà',<sup>64</sup> which means literally 'I have no energy to sing'. In the translation, the exhaustion, implicit in these words is absent, indeed the words 'I daren't sing'<sup>65</sup> imply rather fear of something happening, in case the person sings. Here I argue that there has been a clear misunderstanding of the source text due, perhaps, to lack of knowledge of dialect, since this is a common expression to show exhaustion.

Dialectal expressions often have figurative origins, such as, for example, traditional games. When Catiello describes one of the protégés who is waiting to see Antonio Barracano, he calls him 'Na carta 'e munneze'<sup>66</sup> referring to a traditional Neapolitan card game. Ardito's translation 'Just rubbish'<sup>67</sup> considers the word 'munneze' (immondizia)

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<sup>64</sup> De Filippo, I, 826.

<sup>65</sup> Ardito, I, 8.

<sup>66</sup> De Filippo, I, 833.

<sup>67</sup> Ardito, I, 16.

isolated from the context. Indeed, a card of little value, which is of no use to the game, is defined ‘na carta ‘e munnezze’, just like this man who is only ‘a small fish’.

Another recurrent culture-bound word is *fetente*. It is a typical Neapolitan derogatory word, which derives from the verb *fete* meaning “stinks”, and has different nuances according to the context in which it is used. Noticeably, it is hardly ever vulgar, even when uttered with vehemence, but it does carry a moral judgment, in the sense that the person in question is somehow reproachable. For instance, when the doctor mentions the two *camorristi* ‘o Nait and Palummiello, he says ‘So’ due fetenti’,<sup>68</sup> referring to their poor upbringing, and their ignorance, whereas Ardito translates it as ‘They’re two good-for-nothings’,<sup>69</sup> qualifying them as useless. On the other hand, during his hysterical outburst, the doctor calls himself ‘un fetente! Un fetente fottuto’,<sup>70</sup> meaning that he considers himself a disgrace, a reject of human kind; Ardito’s translation is ‘I’m all fucked up’.<sup>71</sup> The Oxford Dictionary of Slang lists the expression ‘fuck up’ under the heading ‘Spoiling, Ruination’ and gives the following explanation of the term: «To spoil, ruin, botch, make a mess of».<sup>72</sup> In this case, it is important to stress the lack of self-esteem and the self-reproach’; whereas the expression used in translation, though carrying over the sexual connotations, describes a sense of confusion and hopelessness rather than putting more emphasis on the doctor’s words.

The following case has yet a different hue. Catiello reports what happened the night before during a fireworks display. Antonio Barracano, who is guest of honour, is clearly dissatisfied with the performance. After a few moments from the beginning of ‘o Nano d’ ‘a Siberia’s display Barracano gets up and leaves. ‘Dopo due o tre granate del terzo poi, ‘o Nano d’ ‘a Siberia, ha ditto : «Questo è un fetente», ha salutato gli amici e

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<sup>68</sup> De Filippo, I, 241.

<sup>69</sup> Ardito, I, 23.

<sup>70</sup> De Filippo, I, 848.

<sup>71</sup> Ardito, I, 31.

<sup>72</sup> Ayto, Oxford Dictionary of Slang, p. 413.

se n'è andato a letto'.<sup>73</sup> The translation reads 'And after two or three of the Siberian Dwarf's rockets, he just said: Good-night!... as if he thought he wasn't any bloody good. Just said goodnight to his friends and went to bed'.<sup>74</sup> In this case, the adjective *fetente* refers to the moral attitude of the person, and is not related to the quality of the display, which, instead, would have been defined with the noun *fetenzia* (rubbish). For a person of Barracano's calibre, watching a show performed by a disreputable person is not possible, and therefore he leaves. The word *fetente* in Act Three has a different connotation, when it is used in reference to 'o Cuozzo, the only witness who pretends not to have witnessed the crime, as he is afraid of the repercussions on him. This is the same person who, when in Act One he had been helped by Don Antonio, said: 'Don Antonio e 'o pate nuosto! È 'o pate 'e Napule! E te vulimmo bene, Toto'... te vulimmo bene'. Here the epithet *fetente* refers to his ingratitude, rather than to his moral depravation, as appears from the translation 'swine'. The same translation applies also to the word 'fetentone' used by Antonio to show his contempt for Arturo, although he does not use an offensive word such as the one employed in translation.

Let us look now at the word 'guappe', used to describe a fireworks display. This adjective comes from the noun 'guappo'. The definition, according to the Neapolitan-Italian dictionary is the following one:

Guappo, valoroso, prode, Bravo. – per ottimo nel suo genere, Eccellente. – in forza di sostantivo, ostentatore di bravura, Bravaccio. Ammazzasette, Tagliacantoni e Tagliamontagne, Squartanugoli, Gradasso, Rodomonte. – *Fare u guappo*, Braveggiare, Fare il bravo a credenza, Fare il Giorgio, il Rogantino, il Gradasso.<sup>75</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> De Filippo, I, 831.

<sup>74</sup> Ardito, I, 13.

<sup>75</sup> Raffaele Andreoli, *Vocabolario Napoletano – Italiano* (Naples: Istituto Grafico Editoriale Italiano, 1988), p. 189.

In this context, since it refers to excellence and value, it means that someone is extremely effective and awesome, and implies that the spectator is full of admiration for the competence of the displayer. The standard English translation ‘much better’, although linguistically correct, somehow leaves out all the cultural richness of the source text, which used an adjective with such a powerful evocative sense.

In the following extract there is another case of culturally embedded expression, again related to a traditional game. Here Antonio Barracano is getting dressed, and his outfit is carefully chosen, following specific criteria of style. In particular the tie is the object of discussion as different views preside over its choice. Here there is a generational clash between Antonio, who would opt for a more sober style and Gennarino, his son, who instead prefers a more modern, vibrant one.

GENNARINO Se vi devo dire la verità, mi piacerebbe questa (*Indica la più vistosa delle sei*).

ANTONIO Gennari’, io tengo sittantacinc’anne... T’ ‘o vvuo’ mettere ncapa, sì o no? Faccio fà ‘e nummere cu sta cravatta! (De Filippo, I, 243)

Ardito’s translation reads as follows:

GENNARINO To tell you the truth, I rather fancy this one (*Points to the loudest of the six*).

ANTONIO Gennarino, I’m seventy-five years old... when will you get that into your head? How could I possibly wear that sort of tie? (Ardito, I, 26)

The expression ‘Faccio fa ‘e nummere’ refers to the game of *lotto*, very popular in Naples. The choice of the numbers depends almost entirely on strange, unusual events,

which are interpreted according to the ‘Smorfia napoletana’,<sup>76</sup> and translated into numbers. Antonio objects to his son’s choice through a cultural reference which has been omitted in translation and replaced with a standard phrase which has reduced the colorfulness of the source text. Another reference to the magical meaning of numbers is contained in one of the most famous of Eduardo’s plays, *Non ti pago*, which is the story of the owner of a ‘banco lotto’ who claims to be the winner of a substantial sum of money, won by his young employee, on the basis that his father, having mistaken the young man for his son, had given him the winning numbers during his sleep.

Language plays a crucial role also in the way characters are addressed, insofar as it is indicative of their social status. For instance, the doctor who is an educated person is regarded as a reputable man, and therefore is addressed as ‘professo’, although this title is not supported by any academic achievement. On the contrary, nicknames are used to describe characters of working class background, as in the case of ‘o Palummiello. In the same way, abbreviations of names like Mmacula’ instead of Immacolata, Gennari’ instead of Gennaro, Dotto’ instead of Dottore, express familiarity, closeness or is used to urge somebody to take quick action. This feature therefore, implies that a different register is being used in different situations. In addition, the fashion in which first names are given to the characters is indicative of their status and role in the play. For instance, ‘camorristi’<sup>77</sup> are usually identified by a special feature which becomes part of their name. In this way somebody whose name is Pasquale and has a big nose is called Pascale ‘o Nasone; somebody who comes from Torre del Greco or Torre Annunziata, towns near Naples, is simply known as ‘o Turrese, someone else is known as ‘o Nano d’ ‘a Siberia, if he is short

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<sup>76</sup> The name ‘Smorfia’ comes from Morpheus, the god of sleep and is a compilation of words which are connected to the interpretation of dreams. According to the book, different events occurring during dreams correspond to certain numbers from one to ninety. The extraction of these numbers in different combinations of two, three, four or five correspond to different money prices. The winning numbers, therefore, are very often the result of oneiric experiences, but also unusual real life situations can be decoded in a numerical way.

<sup>77</sup> This way of referring to the *Camorra* people is still present in the ‘clans’, as it is demonstrated by the names given to bosses as Francesco Schiavone, also known as ‘Sandokan’, or Antonio Iovine called ‘‘O Ninno’. In both cases, their nicknames, rather than their real names, identify them in their communities. See Roberto Saviano, *Gomorra* (Milan: Mondadori, 2007), and ‘Costruire, conquistare’, in *La bellezza e l’inferno* (Milan: Mondadori, 2009), pp. 143-153.

and has Russian features. Translating these names as surnames in some cases and as nicknames in others (in Ardito's translation we find Turrese, Nait, Pasquale Nasone, but also the Siberian Dwarf) can be confusing about the cross-cultural message since a feature which collocates the character in a particular social position is rendered instead as his surname. Interestingly, similar nicknames are present also in the English language as Jack the Ripper or The Mad Hatter, to mention only two. In this particular case, two strategies could be adopted: domestication, translating into target language the name, as happened with the Siberian Dwarf, or foreignization, importing the original name into the target text. Another way to render these names without altering the target culture effect could be the use of inverted commas, to show the idiomatic connotation of them. In this way Pascale 'o Nasone could have been rendered as Pascale 'Nasone', stressing the point that 'Nasone' is a form of nickname.

From the examples above it appears that the translation of those terms and expressions loaded with great cultural meaning is inevitably problematic as the different nuances are somewhat impossible to render in the target language. For this reason, although 'there is a range of differences available within English, [...] it is difficult to capture the striking variety of the original',<sup>78</sup> in fact, as shown in the textual analysis, standard English does not seem to offer the variety of choices, both of vocabulary and register, to render the colorfulness and rhythms of the vernacular. With regard to his choice of Scots to translate the Québécois play *Les Belles-soœurs* by Michel Tremblay William Findlay argues:

we [Martin Bowman and himself] were aware that some critics had expressed dissatisfaction with English language translations of Tremblay's plays, not because of the competence of the translations but because Standard English lacked the qualities needed to convey fully Tremblay's genius in Québécois. As one critic wrote, in an

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<sup>78</sup> See Linda Gaboriau, 'The Cultures of Theatre', in *Culture in Transit: Translating the Literature of Quebec*, ed. by S. Simon (Montreal: Véhicule Press, 1995), p. 87.



article in the Canadian magazine *Saturday Night*, “In English, Tremblay’s plays reveal little of the color, resonance and musicality of the originals”.<sup>79</sup>

### **The Language of Food**

Food is an essential element in Italian culture. Around the table relationships can become stronger or disputes may begin. The preparation of food is extremely important, both as the continuation of a tradition and as the representation of a ritual. In general food is regarded as an integral part of life and, given the regional connotation of Italian culture, the local variations reflect on the type of food consumed. In Eduardo’s plays food is invariably represented either as the centre of the play, as in *Sabato, domenica e lunedì*, where the preparation of *ragù* spans three days during which the play takes place; or because it is at the basis of the characters’ behavior as in *Napoli milionaria!*, where the female protagonist becomes a racketeer in order to provide survival food for her starving family; or even to create the opportunity for reflection as happens in *Questi fantasmi!*, where the protagonist converses with an imaginary neighbor while preparing his daily coffee. Food can also have a symbolic meaning, as in *Il sindaco del Rione Sanità*, where Antonio Barracano dies during the dinner which he himself has organized, and becomes a sort of sacrificial victim. Apart from such significant cases, food contributes to define the characters’ personality and their environment. A few examples from the play under examination will clarify the point. Before going to work, Gennarino asks for ‘due uova sbattute col caffè e latte’. This was, at the time of the play, a typical breakfast consumed in Italy by a well looked after young person. This reference to beaten eggs is not present in the English translation and ‘caffè e latte’ has been changed into ‘coffee’. It is clear here the cultural standardization where the foreign elements have either been eliminated altogether or have been changed into a domestic

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<sup>79</sup> See William Findlay, ‘Translating Tremblay into Scots’, in *Culture in Transit: Translating the Literature of Quebec*, pp. 149-162 (p. 155).

equivalent. In fact Geraldina's request for 'caffè e latte' has also been rendered with 'coffee'. Further on, Catiello, who comes from a lower social upbringing, has indeed a completely different breakfast, as he refers to a 'piattello di pasta e fagioli di ieri al giorno', which becomes 'some pasta left over from yesterday', where the beans have been omitted, perhaps due to the idea that such a combination would sound too exotic or at least strange. A similar approach has been adopted in the translation of the word 'mozzarella', which is being offered to the starving Rita in Act Two. Ardito translates it with the more generic word 'cheese'. This may be due to the fact that in the seventies, when the translation was made, this type of cheese was not widely available in England and it could represent a foreign element, so it was neutralized and made more accessible to the reader/spectator. The same domestication is visible with the word 'tarallo', which describes another characteristic Neapolitan food. This is a round biscuit which can be either sweet or, more often, enriched with black pepper and almonds. It can be used as a snack or an appetizer, and it is still sold in bakeries today. Geraldina refers to it when she recalls the free *tarallo* she used to be given by Rafiluccio, when, as a child, she would go to his bakery. The term has been translated as 'doughnut', on the basis of the round shape, although the two items differ considerably both in their consistency and in their use.<sup>80</sup> Even in this instance, the main preoccupation of the translator has been to adjust the foreign to the domestic milieu. As a result, the cultural reference has been interpreted according to the target culture conventions, so that the former has been homogenized to the latter. Recalling Tymoczko's reference to the 'material culture', translating food is a problematic issue since its transposition may lead to a misrepresentation of the source culture, or to its total assimilation to the target culture, as in this case.<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> The Neapolitan equivalent of doughnut is the 'graffa', from the distorted German word Krapfen.

<sup>81</sup> See Chapter One, p. 52.

## **Performability and Text Manipulation**

Sometimes, some parts of playtexts are omitted in translation. Such a choice is often justified by alleged needs of performability or speakability. Still, the need to achieve a speakable text, which can be uttered by the actors more easily, sometimes implies a deeper manipulation of the text, and can lead, in extreme cases, to a complete reinterpretation of the original play. In fact, the spectrum of the alterations may vary from the simple use of standard language, in case of translation of vernacular theatre, to the resetting of the play in a localised milieu, using maybe different names for characters and places.<sup>82</sup>

On the other hand, it is worth noting that the use of standard language in translations of vernacular can be attributed also to reasons linked to theatre practice, as the translation of vernacular would require competence of the source language and a laborious activity of cultural interpretation, conditions which are seldom available. Besides, the common practice of playwrights to work on literal translations of texts written in languages unknown to them seems to confirm the idea of appropriation and acculturation of foreign texts often justified in the name of ‘audience reception’.<sup>83</sup> I argue that such forms of manipulation reflect a more general attitude to make foreign plays more intelligible to the local milieu, in a way that reduces the alterity of it. However, the dramaturge’s freedom to alter the source text can carry important consequences in terms of cultural transmission.

I have already illustrated the cuts in the translation of stage directions. I am now going to discuss cuts referring to words and lines expressing the protagonist’s ethical principles as well as his ideas on issues such as ignorance and justice. It should be stressed that the whole justification of Antonio Barracano’s actions stands on his utopian idea of making ‘il mondo un poco meno rotondo e più quadrato’, which leads

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<sup>82</sup> These extensive forms of manipulation will be analyzed in Chapter Four and Chapter Five.

<sup>83</sup> This is the view of the contemporary playwright David Edgar, whom I had the opportunity to talk to at the University of Warwick in 2008, during a Colloquium on theatre translation.

him to take the law in his own hands, and become a criminal.<sup>84</sup> This worldview is clearly expressed in Act Two and in Act Three. Here follows an extract from Act Two where Antonio expresses his idea of marriage and dignity. He explains to Rita the reason why the expression ‘a femmena mia’ is inappropriate when referred to a fiancée or a wife.

ANTONIO E va bene. Dunque: «'a femmena mia» non si usa né per la fidanzata né per la moglie. In tutti e due i casi l'affermazione, diciamo, sarebbe un'offesa per la donna. 'A mugliera è mugliera, e quando si vuole parlare di lei si dice: «La mia signora». Un uomo serio di conseguenza si serve della denominazione: «'a femmena mia» in due casi solamente. Primo, quando tiene la necessità assoluta di parlare della sua amante o concubina che dir si voglia; ma l'interlocutore dev'essere un uomo positivo, responsabile e di provata fedeltà. Secondo: per un caso pietoso in cui un uomo sveglio e provocatore che vuole levare una donna qualunque, mettiamo pure una prostituta, dalle insidie di una comitiva allegra di uomini provati al litigio e lesti di mano, allora si dichiara possessore provvisorio dell'oggetto di sesso femminile e dice: «questa qua non si tocca: è a femmena mia». (De Filippo, II, 873)

ANTONIO Very well. 'My woman' isn't used either to refer to one's fiancée or one's wife. In both cases the woman concerned would find the term offensive. A wife's a wife, and when talking about her one should say 'My wife'. A man who knows how to weigh his words only uses 'my woman' in two circumstances. First when mentioning a mistress ... or such like. Secondly when he sets out to ... how shall I put it ... protect a certain kind of woman ... a prostitute in fact ... from a drunken gang: in other words he claims provisional ownership of the lady in question and says: Hands off. She's my woman. (Ardito, II, 55)

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<sup>84</sup> See Travi, *Eduardo: la morte, i santi, i sogni*, p. 184.

Antonio weighs his words very carefully, to clarify an expression which may be used inappropriately. For this reason he specifies that the man ‘tiene la necessità assoluta di parlare della sua amante o concubina che dir si voglia’ and that ‘l’interlocutore dev’essere un uomo positivo, responsabile e di provata fedeltà’. He also points out that the other case occurs when there is ‘un caso pietoso’, which requires prompt action regardless of the nature of the woman in need of assistance. These are key words insofar as they portray the character as a man of principles. Further on, he will show again that any action, if justified by the need to prevent serious consequences, becomes somehow lawful although his view will prove fallacious and will bring him to death.

Moving now to a different topic, throughout the play Antonio declares that at the basis of corruption and injustice, there is ‘ignorance’.<sup>85</sup> This word does not refer simply to lack of knowledge, but describes the more general state of degradation in which the working class<sup>86</sup> is kept by power, which needs to keep people in such a condition in order to flourish. The reason for Antonio’s action is to protect these people from injustice by keeping crime under control. Indeed, he is well aware that the administration of justice is too often deviated by the interference of powerful people who will protect their own interests at any cost. In fact, he believes that crime exists because society takes advantage of ‘ignorance’ and exploits it to its own benefit, when he says:

la società mette a frutto l’ignoranza di questa gente. Professo’, sui delitti e sui reati che commettono gli ignoranti si muove e vive l’intera macchina mangereccia della società costituita. L’ignoranza è un titolo di rendita. Mettetevi un ignorante vicino e camperete bene per tutta la vita.<sup>87</sup>

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<sup>85</sup> See footnote 1 for the definition of the word ‘ignoranti’ and its problematic essence.

<sup>86</sup> In fact, Eduardo refers to ‘la plebe’.

<sup>87</sup> De Filippo, I, 847.

So he stubbornly pursues his design to make the world 'un poco meno rotondo e più quadrato', to the point of sacrificing his own life.

Further on, in Act Two he introduces the plague of corruption through an apparently insignificant reflection on the nature of the envelope:

ANTONIO Diventa busta quando prima di chiuderla ci si mettono dentro i biglietti di banca che anche sono di carta. Don Artu': senza la busta si ferma pure la bomba atomica. Non c'è bisogno dell'ingegnere e dell'architetto. Questa gente qua conosce il codice edilizio a memoria, e quando arrivano a incatenare un povero ignorante in materia che vuole costruire, allora lo lasciano quando l'anno portato diritto diritto al fallimento o al manicomio. E campano bene perché l'ignoranza è assai. E stanno sempre a posto legalmente, perché «la legge non ammette ignoranza». E non è giusto. Perché, secondo me la legge non ammette tre quarti di popolazione. Ma se, per esempio, si cambiasse la frase e si dicesse: «La legge ammette l'ignoranza», vi garantisco che più della metà di questi signori farebbero sparire la laurea e diventerebbero immediatamente ignoranti. (De Filippo, II, 883).

ANTONIO It only becomes an envelope proper if, before you seal it, you put banknotes into it ... yet another paper product. There you have the greatest lubricant in the world. Don Arturo, without that sort of envelope nothing works. The atom bomb would refuse to go off without it. No need for architects or building contractors. Just a number of well-filled envelopes, which beget all the building permits one could possibly need. (Ardito, II, 63)

Here, the playwright uses the protagonist as a spokesperson of his own people, making an important statement on the social state of his town. The socio-cultural implications are therefore, very strong, and the author's philosophical idea goes through the protagonist's words, which provide a justification to his own action. Similarly, in Act

Three, during Antonio's last monologue, the state of prostrating ignorance is still at the centre of his thoughts when he says, while he is dying, that 'non poteva continuare eternamente. La ignoranza è assai. È un mare di gente che ha bisogno di essere istradata, protetta'. This is obviously a core issue that is reiterated throughout the play, and the word 'ignorante', and its variations, is repeated almost as a mantra to remind the reader/spectator of the state of such people. From a translation viewpoint, therefore, this term represents an important cultural reference, thus omitting the word 'ignoranza' or rendering the adjective 'ignorante' as 'underdog' or 'poor devil' or 'poor bastard' leaves the lexicological problems unresolved and shifts the attention from the intentionally repeated same word, towards various synonyms.

This play was defined by Eduardo himself 'una commedia simbolica e non realistica'<sup>88</sup> and more than any other play shows Eduardo's social commitment as it is in a way an open denunciation of malpractice and denied justice. However, Eduardo did give a positive message insofar as the protagonist's failure is somehow balanced by doctor Della Ragione who, by refusing to write a false death certificate, on the one hand breaks the vicious circle of crime and on the other lays the foundations for a world based not on lies but on the truth.<sup>89</sup>

## **Conclusions**

From what I have illustrated so far it is clear that dialects represent the cultural milieu they belong to as ideograms do with language, insofar as dialectal expressions have a strong symbolic meaning which goes beyond colourfulness and amusement. An example of this can be found in the expression mentioned above in the textual analysis

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<sup>88</sup> See Testoni, *Eduardo De Filippo: Atti del convegno di studi sulla drammaturgia civile e sull'impegno sociale di Eduardo De Filippo senatore a vita*, p. 102.

<sup>89</sup> The same theme of denied justice, but with a more pessimistic approach, is at the basis of *Il Contratto*, written in 1967, which is the story of Geronta Sebezio who, like Antonio Barracano, says that court cases have always an unpredictable end, and that they protract for too many years to the sole advantage of those who have broken the law. See Di Franco, 'L'impegno civile di Eduardo De Filippo', p. 97.

‘Faccio fà ‘e nummere cu sta cravatta!’ which uses an image embedded in the cultural environment.

In theatre, the choice of dialect rather than standard Italian carries a further implication, since it establishes the principle that local identities are not to be concealed under an uncharacterised idiom, but they must be enhanced by the language of the community. I have argued that in vernacular theatre, the linguistic medium equates with its substance. In other words, using vernacular reveals the author’s intention to transmit a precise cultural message. It follows that any manipulation of the text which weakens such a characteristic inevitably reduces the cultural impact of the play as well. As to Neapolitan dialect, in this chapter I have illustrated how linguistic structures permeate the message of the source text. In particular, through the examples cited in the textual analysis, I have highlighted how the worldview of the Neapolitan community is often summarized by words or idiomatic expressions. On the other hand, I have observed that rendering the nuances of dialect is a very hard task with which any translator has to come to terms, and that often dialect expressions are simply untranslatable in terms of equivalence.

I have also shown that the translation of vernacular can be very problematic in terms of register and variety of language, and different strategies such as standardization of the language, use of slang and other dialects may be adopted by translators. Although there are several dialects in the English language to choose from, this would imply confining the message of the play within the boundaries of local culture, and would be, quoting Taylor, ‘simultaneously associated with social class, that is the lower the socio-economic grouping, the stronger the local speech variation’.<sup>90</sup> The use of slang, on the other hand, can be equally limited and represent just one part of society which chooses to isolate itself from the rest by using a counter-language. Furthermore, I have

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<sup>90</sup> See Christopher Taylor, *Language to Language A practical and theoretical guide for Italian/English translators* (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 114.



illustrated how domestication of the language through standardization, on the one hand determines an appropriation of the foreign text, on the other it represents a limited medium insofar as it does not render the hues and the subtleness of the dialect. In particular, standard language seems inadequate to render the code switching of the play which is a central stylistic feature of it as it defines the register of language. With regard to the cuts in the text, I have illustrated how they concern, on the one hand, cultural elements of the play and on the other the representation of the characters, especially because they reduce the justification of their action. Thus, the elimination of entire or parts of the stage directions or of the dialogues reflects on the transmission of the message of the whole play. Finally, from the analysis carried out it appears that register variety, culture-bound expressions and grammatical structures are features which communicate variations of a particular discourse community, and that the cultural identity of such community is embedded in its dialect.

## CHAPTER THREE

### **IN SEARCH OF CULTURAL TRANSFER: A TEXTUAL ANALYSIS OF FOUR TRANSLATIONS OF *FILUMENA MARTURANO***

#### **Introduction**

It is a common opinion among scholars that theatre translation still represents a minor part of translation studies, with far more attention being given to literary and poetry translation.<sup>1</sup> Among the vast amount of books and articles on translation of literature, relatively few contributions have been made on drama translation. One of the reasons behind such a paucity is the peculiarity of this genre, which, ‘implies simultaneous transfer into two forms of communication: monomedial literature (reading) and polymedial theatre (performance)’.<sup>2</sup>

In Chapter One I have argued that, since the 1980s there has been a growing interest in theatre translation, mainly from a practical perspective, which takes into account various issues related to the *mise en scène* of translated plays, of which the most problematic and controversial is their performability.<sup>3</sup> Yet, dialect theatre does not seem to receive as much attention as mainstream theatre, on the assumption that dialect reflects a limited worldview confined to a parochial, often class related, environment. As a result, ‘dialect speakers have often suffered the additional stigma of being marked by their speech as coming from a subordinate or inferior geographical area or social class’.<sup>4</sup> Such a preconceived idea of dialect theatre is a reflection of the same attitude

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<sup>1</sup> See Gunilla Anderman, ‘Drama Translation’, in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, ed. by Mona Baker (London: Routledge, 2001), pp. 71-76 (p. 71). See also Mary Snell-Hornby, ‘Theatre and Opera Translation’, in *A Companion to Translation Studies*, pp. 106-119 (p. 106).

<sup>2</sup> Schultze, cited in Phyllis Zatlin, *Theatrical Translation and Film Adaptation: A Practitioner View* (Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 2005), p. viii.

<sup>3</sup> See Patrice Pavis, *Theatre at the Crossroads of Culture*. See also Zatlin, *Theatrical Translation and Film Adaptation*.

<sup>4</sup> David Crystal, cited in Marvin Carlson, *Speaking in Tongues: Language at Play in the Theatre*, p. 9.

the English speaking world has towards dialect literature in general, since, as Bill Findlay observes,

dialect writing stands outside the English literary mainstream, in both historic and contemporary terms. A serious literary work employing dialect in a sustained manner is therefore viewed as an oddity in England. England does have a dialect inheritance but it has not been given literacy or social legitimacy.<sup>5</sup>

What is more, dialect literature and theatre usually refer to culture- embedded situations, which seem to appeal to selective audiences, therefore offering limited profitable returns, which make this genre less sought after by publishers and producers.

As to Italian theatre, we have seen how regional language variations are expressions of the complexity of the fabric of Italian culture across all social classes. Indeed, each region, if not each town, has its own dialect theatre. There are examples of ‘emiliano’, ‘pugliese’, ‘marchigiano’, ‘torinese’, ‘bolognese’, Milanese, Neapolitan and Sicilian theatre, to mention just a few, which, unknown though they may be, represent the core of the communities they belong to. And yet, these forms of theatre are generally neglected in the Italian mainstream theatre, let alone in the English-speaking world.<sup>6</sup> There are, undoubtedly, practical reasons for such a lack of interest, first and foremost the sheer linguistic difficulty in comprehending the source language, since local dialects often remain obscure even to native Italian speakers. Dialect raises lexical issues as with any other language but, given its vernacular origin, further understanding of the social and historical background is paramount to render the profoundly idiomatic

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<sup>5</sup> Bill Findlay, ‘Translating into Dialect’, in *Stages of Translation*, p. 200.

<sup>6</sup> As Marvin Carlson, in his *Speaking in Tongues: Language at Play in the Theatre*, p. 67 has rightly observed, in Italy this is not due to the fact that ‘dialect theatre is more local and special in its concerns than other theatre, but that dominant cultures remain generally indifferent to the theatre of cultures they consider socially or linguistically inferior to their own. This remains quite clear in the ongoing indifference, by no means overcome today, of the old colonial powers (as well as the newer ones, most notably the United States) to almost any drama produced by anyone in the old colonies’. For a full overview on dialect theatre in Italy, see Carlson, *Speaking in Tongues, Language at Play in the Theatre*.

and culture based expressions. Consequently, the decoding process is made more difficult by the limited availability of translators who command knowledge of both source and target language. As David Johnston observed, in order to convey ‘the quirks of speech [and] the very fine points of style’ it is necessary to have knowledge of the source language’.<sup>7</sup> In this instance accuracy refers to the understanding of meaning inherent in the text, rather than to the actual correspondence between words. For example, translating a proverb will almost invariably require in the target language words radically different from the source language, in order to convey the accurate meaning of it, as in the case of ‘menare il can per l’aia’ which is rendered in English with ‘to beat about the bush’. In this case, although there is no literal correspondence in the translation, nonetheless there is exact correspondence of meaning. Therefore, only through precise understanding of the source language, can the translator render the subtleness of the language. An additional problem comes from the already mentioned widespread practice employed by British directors to use literal translations as a starting point for their adaptations. In dialect theatre, this practice has contributed even more to the misrepresentation of the source text. This attitude has led to the production of translations which while they are too literal, thus missing the idiomatic and cultural references, constitute the basis of theatrical representations of vernacular culture.

Another reason for lack of dialect theatre translations is linked to the discourse of foreign theatre translation, which underscores the dominance of the target culture over the source culture. Antoine Berman argues that

of all the types of translation practiced in a culture during a given historical period, theatre translation is the *only* precise indicator of the profound relationship of the culture to itself and to the Foreigner. [...] Theatre translation is the mirror that reflects

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<sup>7</sup> See ‘Nick Dear: Translation as Conservative Writing: in Conversation with David Johnston’, in *Stages of Translation*, pp. 271-280 (p. 272).

the most and the most intensely. This is the case because (in the Western world) the theatre provides the community with a representational image of its being-in-the-world.<sup>8</sup>

When staging a foreign play the reception of it is dictated primarily by financial norms of saleability, which require the widest possible consensus by the target culture. In other words, this rapport is subject to a complex balance of market interests; as a result the otherness of the source culture tends to be neutralised and made to conform to established ideas and social clichés. I have argued before in this thesis that the translation process goes well beyond language and invests culture as a whole. Theatre is essentially attached to the social discourse of a given society; therefore, it adheres to its ideological assumptions, especially with regard to its world view. In this perspective the translator manipulates

the receiver's perspective of the text. It is important to point out that the translator sets up a point of view around which a new coherence and a new intelligibility are organized. [...] In forcing the audience to see the text from this viewpoint only, translation becomes a mode of persuasion.<sup>9</sup>

The appropriation of a text according to local expectations guarantees on the one hand its acceptance by the audience, and on the other the reinforcement of a pre-existent idea. As Brisset points out in her socio-analysis of theatre translation

the target milieu *would expect* a translation to be a naturalization. [...] Thus, for the institution, the value of the foreign work becomes a functional one, and elimination of

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<sup>8</sup> See Antoine Berman's 'Foreword', in *A Sociocritique of Translation: Theatre and Alterity in Quebec, 1968-1988*, trans. by Rosalind Gill and Roger Gannon (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1996), p. xv.

<sup>9</sup> Annie Brisset, *A Sociocritique of Translation: Theatre and Alterity in Quebec, 1968-1988*, p. 159.

its alterity becomes the primary condition of its acceptance into the theatrical system that will absorb it.<sup>10</sup>

For this reason, foreign theatre, and in particular dialect theatre, is normally approached from a conservative viewpoint so that foreignisms are usually either eliminated or neutralised through the standardization of language and the adherence to clichés. In this way, the source culture is imported in the target culture and homogenised to it, and sociolect is converted into expressions familiar to the target language.<sup>11</sup>

As Susan Bassnett illustrates, among the several translation strategies available, one of the most commonly used in the English-speaking world is the use of

the Source Language cultural context as a frame text. [...] It involves the utilization of the Target Language stereotypical images of the SL culture to provide a comic frame. So in the case of British productions of De Filippo in the 1970s, and equally in the case of Dario Fo's plays in English, the frame text is provided by a comic set of signs denoting Italianicity. Hence, in the National Theatre production of *Filumena Marturano*, the text was played with mock-Italian accents and much of the text was rendered in 'Anglo-Italian' jargon. The result of this type of translation is to create a massive ideological shift: the frame tells British audiences that the play is primarily 'about' comic foreigners.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Brisset, *A Sociocritique of Translation: Theatre and Alterity in Quebec, 1968-1988*, p. 15.

This view is shared by Joseph Farrell, who maintains that British productions of foreign plays are generally preoccupied with what the audience can actually handle: 'If we give them something which is genuinely foreign and unfamiliar, and which is genuinely unchallenged, will the rather 'dubious' minds of these people be able to cope with it, or should we, in some way, water it down, sweeten the pill, so that nothing 'excessive' will be asked of them?'. See 'Round Table on Translation', in *Stages of Translation*, pp. 281-294 (p. 284).

<sup>11</sup> This approach has been confirmed in the course of two separate interviews I conducted with the director Gloria Paris, who staged a French version of *Filumena Marturano* and with the translator and dramaturg Beatrice Basso, who translated into English *Sabato, domenica e lunedì*, and co-translated *Napoli milionaria!* which will be analyzed further on, in Chapter Four. In both cases the main preoccupation had been the production of a play which would meet the audience's expectations. In fact, the former representation was defined by the director 'very French', and the latter generated in the audience a real sense of familiarity.

<sup>12</sup> See Susan Bassnett-McGuire, 'Ways Through the Labyrinth: Strategies and Methods for Translating Theatre', p. 90.

In line with what has been illustrated so far, a further level of complication is given by the choice between British and American English. The use of the former in an American context, and vice versa, represents another destabilizing element, which alters the equilibrium and creates disturbance. The success or the failure of a play may even be determined by the use of either language, as it happened in the American production of *Filumena Marturano* in 1980.<sup>13</sup> In this case the audience's expectations were not fulfilled by the British version, which represented a sort of denial of the local culture's predominance. In fact, not only was a foreign culture introduced, but also the medium carried elements of alterity.

The use of either British or American English plays a fundamental role in the *mise en scène*, since the rhythm and pace of the acting as well as facial expressions, gestures and pronunciation are all influenced by the language used, and in a way reflected in the audience's perception. It is not surprising, then, that to an American audience a play recited in British English may sound somewhat stiff and old fashioned, in line with the image of British society established in the United States. Likewise, the quicker, more direct American style can convey a sense of modernism and dynamism which could, at times, appear too distant for what is considered a more classical subject matter.

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<sup>13</sup> The language issue was one of the factors that caused Zeffirelli's American production's fiasco in 1980. The choice of British English in the translation by Willis Hall and Keith Waterhouse was criticized by the critics. Robert Penn Warren in his review in the *New Yorker* (February 1980, p. 99) noticed that the language used in the play carried too many British terms which sounded inappropriate to American ears: 'Willis Hall and Keith Waterhouse have prepared the English version in so thoroughly English a fashion that we not only hear talk of frocks but on one critical occasion hear Filumena/Plowright cry out boldly, "Carry on! What is the Neapolitan, I wonder, for Yoicks?"', cited in Taviano, 'Italians on the Twentieth Century Stage: Theatrical Representations of Italianness in the English-speaking World', p. 180. Likewise, Michael Feinglod in *The Village Voice* (25 February 1980, p. 74) commented: 'Many feelings come through Zeffirelli's rampage of postures and stylized moves; many nuances are caught by the mixed English and American cast, but there is a sense of artificiality about the whole thing, aggravated by the self-conscious Henry Armetta accents, which keep slipping and by the contrast between this intimate family and the large echo-y St. James'. See Taviano, 'Italians on the Twentieth Century Stage: Theatrical Representations of Italianness in the English-speaking World', p. 180.

In this chapter, I will carry out a textual analysis of four translations of *Filumena Marturano*, a play written by Eduardo De Filippo for his sister Titina in 1946, aiming to illustrate how the different translations, executed at different times by British and American translators, have domesticated the language of the source text, rendering Neapolitan dialect with standard English, and how such strategy, while creating a fluent target text, has reduced the stylistic and cultural impact of the play. Besides, I will examine the translators' general approach to the text in relation to the effectiveness of the target text to represent Neapolitan culture in an English speaking environment, in order to establish whether the message embedded in the play has been rendered or rather it has been reduced to a set of cliché, generally accepted in the Anglo-Saxon community. Therefore, understanding the 'spirit of the play'<sup>14</sup> involves a process of transposition from a stereotyped idea of 'Neapolitan-ness' to a representation of Neapolitan culture as emerges from the characters' words. For this purpose I will show that the command of both source language and culture is a precondition of the translation.<sup>15</sup>

*Filumena Marturano* was first presented in 1946,

dopo una allegra cena, a casa di Eduardo, a Parco Grifeo. C'erano gli amici di quel periodo: Paolo Ricci, Achille Vesce, Gino Capriolo con sua moglie, i coniugi Ruffo, e qualche altro. A raccontarlo è Titina.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> The concept of 'spirit of the plays' has been effectively illustrated by John Clifford who, in his article 'Translating the Spirit of the Play' in *Stages of Translation*, 263-270, p. 264, maintains that 'what counts are not just the words themselves, but the gaps between the words. The feeling behind the words. What is left unsaid matters as much as what is said: and as translators we have to be sensitive to both', and then he adds '[b]ut the task of translating remains the basic creative task: to feel with the characters, become the characters. And listen to what they have to say. That is the foundation of a good translation', p. 266. See on this point also Chapter One, footnote n. 134, p. 42.

<sup>15</sup> The original version to which I will refer is *Filumena Marturano*, published in *Eduardo De Filippo Teatro, Volume secondo, Cantata dei giorni dispari, Tomo primo*, ed. by Nicola De Blasi e Paola Quarenghi, 1st edn., I Meridiani (Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 2005), pp. 529-598.

<sup>16</sup> Giammuso, *Vita di Eduardo*, p. 189.



After this private reading the première was on 7 November 1946 at *Teatro Politeama*, in Naples, where it was received with mixed reactions from the audience, whereas the critics were generally favorable.<sup>17</sup> Later, the play moved to Rome with a preview on 20 December 1946 at *Teatro Eliseo* and the première on 8 January 1947. The play tells the story of an ex-prostitute who has been living for twenty-five years as a mistress/housekeeper with Domenico, a rich and spoilt confectioner who rescued her from the brothel. Unbeknown to him, he is the father of one Filumena's undiscovered three children to whom she is determined to give Domenico's name, and to do so, she feigns a deadly illness in order to be married on her death bed.

The English translations were made respectively by Carlo Ardito (1976),<sup>18</sup> Keith Waterhouse and Willis Hall, (1977),<sup>19</sup> Timberlake Wertenbaker (1998),<sup>20</sup> and Maria Tucci (2002).<sup>21</sup> The extracts taken from the translations will be indicated with the translators' initials in brackets, followed by the act and the page number.

Keith Waterhouse and Willis Hall's British adaptation was first staged in 1977 at the Lyric Theatre in London, directed by Franco Zeffirelli, starring Joan Plowright as Filumena Marturano and Colin Blakely as Domenico Soriano. Although the production referred only to the English adaptors, the literal translation was in fact made by Zeffirelli who was the only person who spoke Italian, though not Neapolitan as he is from Florence. It is documented that Eduardo was not pleased with this choice since he did not believe that Zeffirelli's interpretation of his plays reflected his ideas.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Giammuso, *Vita di Eduardo*, p. 191.

<sup>18</sup> The translation I will utilize is *Filumena Marturano*, trans. by Carlo Ardito, in *Four Plays: The Local Authority, Grand Magic, Filumena Marturano, Napoli Milionaria*, pp. 177-246.

<sup>19</sup> The translation I will utilize is *Filumena, A Play*, English version by Keith Waterhouse and Willis Hall, (London, New York: Samuel French, 1977).

<sup>20</sup> The translation I will utilize is *Filumena*, trans. by Timberlake Wertenbaker (London: Methuen Drama, 1998).

<sup>21</sup> The translation I will utilize is *Filumena – A Marriage Italian Style (Filumena Marturano)*, in *Four Plays*, trans by Maria Tucci (Hanover, USA: Smith and Kraus, 2002).

<sup>22</sup> See Virginia Acqua, 'Eduardo a Londra: Ricostruzione e analisi degli allestimenti' (unpublished Tesi di laurea, University of Rome, La Sapienza, 2000), Chapter Two, p. 4.

Moreover, the choice of translators of comic theatre was considered inappropriate by Eduardo who stressed the dramatic element of the play and argued that

Hall e Waterhouse non sono le persone giuste per questa traduzione; insistono troppo sulle situazioni comiche ed il pubblico li conosce come autori comici, il che potrebbe far equivocare sul vero significato e sulle vere intenzioni della commedia.<sup>23</sup>

In the same year, the translation by Carlo Ardito was staged at the Unity Theatre in Liverpool.<sup>24</sup> Ardito's British version was represented again in 1982 at the Bolton Octagon Theatre,<sup>25</sup> directed by Felicity Taylor, with Anne Godfrey as Filumena Marturano and Wilfred Harrison as Domenico Soriano. A radio adaptation of the play was commissioned to Ardito and was broadcast in 1988 by BBC Radio Drama 4. Sir Robert Stephens played Domenico and Billie Whitelaw Filumena, while the director was Glyn Dearman.<sup>26</sup>

Timberlake Wertenbaker's British translation was staged in London in 1998 at the Piccadilly Theatre, directed by Peter Hall. The main roles were played by Judi Dench as Filumena and Michael Pennington as Domenico. Judi Dench's performance was very successful and obtained an enthusiastic response from the majority of the

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<sup>23</sup> Cited in Acqua, 'Eduardo a Londra: Ricostruzione e analisi degli allestimenti', Chapter Two, p. 4. Interestingly, Carlo Ardito put himself forward for the translation writing to Lawrence Olivier who was in charge of the project, claiming that he had been instructed by Eduardo, but his offer was turned down. See on this point Maurizio Giammusso, *Vita di Eduardo*, p. 344.

In his *Vita di Eduardo*, p. 348, Giammusso describes Eduardo's opposition to Zeffirelli's involvement in a letter he wrote to Joan Plowright in 1977, which reads as follows: '[...] Non capisci che Franco, sebbene abbia, come tu dici, un sacco di belle cose dentro di sé, metterebbe in evidenza solo la parte superficiale di Filumena, mentre tutto ciò che in essa può diventare universale, tutta la sua femmilità, «la grande Madre Mediterranea», appunto, sarebbe messa in secondo piano, perché lui ne ha paura? [...]. [Filumena] ha sempre avuto successo, eccetto a New York e Coventry, non per colpa degli attori, ma perché è così facile per il regista travisare questo dramma, trasformando il sentimento in sentimentalismo, facendo di Filumena un carattere sexy, recitando per le lacrime e le risate, quando lacrime e risate dovrebbero scaturire soltanto dalla situazione. Non sono solo un autore che sta difendendo il suo lavoro, sono anche un attore ed un regista e tu puoi, tu devi credermi'.

<sup>24</sup> In the email of 12 October 2007, Carlo Ardito informed me that he does not have any details about this production.

<sup>25</sup> See illustration n. 2 at the back of this Thesis.

<sup>26</sup> Interestingly, the actors of this production spoke with perfect received pronunciation and with a distinctive posh English accent.

critics and from the audience, whereas the translation was considered by some of the critics too neutral, and ‘businesslike’,<sup>27</sup> or simply ‘sober’.<sup>28</sup> On the other hand, it was noted that Wertenbaker’s translation missed the ‘importance of a regional dialect’.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, almost all the reviews stressed the outstanding performance of Dame Dench which was described as ‘a fusion of England and Italy: a rich, ripe, hip-swaving sensuality’, or as ‘impeccably truthful and intensely moving’.<sup>30</sup> Likewise, Michael Pennington, in the role of Domenico, was considered

the most Italian man on stage [...] almost unrecognizable with a toothbrush moustache, and yet there is something touching in the way he kisses his fingers with delight and embraces the physicality of the role.<sup>31</sup>

The commission for the American translation was given in 1996 to the New York born American-Italian actress Maria Tucci who also played Filumena (Tony Amendola played Domenico). This production, directed by James Naught, was premiered at the Williamstown Theatre Festival in Massachusetts in August 1996, and received an excellent response in so far as it offered the American audience a real taste of a Neapolitan-American ‘wily bella di notte’.<sup>32</sup>

Interestingly, a comparison of the four versions under examination shows that the British editions are considerably longer than the American one, even taking into account different editions: Keith Waterhouse and Willis Hall’s version is sixty-six pages, Timberlake Wertenbaker’s is sixty-eight pages, Carlo Ardito’s is seventy pages,

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<sup>27</sup> See John Gross, ‘Old but still smashing’, *Sunday Telegraph*, 11 October 1998.

<sup>28</sup> See Susannah Clapp, ‘A touch of Jet lag’, *The Observer*, 11 October 1998.

<sup>29</sup> See Sheridan Morley, *Spectator, Theatre Record*, 1998, XVIII, 21, 1341.

<sup>30</sup> See Nicholas de Jongh, ‘In paradise of Dame Judi’, *Evening Standard*, 9 October 1998 and Sam Marlowe, *What’s On, Theatre Record*, 1998, XVIII, 21, 1346. See also Maeve Walsh, ‘For real Neapolitan colour, try the ice-cream’, *Independent on Sunday*, 11 October 1999, Charles Spencer, ‘Glorious Dench gives a touching, comic view into the human heart’, *Daily Telegraph*, 10 October 1998, John Peter, ‘The Michael and Judy show’, *Sunday Times*, 18 October 1998 and Michael Billington, ‘Sex, lies and the Italian ego’, *The Guardian*, 12 October 1998.

<sup>31</sup> See Jany Edwardes, *Time Out, Theatre Record*, 1998, XVIII, 21, 1347.

<sup>32</sup> See Wilborn Hampton, *The New York Times*, 7 November 1997.

whereas Maria Tucci's American translation is only thirty-seven pages long. In the last case, the play has been substantially altered to fit in a quicker rhythm, dialogues have been modified and broken up through repartees between characters, creating a constant shift of attention from one speaker to the other, in line with a vibrant interpretation.

### **Theatre and Drama**

Before I embark on an analysis of the four translations, it is worth recalling the debate on the nature of the play text, which is considered by some authors a genre which lies within literature, whereas theatre is an art per se.<sup>33</sup> As Jiří Veltrusky points out

many plays have been written not for theatrical performance but only to be read. Still more important is the fact that all plays, not only closet plays, are read by the public in the same way as poems and novels. The reader has neither the actors nor the stage but only language in front of him. [...] Therefore, those who declare that the specific characteristic of drama consists in its link with acting are mistaken. [...] Theater is not another literary genre but another art. It uses language as one of its materials while for all the literary genres, including drama, language is the only material-though each organizes it in a different fashion.<sup>34</sup>

Other scholars are more categorical in their assumption that

theatrical translation should be intended precisely for performance. If a play translation is nothing but ink on a page it is not theatre (performance text). If it is published and read, it may be considered drama [...]. Even if the translator's contribution to the

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<sup>33</sup> See also Chapter One, p. 19

<sup>34</sup> See Jiri Veltrusky, *Drama as Literature* (Lisse: Peter De Ridder Press, 1977), p. 8.

production remains invisible to some observers, theatrical translators, like playwrights, need to perform *with* a stage.<sup>35</sup>

Such a distinction entails that translating a play text implies dealing with an ambivalent text which, on the one hand seems to presuppose the performance, and on the other can contain dialogues and stage directions written with such a wealth of detail that it has to be read. For instance, we have seen how Eduardo's plays contain stage directions painstakingly designed not only to prescribe how and when the actors are to speak and move, but also and perhaps mainly, to create the ambience and describe the characters' appearance, their nature, upbringing and psychological features. From this viewpoint, one can say that Eduardo's plays are indeed also literary works, intended to be read as well as performed. In Eduardo's case this is even more manifest, since he was at the same time author, director and actor, therefore his plays easily fall in both categories of theatre and drama, insofar as his ideas, expressed by the text, were directly implemented on stage.

What I have argued so far is clearly shown in the opening of the first act of *Filumena Marturano* which is introduced by four pages of stage directions, written in standard Italian, with a definite literary style. They meticulously define the setting, describing furniture, objects and light on the one hand, and the physical appearance and inner nature of each character on the other, in a narrative style. Here follows the description of Filumena Marturano, as she appears for the first time on stage:

*In piedi, quasi sulla soglia della camera da letto, le braccia conserte, in atto di sfida, sta Filumena Marturano. Indossa una candida e lunga camicia da notte. Capelli in disordine e ravviati in fretta. Piedi nudi nelle pantofole scendiletto. I tratti del volto di questa donna sono tormentati: segno di un passato di lotte e di tristezze. Non ha un*

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<sup>35</sup> See Zatlin, *Theatrical Translation and Film Adaptation: A Practitioner View*, p. vii.

*aspetto grossolano, Filumena, ma non può nascondere la sua origine plebea: non lo vorrebbe nemmeno. I suoi gesti sono larghi e aperti; il tono della sua voce è sempre franco e deciso, da donna cosciente, ricca d'intelligenza istintiva e di forza morale, da donna che conosce le leggi della vita a modo suo, e a modo suo le affronta. Non ha che quarantotto anni, denunziati da qualche filo d'argento alle tempie, non già dagli occhi che hanno conservato la vivezza giovanile del «nero napoletano». Ella è pallida, cadaverica, un po' per la finzione di cui si è fatta protagonista, quella cioè di lasciarsi ritenere prossima alla fine, un po' per la bufera che, ormai, inevitabilmente dovrà affrontare. Ma ella non ha paura: è in atteggiamento, anzi, da belva ferita, pronta a spiccare il salto sull'avversario'. (De Filippo, I, 532)*

This description is more than guidance for the actress and the director, it is also aimed at the reader, who will visualize the character as he or she would do reading a book. Although Veltrusky<sup>36</sup> maintains that stage directions are indeed the author's notes, and that they are not visible in performance, nonetheless the translator cannot ignore them as they represent an integral part of the playtext as they define the actual structure of the play.

Interestingly, if we look at the stage directions of the opening scene in all translations we notice that they are shorter than the original: Carlo Ardito's are three pages long, Timberlake Wertenbaker's two and a half pages long, Keith Waterhouse and Willis Hall's are just over one page, and Maria Tucci's stage directions are reduced to only seven and a half lines. While Ardito and Wertenbaker remain somewhat close to the source text, Waterhouse and Hall provide only a brief description of place and people, without giving many details on the psychological aspect of the characters, whereas Maria Tucci's stage directions simply introduce the setting and the characters.

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<sup>36</sup> Cited by Susan Bassnett, in 'Still Trapped in the Labyrinth: Further Reflections on Translation and Theatre', in *Essays on Literary Translation* (Clevedon, Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters, 1998b), pp. 90-108 (p. 101).

## **Theatre Translation and ‘Performability’**

In Chapter One I have outlined the debate on the concept of ‘performability’ or ‘speakability’ which is often considered a precondition of theatre translation.<sup>37</sup> I have shown how the need for performability often seems to justify the liberties taken by translators who deliberately omit or manipulate parts or the whole of the playtext. In addition, I have argued that at the basis of this practice, there is the idea that the final text must meet the target audience’s expectations. ‘Performability’ is, therefore, linked to the other issue of domestication or acculturation in so far as it shows the same attitude towards the source culture, that is to import it into the target culture trying to limit as much as possible any potential ‘cultural anxiety’, and confirm any stereotype regarding the source culture.

The playtext is undoubtedly a complex text, whose full exploitation is on stage. The reader can wholly appreciate the work when he or she becomes a viewer, since the character’s personality materializes during performance when paratextual elements such as voice tone, accent, gestures, furniture, lighting and sound characterize the actors’ words. A written text by contrast relies heavily on the reader’s imagination, which becomes more restrained when a playtext is rendered on stage. Therefore, the rapport between author and reader is more exclusive than the one between playwright and viewer as in the latter the text’s final destination is not a single individual, but an audience.

Furthermore, in dialect theatre the relevance of performance is even more evident in so far as paratextual elements vary greatly according to the specific regional nuances. Unless the reader of the playtext belongs to that specific ethnographic environment, he or she will not be able to fully appreciate the sociolect and all the other paralinguistic elements which complete the dramatic text.

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<sup>37</sup> See Chapter One, p. 53.

If, on the one hand, such assumptions do not imply the existence of ‘a gestic text that exists within a written text’,<sup>38</sup> on the other they presuppose the translator’s knowledge of both source language and culture, that is the dialect in question, and the target language and culture. From a polysystemic perspective it is essential that both source and target culture be considered when translating a play. Ignoring one of them brings as a consequence that the play will be either totally domesticated or foreignized. In dialect theatre the link between culture and text is even more evident, since it expresses more circumscribed facets of a given society. This does not mean that theatre, and also dialect theatre, can only be read from one perspective but that it is essential to contextualize it in both cultures.

Considering a particular translation more performable than others implies that the source text is more congenial to the target culture, in as much as it reflects established canons of performability and thus, it is more easily accepted. Such a colonial attitude flattens culture diversities and establishes the supremacy of the target culture over the source culture. Another consequence is that the translator’s view, very often derived from lack of knowledge of the source language, tends to prevail over the author’s work. Whenever the original text is unclear, due to idiomatic or regional nuances, and difficult to render, ‘performability’ ‘justifies translation strategies, in much the same way as terms such as ‘adaptation’ or ‘version’ are also used to justify or explain certain strategies that may involve degrees of divergence from the source text’.<sup>39</sup>

As I have explained before, translating theatre requires understanding of different levels within the text, therefore it is the written text which is the starting point in the translation process, which needs decoding to be re-encoded into the target language. I argue, thus, that performability tends to justify translation choices which

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<sup>38</sup> See Susan Bassnett, ‘Still Trapped in the Labyrinth: Further Reflections on Translation and Theatre’, p. 92.

<sup>39</sup> Bassnett, ‘Still Trapped in the Labyrinth: Further Reflections on Translation and Theatre’, p. 96.



reinterpret the source text in light of the target culture's needs and expectations. It goes without saying that '[t]he 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'.<sup>40</sup>

In the case of *Filumena Marturano*, a play written almost entirely in dialect, the difficulty of dealing with an unfamiliar language has led to translations in standard English which, while they did not render the dialect, in some cases tried to reinstate some of its original pathos through the use of unnecessary vulgarity and stereotypical phrases. It is worth mentioning Manuela Perteghella who points out that while the neutralization strategy is acceptable in academic contexts, in performance it brings as a consequence the fact that 'the characterization will lose its strength and the dialogues some of the musicality and colorfulness of the source dialogue'.<sup>41</sup>

One example of this phenomenon can be found in the passage during which Filumena expresses all her passion while talking about her pregnancy and the will to keep her children. Here she curses Domenico using the very strong expression 'hê'a iettà 'o sango a capì comme se campa e se prucedè 'a galantomo',<sup>42</sup> and also when she confronts Domenico on his infidelity: 'Addó? Ca pozza iettà 'o sango, chillo se crede sempe nu giuvinuttello?'.<sup>43</sup> These expressions mean literally: "May you bleed to death", and strong though they might look, they are commonly used by lower social class people during rows or even animated discussions. Nonetheless, none of the examined translations included such expressions, operating a censorship at word level, which could have been avoided through the use, for example, of 'damn you' or similar expressions. In this way, while the vernacular expression would have been rendered

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<sup>40</sup> See Susan Bassnett McGuire, 'Ways Through the Labyrinth: Strategies and Methods for Translating Theatre Texts', in *The Manipulation of Literature: Studies in Literary Translation*, ed. by Theo Hermans (London & Sidney: Croom Helm, 1985), pp. 87-102 (p. 102).

<sup>41</sup> See Manuela Perteghella, 'Language and politics on stage', p. 51.

<sup>42</sup> De Filippo, I, 538.

<sup>43</sup> De Filippo, I, 546.

somehow, both the rhythm and tenor of the discourse would have been kept and so the class identity of the speaker.

From the translator's perspective, such expressions may have been omitted because of a lack of knowledge of dialect. Translating literally such expressions would have been too harsh, introducing blasphemous elements in a play about family and maternal love. On the contrary, to a Neapolitan speaker they reveal the sub-proletarian origin of Filumena, and her language is easily put in context.

In the same way, in Act One, when Filumena reveals to Domenico that she has been stealing money from him to raise her three sons, all four versions misread Filumena's lines, with reference to a diamond ring:

FILUMENA. Eh, cu 'e denare tuoie. T'aggio arrubbato! Te vennévo 'e vestite, 'e scarpe!  
E nun te ne si' maie accorto! Chill'aniello c''o brillante, t''o ricuorde? Te dicette  
ca ll'avevo perduto: m' 'o vennette. Cu'e denare tuoie, aggio crisciuto 'e figlie  
mieie. (De Filippo, I, 542)

The lines were translated as follows:

FILUMENA: Yes, I stole from you. And another thing. I used to sell your suits, your shoes ... and you never noticed. Can you remember that diamond ring you thought you'd lost? Well, you didn't lose it: I sold it. And it was your money that helped me provide for my children. (CA, I, 188)

DOMENICO: Which diamond ring?

FILUMENA: The one with the big diamond. The one you thought you'd lost. You didn't lose it. I stole it. That was the only thing you ever noticed. But over twenty-five years I stole enough from you to provide for my three sons. (KW&WH, I, 9)

FILUMENA: Yes, I've been a thief! I sold your suits, I sold your shoes, your hats, your scarves, and you never even noticed. Your ring with the diamond?

ALFREDO: I thought you'd lost it.

DOMENICO: I did!

FILUMENA: I sold it. I took whatever I needed to keep my boys alive. (MT, I, 7)

FILUMENA: I've robbed you blind. Shirts, shoes, suits, you never even noticed. Remember that diamond ring you thought you'd lost? I had that ring. I fed and clothed my sons on your money. (TW, I, 12)

Here the words *Te dicette ca ll'avevo perduto: m' 'o vennette* translate literally: "I told you I had lost it: I sold it. '*Te dicette ca ll'avevo perduto*' is the first person singular and not second person which would have been '*ll'avive perduto*' and show that Filumena is giving a justification about the disappearance of her own diamond ring (probably one of the expensive presents she received from Domenico), and in any case she is referring to her role of housekeeper, in charge of valuables as well.

It is interesting to notice how the stereotype of a rich, spoilt Neapolitan dandy has prevailed over a reading that takes into account Filumena's active role as house administrator. In all translations these lines have been rendered in an identical way, although grammar suggests a different reading. Even in this case, the text has been interpreted in the light of what the target culture considers more similar to its own representation of the source culture. Alternatively, a possibility may be simple cross-reference between translators, which would carry an oversight from version to version.<sup>44</sup>

Another case in which domestication reflects on the dramatic impact of the play is the dialogue between Alfredo and Rosalia at the opening of act two. In this scene Rosalia comes in and ignores Alfredo, pretending she has not seen him, so Alfredo, who

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<sup>44</sup> Comparing the four translations chronologically I have noticed that the first mistranslation in CA's version (1976) is present also in KW&WH (1977), in MT (1996) and in TW (1998).

is eager to know the new developments in the affair, encourages her to speak. The brisk, quick exchange of lines between the characters suggests that they clearly dislike, but nonetheless tolerate, each other as they share the same household.

ROSALIA Nun t'aggio visto.

ALFREDO Nun t'aggio visto? E che so' nu pólice ncopp'a sta seggia?

ROSALIA (*ambigua*) Eh, nu pólice c' 'a tosse... (*Tossicchia*).

ALFREDO (*che non ha compreso l'allusione*) C' 'a tosse?... (*Cerca di indagare*) Si' asciuta ampresa? (De Filippo, II, 556)

ROSALIA I didn't see you sitting there.

ALFREDO You didn't see me? What did you think I was? Part of the furniture? Where've you been? (KW&WH, II, 21)

ROSALIA I didn't see you.

ALFREDO You didn't see me? What am I? A flea on the carpet?

ROSALIA Yes, a circus flea with a cough.

ALFREDO I see you've already gone out this morning. (TW, II, 24)

ROSALIA: (*unconcerned*) I didn't see you.

ALFREDO: you didn't see me. So I'm the invisible man now. Where have you been?  
(CA, II, 202)

ROSALIA Oh, I didn't see you.

ALFREDO That's right. I'm so tiny, I'm invisible. I'm just a little flea on this chair.

ROSALIA A flea with a big mouth.

ALFREDO You went out early today. Where did you go? (MT, II, 16)

The words ‘E che so’ nu pólice ncopp’a sta seggia?’ refer to the fact that Alfredo is sarcastically comparing himself to a flea which is hardly visible. On the other hand, Rosalia replies with a traditional saying ‘Eh, nu pólice c’’a tosse...’, which describes worthless people who talk too much like fleas that cough, that is, make insignificant, yet annoying, noises. With quick and short lines both characters are clearly portrayed: the maid acute and sharp, the man slimy and insignificant.

On the other hand, the translators’ domestication of both register and content neutralizes the cultural and theatrical elements which disappear in the fluency of the English text. Also the rhythm seems somewhat slow and no comic effect is detectable. Furthermore, the omission of stage directions contributes to the poor effect, since there is no reference to the fact that Alfredo *‘non ha compreso l’allusione’*, making the allusion to the flea with a cough utterly irrelevant. In this instance, a similar effect could have been obtained either through assonance “Do I look like a flea?”, “That’s right, a flea that pleads”, or through a reference to a saying, showing that Rosalia is talking through proverbs “Do you know that saying ‘a flea with a cough’, well, you look just like that. You talk too much”. In this way both cultural and comic effect could have been reproduced.

Another manipulation of the source language which neutralizes the foreign element can be found in act one in the lines uttered by Filumena, in her dialogue with Diana, Domenico’s mistress. Here Filumena is referring to the couple’s kissing and hugging each other at her deathbed.

FILUMENA [...] Naturalmente, dove non ci sono infermi malati non ci possono essere infermieri... e le schifezze... (*con l’indice della mano destra teso assesta a Diana dei misurati colpetti sul mento, che costringono la donna a dire repentini e involontari: «No» col capo*) ...le purcarie... (*ripete il gesto*) davanti a una che sta murenno... pecché tu sapive che io stevo murenno... ‘e vvaie a fà â casa ‘e sòreta!

*(Diana sorride come un'ebete, come per dire: «Non la conosco»)* Andatevene con i piedi vostri e truvàteve n'ata casa, no chesta. (De Filippo, I, 550)

FILUMENA [...] It therefore follows that where there is no illness, there is no need for camphor and adrenalin, and no need for nurses.

*Filumena strikes Diana on the chin with her index finger, making her head jerk from side to side.*

No filth. No cows. No farmyard animals. No filthy farmyard carrying on in front of a dying woman -because that's what you thought I was- a dying woman. So go away. Find somewhere else to bounce your tits and waggle your arse- there is no room for you in this house. (KW&WH, I, 16)

FILUMENA [...] Naturally, where there are no sick people, there is no need for nurses ...or any other kind of filth. *(With her finger she takes Diana's chin and makes her make a no)*. Disgusting acts in front of a dying woman. So why don't you go and look after your sister. (TW, I, 19)

FILUMENA [...] It follows that there's no longer any need for nurses in a place without sick or dying patients... and as for mucky, filthy, *(With the forefinger of her right hand she administers light measured taps to DIANA's chin, which seem to compel the latter to shake her head at each tap as if saying 'No')* disgusting practices *(goes on tapping her chin)* in front of a dying woman, because as far as you knew I was dying ... go and do that sort of thing somewhere else! *(DIANA smiles ineptly as if to say 'What's all this about?')* Off you go ... You're not wanted here. (CA, I, 195)

FILUMENA [...] Naturally when you're not sick anymore you don't need nurses or your filthy carryings-on in front of a dying woman. Because you knew I was dying! So take yourself and all this garbage right out of here to some other house. (MT, I, 12)

The words 'e vvaie a fà â casa 'e sòreta!' literally mean 'go and do that at your sister's house', which means very little unless it is put in the context of Neapolitan culture, where mothers and sisters are considered part of people's pride, and therefore insulting them represents an insult to the person it is directly said to. In TW's version the reference is misunderstood, and therefore the advice to look after her sister does not render the idiomatic expression of the source text. Such nuance is lost in Ardito's translation as well, where the wordy and formal register does not convey the vernacular expression and cultural reference. At the opposite end of the spectrum is KW&WH's version where there is a cultural choice to portray Filumena as a vulgar, shrewd prostitute. In this version the language is deliberately crude and aggressive, whereas in the original text Filumena's tone is firm but not harsh, and particularly in this translation the character is definitely misread. In MT's translation the advice is quickly given with no more than a reference to the dirt of the whole affair: 'So take yourself and all this garbage right out of here to some other house'.

It is clear that the cultural reference contained in a short line is very difficult to render, and that is perhaps why the translators either misunderstood it or omitted it altogether. Still, the cultural transfer could have been achieved through a reference to Diana's mother, which would have rendered such an insult to the character's pride (an alternative to the given translations could be: 'And now go and do these filthy things at your mother's deathbed, not here').

Another stylistic element which is left out with the standardization of the language is the code-switching between standard Italian and dialect. An example can be found in the dialogues in act two between Filumena and her sons. Here Eduardo uses both dialect and standard Italian to show their different social upbringing. Umberto, one of the sons, is well educated and is trying to become a writer, therefore he speaks good

Italian. Instead, his brother Michele is a plumber with a large family and little education. Filumena has just told them they are her sons and has explained how her poor background led her to become a prostitute in order to survive and how she managed to bring them up by stealing money from Domenico.

MICHELE (*si avvicina alla madre commosso*) E va buono, mo basta! (*Si commuove sempre più*) Certo ch'avivev'a fà cchiù 'e chello ch'avite fatto?!

UMBERTO (*serio, si avvicina alla madre*) Vorrei dirvi tante cose, ma mi riesce difficile parlare. Vi scriverò una lettera.

FILUMENA Nun saccio leggere.

UMBERTO E ve la leggerò io stesso. (*Pausa*).

FILUMENA (*guarda Riccardo in attesa che le si avvicini. Ma egli esce per il fondo senza dire parola*) Ah, se n'è andato...

UMBERTO (*comprensivo*) È carattere. Non ha capito. Domani, passo io per il suo negozio e gli parlo.

MICHELE (*a Filumena*) Voi ve ne potete venire con me. 'A casa è piccola, ma c'entriamo. Ce sta pure 'a luggetella. (*Con gioia sincera*) Chille, 'e bambine, domandavano sempe: «'A nonna... 'a nonna...» e io mo dicevo na fesseria, mo ne diceva n'ata... Io quanno arrivo e dico: 'a nonna! (*come dire: «Eccola!»*) Ilà siente Piererotta! (*Invogliando Filumena*) Iammo. (De Filippo, II, 578)<sup>45</sup>

MICHELE It's all right. It's all right. You did everything you could.

*Umberto moves to Filumena.*

UMBERTO There is so much I would like to say to you, but the words are very difficult to find. I will write them down. I will write to you a letter.

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<sup>45</sup> A *luggetella* is a small balcony, usually sheltered, where people like to relax. It is a sought after facility, especially if space is limited. Michele is trying to lift the rather tense atmosphere, and at the same time is encouraging his mother to go and live with him, offering the pleasant prospect of enjoying the fresh air. In translation this term should be rendered in a way that suggests such pleasantness. For a representation of the *luggetella*, see illustration n. 3 at the back of this Thesis.



FILUMENA I can't read.

UMBERTO Then I'd be very happy to read it to you.

*Filumena looks towards Riccardo waiting for him too to walk towards her*

*Riccardo turns and walks out of the house.*

*Filumena catches at her breath.*

UMBERTO He has not understood. I'll call in at his shop tomorrow and explain everything to him.

MICHELE (*to Filumena*) Come with me. Come home-it's only a small place, but we'll make room for you. It's got a little balcony. (*With a sudden realization*) Hey! Just think! All these years the kids have asked me about a grandmother! Who is she? Where is she? Why haven't we got one? All these years I've had to lie to them and now just think, eh? When we walk through the door, that will be the first thing I'll shout "Hey, kids-here's Grandma!" come on. Come home. Let's go. (KW&WH, II, 42)

MICHELE (*goes up to his mother, overcome with emotion*).

MICHELE Hey, there there ...It's all right...

*He gets more emotional.*

What else could you do but what you did?

UMBERTO, (*very serious, goes up to his mother*).

UMBERTO I want to say so many things ...but I find it difficult to express myself. I'll write you a letter.

FILUMENA I don't know how to read.

UMBERTO I'll come and read it out to you myself.

*FILUMENA looks at RICCARDO waiting for him to come forward. But he leaves.*

FILUMENA He's gone...

UMBERTO (*understanding*) It's his character. I'll go to his shop tomorrow and have a talk with him.

MICHELE (*to FILUMENA*) You can come and live with me. It's a small house, but we can all fit in. There's even a pretty balcony. (*Sincerely happy*). The kids are always asking me why they don't have a grandmother-I invent reasons ...but when I get home, I'm going to say to them: here she is, here's your grandmother. What a celebration. Let's go. (TW, II, 46)

MICHELE (*goes up to her affectionately*) All right, but calm yourself now. You couldn't have done more.

UMBERTO (*goes up to her*) There's so much I'd like to say to you, but I'm not much of a talker ...I'll write you a letter

FILUMENA I can't read.

UMBERTO In that case I'll read it to you myself.

*Pause. FILUMENA looks at RICCARDO, expecting him to say something. He goes out upstage without a word.*

FILUMENA He's gone ...

UMBERTO (*sympathetically*) It's just his way. He hasn't quite understood. I'll drop in at his shop tomorrow and have a talk with him.

MICHELE (*to FILUMENA*) You can come and stay with me. Our place is small but we'll fit you in. There's even a small balcony. (*With happy anticipation*) To think that the kids kept asking: Grandma ... haven't we got a grandma? Where is she?-and I had to put them off with silly excuses. The first thing I'll shout when we get home is going to be: Here's grandma then!-why, they'll be all over you! (*Enticingly*) Come on, let's go ... (CA, II, 224)

MICHELE: (*Moved*) It's all right, it's all right, that's enough... enough... of course you had to do what you did... (*He embraces her awkwardly*).

UMBERTO: There are so many things I'd like to say, but it's hard to talk. I'll write you a letter.

FILUMENA: I can't read.

UMBERTO: I'll read it to you.

*She looks to Riccardo, but he walks out the door.*

FILUMENA: Ah, he's gone...

UMBERTO: He's just a difficult person. That's just the way he is, but I'll go talk to him tomorrow in his store. It'll be all right...

MICHELE: You can come with me – to my house. It's small, but there's a balcony! The kids are always asking me, "Where's Grandma?" and I say one dumb thing or another. Now, when I walk in the door with you and say, "Here's your Grandma!" you won't believe the shouts, they'll bring the house down. (MT, II, 28)

From the above extracts it is evident that the use of dialect juxtaposed to standard Italian reinforces the differences between characters, for Umberto naturally expresses himself in standard Italian, whereas Filumena and Michele speak dialect. In addition, Michele makes reference to the traditional Fête of Piedigrotta (Ilà siente Piererotta!, literally here comes Piedigrotta), which creates great joy and excitement among Neapolitans and describes the big noise that the children will make when they see their grandmother. It is worth noting that, while TW makes a general reference to celebration, though without any cultural allusion, the reference to a culturally rooted festival is missing in all translations. Perhaps, a footnote explaining the importance of such an event would have given the reader and the director a more comprehensive view so that the reference could have been maintained in the dialogue perhaps through a correspondent traditional event.

It is important to note that the preoccupation for what the audience might be able to take in has prevailed upon the cultural message of the source text. It goes without saying that translations are made with the purpose of achieving a successful play, with high resonance and good critical reviews. Such a perspective, with the audience in mind, dictates the choices the translator, or more often the dramaturge, makes despite the content of the source text. Indeed, the English dramaturge David Edgar has

explained that his works are always adjusted to the audience he is writing for, therefore he will reduce or adjust a play according to what he believes the audience may be able to receive.<sup>46</sup> On the other hand, Joe Farrell maintains that

translation, not merely the uprooting which is adaptation, is possible since a translation ought to be an arena for an encounter between cultures. Where the adaptor, or director, believe such efforts are futile, or where they have simply low expectations of what an audience can cope with, their efforts are channeled towards lessening the impact of that encounter'.<sup>47</sup>

Language code-switch is one of the indicators of Eduardo's intention to use dialect as a language in its own right, which can act either as an identifying element of social background or to express familiarity or closeness between characters, or even to show contraposition, as in the dialogue in Act One between Filumena and Diana, where Rosalia has to act as an interpreter for Diana, who clearly does not understand what Filumena is telling her.

FILUMENA (*dominandosi con affettata cortesia, s'avvicina lentamente alla giovane*) Il preto è venute... (*Diana sorpresa si alza e indietreggia di qualche passo*) ... e *confromme* ha visto che stavo in *agonizzazione* ... (*Felina*) Lèvate 'o càmmese!

DIANA (*che veramente non ha compreso*) Come?

FILUMENA (*c.s.*) Lèvate 'o càmmese!

ROSALIA (*s'accorge che Diana neanche questa volta ha compreso e per evitare il peggio, le consiglia prudentemente*) Levatevi questo (*E su se stessa scuote, con due dita, la camiciola del suo abito, perché, finalmente, Diana possa comprendere a volo che Fulumena allude al camice d'infermiera*).

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<sup>46</sup> Edgar expressed this opinion at a roundtable during a conference on Theatre Translation at the University of Warwick in 2008.

<sup>47</sup> Farrell, 'Servant of Many Masters', p. 52.

*Diana con timore istintivo, si toglie il camice.*

FILUMENA (*che ha seguito il gesto di Diana, senza staccarle gli occhi di dosso*)

Posalo ncopp' 'a seggia ... Posalo ncopp' 'a seggia.

ROSALIA (*prevedendo l'incomprensione di Diana*) Mettetelo sopra la sedia. (De Filippo, I, 548)

FILUMENA (*advancing on Diana*) The priest was sent for. The priest arrived. The priest stood in that room and testified to the evidence of my desperate condition. The priest said there was no hope for me. Take that thing off.

DIANA What?

FILUMENA Take that thing off.

*Diana is too stunned to take in the command. Rosalia demonstrates with her own apron.*

ROSALIA Take off the overall that you are wearing.

DIANA Oh!

*Diana takes off the nurse's overall. Filumena watches her intently.*

FILUMENA (*pointing*) Put it on that chair. (KW&WH, I, 15)

FILUMENA And he was witness to these that were to be my last hours on this dear earth. (*Reverts to her normal tone*) Take it off!

*DIANA doesn't understand.*

DIANA Pardon.

FILUMENA Take it off!

*ROSALIA realizes that DIANA still hasn't understood, touches her uniform and advises her:*

ROSALIA Take off the uniform.

*DIANA with instinctive fear, takes off the uniform. FILUMENA follows every move.*

FILUMENA On the chair!

*ROSALIA tries to pre-empt DIANA's incomprehension.*

ROSALIA Put the uniform here, on the chair.

*DIANA does so. FILUMENA goes back to the forced and pretentious tone of before. (TW, I, 18)*

FILUMENA *(restraining herself with difficulty walks slowly towards DIANA. With studied courtesy)* The priest was indeed sent for ... *(DIANA, astonished, takes a few steps backwards)* ...and having established the gravity of my condition ... *(Savagely)* Take that off!

DIANA *(off balance)* What?

FILUMENA Take off that overall! *(More patiently)* Go on, take it off.

*DIANA in some alarm slips out of the overall.*

FILUMENA *(who has been following DIANA's every movement)* Now put it on that chair. On that chair. *(CA, I, 195)*

FILUMENA: The priest came. *(Diana turns and shrieks. Filumena keeps talking calmly and advancing on her).* And seeing I was breathing my last... OFF!

DIANA: *(Genuinely perplexed.)* What?

FILUMENA: *(Points to the hat).*

ROSALIA: You should take off that white "thing." *(Diana removes it).*

FILUMENA: Seeing that I was breathing my last...

ROSALIA: Now, put it on the chair! *(Diana does as she's told to do).* *(MT, I, 11)*

It is clear that in all four versions, standardization of dialect has altered the structure of the whole scene, both in linguistic terms and especially from the dramatic viewpoint, as is also demonstrated by the exclusion of Rosalia in the translation by CA, since she is clearly redundant. Indeed, even when such a cut does not happen, for example in TW's version, what the character says is somehow irrelevant. Furthermore, Rosalia's role as

an interpreter is unnecessary in a standard English dialogue. The manipulation of the text in the interest of speakability is particularly evident in MT's version, which also centers the scene round a hat, rather than the nurse's overall. Besides, Rosalia does not act as an interpreter, or as a mediator to prevent a possible escalation in Filumena's words, but as a simple stooge.

Transposing culture-bound language is unquestionably one of the hardest tasks a translator can have, in so far as the mediation process needs to take into consideration exigencies of both source and target language. Indeed, the above analysis shows that the translators had to deal with the intrinsic difficulties of the source text, which presented linguistic as well as cultural problems. Often, translators find themselves grappling with issues such as the sheer untranslatability of certain words or expressions and yet a version needs to be produced. In this instance, requirements of theatre politics come into play, therefore frequently the more convenient solution for the box office prevails over the cultural discourse. On the other hand, one has to consider that in the play the foreign culture is represented primarily through the language, which is a key element. The language shift could have been enhanced through the use of grammar mistakes, as they are present in the source text, and idiomatic expressions could have been employed whenever available. If on the one hand, domestication of the language has produced a more easily comprehensible play, on the other it has anglicized the source text and has given a representation of Neapolitan culture deprived of its linguistic features and class.

### **The Multiple Faces of Filumena**

This section will examine Filumena's monologue in front of the *Madonna d' 'e rrose's* shrine, in Act One. The present text analysis aims at highlighting the complexity of the character, and at demonstrating that the translators' choices somehow weaken the rendering of different nuances of the character.

This is a crucial part of the first act where Filumena discloses the reason behind her deception, and is loaded with cultural meaning, which is expressed in the source text through an alternation of tones and registers. In this monologue essential principles of Eduardo's theatre, which make it universally intelligible, become clear. Filumena's sense of maternity rests on her deep sacred belief in the equality of all children, regardless of their origin. At the time of Filumena's creation the problem of illegitimate children was crucial in Italy, as the law considered the status of natural children as legally inferior to that of legitimate children. Thus, addressing that issue was one of the main objectives of this play.<sup>48</sup>

This monologue contains a revolutionary statement which questions the presumption that a woman of humble origins, who has spent all her life selling herself to different men first, and to a single one later, is incapable of dignified feelings. On the contrary, she endures twenty-five years of humiliation in view of her grand project of giving her children their father's name. Indeed,

la donna, proveniente da una condizione sociale ai limiti della sopravvivenza [...],  
sfruttata dagli uomini in tutto il corso della sua vita, resa arida da essi, ha conservato

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<sup>48</sup> The first legal recognition of the status of natural children was given by the Italian Constitution promulgated in 1948. Article 30 states that «È dovere e diritto dei genitori mantenere, istruire ed educare i figli, anche se nati fuori del matrimonio». Until then natural children had been considered second rate children, who had no rights. The situation was still somewhat unbalanced until the Family Law Act 1975, n.151 came into effect, which radically reformed the existent Family Law. Articles 250 to 290 of the Civil Code regulate the recognition by the parents of children born outside the marriage. Heading II Section I is entitled *Della filiazione naturale e della legittimazione*, giving full recognition to such a status. In particular Article 250, first paragraph, states: «Il figlio naturale può essere riconosciuto, nei modi previsti dall'art. 254, dal padre e dalla madre, anche se già uniti in matrimonio con altra persona all'epoca del concepimento. Il riconoscimento può avvenire tanto congiuntamente quanto separatamente». See also Art. 280 first paragraph, entitled *Legittimazione*, which states: « La legittimazione attribuisce a colui che è nato fuori del matrimonio la qualità di figlio legittimo». Children born outside the marriage therefore, have the same rights as those born within the marriage. In this way what it was once regarded as an inferior position is no longer so. Admittedly, there is still a residual discipline of the old conception, which is contained in Art. 537 of the Inheritance Law entitled *Riserva a favore dei figli legittimi e naturali*, which in the third paragraph states: «I figli legittimi possono soddisfare in denaro o in beni immobili ereditari la porzione spettante ai figli naturali che non vi si oppongono. Nel caso di opposizione decide il giudice, valutate le circostanze personali e patrimoniali»; in other words, when it comes to inheritance, those children who were born within the marriage have the right to choose the way to satisfy the natural children's right to the inheritance unless these oppose this intention. The cited articles have been extracted from: Luigi Franchi, Virgilio Feroci, and Santo Ferrari, *I Quattro Codici: Per le udienze civili e penali* (Milan: Editore Ulrico Hoepli, 1984), pp. 100-137.



integro il sentimento della maternità, nonostante la durezza che le è scaturita dentro a causa della brutalità con cui è stata trattata.<sup>49</sup>

Therefore, when Filumena decides to keep her child, on the one hand she performs an act of courage, and on the other she incarnates a holy necessity. The fact that the Madonna speaks through Filumena renders her somehow divine, in clear contrast with her humble origins, therefore her decision becomes superhuman. Even her sinful pregnancy becomes irrelevant in respect of the much greater act of letting an innocent child be born.

FILUMENA È stata Essa, allora... È stata ‘a Madonna! S’è vista affruntata a tu per tu, e ha voluto parlà...Ma allora, ‘a Madonna per parlà se serve ‘e nuie... E quanno m’hanno ditto: “Ti toglì il pensiero!”, è stata pur’essa ca m’hâ ditto, pe me mettere â prova!...» E nun saccio si fuie io o ‘a Madonna d’ ‘e rrose ca facette c’ ‘a capa accussì! (De Filippo, I, 545)

Her vow to keep her child is, thus, the one and only reason for her remaining beside Domenico, accepting his arrogance and disrespect.

E giuraie. Ca perciò so’ rimasta tant’anne vicino a te... Pe lloro aggio suppurtato tutto chello ca m’hê fatto e comme m’hê trattato! (De Filippo, I, 545)

Indeed, Filumena’s words synthesize exemplarily Neapolitans’ concept of life, which is seen as a continual struggle to survive, even in the most adverse conditions and against all odds, and yet it reflects a deterministic acceptance of fate.<sup>50</sup> Filumena’s tone is,

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<sup>49</sup> See Barbara De Miro D’Ajetta, *La figura della donna nel teatro di Eduardo De Filippo* (Naples: Liguori Editore, 2002), p. 47.

<sup>50</sup> I have shown in the ‘Introduction’ how such an attitude is the result of centuries of exploitation by ruthless or corrupted governments, both foreign and indigenous, which were interested only in exhausting

therefore, extremely varied, moving from utter desperation when she is torn between her instinct and her friends' advice to have an abortion, to impudence when she challenges the Madonna, to complete disillusion and disgust when addressing Domenico.

The monologue begins with her recollection of the moment she took the decision to keep her child.

FILUMENA (*rievocando il suo incontro mistico*) Erano 'e ttre dopo mezanotte. P' 'a strada cammenavo io sola. D' 'a casa mia già me n'ero iuta 'a sei mise. (*Alludendo alla sua prima sensazione di maternità*) Era 'a primma vota! E che faccio? A chi 'o ddico? Sentevo ncapo a me 'e vvoce d' 'e ccumpagne meie: «A chi aspetti! Ti togli il pensiero! Io cunosco a uno molto bravo...». Senza vulé, cammenanno cammenanno, me truvaie dint' 'o vico mio, nnanz'all'altarino d' 'a Madonna d' 'e rose. L'affruntaie accussì (*punta i pugni sui fianchi e solleva lo sguardo verso una immaginaria effigie, come per parlare alla Vergine da donna a donna*): «Ch'aggi'a fà? Tu saie tutto... Saie pure peché me trovo int' o peccato Ch'aggi'a fà?». Ma essa zitto, non rispunneva. (*Eccitata*) «E accussì faie, è ove'? Cchiù nun parle e cchiù 'a gente te crede? ... Sto parlando cu te! (*Con arroganza vibrante*) Rispunne!» (*Rifacendo macchinalmente il tono di voce di qualcuno a lei sconosciuto che, in quel momento, parlò da ignota provenienza*) «e figlie so' figlie!» Me gelaie. Rummanette accussì, ferma. (De Filippo, I, 544)

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the population's resources without giving anything in return. This approach did not change, and in fact was aggravated, after unification. Protectionist policies, implemented by Giovanni Giolitti, a bourgeois politician who favoured the Northern industrial expansion through a series of acts promoting domestic capitalism, rendered the Mezzogiorno a sort of semi-colonial area of the country, which was kept at bay 'con due serie di misure: misure poliziesche di repressione spietata di ogni movimento di massa con gli eccidi periodici di contadini [...]; misure poliziesche-politiche: favori personali al ceto degli «intellettuali» o paglietta, sotto forma di impieghi nelle pubbliche amministrazioni'. See Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, p. 2038. The negative attitude towards the South continues to affect this part of Italy, where criminality and severe social backwardness are still major unresolved issues.

In MT's American translation such nuances in tone have been rendered in a rather clinical way and personal feelings have been substituted with paraphrases as can be seen in the opening of the monologue:

FILUMENA: It was three in the morning. I was wandering through the streets wondering what to do. I'd been working in that place six months and here I was (*A gesture to her stomach*) who could I ask? What should I do? I kept hearing the girls' voices in my head: "What are you waiting for... get it over with... we know a good doctor."  
(MT, I, 9)

The fact that Filumena left her house is replaced by the explanation of what she was doing, undermining her painful choice of leaving home. Another painful choice which is removed is the use of an unqualified person to perform the abortion. «Io conosco a uno molto bravo.. » in the original becomes 'we know a good doctor' which introduces an idea of conventionality in the whole process. Abortion was an important issue at the time when Filumena Marturano was written, since it was illegal, and mentioning such a problematic theme in the text was an audacious thing to do.<sup>51</sup> Therefore, the introduction of a doctor in such circumstance shifts the attention from the problem of illegal abortion bringing the tenor of the discourse within conventional boundaries.

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<sup>51</sup> It is important to note that the legislation on abortion is relatively new. The 22 May 1978 Abortion Act, n.194, which protects the woman's right to terminate a pregnancy recites in art. 1: 'Lo Stato garantisce il diritto alla procreazione cosciente e responsabile, riconosce il valore sociale della maternità e tutela la vita umana dal suo inizio'. Further on, in article 4, the law states that 'Per l'interruzione volontaria della gravidanza entro i primi novanta giorni, la donna che accusi circostanze per le quali la prosecuzione della gravidanza, il parto o la maternità comporterebbe un serio pericolo per la sua salute fisica o psichica, in relazione o al suo stato di salute, o alle sue condizioni economiche, o sociali o familiari, o alle circostanze in cui è avvenuto il concepimento, o a previsioni di anomalie o malformazioni del concepito, si rivolge ad un consultorio pubblico istituito ai sensi dell'art. 2 lettera a), della L. 29 lug. 1975, n. 405, o a una struttura socio-sanitaria a ciò abilitata dalla regione, o a un medico di sua fiducia'. The cited articles have been extracted from Franchi, Feroci and Ferrari, *I Quattro Codici: Per le udienze civili e penali*, pp. 421-428. As it appears from the quoted articles, now the law guarantees the woman's right to termination if her physical, psychological or economic conditions or the circumstance under which the pregnancy has begun do not allow her to keep her child. It is clear, therefore, that also pregnancies resulting from physical violence or any form of not voluntary pregnancy are protected by the law. This is certainly in stark contrast with the previous situation which considered illicit any type of termination.

Further on, when Filumena finds the Madonna's shrine, her devotion is awakened but so is her resentment for the holy figure.<sup>52</sup>

FILUMENA [...] "I kept walking. I looked up and there I was in front of her shrine, Our Lady of the Roses. So I looked her straight in the eye like this. "You understand everything. You even understand why I've sinned. Tell me what I should do" (A *pause*) But she didn't answer! Nothing! "Oh, so you think the less you say, the more we'll believe in you. I'm talking to you, so answer me!" (MT, I, 9)

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<sup>52</sup>Whilst Neapolitans have a fervent sense of belief in all saints and in particular in the Virgin Mary, whom they consider the most venerable of the holy figures, their rapport with them is very personal and somehow profane. In other words, the relationship between the believer and the divinity is comparable to the one between peers where one has a special power, namely that of performing miracles. Sometimes, a saint is regarded as a counterpart that, on the one hand, is the receiver of a plea, and, on the other, is the interlocutor that offers the opportunity to the supplicant to clarify his or her own thoughts. In this perspective, saints, including the Virgin Mary, are invoked in order to seek advice, comfort or to obtain favors on the basis of a denied right. Only from this perspective, can Filumena's attitude be understood; she challenges the Madonna since she feels she has been let down and demands to be heard and advised. Donatella Fischer, in her *Il teatro di Eduardo De Filippo: La crisi della famiglia patriarcale*, (London: Modern Humanities Research Association and Maney Publishing, 2007b), p. 76 comments on Filumena's monologue with the *Madonna d' 'e rrose* with these words: 'Nelle sue parole convergono elementi diversi. È infatti presente la ricca tradizione popolare di Napoli, che unisce l'eterna superstizione al paganesimo, ma oltre a ciò emerge l'astuzia unitamente ad un cattolicesimo "su misura", ritornando alle istanze della religione popolare".

On this point, see also Giuseppe Marotta, who in his *San Gennaro non dice mai no* (Salerno, Avagliano Editore, 1948), p. 135 wrote: 'Lasciatemi dire che a Napoli i Santi, dal supremo e volubile San Gennaro al distratto San Giuseppe, da Sant'Antonio che protegge Posillipo a San Pasquale che sorveglia attentamente Chiaia, non sono che autorevoli congiunti del popolo. Il napoletano ha San Luigi, Sant'Espedito e ogni altro Santo come a certi poveracci dei vicoli capita di essere imparentati con un insigne professore residente a via dei Mille. [...] Così, o quasi, stanno le cose a Napoli tra il popolino e i Santi; ma sempre fede è, sempre amore'.

It is worth mentioning as well the cabaret piece entitled *San Gennaro*, written and performed in 1977 by the Neapolitan actors Lello Arena, Antonio Decaro and Massimo Troisi who formed the group *La smorfia*. The following is an extract from the opening of the piece:

La scena si svolge all'interno di una chiesa. La statua di san Gennaro, patrono della città di Napoli, campeggia accanto a quella di san Ciro, e poco discosta, nell'ombra, è visibile anche la statua della Madonna. Massimo Troisi entra con atteggiamento riverente, togliendosi il cappello e facendosi il segno della croce. Indossa una giacca un po' striminzita, e una sciarpa di lana nera al collo. Il suo abbigliamento denota l'indigenza del personaggio, un devoto di san Gennaro, che – come tanti altri disgraziati – vive di stenti nell'eterna attesa di una grazia.

MASSIMO San Genna', io sto qua, tu già mi conosci a me, no?... io so' sempre chille ca... si me putisse fa' 'a grazia, ca... ie nun avisse parla' proprio, eh, san Genna', tu già 'o ssaie... ie so' cliente ccà... chella me vuleva 'a chiesa affianco, ie aggio ditto: «ma peccché? Ie me truovo buono ccà... San Genna' nun me fa' manca' niente e vaco là»... San Genna', si putesse anticipa' un poco 'e ppratiche 'e chella grazia, ca... ie n'aggio bisogno, he' capito, san Genna'... (*Si accorge di Lello Arena che è entrato in chiesa e capisce subito, a giudicare dall'aspetto logoro e misero del cappello e dell'impermeabile che indossa, che può trattarsi di un pericoloso concorrente*) Ammo fernuto 'e fa', 'o 'i'...'. See Arena, Decaro, Troisi, *La smorfia* (Turin: Einaudi, 1997), pp. 17-22 (p. 17).

In MT's version, on the other hand, this facet is smoothed by the omission of the verb 'l'affruntai accussu' (literally: 'I confronted her like this'), which becomes 'So I looked her straight in the eye like this' and also of the stage direction regarding the position of Filumena's arms '*punta i pugni sui fianchi e solleva lo sguardo verso una immaginaria effigie, come per parlare alla Vergine da donna a donna*', and so is the following stage direction '*con arroganza*'.

Similarly, TW's translation, although accompanied by stage directions, remains rather neutral and avoids mentioning the word sin. Furthermore, the stage direction '*con arroganza*' is omitted.

FILUMENA [...] I kept walking, walking. I didn't know where I was going and suddenly I found myself in front of that little altar of the Madonna. So I stood in front of her, like this. (*She stands with fists on her hips and looks towards an imaginary altar straight in front of her*) 'What am I supposed to do now, Madonna? You know everything, you know why I'm in this mess, tell me what to do.' But she was silent, she didn't answer, so I said: 'I see, you say nothing and then people believe in you even more, is that it? Well, I'm talking to you Madonna, answer me!' (TW, I, 14)

In TW's translation, too, the notion of 'challenge' has been replaced with that of 'standing', and there is no reference to the sin inherent in the illegitimate pregnancy. On the other hand, it is worth mentioning that the use of the word Madonna and the stage direction indicating the actual gesture Filumena makes, create a vibrant effect.

Noticeably, the omission of the stage directions '*Eccitata*' and '*Con arroganza vibrante*' lower the tone drastically and so do the words 'so I said' which slow down the crescendo of Filumena's narration. The rhythm of narration, therefore, undergoes

constant adjustments which slow down the acting when it seems to be reaching its peak, and this seems to be more in line with a British style.

Interestingly, the literal translation produced by CA succeeds in rendering the conceited tone of Filumena, even though the final effect is rather long-winded.

FILUMENA [...] What was I to do, I kept asking myself, who was I to tell? I kept hearing the girls' advice: What are you waiting for – solve the problem once and for all. We know a very good man... I kept walking, walking. Then suddenly I found myself right by the street shrine of Our Lady of the Roses. I challenged her. (*Puts her hands on her hips defiantly and looks up at an imaginary shrine, as if about to address the Virgin Mary in a woman-to-woman fashion*) what am I to do? You know it all. You also know why I'm in this pickle. What am I to do then? – There was no answer. [...] It's you I'm talking to! (*Arrogantly*) Answer me! (CA, I, 190)

In this example of word for word translation the original text has been closely reproduced, except when the line 'Saie pure peccé me trovo int' o peccato'<sup>53</sup> is

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<sup>53</sup> The word 'peccato' is used in the source text to stress the character's position, torn between guilt and redemption. Indeed, the Catholic Filomena is aware of her condemnable behaviour, but her will to keep her child obliterates it and makes her worth forgiving. Noticeably, Italian is strewn with religious and biblical references even in the ordinary language. Depending on the context 'peccato' can mean sin, as in the expression 'ho peccato' or pity as in 'che peccato!', or even error 'un peccato da correggere' or else, in a playful way, as in the expression 'peccato di gioventù'. See in the Italian dictionary *lo Zingarelli Vocabolario della lingua italiana* 12th edn, ed. By Miro Dogliotti and Luigi Rosiello (Bologna: Zanichelli editore, 1997), p. 1264 the entry 'peccato': **1** Comportamento umano che costituisce violazione della legge etica e divina. Nella dottrina cattolica, libera o volontaria trasgressione della legge divina, in pensieri, parole, opere, omissioni [...]. **2** (*fig.*) Errore, fallo [...]. **3** In unmerose loc., spesso escl., esprime rammarico, dispiacere, rincrescimento: *è un vero p. che il vetro si sia rotto; che p. che tu non sia qui!; p. che sia così giovane*. In the *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, prep. by J. A. Simpson, and E.S.C. Weiner, vol. XV (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p. 504 the definition of the word 'sin' is as follows: **1.a.** An act which is regarded as a transgression of the divine law and an offence against God; a violation (esp. willful or deliberate) of some religious or moral principle. The expression *for my sins* (see quot. 1842) is frequently employed in a trivial or jocular way. [...] **b.** *transf.* A violation of some standard of taste or propriety. [...] **2.a.** Without article or pl. Violation of divine law; action or conduct characterized by this; a state of transgression against God or His commands. [...]. **3.a.** A pity; a shame. Still in colloquial use esp. in Sc. Nat. Dict. From the quoted definition, appears that in English the word is used only with reference to serious violations and only marginally in a figurative way. Therefore, a foreignization strategy would find this word too strong. On the other hand, I claim that acknowledging the

translated as ‘You also know why I’m in this pickle’. Yet, the use of colloquialisms gives a caricatural image rather than portraying the drama of the monologue

An example of cultural manipulation, according to the theatrical conventions of the receptor system can be seen in KWWH’s version. Here, the rhythm and the register of the source text have been manipulated so that the almost mystic atmosphere vanishes altogether. Noticeably, Filumena’s account begins as a reply to Domenico’s joke about the Madonna, which is not in the original text.

DOMENICO Oh please. Don’t drag the Madonna into this mess.

FILUMENA Don’t joke, Domenico. I’m telling the truth. It really happened. I found myself alone in the street. It was late one night. I knew I was going to have a child. It was my first time. What am I going to do? Who can I turn to? There is no-one. I heard in my ears the buzzing voices of the other women – my friends – in that house. “Get rid of it, Filumena.” “What are you waiting for?” “I know just the man that you should go to.” But I wouldn’t listen to them. I walked and walked and walked. All at once I found myself standing in the street in front of the shrine of the Madonna of the Roses. I stood there, looking up at her, like this. (*She stands, arms akimbo, staring up*) You tell me: “What can I do? You know everything – you know as well as I do why I’m living this dreadful life. Tell me what to do.” But she said nothing. “Why don’t you answer me?” Not a word. “I think I’m beginning to understand,” I said, “That is the way you people up there operate – the less you talk, the more the ones down here believe in you. Is that it? I’m talking to you – answer – answer!” And then I heard a voice: “A child is a child.”

DOMENICO (*puzzled*) “A child is a child.”

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cultural shift would put the use of the word sin, uttered by a Catholic woman, in a context understandable also by an English audience.

*Both Rosalia and Alfredo shoot him warning glances – Rosalia angrily; Alfredo because he is caught up in Filumena’s story. Domenico shrugs, mystified. Filumena has heard or seen none of this. (KWWH, I, 11)*

In this version the long monologue of Filumena has been interspaced with Domenico’s comments, which make her sound like some sort of visionary. Furthermore, like in all the other translations, there is no reference to Filumena’s sinful pregnancy which carries a great cultural significance: ‘You know everything – you know as well as I do why I’m living this dreadful life’. Besides the last stage directions, which are not present in the source text, seem to break the crescendo of Filumena’s words and alleviate the tension of the whole scene, creating an effect closer to comedy than drama.

A different point to take into consideration is that the source text mentions the exact location where the holy vision occurs, that is Filumena’s birth place ‘me truaie dint’ ‘o vico mio’ (literally: I ended up in the alley where I was born). This is another omen suggesting that the solution to her problems will come from the very place where she was born. Again, rather than denying her own past, it is there that she ultimately finds the strength to reconcile herself with the life. In all four versions this reference is omitted. Here it is unlikely that the translator considered redundant such an important reference, and deliberately left it out, unless this was justified by some performability reasons. On the other hand, a limited knowledge of dialect could be a possible explanation of the omission.

Another important change of register occurs during the second part of the monologue, when Filumena refers to her turning down another man who was genuinely in love with her and gives in to the unavoidable fate of remaining with Domenico, despite his selfish and disdainful attitude towards her. As explained before, destiny plays a crucial role in Neapolitan culture. Destiny is the justification of any of the world’s injustices, what should be ascribed to abuse or ill administration is instead



attributed to a trick of fate and accepted with resignation. On the contrary, Eduardo's revolutionary message lies in the fact that in Filumena's case such an acceptance becomes her strength, her motivation to carry on and activate herself for a greater cause.

FILUMENA [...] E me vuleva spusà, 'o povero giovane... Ma tu faciste 'o geluso. Te tengo dent' 'e rrecchie: «Io so' ammogliato, nun te pozzo spusà...» E te mettiste a chiagnere. Pecché saie chiagnere, tu... Tutt' 'o ccuntrario 'e me: tu, saie chiagnere! E io dicette: «Va buo', chisto è 'o destino mio! Dummineco me vò bene, cu tutt' 'a bona volontà nun me pò spusà; è ammogliato... E ghiammo nnanze a San Putito dint' 'e ttre cammere!». (De Filippo, I, 545)

The words 'E ghiammo nnanze a San Putito dint' 'e ttre cammere' (literally: 'let's carry on in those three rooms' at San Putito) are indicative of Filumena's determination not to give up and to pursue her project.

Destiny, as an important factor of the monologue, is ruled out in both KWWH's and MT's versions.

FILUMENA [...] He loved me so much, that boy, he might even have accepted my children. But no, all at once you were jealous. "I cannot marry you. If you leave me for this boy I shall kill myself". And you started to cry. You always knew how to cry. So I said good-bye to that poor boy. Two years later, your wife died. And I went on living in the apartment. I didn't press you. "No, give him time. He knows the sacrifices you've made for him". So I waited and waited. (KWWH, I, 12)

FILUMENA [...] Do you remember that policeman? We'd been together five years, you and I.

ROSALIA: The policeman...!

DOMENICO: What policeman? What are you talking about?

FILUMENA: Yes, for once I attracted a decent man – he used to walk me home to the little apartment where you’d set me up after finally taking me out of that “house”. You were always traveling ... and he fell in love with me and wanted to marry me, poor boy, but you got so jealous I can still hear you. “Filumè, I’ve got a wife, I can’t marry you, but if you marry this man ...” and you started to cry – because you’re good at crying, not like me, you’re really good at crying, isn’t he?

ROSALIA: So you said good-bye to the policeman. But two years later your wife died ...

FILUMENA: You moved me in here – and nothing changed. I kept thinking, he’s young, he’s not ready to tie himself down again, and I waited ... (MT, I, 9)

KWWH’s version renders Filumena’s drama with no special emphasis on the actual deception made by Domenico. By contrast, it adds the threat of suicide made by Domenico, which makes the dialogue sound rather melodramatic. MT’s translation goes further. Noticeably, the text has been substantially altered with the introduction of the policeman lover; this insertion aims to stress the fact that Filumena was going to rehabilitate herself within the canons of legitimacy. In this case too, as in the mentioned monologue, where a doctor is to perform the abortion, the American version has introduced an element of familiarity with the target milieu, that is an institutionalized figure confirming the idea of definite roles in society. What’s more, the omission of destiny seems to be in tune with the American idea of life. In a country where everything is possible, talking of destiny would sound preposterous, the heroine would betray her own identity if she let her life be ruled by the unpredictable. The target culture’s influence is shown in the translator’s choice which has adapted the play’s content to the audience’s expectations.

Interestingly, TW’s translation briefly mentions destiny, though without stressing its importance in Filumena’s choice to stay.

FILUMENA [...] And I said to myself, well, that's my destiny, Domenico really does love me but he can't marry me because he's married already. And I stayed in those three tiny rooms in San Putito. (TW, I, 15)

It is important to note that in this version, the use of 'stayed' instead of 'carried on' gives an idea of ineluctability rather than strong determination as in the Source Text.

CA's translation, on the other hand, recites:

FILUMENA [...] I just said to myself: All right. I suppose that's the way it's got to be. Dummi' in his own way is fond of me, and with all the good will in the world can't marry me as he's already lumbered with a wife ... So we carried on, in the flat at San Putito. (CA, I, 191)

Here, the attempt to render Filumena's words with a sociolect makes the language slip into slang as in the case of 'lumbered with a wife', (whereas the original uses the rather formal word 'ammogliato'), and of the word 'destino' which has been paraphrased with 'I suppose that's the way it's got to be'; on the other hand, the idea of perseverance is rightly stressed by the use of the verb 'carry on'. On this occasion, too, the verbosity of the text may be the result of the period in which it was written, that is the Seventies, when the debate on theatre translation as a medium between cultures had just started and therefore more attention was given to literal translation than to the function of the translated text in the target culture. The chronological element as one of the key factors in translation in general and in theatre translation in particular, will be discussed again in Chapter Four with reference to the language used in an adaptation of *Napoli milionaria!*. In this instance it is interesting to notice that the more recent the translation the more the language reflects the target culture's models and conventions.

The monologue reaches its apex in the final part, when Filumena lets go of all her disgust for Domenico's insensitive and insolent behavior.

FILUMENA [...] E quann'io, ê vvote, dicevo: «Dummi', saie chi s'è spusata?... Chella figlióla ca steva 'e rimpetto a me dint' 'e ffenestelle...», tu redive, te mettive a ridere, tale e quale comm'a quanno saglive cu ll'amice tuoie, ncopp'addó stevo io primma 'e San Putito. Chella resata ca nun è ovèra. Chella resata c'accumencia 'a miez' 'e scale... Chella resata ca è sempre 'a stessa, chiunque 'a fa! T'avarrìa acciso, quanno redive accussì! (*Paziente*) E aspettammo. E aggio aspettato vinticinc'anne! E aspettammo 'e ggrazie 'e don Dummineco! Oramaie tène cinquantaduie anne: è vecchio! Addó? Ca pozza iettà 'o sango, chillo se crede sempe nu giuvinuttiello! Corre appriesso ê nnennelle, se nfessisce, porta 'e fazzulette spuorche 'e russetto, m' 'a mette dint' 'a casa! (*Minacciosa*) Miettammélla mo dint' 'a casa, mo ca te so' mugliera. Te ne caccio a te e a essa. Ce simmo spusate. 'O prèvete ce ha spusate. Chesta è casa mia! (De Filippo, I, 546)

In these lines Filumena expresses all her abhorrence for such an inconsiderate, selfish, rude man who has always taken for granted her dedication, mistaking it for the gratitude of a mistress. All her efforts, her commitment to his life, her sacrifice of her own legitimate love mean absolutely nothing to him, whose only interest is to keep her to manage his business and satisfy his needs whenever he feels like. Filumena finally reveals how hurt she felt when Domenico laughed in an artificial way, when he thoughtlessly brought home handkerchiefs with lipstick marks; and she makes him appear in all his pettiness. With few words she recreates the anguish of her condition as a prostitute in contrast with the obliviousness of the clients who treated her as merchandise 'Chella resata ca nun è ovèra. Chella resata c'accumencia 'a miez' 'e

scale... Chella resata ca è sempre ‘a stessa, chiunque ‘a fa’.<sup>54</sup> At the same time men like Domenico are portrayed as childish, superficial beings who need to be cut down to size and taught a lesson of life.

Interestingly, KWWH’s rendering which translates ‘Chella resata ca nun è ovèra’ (literally: that false laugh) as ‘That arrogant laugh’<sup>55</sup> describes Domenico’s attitude; on the other hand, the word ‘false’ of the original portrays also the feelings of Filumena whose sentiment for the man was of genuine affection.

Conversely, TW’s translation, ‘that horrible laugh which is always the same, whoever has it’,<sup>56</sup> is very effective because it does consider Filumena’s sense of repulsion. What hurt Filumena’s feelings was Domenico’s façade, his way of being charming and perhaps loving without meaning it, which has remained the same even after she has become his companion.

MT’s rendering, ‘that big fake laugh and it always sounds the same no matter who’s laughing’<sup>57</sup> is, in fact, very effective, and is almost onomatopoeic. On the other hand, CA’s translation ‘that mocking scoffing cackle that starts halfway up the brothel’s stairs and I’ve never forgotten’<sup>58</sup> is a little over-descriptive and introduces the word brothel which is deliberately avoided in the original, where Filumena refers to ‘ncopp ‘addó stevo io primma e San Putito’.

A final comment regards what can be considered the most poignant line of the whole play: «’e figlie so’ figlie!», uttered by Filumena on two occasions during Act One. These words will become part of the Italian language and culture insofar as they establish a sacrosanct principle of equality on earth and make Filumena the underdog the emblem of social retribution. The first time she says these words is in her

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<sup>54</sup> De Filippo, I, 546.

<sup>55</sup> KWWH, I, 13.

<sup>56</sup> TW, I, 15.

<sup>57</sup> MT, I, 10.

<sup>58</sup> CA, I, 191.

monologue with the *Madonna d' 'e rrose*, when she makes her decision to keep her child. She repeats them later, when she demands Domenico's surname for her children:

DOMENICO Filume', parla chiaro... Nun pazzià cchiù cu me... Me faie piglià a freva,

Filume'...

FILUMENA (*seria*) 'E figlie so' figlie!

DOMENICO E che vuo' dicere?

FILUMENA Hann'a sapé chi è 'a mamma... Hann'a sapé chello c'ha fatto pe lloro.

M'hann'a vulé bene! (*Infervorata*) Nun s'hann'a mettere scuorno vicino all'at'uommene: nun s'hann'a sentì avvilito quanno vanno pe caccià na carta, nu documento: 'a famiglia, 'a casa... 'a famiglia ca s'aunisce pe nu cunziglio, pe nu sfogo... S'hann 'a chiammà comm'a me! (De Filippo, I, 551)

KWWH translate the line as 'My sons are my sons',<sup>59</sup> which at most can confirm that the boys are Filumena's children. Likewise, CA's 'Our children are our children' misreads the general statement made by Filumena.<sup>60</sup> MT's translation reads 'A child is a child',<sup>61</sup> changing the plural into singular, whereas TW reproduces the literal 'Children are children'<sup>62</sup>

It is important to note that the words 'E figlie so' figlie!' are loaded with extra-textual significance, as they summarize a whole philosophy of life: need for love, dignity, equality, respect, human rights. Therefore the translation should incorporate all this in a short sentence while keeping the conciseness of the original. Consequently, the choice of a target language expression conveying such a powerful meaning in so few words is a hard one, especially because the effectiveness of the sentence comes from the

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<sup>59</sup> KWWH, I, 17.

<sup>60</sup> CA, I, 97.

<sup>61</sup> MT, I, 12.

<sup>62</sup> TW, I, 20.

dialect, and this appears clearly from the translations which can only offer a literal meaning.

From the extracts analyzed above it appears that the rendering of dialect with standard English significantly reduces the variety of registers of the source text. Whilst the use of a target language dialect would raise issues of regionalism as I will show further on in this thesis, it is important to acknowledge the presence, in dialect theatre, of a different phenomenon to standard language theatre and adopt strategies which take into account and enhance such differences.

## **Conclusions**

In the course of the above textual analysis I have shown how the domestication of dialect on the one hand reduces the stylistic impact of the scenes, and on the other requires a manipulation of the play text through cuts of lines and exclusion of characters.

I have argued that exigencies of performability are often at the basis of the translators' choices as they aim to produce a play which reflects the audience's idea of a given culture or of a certain theatre genre. What is more, performability is commonly considered to be the highest priority in a play; therefore all adjustments necessary to obtain a text which is speakable will be made during the translation process, even if this requires that cultural elements of the source text are neutralized or eliminated.

It is important to notice that the translator is in a privileged position as he or she 'is able to project the image of an author and/or as (series of) work(s) in another culture, lifting that author and/or those works beyond the boundaries of their culture of origin',<sup>63</sup> and that such a position implies at the same time freedom and restraint. Interpreting the text in light of the sole target culture's needs has the effect of misrepresenting the

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<sup>63</sup> See André Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*. (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), p. 9.

author's discourse. In particular, I maintain that translating dialect into standard language generates a huge cultural shift, insofar as vernacular variations, which represent the essence of dialect theatre, are inevitably eliminated, and so is their cultural message. The main value of a production of a foreign play lies in its capacity to introduce in the target culture the perspective of a different culture in relation to universal topics. Domesticating the source text's language thwarts the cultural message embedded in it and incorporates it in the target culture.

In *Filumena Marturano*'s case I have observed how such domestication has ruled out the main feature of the play, closely connected to its vernacular essence that is its colorfulness and variety of registers. The bilingualism of this play required clear acknowledgment, through the use of strategies which would take into account the language shift present in the play. Eduardo intentionally used dialect as well as standard Italian in this play, both in dialogues and in the *didascalie*, entirely written in Italian, to show language and cultural contrast. I claim that the use of standard English has undermined the importance of this choice.

As I have already argued, translating vernacular with standard language reduces the facets of the culture it represents; on the other hand, the use of dialect to translate another dialect is equally problematic. Nonetheless, different translation strategies can be employed by the translator to render various degrees of register. On different occasions in the course of this chapter I have suggested alternative translations, which aim at rendering dialect either through the use of similar expressions in the target language or through phrases which would convey the cultural message of the source text, as in the case of proverbs.

What has been discussed so far confirms the other most significant point addressed in this chapter, which regards the importance of a thorough understanding and consideration of both source and target language and culture. Indeed, it is essential



that translators have command of both the source and target language, so that the nuances of the text can be fully rendered, and the cultural transfer achieved.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### CHARACTERIZATION AND CULTURAL APPROPRIATION OF *NAPOLI MILIONARIA!*

#### **Introduction**

In this chapter I intend to discuss how the English representation of the characters of Eduardo De Filippo's play *Napoli milionaria!*, has led to a cultural appropriation of the source text. My analysis addresses the issue of the relocation of Naples, which is represented according to theatrical conventions that belong to the target milieu. I refer to the definition of conventions provided by Sirkku Aaltonen who considers them a 'constraint which has arisen on the basis of consensus as to acceptable behaviour, and appl[ies] it to established practices and prevailing usages which have taken on a relatively binding character'.<sup>1</sup> Through textual analysis I will discuss how choices made by the translators influence the way in which a given culture is viewed by the audience. In particular I will show that the manipulation of the source text aimed at the creation of a target text which would conform to the way the target audience considers Neapolitan culture.

The chapter is divided into two sections. In the first section I will explore the adaptation by Peter Tinniswood of *Napoli Milionaria*, using Scouse, the language of Liverpool. My analysis will concentrate on the roles of Gennaro and Amalia Jovine, although I shall also look at the characters interacting with them in various ways. In the second section I will explore an American version, entitled *Napoli Milionaria!*, by Linda Alper and Beatrice Basso, and I will look at a different form of cultural relocation, which is

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<sup>1</sup> See Aaltonen, *Acculturation of the Other: Irish Milieux in Finnish Drama Translation*, p. 64.

obtained through the creation of a new performing style, more suited to the target audience. In the analysis which will follow, I intend to demonstrate that the employment of a socially defined language on the one hand and the construction of new theatrical rhythms on the other, produce a cultural shift so that the source culture is somehow assimilated to the target culture.

It is generally thought that a play text becomes 'alive' through the performance, when the director and especially the actors transpose words to action. Set, costumes, speech rhythm and gestures are all factors that bring to life the play script. During this process, the text is reinterpreted and modified according to the director's views and to the actors' needs. With foreign plays, the text undergoes a further manipulation by the dramaturge, who usually does preliminary work by researching into the historical and cultural background of the play, and by the translator who actually transposes the play into the target language. In my analysis I will argue that the language used in translation influences the actors' portrayal of the characters and the reception of the play, and that the rendering of source language into target language brings with it a cultural shift. In the course of the chapter, I will look at the questions of adaptation versus translation and I will illustrate in more detail how adaptation involves substantial changes to the source text so that the target text acquires an identity which is detached from the original. As J. C. Santoyo maintains, this term has been employed to 'disguise all manner of unacceptable textual and staging manipulations'.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, Joseph Farrell argues that

adaptation and translation are not two sides of the one coin; they are in conflict with one another, particularly when the adaptor is the wholly new figure of the surrogate, or pseudo-, translator. The justification for this figure arises from the undoubted fact that for a

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<sup>2</sup> Quoted by Phyllis Zatlin, in *Theatrical Translation and Film Adaptation*, p. 79.

translator the more important language is not the language he is translating from, but the language he is translating into.<sup>3</sup>

In particular, I will discuss the possible reasons behind the modifications of the source text and the effects of such modifications on the receiving culture. Finally, by drawing on *Napoli milionaria*, I will describe the implications of the use of a given dialect or accent to translate another dialect in terms of cultural transfer, and I will show the ways in which the use of a particular idiom transforms the stage language in the target text.

*Napoli milionaria!*<sup>4</sup> was written between 1944 and 1945 and was premiered on 25 March 1945, in Naples at the *Teatro San Carlo*,<sup>5</sup> which had been derequisitioned for a charity matinée. The idea behind the play dawned on Eduardo a few weeks after Naples had been liberated by the Allied forces. The general sense of joy and exultation was in sharp contrast with the material and moral degradation of the city, which had been stricken by the war in a particularly vicious way. The effects of the war were visible especially on the population which had been wracked by the conflict, but nonetheless showed incredible strength and self-determination, fighting the Germans for its own liberation even before the arrival of the Allies. On 1 October 1944, the invaders, under pressure from the Neapolitans and the Allies, abandoned the city after looting it of everything valuable.

Watching Naples left without dignity, prostrated and hopeless, Eduardo felt the urge to represent the effects of the war on human beings.

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<sup>3</sup> Farrell, 'Servant of Many Masters', p. 53. See also the scholarly overview in Chapter One.

<sup>4</sup> The original version to which I will refer is *Napoli milionaria!*, published in *Eduardo De Filippo Teatro, Volume secondo, Cantata dei giorni dispari, Tomo primo* ed. by Nicola De Blasi, and Paola Quarenghi, 1st edn., I Meridiani (Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 2005a), pp. 45-151.

<sup>5</sup> See illustration n. 4 at the back of this Thesis.

Se fossi un giornalista avrei scritto uno o una serie di articoli per illustrare, magari con un po' di "colore", la Napoli miseramente arricchitasi; poiché sono invece un commediografo ho ideato la storia di don Gennaro e di donn'Amalia, *Napoli milionaria!* È quindi un articolo giornalistico, o meglio un fatto di cronaca, fantasioso quanto si vuole ma conforme alla realtà.<sup>6</sup>

*Napoli milionaria!* represents a turning point in Eduardo's theatre, beginning a new, more pessimistic phase in his writing which is known as *La cantata dei giorni dispari*, juxtaposed to *La cantata dei giorni pari*, which reflects a less disillusioned approach to life and theatre. In fact, during the opening of the play, after the first Act, Eduardo announced that from the second Act his dramaturgy would change, and indeed his theatre began to represent life almost in a journalistic way.<sup>7</sup> In an interview with Ruggero Jacobbi, Eduardo explained that before writing *Napoli milionaria!*, he kept alive a representation of Naples

che in parte era già morta, in parte era soffocata e nascosta dalle paterne cure del fascismo [...]. La guerra, io penso, ha fatto passare cent'anni. E se tanto tempo è trascorso, io ho bisogno, anzi ho il dovere, di scrivere dell'altro e di recitare diversamente.<sup>8</sup>

It is indicative that a few months after the premiere, in Rome, Roberto Rossellini began the shooting of the film *Roma città aperta*, the first example of neorealism, changing completely the approach of the Italian cinema. In fact,

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<sup>6</sup> Cited in 'Nota storico-teatrale', in *Napoli milionaria!*, in *Eduardo De Filippo Teatro, Volume secondo, Cantata dei giorni dispari, Tomo primo* ed. by Nicola De Blasi, and Paola Quarenghi, 1st edn., I Meridiani (Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 2005a), pp. 5-44 (p. 7).

<sup>7</sup> 'Nota storico-teatrale', in *Napoli milionaria!*, in *Eduardo De Filippo Teatro*, p. 26.

<sup>8</sup> See Ruggero Jacobbi, 'Napoli milionaria', *Cosmopolita*, 1 April 1945.

sia pure attraverso mezzi e modi espressivi diversi, la commedia di Eduardo e il film di Rossellini soddisfacevano quello stesso bisogno di realtà, quella «euforia della verità» [...] che era stata troppo a lungo censurata e che continuava a restare, in un'Italia ancora non completamente libera e pacificata, un obiettivo di pochissimi autori.<sup>9</sup>

The play generated an emotional response among an audience deeply touched by the subject.

Arrivai al terzo atto con sgomento. Recitavo e sentivo attorno a me un silenzio assoluto, terribile. Quando dissi l'ultima battuta, la battuta finale: «Deve passare la notte» e scese il pesante velario, ci fu un silenzio ancora per otto, dieci secondi, poi scoppiò un applauso furioso, e anche un pianto irrefrenabile; tutti avevano in mano un fazzoletto, gli orchestrali del golfo mistico che si erano alzati in piedi, i macchinisti che avevano invaso la scena, il pubblico che era salito sul palco [...]. Io avevo detto il dolore di tutti.<sup>10</sup>

On the other hand, the critics had different reactions to the new change in direction announced by the author. While 'left-wing' critics appreciated such an approach, which helped to bring dialect theatre into the national panorama, politically conservative critics highlighted aspects of the traditional comic *mise en scène*. On the whole the play was a great success and was acclaimed also in Rome and Milan. The television broadcast in 1962 was extremely popular too and confirmed Eduardo's presence on the international stage.

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<sup>9</sup> 'Nota storico-teatrale', in *Napoli milionaria!*, in *Eduardo De Filippo Teatro*, p. 8.

<sup>10</sup> Enzo Biagi, 'La «dinastia» dei fratelli De Filippo: Mezzo secolo di teatro in tutto il mondo', *La Stampa*, 5 March 1959.

## Section I

### *Napoli milionaria!* in England

#### **Peter Tinniswood's Scouse Adaptation**

During the years following the war, Eduardo's plays were staged in many countries including South America, Japan, Czechoslovakia and England, where in 1958 *Questi fantasm!*, translated as *Too Many Ghosts!* was Eduardo's first play to be staged in England at the Oxford Playhouse.<sup>11</sup> It was only in 1972, though, during the World Theatre Season, that Eduardo became known to the London public after his performance in *Napoli milionaria!* as Gennaro Jovine. The production by the De Filippo's company was very successful and critics such as Michael Billington praised the protagonist's 'magisterial stillness'.<sup>12</sup>

Almost two decades after the Neapolitan production, on 27 June 1991, an English adaptation of *Napoli milionaria!* prepared by the National Theatre translator Peter Tinniswood and directed by Richard Eyre opened in the Lyttelton. The two leading roles were played by Ian McKellen as Gennaro Jovine, and Clare Higgins who played Amalia Jovine. While retaining the Neapolitan setting, the play used the dialect of Liverpool, what Tinniswood calls 'the accents' of his home town. Indeed, as he explained in the foreword of his adaptation, he had not intended to use a dialect,

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<sup>11</sup> Acqua, 'Eduardo a Londra: Ricostruzione e analisi degli allestimenti', p. 2. See also Biagi, 'La «dinastia» dei fratelli De Filippo: Mezzo secolo di teatro in tutto il mondo', *La Stampa*, 5 March 1959.

<sup>12</sup> See Michael Billington, 'De Filippo', *Manchester Guardian*, 9 May 1972.

I've done this adaptation of Eduardo's play in the accents of my native city. Not its dialects. I'm not keen on dialect writing in English. It relies too much on a heavily-coated treacled ear and too little on love and sympathy and affection.<sup>13</sup>

Both critics' and public's response was on the whole very positive. The universality of the play was more appreciated here than in the previous production, where the monumental quality of Eduardo's own performance had overshadowed the message of the play. What is more, the use of Scouse was considered a good choice by the majority of the critics, as it contributed to distance it from previous representations of Italian characters as ice-cream vendors or associated with tomato sauce adverts.<sup>14</sup> On the other hand, among others, Claire Armistead disliked the linguistic choice as it pushed the play 'into a no-man's land, somewhere between an English tradition of Scouse family sitcom and De Filippo's more lacerating social comedy. It entirely loses the particularity which, at its premiere in Naples in 1945 [...] reduced the audience to tears of recognition'.<sup>15</sup> Likewise, Kenneth Hurren observed that the language used was excessively vulgar.<sup>16</sup> The reasons behind the choice of a local idiom to render dialect will be analyzed further on. In this instance I intend to underline the parallels which have been made between Liverpool and Naples as, according to Peter Kemp, both cities seem to share 'swagger, squalor, unabashed sentimentality, quick-wit, Catholicism, crime'.<sup>17</sup> In fact, it was Tinniswood himself who explained in an

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<sup>13</sup> See Peter Tinniswood, *Napoli Milionaria*, adapt. by Peter Tinniswood, in *Four Plays The Local Authority, Grand Magic, Filumena Marturano, Napoli Milionaria* (London: Methuen Drama, 1992), pp. 247-362 (p. 248).

<sup>14</sup> See Michael Billington, 'Family at War with Itself', *The Guardian*, 29 June 1991.

<sup>15</sup> See Claire Armistead, 'Merseyside meets Napoli', *Weekend Financial Times*, 29 June 1991.

<sup>16</sup> See Kenneth Hurren, 'Napoli with the syrup on ration', *The Mail on Sunday*, 30 June 1991.

<sup>17</sup> See Peter Kemp, 'The Italian connection', *The Independent*, 29 June 1991.



interview that his choice derived from a deep similarity between the two cities which are both exuberant, melancholic, and, above all, have an ‘indomitable spirit’.<sup>18</sup>

### **Issues of Language Choices**

It is important to underline the fact that both Naples and Liverpool are port towns, they both experienced long periods of wealth and were both heavily affected by World War II. This seems to have led to Tinniswood and other critics’ conclusion that there was a similarity of cultures and therefore, of the idioms, which represent them. A brief overview of the two cities’ histories shows, on the other hand, that their proximity to the sea played a rather different role in the development of their cultures, as in Liverpool’s case it promoted its position as an essential trade point and as the most important immigration access, mainly from Ireland. Such a favourable position, certainly contributed to shape the perception of the city as individualistic and independent, and the characteristic idiom which from the city spread throughout the Merseyside was a tangible proof of Liverpool’s distinctiveness.

Liverpool was founded in 1207 by King John of England to provide a port in England towards the newly conquered Ireland. In the Middle Ages it developed as a market town, being the centre of commerce with Ireland first and the West Indies later. Its main strength came from the docks, which made the city a big import-export centre. At the end of the seventeenth century a writer and traveler, named Celia Fiennes, visited Liverpool and was extremely impressed by the elegance of the town, and by its wealth which came from the florid trading industry. The citizens too, were opulent and wore fine and fashionable clothes. Indeed, she regarded Liverpool as London in miniature.<sup>19</sup> In the 18<sup>th</sup> century

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<sup>18</sup> See Tinniswood, Programme of *Napoli Milionaira*, National Theatre, 1991.

<sup>19</sup> See Tim Lambert, ‘A Brief History of Liverpool’, <http://www.localhistories.org/liverpool.html>, accessed on 20 August 2008.

a major element in the general trading pattern was the Liverpool Triangle-the exchange of manufactured goods from the Mersey hinterland for slaves in West Africa, who were in turn traded for sugar, molasses, spices, and other plantation crops in the West Indies.<sup>20</sup>

During the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, when trading was still its main industry, Liverpool was Britain's second largest city, and with London constituted the two biggest cities of the Empire. Due to its position on the Atlantic Ocean, it was open to influences from Ireland's immigration throughout the nineteenth century which contributed to the development of Liverpool's language and culture as it was its commercial partner for centuries. During World War II Liverpool was the target of heavy German air raids which destroyed large parts of the city.

The geographical position of Naples was, on the other hand, the main reason for the different dominations it underwent ever since its birth as a Greek colony. From the Romans, then the Normans, the French, the Arabs, up to the Spanish, different powers kept it under their political and economic control. The greatest strength of the city was, rather than commerce, its flourishing culture, both intellectual and artistic. However, Naples' opulence referred mainly to the aristocracy, especially during the regime of the Spanish viceroys, which led to the rebellion of the population, headed by Masaniello, in 1647.<sup>21</sup> The combination of culture with the amenity of the area made Naples one of the most important cities in Europe for many centuries. As a result, the language, too, was formed in a complex, overlapping set of contexts and cultural interactions, so that Neapolitan dialect drew on Latin, French, Spanish and Arabic, whose cultural strata permeated it. Moreover, the implications of World War II were rather different from Liverpool, as the invasion of

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<sup>20</sup> See *The New Encyclopedia Britannica*, VII, 15<sup>th</sup> ed n. (Chicago: Encyclopedia Britannica), p. 411.

<sup>21</sup> See Giuseppe Coniglio, *I viceré spagnoli di Napoli* (Naples: Fiorentino, 1967), p. 254.

the Germans first and then the ‘liberation’ by the Allies, produced a moral devastation of the population, as well as the destruction of large parts of the city.

Therefore, Tinniswood’s assumption that the two cities shared a similar background appears to be based essentially on a geographical similarity which could equally well apply to Aberdeen, Dublin or Cardiff as well. Indeed, while Naples developed essentially as a cultural and artistic centre, Liverpool had strong industrial, and working class connotations. From a linguistic point of view, then, the choice of Scouse to translate Neapolitan seems more related to the image associated with Liverpool that is a port town with working class, swagger and inflammable spirits. As Benedict Nightingale explained,

the cast’s Merseyside accents, and the colloquialisms of Peter Tinniswood’s translation, may sound better than spaghetti-house Italian; but they accentuate the differences between Naples and Liverpool, them and us. Liverpool is not known for fierce Neapolitan values. In the last war Liverpool was badly battered, but did not risk its soul, as Naples did.<sup>22</sup>

The above argument suggests that, although similarities may be found between the two cities from a geographical and linguistic point of view, it must be stressed that ‘cultural relocation is always going to be inadequate because since no two cultures are identical it is simply impossible to try and impose one framework upon another’.<sup>23</sup> Later we will see that the assumption that the two cities shared a similar background, translated into theatre language, equates with loud acting and vulgarity.

The importance of *Napoli milionaria!* lies in its ability to depict moral degradation resulting from war conflicts, and to illustrate how people can be dehumanized by the need to survive. The story of the Jovine family is the story of any family dealing with the horrors

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<sup>22</sup> See Benedict Nightingale, ‘Fight for the soul of Naples’, *The Times*, 28 June 1991.

<sup>23</sup> Extract from a correspondence with Susan Bassnett on 4 February 2009.

of war, regardless of their social background. For this reason, the choice of a class related idiom seems to reduce the impact of the play as it frames the story within a specific social context. What is more, as I have noted *Napoli milionaria!* marks the beginning of Eduardo's new theatre style, less comic and more dramatic, which will affect also his future productions.

In the textual analysis that now follows, I will describe how the language spoken by Gennaro and Amalia Jovine, when compared with the original, shows a considerable amount of swearing and slang, and this reflects on the general representation of the characters. In the source text, on the other hand, the language is not offensive even when the characters argue, and toughness resulting from desperation, rather than anger, is the main feature. We can observe how the acculturation of the original implies a shift from the source culture to the target culture, so that the former is framed within a British context, which makes it more accessible to the audience, as it assimilates it into the target theatrical system. This process implies always an arbitrary choice as no two cultures are alike, no matter how similar a background they might have. Therefore, the transposition of the source culture onto the target culture carries the inevitable consequence of super-imposing domestic elements on the foreign ones. Indeed,

it is common knowledge that in theatre the idiom of a given character and his or her social identity are strictly related. It is through the specific expressions that a character uses that audiences recognize his or her status.<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Taviano, 'Italians on the Twentieth Century Stage: Theatrical Representations of Italianness in the English-speaking World', p. 165.

By using Liverpool speech-rhythms the identity of the characters can be related directly to domestic examples. In this way the representation of the Other has been brought into line with the expectations of the target audience. While this mechanism has the advantage of presenting a foreign culture in a more approachable way, from a translation point of view it shifts the emphasis from the source to the target culture. In other words rather than the audience going towards the source culture, it is the source culture that moves towards the audience. However, Tinniswood's adaptation has the merit of portraying the characters without using the 'accent convention' as a stereotypical landmark of 'Italianness', which is commonly used in the representation of Italian culture in the Anglo-Saxon world.<sup>25</sup> In her review, Vera Lustig noted that this production of *Napoli milionaria!* rightly represented a departure from the two productions of Eduardo's plays *Saturday, Sunday, Monday* and *Filumena*, directed by Franco Zeffirelli in the '70s, which had a strong Italian accent.<sup>26</sup> While the previous versions stressed the 'Italianness' of the play, this one aimed to accentuate the 'Britishness' of the adaptation, by combining an English local idiom with Neapolitan gestures. Further on it will be argued that such a combination, on the one hand produced an effect of independence between speech and gestures; on the other it produced an appropriation of the cultural element of the play by the receiving culture. However, it is important to note that the choice not to use standard English, but a regional language denoted an innovative and unique approach to dialect translation.

### **Translating or Adapting?**

One of the most heated issues in theatre translation is the freedom translators have to change the source text. How far can translators go in their interpretation and alteration of

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<sup>25</sup> On this point see also Taviano 'Italians on the Twentieth Century Stage: Theatrical Representations of Italianness in the English-speaking World'.

<sup>26</sup> See Vera Lustig, 'Authenticity please!', *Plays & Players*, August 1991.

the play text? Scholars' views on this issue span from claims of total independence to claims of total adherence to the original text. Among those who declare their loyalty to the playwright, is the previously mentioned Joseph Farrell, who considers translation and adaptation incompatible activities as they have different objectives.<sup>27</sup> The same view is shared by the translator of Quebec theatre Linda Gaboriau who argues that, without any doubt, for her 'loyalty goes to the playwright'.<sup>28</sup> For this author adaptation is the result of a preconceived idea of audience's reception since 'theatre directors often underestimate the cultural curiosity of local audiences, assuming that if the play doesn't talk about their nextdoor neighbours they won't be interested'.<sup>29</sup> Among those who argue that the 'spirit of the play' has to be protected is John Clifford who, while stressing the activity of the translator as a creative one, also argues that translators have to make sure that 'the characters haven't run away with themselves (as they often do) and given you lines, and feelings that in the original simply do not exist'.<sup>30</sup> On the opposite side of the spectrum, the distinction between translation and adaptation is questioned by Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere who argue that any form of translation is indeed a new creation, as translators rewrite the source text. In particular Bassnett claims that

what a translator does effectively is to rewrite, to reshape, to restructure, to reenconde [...] for a new public and in the theatre that is particularly apparent. It simply isn't possible to be "faithful" because cultural systems, horizons of expectations, stylistic frameworks etc are completely different.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Farrell, 'Servant of Many Masters', p. 53.

<sup>28</sup> See Linda Gaboriau, 'The Cultures of Theatre' in *Culture in Transit: Translating the Literature of Quebec*, ed. by Sherry Simon (Montreal: Véhicule Press, 1995), p. 83.

<sup>29</sup> Gaboriau, 'The Cultures of Theatre', p. 84.

<sup>30</sup> See John Clifford, 'Translating the Spirit of the Play', in *Stages of Translation*, p. 266.

<sup>31</sup> Bassnett in the correspondence on 4 February 2009.

However, the terminology used in theatre translation is indicative of the attitude towards translators, rather than towards the source text. Indeed, plays are ‘adapted’ when the translator/adaptor used a literal translation as a starting point to build his own play inspired, so to speak, by the source text. This is often due to the fact that the playwright does not know the source language, as in the case of the Almeida production of *Pirandello’s Rules of the Game*, ‘translated and adapted’ by Dave Hare in 1992.<sup>32</sup> A different approach to the source text is the *resistant* approach, which calls for translators to be not only visible, but even bold, in order to operate a clear appropriation of the source text which is presented to the target society as a reinterpretation, a total rewriting, of the source text. Such an approach is based on the idea of ‘postmodern performance, which, rather than transgressing the limits imposed by society, is *resistant* within the dominant culture’.<sup>33</sup> According to Barbara Godard, one of the most prominent representative of resistant translation,

in light of this rewriting, the concept of translation is enlarged to include imitation, adaptation quotation, pastiche, parody – all different modes of rewriting: in short, all forms of interpenetration of works and discourses.

When translation is concerned not only with the relationship between two languages but between two text systems, literary translation becomes a text in its own right so that the traditional boundary set up to separate original works from their translations collapses.<sup>34</sup>

In theatre translation, such a *resistant* approach implies a challenge to the receiving society’s acting styles, through the use of non-standard language and stage language.<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Anderman, *Europe on Stage: Translation and Theatre*, p. 27.

<sup>33</sup> Stefania Taviano, ‘Staging Italian Theatre: A Resistant Approach’ , pp. 46-55 (p. 47).

<sup>34</sup> See Barbara Godard, ‘Theorizing Feminist Discourse/Translation’, in *Translation, History & Culture*, p. 92.

<sup>35</sup> Taviano, ‘Staging Italian Theatre: A Resistant Approach’.

As I have already noted, the play is the result of textual and paratextual elements which convey the message of the written text. As a consequence, it is generally believed that the play's 'natural' destination is the performance. That is why performability is considered an essential requirement of any play, and it is one of the crucial factors of the success of a play text. When foreign plays are translated extra textual factors need to be considered such as the differences in terms of language, gestures and setting, between the source and the target culture. During the *mise en scène*, the play is significantly modified by the translator, by the dramaturge, by the director and by the actors, so the initial text can be drastically changed by the end of the staging process. The extent of alterations to the text depends essentially on the cultural and acting conventions of the target culture. The translator's choices will be made primarily to obtain a text that meets the requirements of the target theatrical system. This perspective is accurately illustrated by David Johnston when he discusses what he calls 'theatre pragmatics'. He maintains that adaptations are forms of translations where the translator 'has played something of a more active role [...] in an effort to vivify the re-enactment'.<sup>36</sup> Such a statement derives from Johnston's idea that, since the play text is best exploited in performance, obtaining a speakable or performable text justifies all sorts of alterations to the source text. Indeed, performability is a requisite of any text which conforms to the norms and canons of 'the target audience's horizon of expectations',<sup>37</sup> whether they be political or cultural. Therefore, adaptations reveal the playwrights' intention to impose their supremacy over the translated play as translators supposedly lack dramaturgical abilities. In fact, the opinion many dramaturges and directors have about the translators' inability to produce a playable text seems to find

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<sup>36</sup> See David Johnston, 'Theatre Pragmatics', in *Stages of Translation*, pp. 57-66, (p. 65).

<sup>37</sup> Johnston, 'Theatre Pragmatics', p. 65.



its premises in the need to manipulate source texts to fit them into the local theatre conventions in order to obtain the approval of both critics and audience.

In the case under examination, the characters maintain their original names, the setting and costumes, by Anthony Ward, reproduce the Neapolitan ambiance, with an abundance of saints, food, and saucepans, while the language is anglicized. It is interesting to note that the domestication of the language has not been matched by the domestication of the gestures, as the director Richard Eyre employed a dialect coach, Joan Washington, to help the actors combine British language with Italian gesture.<sup>38</sup>

I argue that the degree of changes to the original text makes this version an adaptation rather than a translation. This is not due to substantial alterations made to the dialogues or to the place, but to the deep cultural relocation of it. Here the input of the translator has been so significant that the target text has its own cultural originality. It is useful to recall Patrice Pavis' view on theatre translation and cultural transfer. He maintains that theatre translation cannot be considered a purely linguistic activity, as it affects the *mise en scène* as a whole. In particular, he points out that 'the text is much more than a series of words: grafted on to it are ideological, ethnological, and cultural dimensions'.<sup>39</sup> In the Scouse version *Napoli Milionaria's* cultural identity derives mainly from the language used, as the emphasis on class which is pronounced in Tinniswood's translation is absent in the Italian version. Here, Tinniswood has, in fact, rewritten the foreign text, establishing his supremacy over it. As he declared in an interview with Brendan O'Keeffe he needed to obtain "literary respectability": "I felt that I've been disregarded because I've been so many different things. Critics are suspicious of that, even if audiences like it".<sup>40</sup> It is indicative

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<sup>38</sup> Acqua, 'Eduardo a Londra: Ricostruzione e analisi degli allestimenti', p. 39.

<sup>39</sup> See Patrice Pavis, 'Problems of translation for the stage: Interculturalism and post-modern theatre', p. 41.

<sup>40</sup> See Brendan O'Keeffe, 'Bray of Naples', *What's On*, 26 June 1991. See also Taviano, 'Italians on the Twentieth Century Stage: Theatrical Representations of Italianness in the English-speaking World'.

that the title of this article is 'Bray of Naples' where the members of the Jovine family are described as 'Neapolitans asserting themselves, continually hurling insults and not so much conversing as braying'. So the similarities between the two cities presented by Tinniswood as the reason at the heart of his adaptation can be regarded as secondary, while the drive to give his own imprint to the play appears to be more important.<sup>41</sup>

It is interesting that Michael Billington praised Ian McKellen's performance which could 'compete with what Thornton Wilder once called Eduardo's "powerful quiet"',<sup>42</sup> and one wonders how such a 'powerful quiet' can reflect 'cruel effervescence', 'dark brooding melancholy' and 'indomitable spirit'.<sup>43</sup> It is important to emphasize that translators should not be regarded as simply those who repeat a source text, but as creators of a text which, while preserving the identity of the source text, has a similar communicative function as in the source language. For this reason, adaptation and translation seem indeed incompatible, as the former aims to acculturate the Other to entertain the target audience, whereas the objective of translation is to achieve intercultural transfer.<sup>44</sup>

### **Translating Neapolitan into Scouse. What is the Outcome?**

Let us now turn to a comparative textual analysis of dialogues in both the Neapolitan text and the adaptation in Scouse language. As I have noted before, dialect is so deeply embedded in the regional culture it belongs to, that it is almost impossible to render its nuances into another cultural environment. Therefore, looking for equivalent results would prove both frustrating and sterile. Various strategies can be adopted, such as translating

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<sup>41</sup> In the same interview, Tinniswood affirms that 'There was no point in me adapting it, unless I brought some of my own character in – otherwise you may as well get a eunuch in to do it. I think I brought in a certain frenzy of dialogue'

<sup>42</sup> Billington, 'Family at War with Itself'.

<sup>43</sup> Tinniswood, Programme of *Napoli Milionaria*, National Theatre, 1991.

<sup>44</sup> The essay 'Nick Dear: Translation as Conservative Writing: In Conversation with David Johnston', is illuminating on the role of adaptation from the adaptor's point of view.

dialect with another dialect, with a localized accent or slang, with a dialect compilation or with a standard language.<sup>45</sup> Translating dialect with another dialect is the strategy adopted by Tinniswood.<sup>46</sup> Indeed, as mentioned before, his words on the choice of Scouse refer to it as ‘rhythm’, or ‘accent’, not as a dialect. On the other hand, according to Crystal, a dialect is ‘a regionally or socially distinctive variety of language, identified by a particular set of words and grammatical structures. Spoken dialects are also associated with a distinctive pronunciation or accent’.<sup>47</sup>

As I have explained in Chapter One, the contraposition between standard English and dialects has a strong social and political connotation, inasmuch as any variation from what is considered the ‘correct’ pronunciation or received pronunciation that is the standardized middle class form of English language<sup>48</sup> is looked down upon as the expression of a lower social class and generally speaking of an ugly and unpleasant idiom. Such a distinction between standard and vernacular emerged during the industrial revolution and consolidated during Victorian times, as a need of the ruling class that ‘wanted to devise a standard language out of many spoken idioms, which then became downgraded to dialects’.<sup>49</sup> In particular, the dominant class considered here was based in London as the core of commercial national activity, and extended to Oxford and Cambridge giving birth to the so called ‘East Midland dialect’. Conversely, the other idioms spoken

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<sup>45</sup> Perteghella, ‘Language and politics on stage’.

<sup>46</sup> On this point see the enlightening article by Manuela Perteghella ‘Language and politics on stage’ where she argues that ‘a further example of this translation practice [translating dialect with another dialect] was a production at the National Theater of *Napoli milionaria!* by Eduardo De Filippo’, in *Translation Review* 64 (2002) p. 47.

<sup>47</sup> See David Crystal, *A Dictionary of Linguistics and Phonetics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991), p. 193. For a thorough analysis of English dialects and accents, see also Peter Trudgill, who in his *The Dialects of England*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1980), p. 85 refers to ‘a number of dialects influenced by Irish English, such as the dialect of Liverpool, [which] has similarly developed youse as plural form of you’. See also Arthur Hughes & Peter Trudgill, *English Accents and Dialects: An Introduction to Social and Regional Varieties of British English* (London: Edward Arnold).

<sup>48</sup> See Marnie Holborow, *The Politics of English: A Marxist View of Language* (London: Sage Publications: 1999), p. 156.

<sup>49</sup> Holborow, *The Politics of English: A Marxist View of Language*, p. 157.

throughout the country, and especially those spoken in rural areas became increasingly declassed and associated with working class. Indeed, as Trudgil argues, although different accents and grammatical structures do not cause problems of communication, nonetheless they ‘do lead to stereotyping of speakers from certain areas as having certain characteristics’,<sup>50</sup> especially since regional dialects tend to carry a social connotation. In fact, ‘[i]n any given area we find a social scale of dialects, with people at the top of the social hierarchy tending to speak standard English, and with more and more nonstandard regional features occurring as we go down the social hierarchy’.<sup>51</sup>

As to the idiom spoken in Liverpool, one can say that regional collocation, peculiarity of the sounds and their association with a particular social class can identify Scouse as a dialect. Whether we call Scouse a dialect or an accent, it is interesting to note that in this adaptation the sociolect in the target text emerges mainly through slang and bad language. Such a choice seems to be motivated by the desire to offer a representation of working class people with strong regional connotations.<sup>52</sup> As I will show later in the analysis, dialect expressions do not necessarily coincide with swearing; in particular, in the play under examination Gennaro Jovine is a light-headed philosopher and a ‘disconsolate outsider’,<sup>53</sup> whereas his wife Amalia is toughened by the desperation of possibly seeing her family die of starvation unless she engages in illicit trafficking in the black market. In both cases there is hardly any sign of strong language, especially because the characters incarnate a *pater familias* and a wife dedicated to her family who turns into a matriarch to

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<sup>50</sup> Trudgill, *The Dialects of England*, p. 14.

<sup>51</sup> Trudgill, *The Dialects of England*, p. 4.

<sup>52</sup> Another explanation may be found in the use, during the eighties and nineties, of swear words and slang ‘as part of the representation of the British working class as a way of playing with the association of working-class speech as restricted, inferior, etc. The best work resituated ‘coarse’ language as beautiful, poetic and a powerful conveyor of meaning. Examples include Jim Cartright’s *Road*, Stephen Berkoff’s *East*’ (I would like to thank Dr. Nadine Holdsworth, who has written extensively on contemporary British theatre, with whom I had a conversation on 11 November 2008 which I have quoted in this footnote).

<sup>53</sup> See Claire Armistead, ‘Merseyside meets Napoli’, *Weekend FT*, 29 June 1991.

survive the horrors of war. A similar register applies in all the characters of the play. For example, although Amedeo and Maria Rosaria, undermine their father's opinions, and sometimes argue with their parents, they are always respectful. Similarly, the neighbours in the *vicolo* regard Don Gennaro as a very respectable person and this is clearly expressed by the language they use.

At the beginning of the play, Gennaro Jovine distances himself from his family's illicit business and reveals straight away his gentle, almost shy nature. His contempt derives from his moral integrity, and also from his desire to stay away from trouble, to lead a quiet, ordinary life. Here Gennaro tells his daughter that he disapproves of his wife selling coffee on the black market.

GENNARO (*c.s.*) Aspe'... No: «ca facimme nuie»... Ca facite vuie... Ca fa màmmeta...  
Pecché io nun 'o ffaciarrìa... Stu fatto ca hê campà 'e palpate: 'e gguardie, 'o  
brigadiere, 'e fasciste... (De Filippo, I, p. 49).

GENNARO (*off*) Oi, hold on. Hold your horses eh? Not so much of the 'our' if you don't  
mind. This coffee you and your mother make has got bugger all to do with me. It's out  
of my province, is that coffe of yours. If the *cops* come bursting in and catch you red-  
handed with it, then that's your business. Don't drag me in it. (Tinniswood, I, 253)

In two lines Gennaro's thought is made clear and so are his fears. In the translation, the words 'Pecché io nun 'o ffaciarrìa' (Because I wouldn't do it) become 'This coffee you and your mother make has got bugger all to do with me'. Here, the word 'palpate', that is 'anxiety', which expresses his gentle nature, has been omitted in the target text, while the word 'brigadiere', which shows reverence is rendered with 'cops'.

The next extract, from the first act describes the dialogue between Gennaro and his son Amedeo. Here Gennaro expresses his disdain towards his family's profiteering and involvement in the black market. It is clear that he is considered an outsider, who lives in a world of his own:

AMEDEO Papà, vuie cierti ccose nun 'e ccapite... Site 'e n'ata epoca. (*Maria Rosaria fa un cenno al fratello come per dire: «Non dargli importanza». Allude al padre*) Eppure dice buono!

GENNARO Dice buono, è ove'? Sòreta t'ha fatto segno: «Nun 'o dà retta...» Perché io sono scoccante, nun capisco niente... Poveri a voi... Che generazione sbagliata... (*Piccola pausa*). Io po', voglio sapé na cosa 'a te... Il caffè che voi vendete tre lire 'a tazza, 'o contrabbandiere ca 'o vvenne a vvuie addó o ppiglia? Non lo sottrae alle cliniche, agli ospedali, alle infemerie militari?... (*De Filippo, I, 50*)

AMEDEO Ach, there's no point talking to you. You're pots for rags, you are. You don't understand nothing. Not a dicky bird. You're living on a different planet. You are.

*MARIA motions for him to ignore GENNARO. He shrugs his shoulders.*

All right, all right. I suppose he might have a point.

GENNARO (*off*) Oh, might he? Well, well, you're changing your tune, aren't you? I shouldn't bother. I know your sister's told you to pay no attention to me. And she's right. Well, I'm just a simple old fogey, aren't I? I don't understand nothing. Poor old sod, you've got to feel sorry for him, haven't you? Well, listen to me, my little chucky eggs. You're the ones I feel sorry for. You lot. Dear God above, what a crazy, mixed-up generation. (*Pause*) Tell me something. Just tell me this. You know that coffee you sell to the punters for three lire a cup? Well, has it occurred to you where the black

marketeers get it from? I'll tell you. They get it from the clinics and the hospitals and the infirmaries and the children's wards and the... (Tinniswood, I, 254)

A comparison between the two texts shows straight away the wordiness of the English version. This reflects directly on the rhythm of the lines as well as on the physical acting, which is accentuated to support the dialogue expanded by extra words such as 'You lot' or 'Dear God' or the reference to the children and the wards. On the contrary, what is striking in the source text is its concision, which effectively portrays in a few lines the generation gap between Gennaro and his children. Here, the tone is of resignation, since Gennaro can almost foresee the outcome of their family's attitude.

The second element of the adapted dialogue is the use of colloquialisms and grammatical mistakes to give a working class inflection. Indeed, although the language of the source text is dialect, it is grammatically correct. Besides, the words 'poveri a voi... Che generazione sbagliata...' in standard Italian as opposed to dialect give solemnity to the warning of Gennaro to his children. Another example can be found in the dialogue describing the argument between Amedeo and Gennaro who ate his son's pasta leftovers during the night. In the English version the aggressive tone of the character is striking.

AMEDEO Ma io nun me faccio capace... Vuie magnate 'e notte? Ve susite apposta?

GENNARO (*spazientito*) Oi ni', tu quanto si' scucciante? Tu quann'anne vuo' campà?!

Me sóso apposta! Hê 'a vedé cu che piacere me so' susuto, stanotte... L'allarme nun l'hê sentuto? Doie ore e meza 'e ricovero. So' turnato â casa con un freddo addosso...

Non potevo dormire, pe via di un poco di languidezza di stomaco... Me so' ricurdato ca ce stéveno duie maccarune rimaste: putevo sapé 'e chi erano? Chille erano tale e quale ê mieie! (De Filippo, I, 52)

AMEDEO It beats me, this does. I'm stumped. How do you do it? Do you get up special in the middle of the night? Snuffle, snuffle like a little mouse, eh? Gobble up all the leftovers, eh? Eat other people's food so you can keep going till morning, eh? What next? I'll tell you. You'll be prowling round at night eating our socks and our kecks.

GENNARO (*off*) What a song and dance to make over a miserable bit of spaghetti.

AMEDEO It was not a miserable bit. It was a large bit. And it was mine.

GENNARO (*off*) Listen to him. Just listen to him. Anyone'd think it was the end of the world. Get up special in the middle of the night, he says. Well, I don't suppose old clever dick there happened to notice the air raid sirens last night, did he? Sirens – you know. (*Mimics them*) I suppose he slept through it all. Well, I didn't. Oh no. Two and a half hours in the shelter I was. And frozen to the bloody marrow when I got back. Frozen stiff. Perished. And I couldn't sleep, could I? And I felt hungry. And then I remembered – there was a bit of spaghetti left over from supper. Fine. Dandy. How the hell was I to know it was yours? You know what you want to do? Next time you want to put your name on it. On the bowl there. Write it large, eh? 'Property of Amedeo – Bugger off.' What a fuss and palaver about nothing. (Tinniswood, I, 257).

As in previous examples, the dialogue is considerably longer than the original, and Gennaro's tone is aggressive rather than self-justifying. Besides, the comic effect of the final sentence in the source text 'Chille erano tale e quale ê mieie!' which also declares the incident closed, is cut in the translation. The harshness of Gennaro's words is expressed throughout the play by exclamations like 'Oh God!', 'Christ!', 'Ye Gods!', 'bugger', 'bollocks' and 'bloody!' used in different versions such as 'Bloody old ratbag'. These are mirrored by the other characters' lines, with frequent recourse to words such as 'arse', 'shit', 'bitch', 'old cow' and so on. Such a characterization not only has given a socially



derogatory image of Gennaro, but it has also changed his nature of light-headed idealist into an angry pessimist. The following extract shows this metamorphosis. It is taken from one of the most famous scenes of the play, where Gennaro, while shaving, lingers over his idealistic and rather impractical views on the issue of price fixing imposed by the authorities, which has led to the development of the black market. The scene has a very slow pace, mostly built around Gennaro's little morning ritual. It is also rather comic, as Gennaro, only half dressed, begins a sort of public speech for his improvised audience which finds it difficult to follow. Interestingly, the director Richard Eyre constructed the English character of Gennaro Jovine as the Neapolitan's double making sure that the two match exactly.<sup>54</sup> Nonetheless, such a striking physical resemblance makes a rather sharp contrast with the register used in translation. The dialogue is between Gennaro and Federico, a neighbour who has just bought a cup of coffee from Amalia's black market competitor.

FEDERICO Ma 'o ccafè vuosto è n'ata cosa; ce l'aggio ditto pure a essa. (*Notando freddezza intorno, si rivolge a don Gennaro, per attaccar discorso*) Don Genna', ve state facenn' 'a barba?

GENNARO No. (*Freddo*) Me sto taglianno e calle! Ma nun 'o vvide ca me sto facenno 'a barba? C'è bisogno 'e domandà? Domande inutili. Conservateve 'o fiato e parlate quando siete interrogati!

FEDERICO E va bene, ho sbagliato. (*Scherzoso alludendo alla situazione bellica*) Don Genna', che dicite? A mettimmo a posto, sta situazione?

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<sup>54</sup> See illustration n. 5 at the back of this Thesis.

GENNARO Tu vuoi scherzare. E io ti dico ca s'io fosse ministro... di... non so quale ramo, perché nun saccio 'a qua' Ministero dipende, aggiustasse subeto subeto 'a situazione... (De Filippo, I, 59)

FEDERICO Oh no. her coffee's rubbish. Gnat's piss, it is. Nothing like yours. I told her so. Oh, aye, I did. I said: 'This coffee's not a patch on Donna Amalia's. And it isn't. I mean to say, it's... it's... (*Silence. He changes the subject*) Having a shave, are you, Don Gennaro?

GENNARO Having a shave? Me? Good God, no. I'm having a crap, aren't I?

FEDERICO Sorry. I seem to have said the wrong thing.

GENNARO Look, mate, instead of asking bloody stupid questions, why not save your breath and speak when you're spoken to?

FEDERICO Yes. Right. (*Pause*) What do you think of the war then, Don Gennaro? How do you think things are going?

GENNARO Don't try that on with me, son. I know what you're up to. You're trying to take a rise out of me, aren't you?

FEDERICO No, I'm not.

GENNARO Ye, you are. Well, you just pin back your lugholes and listen to me. All I'll say about the war is this – as far as I'm concerned, if it was left to me and I was the Minister of Whatshisname in charge, I'd have the whole bloody lot sorted out tomorrow. (Tinniswood, I, 266)

As the reasoning progresses, the contrast between source and target text becomes more evident:

GENNARO [...] Dunque... Il calmiere... Il calmiere, secondo me è stato creato ad uso e consumo di certe tale e quale persone... che sol perché sanno tènere 'a penna mmano

fanno 'e prufessure, sempe a vantaggio loro e a danno nostro. Danno morale e materiale; quello morale prima e quello materiale dopo... E me spiego. Il calmiere significa praticamente: «siccome tu nun saie campà, lèvate 'a miezo ca te mpar'io comme se campà!». Ma nun è ca nuie, cioè 'o popolo nun sape campà... È il loro interesse di dire che il popolo è indolente, è analfabeta, non è maturo... E tanto fanno e tanto dicono ca se pigliano 'e rrétene mmano e addeventano 'e padrone. (De Filippo, I, 61)

GENNARO [...] Now then, what was I saying? Ah, yes, price control. (*Warming to his subject*) The thing is, price control was brought in for one reason and one reason only – benefit a specific strata of people. What strata of people you ask? I'll tell you – the people who know how to hold a pen.

ERRICO What people?

GENNARO The professors, of course. The intellectuals. The bastards who know how to work things out to their advantage and to our disadvantage. Well, don't look so gormless. It's perfectly simple. What they're saying about price control is this: 'Listen here, you silly twats, you don't know how to manage on what you've got, so we'll take it off you and manage it on your behalf. And so what they're doing ipso facto is to make out that ordinary people, folk like you and me, are too thick, lazy and pig ignorant to take responsibility for anything. So what do they do then? They go on and on about it so that by time they've finished, everyone is so confused they believe them, and so they end up being in the cat bird seat. (Tinniswood, I, 269)

The tone of the discourse in the two versions is clearly very different, and that applies to the other characters as well. The content of Gennaro's reasoning is carefully articulated through the use of standard Italian to underscore the parts which are more philosophical and

dialect to highlight closeness to the listeners. He articulates his thoughts in a simple though logical way, leading his listeners to understand that the governors only act in their own interests keeping the population in a subaltern position. The power of his speech comes from its being understated, whispered and not shouted. It must be underscored that the invective is in no way against the intellectuals, of which Eduardo felt he was part, but against the bureaucrats, who pretend to act in the interest of the population and instead use power to their own advantage. The reference to the 'bastard intellectuals', therefore, is incorrect. Similarly, the 'pig ignorant' is not somebody who refuses to be educated, on the contrary it is the whole mass of population which has been deprived of education and kept in a state of ignorance. I argue that the tone and the register of this dialogue is crucial in the transfer of the discourse between cultures. The appropriation of the text through the language and rhythm has once more created an assimilation of the source culture to the target one.

Turning now to an examination of the female characters, I will illustrate how their language is similarly impoverished and how for some of them aggressiveness prevails. In this instance I will analyze dialogues involving Amalia. As I have explained before, she is the person who has been most severely affected by the war, and her despair has changed her nature altogether. From a devoted mother and wife she has turned into a ruthless profiteer. This, however, is represented in the source text through a careful balance in the words she uses even when expressing her utmost anger. In the following extract Amalia is talking about her competitor on the black market Donna Vicenza to whom she regrets having been kind.

AMALIA Chella steva sempe menata dint'o vascio mio... N'ha avuto robbba 'a me! (*Con accentuato sarcasmo rievocando passate cortesie*)... L'uovo frisco... 'o pezzullo 'e

bullito... ‘o piattello ‘e maccarune... Dio ‘o ssape chello che costa nu poco ‘e schifezza  
‘e magnà, salvann ‘a grazia’e Ddio, quando ‘o tturove... (*Irritata, rievocando con  
rimorso la sua passata dabbenaggine*) Nu metro e mezzo ‘e lana pesante p’ ‘a figlia...  
(De Filippo, I, 53)

AMALIA Two-faced old bitch. How many times has she been round here groveling and  
fawning, wheedling and whingeing? (*Mimics her*) ‘Oh, Dona Amalia, love, you don’t  
happen to have a fresh egg, do you?’ ‘Oh dear, oh dear, Donna Amalia, I seem to be  
right out of spaghetti this morning.’ In and out of here all day she is. In and out like a  
stoker’s shovel. There’s no end to it. A joint of boiled beef here. A hunk of salami  
there. And food’s not cheap either, Donna Peppene’. And even when you can get your  
hands on it, half the time it’s not fit to sling to the cat. Do you know what I gave her  
daughter the other week? I gave her a metre and a half of heavy wool. A metre and a  
half! I’m a bloody fool, me. I’m going right off me beanpole. Honest to God, without a  
word of a lie, I’m convinced I’m going simple. (Tinniswood, I, 259)

The main difference between the source and the target text lies in the shift of attention from  
Amalia to her neighbor. Amalia’s good heart is expressed through the diminutives she uses  
for the food she gave to Donna Vicenza, namely ‘l’uovo frisco... ‘o pezzullo ‘e bullito... ‘o  
piattello ‘e maccarune’, showing her thoughtfulness and care. In the translation, on the  
other hand, emphasis falls on the mimicking of the woman’s gestures and on her being  
double-faced. Besides, the wealth of English idiomatic expressions aiming at achieving a  
colloquial style, are not present in the source text, apart from the religious reference in the  
sentence ‘salvann ‘a grazia’e Ddio’, which literally means ‘saving God’s gifts’, that is the  
scarcely available food. This monologue, too, while considerably longer than the original,  
serves to exacerbate the already tense atmosphere. So, it is not surprising that some critics

have defined Amalia as ‘a small-town Clytemnestra with a red gash of a mouth and a heart of granite’,<sup>55</sup> or as ‘Cruella de Vill’.<sup>56</sup>

A similar escalation of rage is portrayed in the dialogue between Amalia and her daughter Maria Rosaria. The girl is taking advantage of the fact that her mother is too busy with black-market food commerce to control her, so she goes round with some girl friends, flirting with American soldiers. Amalia has just slapped the girl on her face as the night before she came home late. This was a typical reaction a strong willed mother would have with her children.

MARIA ROSARIA (*la mano sulla guancia, poco sorpresa dell'accaduto per nulla insolito, risponde con tono deciso e indispettito*) Io iètte cu ddoie cumpagne meie a vedé ‘o cinematografo â “Sala Roma”.

AMALIA (*col tono di chi non ammette replica, ma senza drammatizzare*) E nun ce aviv ‘a ì. (*Quasi parlando a se stessa*) Cu ‘o scuramento che ce sta, te retire all’una e nu quarto... Dint’ ‘o vico che diceno? Aieressera nun facètemo ll’opera peccché era tarde... Ma cammina deritto si no te manno ô campusanto! Va’ fa’ ‘o ccafè, ca si no accumulenciano a venì e cliente...

*Maria Rosaria tace, un po’ mortificata, ma con lieve disappunto esce* (De Filippo, I, 56)

MARIA (*unbowed*) I only went to the pictures with some mates. What’s the harm in that?

AMALIA Plenty. There’s every harm in the world not doing as you’re told. One o’ clock in the morning you got back last night. What sort of time do you call that? And in the blackout, too. No wonder people are talking – nosey load of buggers. You don’t find your father and me gallivanting out all hours. We stayed in all night specifically so we

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<sup>55</sup> See John Peter, ‘Exploding the Italian connection’, *Sunday Times*, 30 June 1991.

<sup>56</sup> See Benedict Nightingale, ‘Fight for the soul of Naples’, *The Times*, 28 June 1991.

couldn't be caught out late in the blackout. We don't want people talking about us. This is a respectable house, this, and I intend to keep it that way. I'm telling you lady. I'm warning you here and now – watch your step or there'll be all hell let loose. Understand? Understand what I'm saying? (MARIA *stares at her coldly*) Don't you look at me in that tone of voice, my girl. Don't you flash your eyes at me. Shift yourself and get that coffee made. Shift yourself before the *punters* are round here screaming their bloody heads off.

*MARIA goes out to the scullery still unbowed* (Tinniswood, I. 262,)

Here the stage directions are enlightening in the interpretation of the two characters. Maria Rosaria accepts her mother's authority, and even though she tries to rebel '*la mano sulla guancia, poco sorpresa dell'accaduto per nulla insolito, risponde con tono deciso e indispettito*' in the end she accepts her mother's scolding: 'Maria Rosaria tace, un po' mortificata, ma con lieve disappunto esce'. On the other hand Amalia, angry though she may be, keeps a relatively calm tone, '*col tono di chi non ammette replica, ma senza drammatizzare*' especially because she is more worried about getting the coffee ready for the customers than the possible danger to her daughter. Indeed, Amalia's lines are quite short and go straight to the point of the girl's disobedience to declare the issue over. The English version, on the contrary, places a great deal of emphasis on the row between the two women and on the aggressive attitude of Amalia, expanding the dialogues through repetitions 'This is a respectable house, this, and I intend to keep it that way. I'm telling you lady. I'm warning you here and now – watch your step or there'll be all hell let loose. Understand? Understand what I'm saying?' and extra comments 'nosey load of bugger' or 'before the punters are round here screaming their bloody heads off' which exacerbate the

exchange of lines. Interestingly, there are no stage directions describing Amalia's tone, which is characterized instead by the long-windedness of her reprimand.

The next passage reproduces a dialogue between Amalia and Riccardo, a neighbor who used to be a clerk with a good salary. He too had to seek Amalia's help in order to feed his family and sold her all his assets to pay for black market goods. He has just received a threat of eviction from Amalia's lawyers and is pleading for a deferral, but Amalia is immovable.

AMALIA Ma scusate... Ma cheste so' belli cchiacchiere... (*Ad Errico che insiste nel guardarla per farla rabbonire, con tono che non ammette replica*) Oi ni', àssance fà. (*Si alza accesa*) Ma vuie 'e solde v'e 'e ssapìsteve piglià... Mo mi venite a dire, ca 'e duie quartine vuoste m' 'âccattaie io... E nun ve l'aggio pavate? (*Riccardo cerca di calmarla, temendo la chiassata*) Ma pecché, quanno dint' 'a casa mia simme state diune, simme venute addù vuie? (*Convinta e vendicativa*) 'E figlie mieie nun hanno sofferto 'a famma? Nuie, quanno vuie tenìveve 'o posto e 'a sera ve facìveve 'e ppasseggiate a perdere tiempo nnanze 'e vvetrine, mangiàvemo scorze 'e pesielle vullute cu nu pizzeco 'e sale, doie pummarole e senza grasso... (*Perde il controllo. Va sempre più gridando*) Mo me dispiace! Ma io chesto me trovo: 'e duie quartine vuoste e 'a casa addó state vuie... Pigliateve 'e ccinquantamila lire 'a mano 'e ll'avvocato. E si vulite rummané dint' 'a casa, che v'arricorda quanno vuie mangiàveve e nuie stévemo diune, pagate 'o mensile. E si no ve ne iate ca ce facite piacere. Mo lassàtece, ca avimmo che fà... (*Mettendo Riccardo alla porta*) Sfullammo! Sfullammo! Iate, ragiunie', ca 'o gghì è sempe buono. (De Filippo, II, 103)

AMALIA Oh yes, this is all very well. All this fine talk. All to me, sunshine, you weren't behind the door when it came to grabbing the money I offered you. You knew when



you were onto a good thing. Okay, so it was me bought your two apartments. What are you suggesting – that you weren't paid for them (*Before he can answer she ploughs on with increasing anger*) You make me sick. You make me want to throw up. When we were starving, did we come groveling to you? Did we come whingeing and whining? I suppose my children never went hungry, did they? Oh no, they never had to go without, did they? And you? While we were pinching and scraping, having to eat any old shit we could lay our hands on, you were in your secure and comfy well-paid job, weren't you, and you'd all the time in the world to gossip and go window shopping. You piss me off. All you had to do was find the money you owed me, and the house would still be yours. Well, you haven't, have you? So go round to my lawyers, collect your fifty thousand lire and get out of my hair. On the other hand if you want to stay on in the house to remind you of the times you were doing fine and dandy and we were wondering where the next meal was coming from, then pay the rent. That's all you've got to do, sunshine – pay the rent. If you can't, that's your problem. It's not mine. Right? So just go, will you? Bugger off. (*She pushes him towards the street door*) Clear off out of it. Out, out. (Tinniswood, II, 315)

Here, the preoccupation to present the Neapolitan inflamed spirit of Donna Amalia, has resulted in long-windiness, emphatic tones and strong language. Amalia's words, though aggressive they might be, keep the social distance between her and the interlocutor, with whom she maintains the pronoun *voi* instead of using the *tu* which implies that the speakers are on the same level. Even when she describes her family's starvation, she refers simply to 'scorze 'e pesielle vullute cu nu pizzeco 'e sale, doie pummarole e senza grasso...', that is boiled peas shells, with a little salt and tomatoes without any condiment. The translation, however, is 'having to eat any old shit we could lay our hands on'. Besides, it is worth

noticing how words such as 'piglià' (to take), and 'simme venute' (came) have been translated as 'grabbing' and 'groveling' with a much stronger connotation.

The same register applies to the other female characters, who, despite their age and relationship with the main characters, use bad language, as in the case of Adelaide, an old woman, who addresses Gennaro who has just come back from concentration camp, saying phrases such as '«This is your house, you silly old bugger»' or '«Come on Don Gennaro. Sit down. Park your arse, lad»'. Noticeably, the register in the original is somewhat different, as Adelaide's words are, in the first example, '«È cca, don Genna'... Trasìte... Chesta è a casa vostra... 'A mugliera vostra, 'a vedite?»', and in the second example, '«Don Genna' assettateve!»' where jargon and colloquialisms are absent, and the tone is concerned rather than jolly, as the woman, who understands Gennaro's distress, uses gentle manners to welcome him.

## Section II

### An American Version of *Napoli milionaria!*

#### The Translation by Linda Alper and Beatrice Basso

In this section I am going to look at an American translation of *Napoli Milionaria!* by Linda Alper and Beatrice Basso, who was also the dramaturge, commissioned by the Oregon Shakespeare Festival in Ashland. The play which opened on the 23<sup>rd</sup> April and run until the 30<sup>th</sup> October 2005 in the Angus Bowmer Theatre at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival, was directed by Libby Alpel, Amalia Jovine was played by Linda Alper and Richard Elmore played Gennaro Jovine. The sets and the costumes accurately reproduced World War II Naples.<sup>57</sup> The play had a very good response from both the audience and the critics who defined it ‘an absorbing and timeless story with universal appeal’,<sup>58</sup> although some noticed that the play ‘bogs down a bit in moralizing as it winds toward completion’.<sup>59</sup>

In a telephone interview with Beatrice Basso,<sup>60</sup> I discussed translation issues related to the rendering of dialect into English. Beatrice, born in Veneto, has also translated *Sabato, domenica e lunedì*, and in both cases she treated Neapolitan as a foreign language as it was so far from her native dialect. On some occasions, she had to ask her Neapolitan friends for advice on expressions that were totally obscure to her. The translation was done into American English, as in previous occasions the use of British English had proven incomprehensible for the American audiences. The translation issues related to the rewriting of *Napoli milionaria!* were the same as the ones analyzed in an article she wrote

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<sup>57</sup> The information about the production was provided in the ‘Interview with the translators’, in the forewords of the script of the play.

<sup>58</sup> See Ron Cowan, ‘A lively, penetrating look at human failings and foib’, *Salem Statesman Journal*, 28 June 2005.

<sup>59</sup> See Bob Keefer, ‘Family tested by war and money’, *Eugene Register-Guard*, 27 June 2005.

<sup>60</sup> The interview took place on 17 December 2007.

with reference to her translation of *Sabato, domenica e lunedì* to which she referred during the course of the interview. In particular, she underscored that the need to convey the cultural aspects of the text has to take into account that ‘understanding the cultural elements does not necessarily mean being able to re-create them successfully in another culture’,<sup>61</sup> as clichés can constitute a predominant element of the translation. One point that was very clear is that the choices made by the translator had to fulfill both the actors’ acting conventions and the audience’s expectations. This resulted in the adjustment of the theatrical language to meet the canons of the receiving milieu. In this section I will analyze the choices made in the translation of *Napoli milionaria!*, by looking at the linguistic structure and at the rhythm in the text. The script I am going to examine has been provided by Beatrice Basso, and is the Official Script of the 2005 Oregon Shakespeare Festival Production.

The key features of this version can be summarized as the re-shaping of the play’s architecture in terms of length of dialogues and stage directions, which have been either condensed or cut altogether, and in the creation of a new theatrical rhythm, through short, quickly paced dialogues. From a linguistic viewpoint, the main characteristic resides in the use of standard English. The code-switching of the source text has been eliminated in the translation, which shows no reference to vernacular, neither in terms of register, nor in terms of certain expressions, except for the use of words such as ‘mammà’, ‘mammeta’, ‘papà’, ‘maccheroni’, ‘buongiorno’, ‘signurì’, ‘pastina’, ‘malafemmina’ and some exclamation such as ‘Madonna!’. Interestingly, these Italianisms are interspersed with English so that they create a sense of exoticism in the dialogue, as it happens in the

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<sup>61</sup> See Beatrice Basso, ‘Italian Dramaturg in a Translation Process’, in *Theatre Topics*, 13.1 (2003), pp. 161-163 (p. 161).

following extract from the opening of the play. Gennaro has just been woken up by the quarrel outside his *basso* between his wife and the neighbor about the price of coffee.

*Dalla cameretta di fortuna, creata dal tramezzo, si ode insieme ad uno strano suono umano che sembra un grugnito, la voce fioca, impastata di Gennaro.*

GENNARO Me so' scetato, me so' scetato... Sto scetato d' 'e ccinche! M'ha scetato màmmeta! Già, quanno maie, dint'a sta casa, s'è potuto durmì nu poco supierchio...  
(*Internamente, nel vicolo la lite si fa più violenta; la voce di Amalia sovrasta.*)...  
Siéntela, sie'... Ih che sceruppo! (De Filippo, I, 49)

GENNARO (*from within the curtained room*) Your papà is not asleep. He hasn't been asleep for hours. How could anyone sleep here? (*A shriek is heard outside.*) Ahhh. The voice of an angel. Your Mámmeta. What's she doing out there? (Alper & Basso, I, 2)

Gennaro is talking to his children; therefore he uses dialect as a means of intimacy. Besides, he refers to the time 'five 'o clock' to specify that his wife woke him up with her arguing with the neighbor and not because he woke up naturally. On a grammatical level, the word 'màmmeta', with a grave accent on the 'a', means literally 'your mother';<sup>62</sup> therefore, the translation 'your mámmeta', with an acute accent, appears to be both phonetically and grammatically incorrect because it suggests a double possessive. Other mistranslations of dialect expressions can be seen in Act One, where the word 'scignetella', which means unattractive girl, has been translated as 'that monkey faced daughter of

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<sup>62</sup> In the same way, 'pateto' 'sòreta', and 'frateto' and so on, mean respectively your father, your sister and your brother. The suffix 'to' and 'ta' are the possessive adjectives.

hers'.<sup>63</sup> Here the reference to the monkey, conjures up a whole image of a rachitic, not good looking creature, rather than specific facial features. Further on, Amedeo refers to a character with the nickname of 'Córa 'e Sórice' meaning 'Rat's tail', which has been translated as 'son of Sorice' as if the person was identified by his relation to Sorice who is his father.<sup>64</sup> Further on in the play, in Act Two, Peppe is haggling with Federico on the purchase of some second-hand tyres. Peppe is telling Federico that the purchase is a bargain, so he must stop asking for a reduction in price.

PEPPE Allora aviss'a piglià duicentosissantamila lire, cu nu vaso ncoppa e me l'aviss'a dà.  
(*Alludendo ai pneumatici in questione*) Chelle a quatt'ati iuorne p' 'e ppiglià ce vonno  
trecientomila lire. (De Filippo, II. 98)

PEPPE If you're such a genius, you'd count out two hundred and sixty thousand and hand it  
to me with a vase on top. Or wait a week, and it'll cost you three hundred. (Alper &  
Basso, II. 42)

What Peppe is saying to his perspective customer is that the price is so good that he should give him the money with a big 'thank you'. Indeed, the expression 'cu nu vaso ncoppa' means that the person must kiss the money showing his appreciation for the bargain. The word 'vaso' far from meaning vase means kiss. Consequently, the mistranslation has conveyed a rather obscure message, suggesting the image of somebody who pays the money putting a vase on top of the bunch of banknotes!

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<sup>63</sup> Alper & Basso, I, 6.

<sup>64</sup> In Chapter Two I have shown how nicknames become the sole identification of some characters, especially when they belong to lower social strata.

A more substantial misinterpretation of the Source text is visible in Act Two, Scene Two, which corresponds to the original Act Three. This is a crucial point in the play, where Gennaro makes his wife realize that she has turned into a greedy racketeer, and he does so through a very long monologue during which he considers the power of money. The following extract refers to this specific point:

GENNARO [...] Tu ll'hê accuminciate a vedé a poco â vota, po' cchiù assaie, po' cientomila, po' nu milione... E nun hê capito niente cchiù... (*Apri un tiretto del comò e prende due, tre pacchi di biglietti da mille di occupazione. Li mostra ad Amalia*) Guarda ccà. A te t'hanno fatto impressione pecché ll'hê viste tutte nzieme... A me, vedendo tutta sta quantità 'e carte 'e mille lire me pare nu scherzo, me pare na pazzia... (*Ora alla rinfusa fa scivolare i biglietti di banca sul tavolo sotto gli occhi della moglie*) Tiene mente, Ama': io 'e ttocco e nun me sbatt 'o core... E o core adda sbattere quanno se toccano 'e ccarte 'e mille lire... (De Filippo, III. 149)

GENNARO [...] (*He takes out a packet of lire notes*) This isn't shocking to you, because you've seen them come in, a few at a time... a hundred thousand... then a million... (*He spreads the money out before Amalia*) I touch it, and my heart pounds. Anyone's would. (Alper & Basso, II, II, 74)

The sentence 'Tiene mente, Ama': io 'e ttocco e nun me sbatt 'o core... E o core adda sbattere quanno se toccano 'e ccarte 'e mille lire...' mean 'Look, I touch the money and I feel no excitement, when it should be quite the opposite', the expression 'nun me sbatte 'o core' means literally 'my heart doesn't pound'. Here, the part of the dialogue referring to the effects that a large quantity of money can have on people that is make them lose their minds, has been omitted in translation, and this may be the reason for the subsequent

mistranslation of the central part of the monologue conveying the exact opposite of the original.

Looking now at examples of idiomatic expressions, in another scene Riccardo tries to obtain from Amalia a reduction in price of the black-market goods she sells to him by appealing to her pity, and he says “Â fine ‘o mese faccio i capelli bianchi...’, which refers to the old saying that worries make the hair turn grey. This has been translated literally as ‘Come the end of month, the only thing I have are some new grey hairs’,<sup>65</sup> losing the idiomatic expression. From a different standpoint, the re-shaping of the play, which has resulted in its length’s reduction, regards the elimination of idiomatic expressions such as ‘Chella è na faccia verde, fàveza e mpechèra’, meaning ‘She is an envious, false crook’, used to describe Amalia’s competitor. Similarly, in Act One, a quarrel between Amedeo and his father takes place when Amedeo finds out that the plate of leftover pasta, which he had saved the night before for his breakfast, has been eaten by Gennaro during the night. In an outburst of rage Amedeo threatens to break everything in the house but Gennaro, who claims he does not remember whom the leftovers belong to, stops the argument saying: “Gué, tu ‘a vuo’ fernì? Che scasse? Io overamente nun me ricordo! Tu staie facenno chistu ballo in maschera!”. This has been translated as ‘Amedeo. Enough. Don’t wreck anything. It was just a little maccheroni!’.<sup>66</sup> Interestingly, while the reference to the ‘ballo in maschera’ meaning the big fuss about such an irrelevant issue has been omitted, in translation we find the Italianization of the dialect ‘Chille erano tantille ‘e maccarune’ which has been standardized and skimmed of its vernacular identity. Similarly, in the dialogue in Act Two involving Errico other culture-bound expressions have been cut. Here Errico explains to Amalia that he has not been able to arrive earlier at the dinner as he had a

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<sup>65</sup> Alper & Basso, I, 17.

<sup>66</sup> Alper & Basso, I, 5.



busy day. The exhilarating effect is once more obtained through carefully constructed lines, where the narration is enriched by cultural and comic references. Also in this case, the English dialogues have been broken up so that the pace is defined by a repartee between the characters:

ERRICO E grazie ancora. (*Galante*) Però voi non dovete alzare neanche una sedia da qua llà. Io e Amedeo abbiamo provveduto a tutto. (*Siede a destra accanto al tavolo*) Dunque vi dicevo... Sarei venuto prima ma ho avuto un poco da fare. Aggi'avut'a fà partì due camion per la Calabria e si nun staie presente durante 'o carico 'a rrobba sparisce... L'aggio cunsignate, m'hanno dat' 'o scecche e me ne so' ghiuto. Po' aggio perza na meza iurnata tra l'A.C.C. 'a B.V.B., 'a sega sega Mastu Ci'... 'o sango 'e chi ll'è bivo... E chi Madonna 'e ccapisce... Ccà p'avé nu permesso ce vò 'a mano 'e Ddio... Po' so' ghiuto na mez'ora abbascio 'a Réfice... e a questo proposito v'aggi' a parlà... Me so' ghiuto a vèstere ca parevo nu scarricante d' 'o puorto... ed eccomi qua... Amedeo è venuto? (De Filippo, II, 97)

ERRICO Amedeo and I took care of everything. I don't want you to lift a finger.

AMALIA I was hoping you'd come by this morning...

ERRICO There was a lot going on. Two trucks were on their way to Calabria. You know how it is. If I'm not there, watching every second when they load up, things have a way of falling off. To get a permit from the Americans these days, you need a handshake with God. I went home to change. I smelled like the docks. Is Amedeo here? (Alper & Basso, II, 40)

Interestingly, all cultural elements have been eliminated in the English version. This may be due to length exigencies requiring a quicker exchange of lines. Another reason for this

cut may be the fact that the reference to ‘a sega sega Mastu Ci’...’, which is the beginning of a nursery rhyme, ‘o sango ‘e chi ll’è bivo...’ which is a curse, or to ‘a Réfice’,<sup>67</sup> which refers to the jewelers quarters in Naples, may have been obscure to the translator, and therefore they have been cut. It is a pity, though that this comic element has been eliminated as this has somewhat flattened the dialogue.

Another way in which the text has been reduced is with cuts of stage directions. As I have previously underlined, Eduardo used stage directions on the one hand to give instruction to the actors and on the other to express his own views on theatre and on life. In the following extract, the stage directions serve both aims of indicating what theatrical language is to be used on stage and to instruct the actress. A further crucial scene is in Act One, where Gennaro has to pretend to be dead so that the police officer will not search the place for black-market goods which are stashed under the bed where the ‘corpse’ is lying. But the police officer suspects that the death is a fiction and the risk that he might look under the bed is high.

AMALIA (*lo ferma con un gesto disperato*) No, brigadie’! (*Gli si aggrappa alle ginocchia, sciolta in lacrime. A questo punto l’attrice dovrà raggiungere l’attimo più straziante e drammatico, senza nessuna venatura di caricatura, un po’ per la perfezione della finzione che raggiunge sempre il nostro popolo, e un po’ pure perché il pericolo è grosso*) (De Filippo, I, 81)

AMALIA (*She throws herself at Ciappa’s knees.*) No! Officer, please. (*She bursts into tears, achieving a totally believable Neapolitan grief*) (Alper & Basso, I, 28)

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<sup>67</sup> This is the distorted name of an area in Naples called ‘gli Orefici’, where jewellery wholesalers have their base.

What a ‘totally believable Neapolitan grief’ may be is difficult to guess unless the stage direction refers to the stereotypical image of an overexcited, melodramatic woman pleading for mercy. However, if this was the case, it would be in contrast with both the intention and specific directions of the source text. In this instance, on the one hand the stage direction has been drastically cut, on the other it has been wholly reinterpreted in light of a domestic idea of Neapolitan pathos, which seems to reappear in another stage direction describing Amalia’s outburst as a ‘full Neapolitan fury’.

Stage directions have been manipulated also to create a different rhythm and give a quicker pace to the acting. In the scene in Act Two between Amalia and her partner and, so far platonic lover, Errico. Amalia has just received a letter which makes her believe that Gennaro, whom they thought may be dead, is indeed alive. This has created both surprise and a certain degree of disappointment in the two who were becoming more and more affectionate to each other. Amalia has just told Errico about the letter and has explained that she is not looking forward to her husband’s return as, she claims, he would interfere with her business with Errico:

ERRICO (*messo di fronte all’evidenza, trova modo di insinuare*) Certo ca pe vuie sarrà nu piacere...

AMALIA (*combattuta*) Nu piacere e nu dispiacere. Pecché, certamente, vuie ‘o ssapite.. accumnecia a dimannà...: «Ma ched’è stu cummercio? Chesto se pò fà... chello no...».  
Insomma, mi attacca le braccia ca nun pozzo cchiù manovrare liberamente...

ERRICO (*avvicinandosi sempre più a lei e fissandola, quasi con aria di rimprovero*) Già...

AMALIA (*volutamente sfugge*) ‘O pericolo... Stàmmice attiente...

ERRICO E... non per altra ragione?

AMALIA Per... tutte queste ragioni.

ERRICO (*indispettito, come richiamando la donna a qualche promessa tutt'altro che evasiva*) E pe me, no? È ove'? Pe me, no!

AMALIA (*non avendo più la forza di fingere per la prima volta, guarda l'uomo fisso negli occhi e stringendogli le braccia lentamente e sensualmente gli mormora*) E pure pe te!

*Errico ghermisce la donna e con atteggiamento cosciente da maschio avvicina lentamente la sua bocca a quella di lei, baciandola a lungo. Immediatamente dal fondo entra 'O Miezò Prèvete frugando nelle tasche del panciotto e muovendo verso la «vinella». Scorge la scena, ne rimane interdetto, poi torna sui suoi passi, fermandosi sotto la porta e voltando le spalle ai due amanti. (De Filippo, II, 105)*

ERRICO Would that be a good thing?

AMALIA (*torn*) Good. Partly. Partly I don't know. He'll start asking question, telling me I can't do this, I can't do that.

ERRICO And...

AMALIA (*She knows where Errico is going and avoids it*) He'll tell me the business is too dangerous, it's not right...

ERRICO No other reasons?

AMALIA Yes, other reasons. (*For the first time, she looks him in the eye, then touches his arm. She says softly, sensually*) Of course, other reasons.

*A long kiss. Miezò Prèvete enters, searching his pockets and heading for the kitchen. When he sees Errico and Amalia, he returns to the front door and turns his back. Caught, Errico and Amalia hurry away from each other. Amalia immediately exits. (Alper & Basso, II, 47)*

In the Neapolitan version the crescendo of pathos between Amalia and Errico is carefully described, more than by the words, by the stage directions which build up the tension of the scene and at the same time give directions to the actors about the acting. In particular this is more evident in the stage directions describing Errico's barely contained passion and Amalia's desperate surrender. Here the rhythm is intentionally slow, to underline the inner conflict in both characters who, in the end, confess to each other their feelings. The English version, on the other hand, quickens the pace of the scene, reducing this rather important moment to a short interlude. This happens also in another powerful scene describing Gennaro's bewilderment when, on his return from deportation, he finds his family utterly changed. Here the stage directions and the dialogues aim at building up the tension between the characters: on one side Gennaro who is eager to share his ordeal with his family, and on the other his relatives who are uninterested, almost annoyed by his presence which is disrupting their celebration. Even on this occasion the slow, atmospheric pace has been quickened through short dialogues supported by equally short stage directions or by no stage directions at all:

AMEDEO Papà, ccà oramai stammo cuiete.

GENNARO (*compiaciuto*) 'O vveco, 'o vveco... Quanta vote aggio scanzato 'a morte! Ama', proprio a pelo a pelo... Io aggi 'a ì a Pompei... (*Si alza guardando intorno, soddisfatto*) E si murevo, io nun avarrìa visto stu bellu vascio rinnovato, sti mobile nuove, Maria Rosaria vestuta elegante... Pure Amedeo... Tu cu sta bella veste comme a na gran signora... (*Scorgendo gli orecchini, gli ori e le mani inanellate di Amalia, rimane per un attimo perplesso. Amalia istintivamente cerca di nascondere, come può, tanta ricchezza*) Ma, famme vedé, Ama'... (*Incredulo*) Ma chiste so' brillante?

AMALIA (*come per sminuire l'importanza delle sue gioie*) Sì... So' brillante, so' brillante...

GENNARO (*si rannuvola, formula mille ipotesi nel suo cervello e si sforza a scartarne proprio quelle che con più insistenza prendono evidenza di certezza. La pausa deve essere lunga. Istintivamente guarda Maria Rosaria con diffidenza. La ragazza abbassa lievemente lo sguardo. Ora è con tono serio e indagatore che interroga la moglie*)  
E...Famme sapé quacche cosa, Ama'...

AMALIA (*simulando con un sorrisetto*) E che t'aggi'a fà sapé, Gennari'? Ce simmo mise nu poco a posto...

Amedeo fatica e guadagna buono... Io faccio 'o ppoco 'e cummercio... (De Filippo, II, 119)

AMEDEO The war is over.

GENNARO The war is not over... (*He looks around at the house*) But if I had died, I never would have seen this... so fixed up... so nice. Maria Rosaria, so elegant... (*to Amedeo*) You. (*to Amalia*) And you. Such a great lady. (*He notices her jewelry and is a little perplexed. Amalia instinctively tries to hide her display of wealth. Incredulous, referring to the stones*) Are those real?

AMALIA Yes.

GENNARO (*He's beginning to understand. His tone becomes more severe*) How did all this...?

AMALIA Amedeo works hard. I do a little business... (Alper & Basso, II, 54)

Here, the stage directions aim at describing the contrast between the characters' attitude, and at illustrating the change in the tone of the discourse as the bitter reality comes to the surface. Even in this case, the author, on the one hand instructs the actors, on the other he

writes a literary piece. It is indicative that the length of the English stage directions in almost halved, as the aim of them is to give just an indication of the literal meaning of the lines.

## **Conclusions**

In this chapter I have looked at the way the receiving culture can operate a cultural relocation of the source text. In the analysis of the translation into Scouse, such redefinition has been achieved through the use of locally characterized language, whereas in the translation into American English the redefinition of rhythms and stage directions has absorbed the play into the target theatrical system. Indeed, from the dialogues of the translation into Scouse it can be seen that the language choice, together with the *mise en scène* of the English adaptation *Napoli Millionaria* aim to reinforce the idea that Neapolitan culture is exuberant, loud and over affectionate, and food plays an important part. Such a characterization, in theatre language has been expressed through a coarse and impoverished language which is associated with the working class. The characters over-use idiomatic expressions, slang and swear words to support what has been described by some critics as ‘tears-in-eyes excitability, rowdiness and sign-of-the-cross religiosity of Naples’ old quarters’.<sup>68</sup> Indeed, Tinniswood

adopts a Merseyside voice, which Eyre offsets with Italianate mannerisms and places it in an Italian setting. One can see their point: Liverpool, like Naples, is poor and embattled; it has a strong Catholic influence, and its people are regarded with a similar exasperated affection.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> See Peter Kemp, ‘The Italian connection’, *The Independent*, 29 June 1991.

<sup>69</sup> See Claire Armistead, ‘Merseyside meets Napoli’, *Weekend FT*, 29 June 1991.

The peculiarity of this production is the fusion between a naturalistic representation of Naples and Liverpoolian language. This solution has an even stronger power of cultural redefinition than a complete acculturation, where language and settings are relocated elsewhere from the original. In fact, the domestic aural representation is accentuated by the foreignness of the setting, and both reinforce the idea of similarity between the two cities, as the British audience can recognize the working-class language, which is transposed to the play.

The combination between foreign culture and regional idiom, so that the former is more easily associated with a familiar milieu, is made easier by the reproduction of Neapolitan ambiance and body language. In this way, although there seems to be a separation between the two cultures, that is Neapolitan location and Liverpoolian language, nonetheless there is a deep assimilation of the foreign culture to the domestic one, with the latter becoming a referent. On the other hand, one has to take into account the differences in tenor and register between the source and the target text, especially if one considers that one of the central preoccupations of De Filippo's play is to portray the human desperation and degradation that comes with war conflicts, rather than the representation of Mediterranean working class fervor.

The American version, on the other hand, while keeping standard English without giving any specific language connotation, modifies the rhythms of the dialogue, which are quicker and reduced in length. In particular, the long monologues, very frequent especially when Gennaro Jovine speaks, have been broken up by the intervention of other characters who either act as cues, or create a busy atmosphere, with a regular exchange of short lines in a repartee style. From the staging viewpoint, this style has been accentuated by the elimination or reduction of most stage directions, especially of those referring to the characters' feelings. Interestingly, in this vibrant, quick-paced version the set has



reproduced accurately the 1940s, so that more contemporary dialogues have been paired with a retro setting.<sup>70</sup> This effervescent approach in the translation of De Filippo into American English seems to respond to the need to meet the audience's taste. In a society where long lucubrations are not favored and dynamism inspires every sector of life, theatre needs to meet the same requirements. Indeed, the American *Napoli milionaria!*, by putting the emphasis on the story rather than on the psychological profile of the characters, reflects the pragmatic culture of the American society, and theatre is in tune with such an approach.<sup>71</sup>

Translators play an important role in the mediation and transmission of cultural values. Their choices are crucial in the representations of foreign cultures and in the reception of foreign oeuvres. How far a translator can go in rendering the source text is a thorny subject, and is linked to the issue of theatre politics and a play's reception. A performable play is a play that attracts audiences and makes a profit. Therefore, the extent of text manipulation by translators and directors is dictated by these needs as well. How distant from the source text a target text can be is a matter of the freedom of the translator to transmit the cultural message of the source text, and the choices made should be the result of cultural negotiation and of recognition of the Other. The liveliness of Neapolitans is certainly one of their characteristics, and so is their animated spirit; this, on the other hand, does not necessarily coincide with bad language and aggressiveness. Indeed, the gentle colorfulness of Eduardo's language, with its subtle irony and bitter laugh is predominant in the play, and makes it a type of theatre whispered rather than shouted.

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<sup>70</sup> Joan Jones in her review in *Southern Oregon News.com*, 23 May 2005 commented on sets and costumes which 'were all very detailed, evoking the bygone era of World War II'.

<sup>71</sup> See Chapter Three for the same stylistic approach which has been adopted by Maria Tucci in her translation of *Filumena Marturano* into American English.

The final line pronounced by Gennaro Jovine ‘Adda passà ‘a nuttata’, defined by Eduardo ‘una battuta tipicamente napoletana’,<sup>72</sup> brings up one final reflection on language and culture in dialect theatre. This phrase literally translates as ‘we will see the end of this dark night’ meaning that our suffering will come to an end. Yet it goes far beyond this, as it summarizes the Neapolitan stoical acceptance of misery mixed with the ability to see the future with a positive mind. This is epitomized by the renowned *arte di arrangiarsi* that is the ability ‘di una città, di un popolo costretti, ancora in larga parte, a vivere o sopravvivere di pazzeschi espedienti’<sup>73</sup> and who are able to face the most adverse conditions despite the state of neglect by the political establishment. It is not surprising, therefore, that the cited phrase has been co-opted by the Italian language as a general expression of positive hope. From this standpoint, both the British translation ‘We must see the night through’ and the American one ‘The night has to go by’ seem to reduce the final and most important line of the play to a simple ‘let’s hope for the best’, rather than underscoring the sense of optimism and proactive attitude towards life.

From these considerations derives the need for translators to be able to grasp the nuances not only of the source and the target language but most importantly of their cultures. This applies to foreign national languages as well as to sub-languages or dialects which, in respect of the national language, are to be considered languages in their own right. If it is true that the translators ‘construct cultures’<sup>74</sup> and that translation represents the vehicle between cultures, it is vital that the culture expressed in the source text be maintained so that translation can fulfill its function.

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<sup>72</sup> See Maurizio Valenzi, ‘Eduardo, cinquant’anni fa’, *L’Unità* 2, 1995, p. 1

<sup>73</sup> See Aggeo Savioli, ‘Napoli è milionaria’, *L’Unità* 2, 1995, p. 3.

<sup>74</sup> Bassnett and Lefevere, *Constructing Cultures: Essays on Literary Translation*, p. 10.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### ACCULTURATING *NATALE IN CASA CUPIELLO*

*Napule è nu paese curioso:  
è nu teatro antico, sempe apierto.  
Ce nasce gente ca, senza cuncierto,  
scenne p' 'e strate e sape recità.*

**Eduardo**

#### **Introduction<sup>1</sup>**

This chapter looks at an adaptation of *Natale in casa Cupiello* by Mike Stott who has moved the original Neapolitan setting to West Lancashire, narrating the Christmas of a working class family during the 1980s. Since the play belongs to the *Cantata dei giorni pari*, as it was written in 1931, following a chronological order it should have been discussed earlier; nonetheless, I have decided to analyze it now because it has undergone a radical cultural transformation which has totally acculturated it.<sup>2</sup> Therefore it represents an extreme form of translation which decontextualizes the source text in order to transplant it in the receiving theatrical system. In fact I will argue in this chapter that the source text has been entirely rewritten according to the adaptor's free interpretation, and that the source culture has been transmuted into the receiving milieu losing its identity.

*Natale in casa Cupiello* is probably the play which best represents the Neapolitan Christmas, saturated in cultural elements, among which is the *Presepio* that is the scenic representation of the Nativity. The protagonist Luca Cupiello devotes himself to the construction of his *Presepio* and in doing so avoids taking part in the crisis which is

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<sup>1</sup> The citation opening this chapter has been taken from *Baccalà*, in *Le poesie di Eduardo* (Turin: Einaudi, 1975), p. 191.

<sup>2</sup> Anna Barsotti, in her *Eduardo Drammaturgo*, p. 119 considers this play a stepping stone between the *Cantata dei giorni pari* and the *Cantata dei giorni dispari*, since it 'rappresenta comunque il testo-chiave o testo-ponte alla seconda fase, più impegnata e matura, della drammaturgia di Eduardo'. See also by the same author *Introduzione a Eduardo*, p. 52.

destroying his family, and at the same time finds a way to justify his exclusion by his wife and his daughter.<sup>3</sup> In addition to this, the *Presepio* also becomes the grounds for the generation conflict between Luca and his son Tommasino who will repeat for the whole play ‘A me non mi piace’, until the very end when he lies and says «Si», only to please his dying father. But the *Presepio* is not the only cultural reference of the play, though the most prominent of all. The *capitone*,<sup>4</sup> which plays a crucial role, is another traditional requisite of the Neapolitan Christmas, whose meaning will be explained further on in this chapter. A further Neapolitan characteristic resides in the day of the actual Christmas celebration. The dinner on Christmas Eve is the central event for any Neapolitan family as it is a prelude to the midnight mass and the ritual of placing baby Jesus in the crib. Indeed, as I have already noted in this thesis, the mixture of sacred and profane is quintessential to Neapolitan culture and the *Presepio* is the theatrical representation of such a phenomenon.<sup>5</sup> The above mentioned cultural elements put this play among those which best describe Naples and Neapolitans’ *teatralità*, since the rituals of the *Presepio* are mirrored in the rituals of the Cupiellos.<sup>6</sup> We will see in this chapter how these elements have been acculturated and transformed into indigenous features such as the duck, which is a substitute for the Christmas turkey.

On the other hand, the theme of this play undoubtedly brings it into the national and western European panorama of the twentieth century. Indeed, the contrast between ‘l’essere

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<sup>3</sup>See on this point Nicola De Blasi and Paola Quarenghi, ‘Nota storico-teatrale’ of *Natale in casa Cupiello*, in *Eduardo De Filippo Teatro Volume primo Cantata dei giorni pari*, ed. by Nicola De Blasi and Paola Quarenghi, I edn., I Meridiani (Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 2000), p. 714.

<sup>4</sup>It is a type of eel.

<sup>5</sup>See on this point Alessandra Griffo, *il Presepe Napoletano* (Novara: Istituto Geografico De Agostini, 1996), p. 13. See also Roberto De Simone, *Il presepe popolare napoletano* (Turin: Einaudi, 1998).

<sup>6</sup>This characteristic will be analyzed in more detail further on in this chapter.

e il voler sembrare',<sup>7</sup> which is the fulcrum of the play, where the characters pretend to ignore the crisis of their family, is the most important feature of Pirandello's theatre, whereas incommunicability and isolation were themes present in Becket and Ionesco's theatre as well. In fact, while the traditional ingredients characterize the play as truly Neapolitan, they lead the spectators to reflect, through laughter, on their own condition. In his review dated 5 May 1976 Renzo Tian noted that *Natale in casa Cupiello* tells

una non-storia, che esce dai confini del versomile e della descrizione per arrivare nel territorio della visione e del simbolo [...]. Nel *Natale* ci sono già tutti i lampi e le fughe in avanti di un visionario che si lascia alle spalle la realtà. Forse per questo, e forse perché l'abbiamo rivista in una edizione nella quale Eduardo mostra di aver sublimato nello stesso tempo interpretazione e regia, ci sembra che questa commedia non sia più necessariamente legata alla sua condizione di "napoletana".<sup>8</sup>

I would like to stress once again that Eduardo's acting and dramaturgical style also contributed to bringing his theatre to national and international level. Anna Barsotti perceptively argues that Luca Cupiello resembles Don Quixote in that they are both absent-minded, and both retreat into a fantastic, illusory world. Indeed, the former is absorbed in his *Presepio* 'grande come il mondo', the latter in his chivalry stories and both distort the reality around them. In fact, in both cases the protagonists' object of their passion distracts

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<sup>7</sup> See Donatella Fischer, *Il teatro di Eduardo: la crisi della famiglia patriarcale* (London: Legenda, 2007), p. 3. See on this point also Agostino Lombardo, 'Eduardo De Filippo: da Napoli al mondo', in *Eduardo e Napoli* *Eduardo e l'Europa*, ed. by Franco Carmelo Greco (Naples: Edizioni scientifiche italiane, 1993), p. 25.

<sup>8</sup> Cited by Anna Barsotti, in *Eduardo, Fo e l'attore del Novecento* (Rome: Bulzoni, 2007), p. 37.

their attention from real life to visionary utopia, but only by giving universal value to this object can we understand ‘«quale intensa comicità deriva da uno spirito fantastico»’.<sup>9</sup>

*Natale in casa Cupiello* was originally written as a single act, the actual second act, for the début of the company *Il Teatro Umoristico I De Filippo* at the cinema and theatre *Teatro Kursaal*, in Naples on 25<sup>th</sup> December 1931. The following year Eduardo added the second act, the actual first act, in preparation for the season at the *Sannazzaro* in Naples, and two years later he wrote the third and last act.<sup>10</sup> Indeed, according to Eduardo this was a ‘parto trigemino con gravidanza di quattro anni’.<sup>11</sup> The complete play was premiered in Milan at the *Teatro Olimpia* on 9th April 1934. It was only in 1936 that he presented all three acts in Naples at the *Mercadante* as he thought that the third act was too painful for him to recite in his own town, especially because he knew the family described in the play.<sup>12</sup> Interestingly, the people described in the play were Luca and Concetta De Filippo, his maternal grandparents. The critics underscored the dramatic valence of the comedy, as noted by Achille Vesce who considered it a tragedy where ‘la risata si spegne nel pianto: in un lungo pianto nascosto e infinito’.<sup>13</sup> The farcical element, combined with drama was underscored by Ermanno Contini who noted that ‘da un atto farsesco è venuta fuori una commedia ricchissima sì di comicità, ma anche di umanità, patetica, amara, commossa’.<sup>14</sup> It is worth noting that the comic effect is obtained mainly from the relationship between characters who know, namely Concetta, Ninuccia, Nicolino and Vittorio, and those who do

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<sup>9</sup> Bergson, cited in *Eduardo, Fo e l'attore del Novecento*, p. 40.

<sup>10</sup> See De Blasi and Quarenghi, ‘Nota storico-teatrale’, in *Eduardo De Filippo, Teatro*, p. 709. The date of the completion is still debated, as Anna Barsotti dated the third act in 1943. See Barsotti, *Eduardo drammaturgo*, p. 119.

<sup>11</sup> Cited in *Eduardo: polemiche, pensieri, pagine inedite*, ed. by Quarantotti De Filippo, p. 125.

<sup>12</sup> *Eduardo: polemiche, pensieri, pagine inedite*, p. 125. See also ‘Nota storico-teatrale’, in *Eduardo De Filippo Teatro*, p. 721.

<sup>13</sup> Achille Vesce, *Il Mattino*, 22 December 1936, cited in De Blasi and Quarenghi, ‘Nota storico-teatrale’, in *Eduardo De Filippo Teatro*, p. 723.

<sup>14</sup> Ermanno Contini, *Il Messaggero*, 12 June 1937, cited in Fiorenza Di Franco, *Eduardo* (Rome: Gremese Editore, 2000), p. 52.

not know, that is Luca, his brother Pasquale and Tommasino, giving space to a series of unintentional disasters.<sup>15</sup> In fact, although some of the scenes are certainly very amusing the comedy is only the exterior face of the tragedy; nonetheless the play received an extraordinary response from the audience for decades and has become a classic in the dialect repertoire, as pointed out by Ennio Flaiano who argued that ‘gli episodi della commedia, diventati luogo commune, si citano infallantemente’.<sup>16</sup> The identification with the protagonist reached such deep levels that when in 1976 Eduardo played Luca Cupiello after recovering from a long illness the audience gave him an applause which lasted ten minutes.<sup>17</sup>

*Natale in casa Cupiello* tells the story of the Cupiello family who are going through a deep family crisis which will culminate with a tragic event. While Luca, the male protagonist, is all wrapped up in his dreams of a perfect world and a perfect family, his wife Concetta is the real ‘man’ of the family, who administers the finances of their humble household. They have two grown-up children, Tommasino, called Nennillo, who is childish and lazy and Ninuccia, who is married to Nicolino, a businessman whom she does not love. Instead she is in love with Vittorio, a friend of Tommasino, and when their love affair is accidentally discovered Luca suffers a stroke which paralyzes him, damaging his speech seriously, and eventually brings him to death. Luca represents yet another anti-hero who is incapable of coming to terms with a reality which is very different from his expectations. In Chapter Two we have seen how Antonio Barracano in *Il sindaco del Rione Sanità* pays with his own life for his inability to understand that the law, unjust though it might be,

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<sup>15</sup> See De Blasi and Quarenghi, Nota storico-teatrale, in *Eduardo De Filippo Teatro*, p. 711.

<sup>16</sup> Ennio Flaiano, *Oggi*, 17 May 1941, cited in the ‘Nota storico-teatrale’, in *Eduardo De Filippo Teatro*, p. 724.

<sup>17</sup> See De Blasi and Quarenghi, ‘Nota storico-teatrale’, in *Eduardo De Filippo Teatro*, p. 728. In October 1976 I went to see the play in Naples at the *San Ferdinando*, and when the curtains opened and Eduardo appeared in bed, covered by a heap of blankets, and still very ‘visible’, a heavy silence filled up the house, almost as if the audience was afraid to make any noise in case it would disturb him.

cannot be administered by private individuals as he stubbornly does. Likewise, Luca pays with his own life for his failure to understand that his family is irremediably crumbling and insists on carrying on with a tradition which none of the members of his family are interested in. Therefore, the play denounces the hypocrisy pervading this traditional family where the members 'sono incapaci di gettare la maschera e di parlarsi apertamente'.<sup>18</sup> It is important to note that Eduardo put under the spotlight themes such as the crisis of the family, generation conflicts and the role of women in patriarchal society revealing an incredible modernity.<sup>19</sup> What is more, the importance of this play in the Italian panorama is underscored by the fact that its subject matter was in clear contrast with the dominant ideology and with the general attitude of theatre in those years. By questioning the dogma of the indissolubility of the family, *Natale in casa Cupiello* questioned one of the bastions of Fascism.<sup>20</sup> In fact, after seeing the comedy at the *Teatro Argentina* in Rome, in 1937, Federico Fellini noted that 'i De Filippo raccontavano un'altra Italia, un'Italia abissalmente lontana da quella che stava immediatamente fuori dal teatro' which was represented by the regime.<sup>21</sup>

### ***Natale in casa Cupiello* in England**

The English adaptation of *Natale in casa Cupiello* opened at the Greenwich Theatre on 9<sup>th</sup> November 1982 and ran until 11<sup>th</sup> December, and then on 16<sup>th</sup> December it moved to London's West End to the Duke of York's Theatre where it remained until 5<sup>th</sup> February

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<sup>18</sup> See Donatella Fischer, *Il teatro di Eduardo: la crisi della famiglia patriarcale*, p. 18.

<sup>19</sup> See on the last point Barbara De Miro D'Ajetta, *La figura della donna nel teatro di Eduardo De Filippo* (Naples: Liguori, 2002), p. 21.

<sup>20</sup> Interestingly, the censor declared that the play was unsuitable for people below sixteen years of age. See Elio Testoni, 'Introduzione', in *Eduardo De Filippo*, p. XXXIII.

<sup>21</sup> Cited by Maurizio Giammusso, in 'Eduardo e il potere politico', in *Eduardo De Filippo*, pp 15-33 (p. 15).



1983.<sup>22</sup> The adaptation had been done by Mike Stott from a literal translation by Giovanni Baratelli and Bruce Hyman. The director was Mike Ockrent, Warren Mitchell played Len, Gillian Barge Connie and Kevin Kennedy played Tommy. The rights to the production had been bought by the company H.M. Tennent Ltd, owned by Bruce Hyman with the intention of presenting a truly English version of the play.<sup>23</sup> The idea was to relocate the comedy to a council flat in Derwent Block, the Lakeview Estate, in a town in West Lancashire, Stott's homeland and to transport the 1931 setting to the 1980s, making it a modern story. The three acts took place respectively on Christmas Eve, on Christmas Day and ten days later.<sup>24</sup> According to Stott, one of the reasons for the different interpretation of the play was to be found in the limited amount of actors available 'because we had FAR less actors than Signor De Filippo seemed to have had!'.<sup>25</sup> However, as Virginia Acqua illustrates in her study on this production, the agenda of the adaptor seemed to be somewhat different as is demonstrated by a correspondence with Isabella Quarantotti De Filippo, where Bruce Hyman, who was acting as a mediator between the author and the adaptor, reassured her that all the changes requested by Eduardo would be done. In fact, according to Acqua:

i rapporti fra Eduardo e Stott non dovevano essere stati privi di contrasti, probabilmente dovuti alla volontà del commediografo di conservare il suo abituale controllo sulle traduzioni, mentre dall'altra parte Stott rivendicava la propria autonomia per l'adattamento.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> A previous production with the title *The Crib*, translated by Ray Herman had been staged at the Castle Theatre, in Farnham, in 1968.

<sup>23</sup> This information was obtained from Mike Stott during a telephone interview conducted on 25 March 2007.

<sup>24</sup> See the theatre programme, illustration n. 6 at the back of this Thesis. In the original play instead Act One is on the day before Christmas Eve, Act Two on Christmas Eve and Act Three takes place three days later.

<sup>25</sup> This is an extract from an email received on 20 March 2007.

<sup>26</sup> See Virginia Acqua, 'Ducking Out', in 'Eduardo a Londra: Ricostruzione e analisi degli allestimenti', p. 3.

Indeed, Eduardo had made several requests to change parts of the adaptation so that the work would be carried out 'secondo le mie intenzioni', although Mike Stott was reluctant to make such changes since he wanted to maintain his control over the text.<sup>27</sup> What these 'intenzioni' might be is difficult to establish here, but we must acknowledge the presence of a series of core features which have been left out in the name of the independence of the translator from the source text. In this sense, the English adaptation reflected on the one hand the aim to anglicize the Neapolitan play and on the other the idea of establishing a new authorship over it.

The choice of West Lancashire aimed to operate a geographical as well as cultural transposition, since the northern accent spoken by the actors gave a clear regional connotation, and some of the actors were chosen for their distinctive accent. Interestingly, the reason for setting the play in that particular area was linked to the supposedly impassioned spirit of the people from that region, inclined to easy arguments and animated relationships. Indeed, when Warren Mitchell, who played with a northern accent,<sup>28</sup> left the production his substitute was an Irish actor who also had a strong accent.<sup>29</sup> In fact, setting the play in a council flat has also operated a cultural shift giving a working class connotation to the characters, as was observed by Benedict Nightingale<sup>30</sup> and Milton Shulman.<sup>31</sup> David Roper described the setting of the adaptation as a 'kind of Hilda and Stan Ogden household'.<sup>32</sup>

As I have already noted, this is an adaptation rather than a translation, insofar as the target text is a complete reinterpretation of the source text both in cultural and in linguistic

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<sup>27</sup> Acqua, 'Ducking Out', p. 3.

<sup>28</sup> See Robert Cushman, *The Observer, London Theatre Record*, 1982, II, 23, 619..

<sup>29</sup> Information provided by Mike Stott, in the mentioned interview. Apparently, the Irish actor was an alcoholic who, in one of the shows, acted while completely drunk.

<sup>30</sup> Benedict Nightingale, *New Statesman, London Theatre Record*, 1982, II, 23, 619.

<sup>31</sup> Milton Shulman, 'Sitting Duck', *The Standard*, 10 November 1982.

<sup>32</sup> David Roper, *Daily Express, London Theatre Record*, 1982, II, 23, 619. Hilda and Stan Ogden were characters in the television serial *Coronation Street*.

terms. First and foremost, the title *Ducking Out* is a complete departure from the original *Natale in casa Cupiello*. Indeed, the adaptation underscores the inability of Len to handle the generational conflict between him and his children while avoiding taking responsibility for the failure of his family. Therefore the shift affects the play immediately with the title which focuses on the dramatic persona of Len and his own drama, rather than on the whole family as in the Neapolitan play. It must be noted that the choice of West Lancashire, with a strong regional connotation, avoids the stereotypical representation of Italians, as suggested in Zeffirelli's productions *Sabato, domenica, lunedì* and *Filumena Marturano* during the 1970s. However, the linguistic impoverishment and the use of slang position the play within a particular social class which provides the cultural framework.

Regarding the acculturation of the play, in the textual analysis I will show how the cultural elements either have been obliterated, or have been substituted with English cultural references, and extra elements have been added to the text. This process on the one hand has created an English Eduardo, and on the other has annihilated the otherness of the play. Further on I will illustrate how the transposition of the Neapolitan milieu into the English environment, transferring *tout court* elements of the source culture did not take into account the void created, insofar as a true identification with the characters was not possible, although the strong English cultural references suggested so. What is more, I will show the array of contemporary references to English society which, while toning down the traditionalism that pervades the play, contribute to accentuate the Englishness of the target text.

We will see further in the chapter how critics raised serious doubts about the credibility of an English family with strong Catholic beliefs and more than one suggested that Ireland would have made a more plausible location. Likewise, the representation of characters prone to quick fights, loud arguments and swearing sounded too distant from the

renowned English aplomb.<sup>33</sup> In fact, the response from both critics and public was on the whole negative, as proven by the early withdrawal of the play due to lack of public, who expected to see an exhilarating comedy, in tune with the Christmas atmosphere and found instead a daunting drama.<sup>34</sup>

### **The Language of *Natale in casa Cupiello***

From a linguistic point of view *Natale in casa Cupiello* represents the quintessential example of Eduardo's use of language in his theatre. Dialect is the principal medium whereas Italian is used to juxtapose characters who have reached or aspire to upward mobility as Ninuccia, Vittorio and the doctor who tend to speak Italian, and those like Luca, Tommasino and Concetta, who master Italian with difficulty and make use of it only to give more weight to their words. Code-switch is another strategy used in the play as some characters, like Pasquale and Tommasino shift constantly from standard Italian to dialect creating extremely comic effects. As I have argued elsewhere in this thesis, this complex use of the language was the expression on the one hand of Eduardo's intention to bring Neapolitan closer to the people who did not speak it. In addition, when he observed that 'io mi sono accorto che più le commedie sono in dialetto e più diventano universali',<sup>35</sup> he wanted to acknowledge the ability of such a medium to cross the boundaries of Naples and Neapolitan culture. On this point, the critic Giulio Trevisani noticed that:

se il linguaggio di questa opera, [...] è fondamentalmente dialettale, e napoletana è l'ambientazione, lo spirito che le anima è universale ed è questa la caratteristica che ha dato

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<sup>33</sup> See John Barber, 'Crisis at Christmas', *Daily Telegraph*, 11 November 1982; Benedict Nightingale, *New Statesman*, *London Theatre Record*, 1982, II, 23, 619; Francis King, 'Those excitable Lancastrians', *Sunday Telegraph*, 14 November 1982.

<sup>34</sup> See *Ducking Out* play-bill, illustrations n. 7 and n. 8 at the back of this Thesis. See also Paola Quarenghi, 'Cronologia' of *Natale in casa Cupiello*, in *Eduardo De Filippo, Teatro*, p. CLXXXII.

<sup>35</sup> Cited in Fiorenza Di Franco, *Il teatro di Eduardo* (Rome: Laterza, 1975), p. 26.

al teatro di Eduardo il segno della poesia e il diritto di cittadinanza nel teatro di ogni Paese.<sup>36</sup>

Eduardo used dialect in a naturalistic way, as a sort of photographic reproduction of the linguistic panorama of the country, and included different forms of dialect such as the popular dialect, the dialect used by the bourgeoisie, as well as the dialect spoken in the province and also the badly translated Italian.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, the characters of his plays use the language that was normally spoken in reality, and the comic effect comes also from the approximate use of an idiom considered distant. In this sense, when Luca Cupiello attempts to speak Italian in a way which has been defined by De Blasi 'italiano popolare'<sup>38</sup> he says *alfabetico* instead of *analfabeta*, then mentions *interoclisemo* instead of *enteroclisma*, then he threatens his wife to retreat to a mountain to become a *romito* instead of an *eremita*. Likewise, Pasquale describing his coat says that it has the *martingana*, instead of the *martingala*. In these cases, 'la commistione tra dialetto e italiano che conduce all'italiano popolare rientra in un coerente progetto eduardiano di aderire alla lingua parlata, sfuggendo al "carcere" della lingua letteraria'.<sup>39</sup> It is important to note that the Neapolitan used by Eduardo, while maintaining traditional structures, is somehow simplified in order to reach as many readers/spectators as possible because he was convinced that dialect still represented the most authentic medium.

The different registers and types of dialect used in the play were, therefore, the result of a specific linguistic and stylistic project, which together with the theme of the crisis of the family rendered it extremely innovative. Each character has a detailed

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<sup>36</sup> Cited in Di Franco, *Il teatro di Eduardo*, p. 27.

<sup>37</sup> See Nicola De Blasi, 'Uno scrittore tra dialetto e italiano', in *Eduardo De Filippo: Teatro*, pp. LIII-XCIV (p.LXXIII).

<sup>38</sup> De Blasi, 'Nota filologico-linguistica', in *Eduardo De Filippo: Teatro*, pp. 813-837, (p. 830).

<sup>39</sup> De Blasi, 'Uno scrittore tra dialetto e italiano', p. LXXVI.

linguistic connotation, which reflects the nature of the speaker and puts him or her in a definite theatrical perspective. I have already mentioned the difference between Tommasino and Ninuccia, the former speaking mainly dialect, except when making fun of his father or his uncle and the latter using almost exclusively Italian, revealing her education and social status. Likewise, Nicolino, who is a businessman, shows his social position through assertive language which does not give in to dialect. By contrast, Concetta does not even attempt to use Italian and her language reveals a traditional mother and wife who, overwhelmed though she might be by her role, reinforces her position as the 'martyr' of the house.

Conversely, I suggest that the language used in the English version is characterized by a definite class connotation, the register is generally colloquial with slang and the tone is over excited, reaching unnecessary levels of rudeness. As I have noted elsewhere, Eduardo never used strong language in his theatre; besides, his renowned succinct dialogues and minimalist acting style contributed to create a much stronger comic effect than wordiness and over gesticulation, as noted by Anna Barsotti who points out that he makes 'solo il gesto, ma tale da suscitare il riso del pubblico. Il gesto non viene mai portato alle sue estreme, o reali, conseguenze'.<sup>40</sup>

On the contrary, the use of swearing and sexual references which abound in the adaptation demonstrates the intention of the adaptor to distance his work from the original both in content and style. The use of swear words, common in the theatre of the eighties and nineties could provide an explanation for this translational choice; however this portrayal seems to give a misrepresentation of the source text and culture. The conventions and expectations of the receiving theatrical system require that Italian comedy be funny and loud, which is accentuated in the adaptation by the great deal of 'bloody', 'bloody hell' and

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<sup>40</sup> See Anna Barsotti, *Eduardo, Fo e l'attore-autore del Novecento*, p. 41.

of quarrelling. That is probably why the characters make extensive use of jokes and ‘convulsive sobbing’,<sup>41</sup> although none of these features are present in the original. Such translational choices do not seem to have taken into account either the style of the source text, or its tone, or the use of dialect and standard language to characterize the different dramatic personae. Therefore, it seems that although this adaptation has freed the text from the language of ‘spaghetti English’,<sup>42</sup> on the other hand it has annihilated the stylistic and cultural otherness of the play.

### **The *Presepio* of Luca Cupiello**

Before I embark on a textual analysis of *Ducking Out*, I am going to give an overview of the history and role of the Neapolitan *Presepio*. This traditional component of the Neapolitan Christmas is the focal element of *Natale in casa Cupiello*, as it represents both the protagonist’s attachment to the tradition and his retreat from reality. It also incarnates some of what are considered characteristics of Neapolitans, such as their ‘teatralità’,<sup>43</sup> their superstition which ‘diventa fede e si sovrappone alla religione tanto che è difficile scinderle’,<sup>44</sup> and their indomitable attachment to family and traditions, as Luca Cupiello declares: “Quando viene Natale, se non faccio il Presepio mi sembra un cattivo augurio. Abituato che la buonanima di mio padre lo faceva per me e mio fratello quando eravamo piccoli...”<sup>45</sup>

The Neapolitan Nativity evolved over the centuries from the humble portrayal of medieval times and throughout the fifteenth and sixteenth century, into ‘la roboante

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<sup>41</sup> Francis King, ‘Those excitable Lancastrians’.

<sup>42</sup> See Alan Strachan, artistic director of the *Greenwich Theatre Sunday Telegraph*, 22 August 1982.

<sup>43</sup> See Agostino Lombardo, ‘Eduardo De Filippo: da Napoli al mondo’, in *Eduardo e Napoli Eduardo e l’Europa*, p. 26, on the ability of Neapolitans to fight despair by looking at the laughable side of tragedy.

<sup>44</sup> Di Franco, *Il teatro di Eduardo*, p. 75.

<sup>45</sup> De Filippo, II, 780.

‘macchina’ del presepe napoletano settecentesco’,<sup>46</sup> expression of bourgeois power and ideals. It was in fact during the eighteenth century that the Neapolitan *Presepio* became the emblem of the most exquisite productions of the Nativity in Italy. Interestingly, the theatrical representation *Cantata dei pastori*, dated 1699,<sup>47</sup> which narrates ‘la strenua lotta tra le schiere della luce, capeggiate dall’arcangelo annunziante e quelle dell’abisso, capeggiate da Belfagor’,<sup>48</sup> develops around the *Presepio* and confirms its theatrical essence. Hence the allegoric and profane nature of it which is reproduced in traditional figurative elements such as the *capitone*, representing the serpent which tempted Eve, the well, the *taverna*,<sup>49</sup> the waterfall and the three kings, just to name a few. In the course of this chapter, I will show how Luca Cupiello becomes a sort of ‘Vanvitelli minore [che] arricchisce il suo presepe di una cascata come Dio comanda’,<sup>50</sup> and we will see that all the mentioned elements are included in *Natale in casa Cupiello*. The theatrical essence of the Neapolitan *Presepio*, as it became established in the course of the eighteenth century, is confirmed from the fact that prominent artists and architects such as Luigi Vanvitelli, the painter Luca Giordano or the sculptor Giuseppe Sanmartino were being called by the aristocracy and by the clergy to stage this religious event in a spectacular way. In this perspective the religious element became secondary to the theatrical one as proven by the involvement of stage directors such as Vincenzo Re and

scenografi professionisti impegnati a studiare sorprendenti effetti di illuminazione artificiale giocati sulle rifrangenze, in lamiere lucidate, di lampade a olio occultate da ricchi damaschi.

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<sup>46</sup> See Rossana Muzii, ‘Introduction’, in *Il presepe: le collezioni del Museo di San Martino* (Naples: Electa Napoli, 2005), p. 6.

<sup>47</sup> The author of this sacred drama was Andrea Perrucci, and the complete title is *Il Vero Lume tra le ombre, ovvero la spelonca arricchita per la nascita del Verbo Umanato*.

<sup>48</sup> See Marino Niola, *Il presepe* (Naples: L’ancora, 2005), p. 6.

<sup>49</sup> See illustration n. 9 at the back of this Thesis.

<sup>50</sup> Niola, *Il presepe*, p. 8.



E con i suoi musicisti – Alessandro Scarlatti, Domenico Giordano, Giovan Battista Pergolesi – chiamati a comporre cantate, pastorali e novene da eseguire di fronte al presepe finito.<sup>51</sup>

In addition tailors, jewelry makers and silversmiths created miniature works of art to complement the scene. I can safely argue that the *Presepio* of this period reflected the great cultural and artistic fervor of the capital of the kingdom as well as its lively atmosphere as confirmed by Goethe's definition of 'Napoli gioconda'.<sup>52</sup> The epitome of this Neapolitan tradition is the *Presepe Cuciniello*,<sup>53</sup> donated in 1879 to the Museum of San Martino by the architect and dramaturge Michele Cuciniello, who also put up the *Presepio*, since he believed that without a proper director, the *Presepio* loses its theatrical essence and becomes 'una delirante proliferazione di parti, o di "bei pezzi"'.<sup>54</sup>

From a different perspective, the anthropological aspect of the *Presepio* reveals its importance as a 'vera e propria ideologia che, con la sua caratterizzazione intimistica e familiare, prova la forza della stereotipizzazione meridionale della tradizione presepiale', and as an expression of bourgeois values,<sup>55</sup> since intimacy and family were the quintessential values advocated by the emerging bourgeoisie of the seventeenth and eighteenth century.<sup>56</sup> The Neapolitan attachment to such values is exemplarily portrayed in *Natale in casa Cupiello*, where both Luca and Concetta insist on denying the crisis of their family and try to keep it together at all costs. In particular, Luca considers the *Presepio* his little toy, where he retreats and shuts himself out of the troubled events which strike his

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<sup>51</sup> See Alessandra Griffo, *il Presepe napoletano*, p. 13.

<sup>52</sup> Griffo, *il Presepe napoletano*, p. 14.

<sup>53</sup> See illustration n. 10 at the back of this Thesis. For a contemporary example of a Neapolitan *Presepio* see illustration n. 11 at the back of this Thesis.

<sup>54</sup> Niola, *Il presepe*, p. 35.

<sup>55</sup> Niola, *Il presepe*, p. 15.

<sup>56</sup> Niola, *Il presepe*, p. 17.

household. Likewise, his constant reference to the importance of tradition and family values reiterates his false convictions.

As I have already stated, Luca Cupiello meticulously seeks the traditional elements of the *Presepio* which he either includes in his own little work of art, such as the waterfall executed with the pouch used for gastric lavage. In addition, he performs the arrival of the three kings in front of Concetta who is injured after chasing the *capitone* which, although ‘me fanno schifo: Lucariello ce va pazzo’.

It is important, at this stage, to illustrate the significance of these traditional elements. As I have noted before, the combination of religious and secular aspects with the further element of superstition have a strong significance in Neapolitan culture. In this sense the representation of the Nativity in Neapolitan tradition is interspersed with elements which on the one hand create the theatrical effect and on the other tell a completely different story from the one narrated in the Gospels. These elements, in the popular *Presepio* are always placed in a descendent position leading towards the *grotta* where baby Jesus is born as they reproduce the descending path from life to death and from light to dark. Among these, the river represents the ‘sacralità dell’acqua che scorre: segno presente in tutte le mitologie legate alla morte e alla nascita divina’,<sup>57</sup> which leads to the already mentioned waterfall. Besides, the three kings represent ‘il viaggio notturno dell’astro, che termina lí dove si congiunge con la nascita del nuovo sole bambino’.<sup>58</sup> Even the *pastori* are present in *Natale in casa Cupiello*, because they represent the reason for Luca’s errand before the Christmas Eve dinner,<sup>59</sup> or as a pathetic *mise en scène* in front of the injured Concetta which closes Act One. The final traditional element in the Neapolitan Christmas is

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<sup>57</sup> See Roberto De Simone, *Il presepe popolare napoletano* (Turin: Einaudi, 1998), p. 16.

<sup>58</sup> De Simone, *Il presepe popolare napoletano*, p. 19.

<sup>59</sup> Noticeably, in the English adaptation Len spends the whole night in search of a duck for the Christmas dinner.

the banquet on Christmas Eve, which is the fulcrum of the play. The Christmas Eve dinner holds a special place in Naples, where this tradition is probably related to old orgiastic Christmas dinners,<sup>60</sup> and it is indicative that the *osteria* where the banquet takes place is always positioned next to the *grotta*. Since the celebration takes place on 24<sup>th</sup> December, the setting of the first act is on 23<sup>rd</sup> December or ‘antivigilia’, as it is normally referred to, whereas the dramatic events which will lead to Luca’s illness happen on Christmas Eve.

I would like now to say a few more words about the significance of this dramaturgic element insofar as the choice of the *Presepio* as the central part of the play underscores a parallel and at the same time a juxtaposition with the traditional image of the family, especially in the South of Italy. We have seen how Luca’s determination to finish his *Presepio* is a sort of denial of the family crisis and at the same time is the expression of a totally unrealistic attitude on the part of the protagonist. Making the *Presepio* allows Luca to day-dream of a perfect world and to make it happen, even though only as a theatrical representation. This is fully explained in the closing stage directions which have been omitted in the adaptation and which read as follows:

*ottenuto il sospirato «si», Luca disperde lo sguardo lontano, come per inseguire una visione incantevole: un Presepe grande come il mondo, sul quale scorge il brulichio festoso di uomini veri, ma piccoli piccoli, che si danno un da fare incredibile per giungere in fretta alla capanna, dove un vero asinello e una vera mucca, piccoli anch’essi come gli uomini, stanno riscaldando con i loro fiati un Gesù Bambino grande grande che palpita e piange, come piangerebbe un qualunque neonato piccolo piccolo...*

LUCA (*perduto dietro quella visione, annuncia a se stesso il privilegio*) Ma che bellu Presebbio! Quanto è bello! (De Filippo, III, 812)

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<sup>60</sup> De Simone, *Il presepe popolare napoletano*, p. 27.

LEN's finger twitches... switching an imaginary switch on.

*ARTHUR switches the crib lights on.*

LEN: Oh, look! Just... look... at that!

*He sighs, gazing at it. (Stott, III, 14)*

As I have previously noted, the *Presepio* is Luca's response to his exclusion from family business.<sup>61</sup> Therefore, not only does it represent an essential cultural feature of the play, but it is also the justification for the whole plot. In this sense, I will show how in *Ducking Out* unemployment becomes a new core feature, and while this creates a considerable cultural shift, it shows the freedom the adaptor has taken in respect of the source text.

### **From the Source Text to the Target Text: What Happens in Between?**

In the course of this thesis I have suggested that the prime aim of translation is the encounter of cultures, insofar as translation makes it possible for us to become familiar with realities distant from our milieu and to appreciate cultural differences. This applies to foreign literature as well as theatre, although, since theatre carries the further element of the audio-visual representation of the oeuvre there are further cultural implications. My argument takes as a starting point the transmission of the actual work produced by a playwright taking into account his or her cultural background, ideas and style. It is worth noting that the selection of authors represented reflects specific cultural political choices related to a number of factors. These include the importance of introducing, in a given society, a particular author at a specific time, as well as the personal agendas of theatre managers, translators and directors. In addition, it is worth remembering that the nature of

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<sup>61</sup> See on this point Angelo Puglisi, *In casa Cupiello: Eduardo critico del populismo* (Rome: Donzelli Editore, 2001), p. 6.

the play script, as a tool used in the *mise en scène*, gives space to a series of interventions by the different parties involved in the transposition to the stage which lead to further departures from the initial work. Therefore, patronage and cultural constraints of the receiving culture exercise a considerable influence over the representation of foreign plays. From the translation viewpoint the extent of intervention on the source text depends largely on the translator's views of authorship and the role of theatre in general. This is why in theatre there is a demarcation between different gradients of translation according to the adherence to the text, so that an adaptation will give more freedom than a translation which supposedly departs very little from the original.

A contemporary transposition of a play written in the past, with references to the present and the relative adjustments is perfectly feasible and even desirable in order to make dated works more approachable and in line with the times. However, in order for this type of manipulation to achieve a cross cultural transfer the source text's cultural and stylistic elements, such as the use of dialect, need to be accounted for and this is a laborious process. By contrast, the practice of adapting plays rather than translating them, on the one hand seems to reflect the dichotomy between 'academic' translations, so to speak, and 'performable' translations, where the latter aim at creating a complicity between stage and a specific audience;<sup>62</sup> on the other it underscores an acculturating attitude towards the Other which is reinterpreted in light of the receiving culture's needs and expectations. As to *Natale in casa Cupiello*, I will show how the replacement of cultural features of the source text with domestic ones has determined the creation of a new story, since the crisis of the family, the individual's isolation and the attachment to tradition, which are core elements of the Neapolitan play, bear less significance than the protagonist's preoccupation with having lost his job and his dignity. On the other hand, the attachment of the English protagonist to

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<sup>62</sup> Johnston, 'Theatre Pragmatics', in *Stages of Translation*, p. 65.

the Nativity crib is seen as little more than a childish obsession,<sup>63</sup> especially when the artifact is destroyed during Nicolette's rage attack.<sup>64</sup>

### **Translation and Authorship**

The independence of the translator is linked to the issue of the recognition of his status as a writer and not as an invisible conveyor of the source text. In chapters One and Four I have outlined the debate between those scholars advocating the total independence of the translator 'as a writer' and those professing their loyalty to the author. In this instance I argue that what seems *prima facie* a question of professional dignity reveals a practical problem of authorship and copyright, which, by definition protects 'the expression of an idea, not the idea itself'.<sup>65</sup> A brief overview of the history of copyright in the United Kingdom will show on the one hand that until the sixteenth century written works were not protected against unacknowledged reproductions or even forgery and on the other that the protection of ideas has been the object of the attention of the legislator. In fact, 'in the 1550s a compulsory system of registration of books with the Stationers' Company was established with the aim of affording protection for authors',<sup>66</sup> although the system's primary objective was to protect the publisher's 'perpetual right to reproduce the book and, consequently, prevent reproduction by anyone else'.<sup>67</sup> Indeed, the subsequent Statute of Anne 1709, only gave authors 'an exclusive printing right of 14 years, followed by a further period of 14 years to be enjoyed by the author, if living';<sup>68</sup> however copyright protection for dramatic texts was not granted until the 1880s. Later, the Berne Copyright Convention

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<sup>63</sup> See David Roper, *Daily Express*, in *London Theatre Record*, 1982, II, 23, 619.

<sup>64</sup> See Milton Shulman, 'Sitting Duck', *The Standard*, 10 November 1982. Nicolette is the daughter of the Coppells, and will be examined further on in the chapter.

<sup>65</sup> See Tina Hart, Linda Fazzani and Simon Clark, 'Copyright', in *Intellectual Property Law* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), p. 161.

<sup>66</sup> Hart, Fazzani and Clark, 'Copyright', in *Intellectual Property Law*, p. 163.

<sup>67</sup> Hart, Fazzani and Clark, 'Copyright', in *Intellectual Property Law*, p. 163

<sup>68</sup> Hart, Fazzani and Clark, 'Copyright', in *Intellectual Property Law*, p. 163

1885 prompted the United Kingdom to amend its copyright laws until the promulgation of the Copyright Act 1956. In 1988, the Copyright Designs and Patents Act was introduced, and was subsequently amended by the New Copyright Regulations which came into force on 31 October 2003 in order ‘to achieve harmonization of copyright protection across the European Union’.<sup>69</sup> Interestingly, the current legislation has brought only limited changes to the legal discipline provided by the Berne Copyright Act 1956.

The amended Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988, in Chapter I, Section I, under the heading ‘Copyright and copyright works’ states:

(1) Copyright is a property right which subsists in accordance with this Part in the following descriptions of work—

(a) *original* literary, dramatic, musical or artistic works (my italics).

Under the heading ‘Authorship of Work’ it states:

(1) In this Part “author”, in relation to a work, means the person who *creates* it (my italics).

(3) In the case of a literary, dramatic, musical or artistic work which is computer-generated, the author shall be taken to be the person by whom the arrangements necessary for the *creation* of the work are undertaken (my italics).

Chapter II ‘Rights of Copyright Owner’ under the heading ‘The acts restricted by copyright in a work’ recites as follows:

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<sup>69</sup> Hart, Fazzani and Clark, ‘Copyright’, in *Intellectual Property Law*, p. 164.

(1) The *owner of the copyright* in a work has, in accordance with the following provisions of this Chapter, the *exclusive* right to do the following acts in the United Kingdom (my italics).

[...]

(e) to make an *adaptation* of the work or do any of the above in relation to an adaptation (see section 21); (my italics).

The mentioned section 21 is entitled ‘Infringement by making adaptation or act done in relation to adaptation’ and states:

(1) The making of an adaptation of the work is an act restricted by the copyright in a literary, dramatic or musical work.

For this purpose an adaptation is made when it is recorded, in writing or otherwise.

(3) In this Part “adaptation”—

(a) in relation to a literary or dramatic work, means—

(i) a *translation* of the work (my italics);

(ii) a version of a dramatic work in which it is converted into a non-dramatic work or, as the case may be, of a non-dramatic work in which it is converted into a dramatic work.<sup>70</sup>

From the above mentioned Copyright Designs and Patents Act we learn that the protection of the expression of ideas rather than their pure publication represents a substantial innovation of our times, where importance is given to intellectual property, in the sense of preserving the right of the ‘creator’ not to see his or her creation being unlawfully taken or

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<sup>70</sup> See the Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988 at [http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1988/ukpga\\_19880048\\_en\\_1](http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts1988/ukpga_19880048_en_1) (accessed on 6 October 2009).



misrepresented. We also learn that, while the author maintains the exclusive right over his or her creation, the translator does not acquire any autonomous right from his or her work. What is more, we can see that translations are also included in the definition of adaptations.

The legislation quoted on the one hand explains the position of those translation scholars who stress the creative role of translators, who are considered 're-writers' of the source text and in this sense become new authors. It also explains the position of those translators who produce versions or adaptations of dramatic texts with substantial cuts and alterations, as well as spatial and temporal transpositions, claiming that 'it is an experimental rather than a linguistic loyalty which binds translator to the source text'.<sup>71</sup>

With regard to the position of those scholars who consider translation a form of creative rewriting, I have claimed that the need to recognize the translator's presence and his or her importance in the transmission of culture does not exclude the importance of preserving the author's ideas and style expressed in the source text. I have also suggested that if the translator's choices are governed primarily by the need of over imposition as authors, then we open up to any sort of 'original' interpretations of literary and non literary works. Indeed, any translator's reading of the source text is subjective and culturally influenced, and this is reflected in his or her translational choices. In addition the use of drama texts in performance lends itself to more extensive manipulation to fulfill the so-called requirement of performability. Nonetheless, this should not lead the 'stage/performance dimension of the play, a dimension which makes it an 'acting' text and a source of creative processes',<sup>72</sup> to impinge on the source text's identity. On the other

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<sup>71</sup> See David Johnston, 'Text and Ideotext: Translation and Adaptation for the Stage', in *The Knowledge of the Translator: from Literary Interpretation to Machine Classification*, ed. by Malcolm Coulthard and Patricia Anne Odber de Baubeta (Lewiston: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1996), p. 246.

<sup>72</sup> David Johnston, cited by Manuela Perteghella, in 'Poetry, music and transformation in the Gulf of Naples: a creative voyage of *The Tempest*', in *Translation and Creativity: Perspectives on Creative Writing and*

hand, there are cases where so-called ‘privileged translators’ who are ‘in a favoured position because of their prestige, status and experience as writers, poets or playwrights’<sup>73</sup> hold a well recognized position in the target culture which entitles them to give a more personal interpretation of the source text. One example is the translation into seventeenth century Neapolitan of William Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* made by Eduardo De Filippo, which operated an acculturation of the English play relocating it in seventeenth century Naples. The translation created a Mediterranean version which maintained all the themes of the original while showing ‘his sensibility towards the literary text and its stylistic form’<sup>74</sup> through painstaking and laborious research on ‘the meaning of Elizabethan words, their several possible connotations/collocations, researching archaisms and difficult, unfamiliar expressions’.<sup>75</sup> I will discuss this methodology in the next section.

As for all aspects of life, I believe that ‘in medio stat virtus’ and that the freedom of translators and dramaturges to ‘experiment’ is quite legitimate, and incredibly stimulating, but it needs to be adequately qualified and regulated. In this sense the indication of ‘liberamente tratto’ seems a useful interpretative tool which, while establishing the autonomy of the new work from the original, alerts the readers/spectators to the fact that what they are experiencing is a new work altogether.

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*Translation Studies*, ed. by Eugenia Loffredo and Manuela Perteghella (London: Continuum, 2006), pp. 109-123, p. 112.

<sup>73</sup> Perteghella, ‘Poetry, music and transformation in the Gulf of Naples: a creative voyage of *The Tempest*’, p. 122.

<sup>74</sup> Perteghella, ‘Poetry, music and transformation in the Gulf of Naples’, p. 112.

<sup>75</sup> Perteghella, ‘Poetry, music and transformation in the Gulf of Naples’, p. 114. Eduardo’s acknowledgement to his wife Isabella for her collaboration to the translation is reported in Perteghella’s essay, p. 114.

## Writers Who Translate Writers

In 1983 Giulio Einaudi asked Eduardo to collaborate to the series *Scrittori tradotti da scrittori* by translating one of Shakespeare's plays. A year later, only a few months before his death, in just over a month, Eduardo completed and recorded the translation of *The Tempest*, which was utilized first at the University of Rome La Sapienza at the end of a series of lectures on theatre held in the Department of History of Theatre. Subsequently, after Eduardo's death, the same recording was used in 1985 by Eugenio Monti Colla's puppet company 'Compagnia Carlo Colla e figli' at the *Biennale* in Venice. Eduardo had given his voice to all the characters except Miranda who was played by Imma Piro.<sup>76</sup> He explained that one of the reasons for this choice was the closeness of the play to the old theatrical genre of the *féerie*, which had its origins in the seventeenth century and was in the repertoire of many theatre companies until the mid-nineteenth century. Like *The Tempest*, the *féerie* had as principal characters demons, fairies, witches, elves and other magical creatures. This text brought Eduardo back to a juvenile experience when, at the age of nineteen, he acted in the theatre company of Vincenzo Scarpetta, his half-brother, who had revived the *féerie* writing *La collana d'oro*, an adaptation of the old *I cinque talismani*, adding the character of Felice Sciosciammocca which linked the genre to comedy.<sup>77</sup> Another reason for Eduardo's choice seems to lie in the actual themes of the play which is about forgiveness and tolerance rather than revenge, which were also at the base of Eduardo's theatre.<sup>78</sup> The 'moral' message of *The Tempest* was particularly suitable for the political and social state of Italy at the time of the translation, and maybe Eduardo referred

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<sup>76</sup> See Angela Leonardi, *Tempeste: Eduardo incontra Shakespeare* (Naples: Colonnese, 2007), p. 103. See also Ferruccio Marotti, 'La lettura de «La Tempesta» di Shakespeare in napoletano come strumento didattico per un corso universitario a «La Sapienza»', in *Eduardo De Filippo: Atti del convegno di studi sulla drammaturgia civile e sull'impegno sociale di Eduardo De Filippo senatore a vita*, pp. 141-147.

<sup>77</sup> Leonardi, *Tempeste*, p. 35.

<sup>78</sup> See on this point Perteghella, 'Poetry, music and transformation in the Gulf of Naples', p 114.

to events which in the early 1980s struck Italy and the entire world such as terrorist attacks, wars and political scandals.<sup>79</sup> Another reason for Eduardo's choice of this play is its closeness to the *commedia dell'arte* of which it contains elements such as the exchanges between Stefano and Trinculo, resembling the *lazzi*,<sup>80</sup> as hypothesized by some scholars who were inclined to see the *commedia dell'arte* as one of the sources of the *Tempest*.<sup>81</sup>

However, although he remained close to the core message of the play, Eduardo infused in his work his own idea of theatre,<sup>82</sup> so he translated the play using seventeenth century Neapolitan '«ma come può scriverlo un uomo che vive oggi»',<sup>83</sup> introducing linguistic features taken from traditional storytelling, and relocating the action on an island which is a sort of synthesis between Capri and Isca, the small island which Eduardo bought in 1944 and where he used to spend long periods writing his plays.<sup>84</sup> Eduardo's re-writing acculturates the original, which becomes Neapolitan not only in the language but in its cultural elements. For example, such domestication is evident right from the opening of the play with a reference to the 'Madonna della Catena':

Nostromo (*ai marinai che entrano*): Guagliú, currite. Faciteve curaggio: 'a Maronna 'a Catena nce aiuta. Ammainate 'a vela maestra e mantenitive lèse. Appizzate le rrecchie pe' lu sisco de lu Capitano. Guagliú, facímme annòre: simmo Napulitane!<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Perteghella, 'Poetry, music and transformation in the Gulf of Naples', p. 114.

<sup>80</sup> See *The Tempest*, ed. by Virginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan (London: Arden Shakespeare, 1999), p. 12. See also Farrell, 'In Search of Italian Theatre', p. 3. On the same point see also *The Tempest*, ed. by Frank Kermode (London: Methuen, 1958), p. Ixvi-Ixviii.

<sup>81</sup> Leonardi, in her *Tempeste*, p.109 mentions Ferdinando Neri, Benedetto Croce and Piero Rebora who respectively in 1913, 1919 and 1932 found 'delle corrispondenze tra alcune situazioni della *Tempest* e la *Commedia dell'arte italiana*'.

<sup>82</sup> Leonardi, *Tempeste*, p. 38.

<sup>83</sup> Cited in Leonardi, *Tempeste*, p. 39.

<sup>84</sup> Leonardi, *Tempeste*, p. 47.

<sup>85</sup> Cited in Leonardi, *Tempeste*, p. 40.

Invoking the 'Madonna' is a clear element from the popular Neapolitan tradition as we have seen in *Filumena Marturano* as well, and this is followed by the even more explicit exclamation 'Guagliú, facímme annòre: simmo Napulitane!' stressing the element of honor and pride which characterize Neapolitan culture.<sup>86</sup>

Likewise the lines taken from old Neapolitan songs uttered by the various characters<sup>87</sup> represent another element indicating that Eduardo was deeply influenced by his own culture when translating *The Tempest*. In fact, the translator's cultural background is visible in the reference he makes to the Neapolitan theatrical genre of the *féerie* and in the elements drawn from comedy, such as the language, especially in the dialogues between Stefano and Trinculo,<sup>88</sup> and the use 'delle *immagini demoniache, catastrofiche, repellenti* che mette in campo, per incatenare il lettore-spettatore alla materia trattata'.<sup>89</sup> The acculturation of the source text which has been translated from a dominant into a minority language does not necessarily carry a political meaning,

it simply suggests the (re)positioning of the play within the specified locality of Neapolitaness, that is, within one defined cultural and linguistic community with its own tradition, occupying a 'space' within the dominant (perhaps imagined/constructed?) 'Italian' culture. This Neapolitaness mainly features in De Filippo's own theatre writing.<sup>90</sup>

Finally, the presence of the translator is visible through the extensive 'Translator's Note' which explains the translational process, adds all the necessary information for the non

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<sup>86</sup> Leonardi, *Tempeste*, p. 41.

<sup>87</sup> See on this point Leonardi, *Tempeste*, p. 85.

<sup>88</sup> Leonardi, *Tempeste*, p. 99.

<sup>89</sup> Marotti, 'La lettura de «La Tempesta» di Shakespeare in napoletano', p. 146.

<sup>90</sup> Perteghella, 'Poetry, music and transformation in the Gulf of Naples', p. 121.

Neapolitan reader and acknowledges the contribution of Isabella Quarantotti who did a literal translation. This seems to confirm that translation is a subjective activity and that in Eduardo's case his own poetry and theatrical art have informed his translation of *The Tempest*.

### **Analyzing *Ducking Out* (*The Coppel's Christmas*)**

As I have argued above in this chapter, the acculturation of *Natale in casa Cupiello* aimed at creating an English Eduardo with English cultural references and contemporary themes. This experiment made it possible for this Neapolitan author to be assimilated to the Anglo-Saxon world through the domestication of the foreign culture. As I have already mentioned, with such a radical choice the translator intended to distance himself from the previous representations of Naples, marked by great emphasis on caricature, given by Zeffirelli. What formerly had been presented as the quintessence of Neapolitan culture was now considered dated and stereotypical; therefore a completely new approach was necessary. Besides, presenting a foreign author with native characteristics had the advantage of making it possible for the audience to identify themselves with the characters and to create empathy with them. Furthermore, the generational clash and unemployment which were emphasized in the adaptation were probably considered more suitable themes than the crisis of family values. As I have argued above, the geographical and temporal transposition of plays is an experiment that could open up new perspectives and interpretations of the source play text. Nonetheless, such an acculturation must be supported by a coherent translational discourse, with special attention to both the linguistic and cultural features of the source text. In this way, acculturation may well represent a gateway for the Other into the receiving theatrical system, since the transposition of cultural elements can make the

foreign more understandable. However, the cultural elements need to have some sort of relevance in the target system; otherwise they may produce a destabilizing effect, as in the case under examination. Without these preconditions, the pure transposition of the play represents only an affirmation of the dominance of the target culture over the source culture.

Before turning to the textual analysis it is worth noting that the play script of *Ducking Out* needs to be considered mainly as a blueprint for the *mise en scène*, without any special emphasis on literary elements. In this sense, it reflects the director-oriented English theatre tradition as opposed to the Neapolitan tradition, where the author-actor greatly influenced the *mise en scène*. This appears clearly from the almost total absence of stage directions which, while in the Neapolitan play text abound in number and length, are reduced to minimal indications to the actors in the target text. I have already discussed the importance of stage directions in Eduardo's plays, which represent a way for the author to give life to his own voice in the plays; in fact

questo, delle lunghe e particolareggiate didascalie, non è un vezzo di Eduardo De Filippo. Integrano la sostanza lirica nel momento espressivo; e poiché l'ineffabile resiste, si tenta, come si può, di vincere questa resistenza. [...] In più, bisogna che si ricordi che l'autore, De Filippo, è un attore: un attore che oltrepassa la sua funzione d'interprete e l'abbina o la fonde in quella di creatore.<sup>91</sup>

For these reasons, the stage directions in *Natale in casa Cupiello* serve to clarify further the author's 'intenzioni' and to guide actors and director during the representation of the

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<sup>91</sup> Personè, *Il teatro italiano della «Belle Époque»*, p. 258.

drama. Conversely, I will show how such indications do not seem to have been taken into account in the adaptation, and more space has been given to the cultural relocation.

As a general comment, and in line with some of the critics,<sup>92</sup> I argue that the acculturation of the play has followed an incoherent process of assimilation between the Neapolitan and a local English culture, transferring some strong cultural elements which are quite frankly incompatible with the domestic environment. In fact it has rightly been underscored that the main contrast is between the strong Catholic attitude of the Coppells and their being English, which, together with the excessively animated and overexcited manners of the characters, is incompatible with the Anglo-Saxon style.<sup>93</sup>

A further indecision appears from the very choice of names which though English, are in almost all cases a literal transposition of the Neapolitan ones. Indeed, the Cupiellos are the Coppells, Luca is Len, Concetta is Connie, Tommasino is Tommy, Ninuccia is Nicolette. Exceptions are Pasquale who is Arthur, and Olga and Luigi Pastorelli who are respectively Maureen and Derek Mooney.

From the language viewpoint, I will show how the characters make much use of expressions such as Ah! Ohoohoo! Ur! Eh? What? and so forth, which are constantly interspersed in the dialogues. Furthermore, while colloquialisms and slang have been employed to translate dialect, the malapropisms are rendered in standard English like the *interoclisemo* (the *enteroclisma*) which is translated as 'enema bag', or are eliminated altogether. In this sense, the translational strategy to render dialect has coincided with the expansion and over expression of the dialogues which are coloured, so to speak, with swear words and sexual references. Interestingly, the same strategy will be employed nine years

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<sup>92</sup> See John Barber, 'Crisis at Christmas' and Milton Shulman, 'Sitting Duck', *The Standard*, 10 November 1982.

<sup>93</sup> See Sheridan Morley, *Punch, London Theatre Record*, 1982, II, 23, 618, and Robert Cushman, *The Observer*.



later in the adaptation of *Napoli milionaria!* by Peter Tinniswood, as I have illustrated in Chapter Four.

The first among the several cultural alterations of the play appears in the following extract of Act One. This is the opening of the play, where Luca and Concetta Cupiello are introduced and depicted in their utterly different natures: day-dreamer, unrealistic and self-centred the former; practical, down to earth and family administrator the latter.<sup>94</sup> It is the cold morning of 23<sup>rd</sup> December, the day before the *Vigilia*. The English version starts instead on the 24<sup>th</sup> December, which preludes the big dinner on Christmas day.

CONCETTA (*entra dalla destra con passo cauto; indossa una sottana di cotone bianco e ha sulle spalle uno scialle di lana; ai piedi un paio di pantofole realizzate con un vecchio paio di scarpe del marito. Reca in una mano una fumante tazza di caffè, e nell'altra una brocca d'acqua. Mezzo assonnata si avvicina al comò, posa la tazza poi va a mettere la brocca accanto al lavabo; va al balcone ed apre le imposte; torna al comò, prende la tazza e l'appoggia sul comodino. Con tono di voce monotono, abitudinario, cerca di svegliare il marito*) Lucarie', Lucarie'... scétate songh' e nnove! (*Dopo una piccola pausa, torna alla carica*) Lucarie', Lucarie'... scétate songh' 'e nnove (*Luca grugnisce e si rigira su se stesso, riprendendo sonno. La moglie insiste*) Lucarie', Lucarie'... scétate songh' 'e nnove

LUCA (*svegliandosi di soprassalto*) Ah! (*Farfuglia*) Songh' 'e nnove...

CONCETTA Pigliate 'o ccafè. (*Luca pigro e insonnolito, fa un gesto come per prendere la tazza del caffè, ma il sonno lo vince di nuovo. Imperterrita, Concetta riprende il lamentoso ritornello, con tono un po' più forte, mentre comincia a vestirsi davanti al comò*) Lucarie', Lucarie'... scétate songh' 'e nnove!

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<sup>94</sup> The original version to which I will refer is *Natale in casa Cupiello*, published in *Eduardo De Filippo, Teatro. Vol I, Cantata dei giorni pari*, ed. by Nicola De Blasi and Paola Quarenghi 1st edn., I Meridiani (Milan: Arnoldo Mondadori Editore, 2005), pp. 743-812.

LUCA (*si siede in mezzo al letto e si toglie, svolgendoli dalla testa, uno alla volta, due scialletti di lana e una sciarpa; poi guarda di sbieco la moglie*) Ah, songh' 'e nnove? Già si sono fatte le nove! La sera sei privo di andare a letto che subito si fanno le nove del giorno appresso. Conce', fa freddo fuori?

CONCETTA Hai voglia! Si gela. (De Filippo, I, 745)

CONNIE *enters, cautiously. She's still wearing her nightdress and an old dressing gown, with even older slippers (LEN's?), on her feet. She carries a pot of tea and a mug, both of which she puts on the dressing table.*

*She sighs, and begins the morning ritual:*

CONNIE Le-hen, Lennie. Nine o'clock.

*She pours tea into the mug.*

*Pause.*

CONNIE Le-hen. Nine o'clock? Len?

*She opens the curtains a few inches.*

*Len groans, and turns over.*

CONNIE Len? Lennie? Nine o'clock? Len?

*Pause*

*She yanks the curtains open.*

LEN Uh? Ah! Eh? Oh... What?

CONNIE Tea's ready. There's your tea.

LEN Ah. Oh...

*The effort to reach for it is too much, and he sinks back into the pillow.*

*CONNIE sniffs, nods, and starts to get dressed.*

CONNIE Nine o'clock, Len. Nine o'clock. Gone. Well?

LEN groans, and slowly sits up.

LEN Oh... Time is it? Oh...

CONNIE It's nine o'clock. Nine o'clock. Up and at em, he?

*LEN groans, and unwinds his football scarf, which is almost throttling him. He feels the air on his neck, and pulls his cardigan tighter.*

CONNIE That's the spirit. Rise and shine.

LEN Hurr. Hell's bells, you're hardly into bed and BOOOP! It's time to get up. And freezing. Is it? Cold? Connie?

*Connie stares at him, and sighs.*

CONNIE It's cold. It's winter. It's cold. (Stott, I, 1)

What appears straight away is the inverted length of stage directions and lines in comparison with the original with a considerable change of rhythm, given that the English dialogue carries on for much longer and without the repetition of the same unsympathetic phrase uttered by Concetta. Besides, if the substitution of tea with coffee represents an almost natural feature, since the morning ritual of coffee is not part of the English tradition, it is rather surprising to see a football scarf wrapped around the head to keep warm. In fact we can see that the comic effect has been framed in a class stereotype. Indeed, since the family is portrayed as working class, football is a key element to typify the character's social background.

As to the ritual of the morning coffee, Luca complains about the bad taste of the coffee showing that his preoccupations are on ludicrous things, such as the weather and coffee:

LUCA Eh... Questo Natale si è presentato come comanda Iddio. Con tutti i sentimenti si è presentato. *(Beve un sorso di caffè, e subito lo sputa)* Che bella schifezza che hai fatto, Conce'!

CONCETTA (*risentita*) E già, ma facévemo 'a cioccolata. È nu poco lasco ma è tutto caffè.

(De Filippo, I, 747)

In the English version instead, Connie replies to Len's complaint about his weak tea by saying that the tea is not good because it has no milk since the milkman has stopped the delivery.

LEN Urk! Ooo! This is muck. There's no milk!

CONNIE: That's right.

LEN What? But why? Why's there no milk?

CONNIE (*Nods*). Delivered. Anymore. (Stott, I, 4)

Unemployment is straight away over-imposed as a cultural transposition which shifts the theme of the dream and of refuge from reality, represented by Luca's preoccupation with his work of art, to that of lack of employment and social dignity. This turns into an oppressive obsession, when Len talks about a nightmare he had had the night before.

LEN: Oh. Oh...

*He picks the mug up.*

LEN Oooo, ey! I had an horrible dream last night. I had this... I dreamed I'd got a job.

CONNIE: Huh.

LEN I know, I know, I know, but... I got a job, but I couldn't do it. Carrying sacks up an down somewhere. Finally got a job, and... I couldn't do it. Worn out, trying. Connie? And I wake up, and it was only a dream, and... worn out, dreaming. (Stott, I, 3)

This reference is a new element which has the further effect of creating immediately a sense of anguish which builds up throughout the play, and it is repeated in the closing of the first act with Len's words: 'Work. That's what matters. Work. [...] Work, work, work, work...'. Further on in Act One, Len is trying to exert his authority on lazy Tommy, urging him to get a job, but he is somewhat vague on his employment position and is immediately rebuked by his son.

LEN [...] You can't go on being a naughty boy for ever. You're a man now. A man. All right, you got nothing from school. Right. But school's over. And men work. And you're not even trying. You need work, Tommy. You need to earn a living. I'm not immortal you know. Oh, I know, I'm between jobs myself, but... Well? Eh?

TOMMY Between? Dad, I finished school and you finished work. Finished. There is no work. There never will be no work. Not anymore. Why not just admit it? Live with it. It's finished, Dad. Gone. For all of us, who're like us. Gone. (Stott, I, 5)

Tommy's last words: «Gone. For all of us, who're like us. Gone» confirms that the play describes a working class family in the middle of a work rather than family crisis. Therefore the reference to the *Presepio* and all the fuss about it seems to be redundant insofar as both the traditional and metaphorical elements are missed, and the *Presepio*, from 'pietra angolare della tradizione partenopea [e] Arcadia nella storia della cultura del popolo napoletano'<sup>95</sup> becomes a secondary element which bears little significance in the receiving culture. Interestingly, the *Presepio* is the centre of Len's attention when he boasts his craftsmanship with Tommy who is instead utterly dismissive:

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<sup>95</sup> Puglisi, *In casa Cupiello: Eduardo critico del populismo*, p. 3.

LEN Noticed? You? Noticed? Ha! What would you know? You wouldn't 'notice' a masterpiece if you saw one. That's what I make, that! That is one thing I am a master of! Masterpieces! Cribs. All sizes. Indoors or out. Handmade, by a craftsman. I've had as many as six, seven orders at a time, for them. Churches, schools, homes, shops. Foo! You! What do you know? They said that to Picasso, you know! 'Worse every year!' Ha!

TOMMY How many orders this year then?

LEN Oh yes, oh yes, I know, oh yes. But, there's a recession on. And a lot of clever-dick know-it-all wanting trendy changes for no reason, but... And they might think it's dated, and you might think it's dated, but you're wrong, you see. A good crib, a good Nativity, skillfully done, by a master craftsman, is a beautiful and... and... and... a meaningful thing. Even today. So. (Stott, I, 7)

LUCA E già, come se fosse la prima volta che lo faccio! Io sono stato il padre dei Presepi... venivano da me a chiedere consigli... mo vine lui e dice che non viene neanche bene.

TOMMASINO (*testardo*) A me non mi piace.

LUCA Questo lo dici perché vuoi fare il giovane moderno che non ci piace il Presepio... il superuomo. Il Presepio che è una cosa commovente, che piace a tutti quanti... (De Filippo, I, 750)

It is worth noting that, while depicting the protagonist as somehow pathetic, the adaptation has failed to grasp the real justification of his action, that is the stubborn defense of an idyllic lost world. Once again the emphasis is on Len's dignity as a skillful craftsman rather than on pathos, as clearly indicated by the word 'commovente' used by Luca. Indeed, the reference to modernity as the alleged reason for Tommasino's lack of interest in the *Presepio* is somehow undermined, in translation, by the unreasonable requests made by

perspective clients and by the changed economic situation, namely the recession. Instead of the *Presepio* the duck which Len is desperately trying to get hold of for the meager Christmas dinner plays a central role. This major difference between the two cultures inevitably leads to alteration in the structure of the play, since the quest for the bird together with the lost dignity of the protagonist who is out of work replace the *Presepio* with its cultural and meta-theatrical significance.

The beginning of Act Two offers a wealth of elements which show on the one hand the total acculturation and on the other the centrality of work as the theme of the play. Let us begin with the stage direction describing the opening of the scene. It is Christmas day, after the family has been stricken by Nicolette's outburst culminating with the destruction of the crib.

*The living room.*

*Two doors: one to the hall and front door and other rooms, the other to the kitchen. The table is laid for Christmas dinner. On the sideboard is a cake, trifle, etc. on a card table in the corner is the crib, mended and finished, and behind it a small synthetic tree. There are paper chains from the main light to the corners of the room.*

*It's midday.*

*CONNIE is whipping up a sauce for the pudding.*

*RALPH, the caretaker, sips a glass of British Sherry, wincing with each sip. (Stott, II, 1)*

The description recalls immediately a domestic ambiance with British Sherry, trifle and whipped cream for the cake as opposed to 'la rituale «croccante», gli struffoli e la pasta reale'.<sup>96</sup> Besides the action is set on midday of Christmas day and not Christmas Eve at 'le

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<sup>96</sup> De Filippo, II, 773.

ventuno circa. Si aspettano Ninuccia e Nicolino per fare onore al pranzo della Vigilia e per andare alla rituale messa di mezzanotte'.<sup>97</sup> It is worth noticing the presence of the synthetic tree which introduces a further element in the scene: in the Neapolitan culture the *Presepio* is a symbol of tradition whereas the tree represents modernity. Therefore, the two features are somewhat contrasting.<sup>98</sup> These are details unknown to somebody who is not accustomed to Neapolitan culture although they are not of secondary significance in a cross-cultural perspective.

Interestingly, the duck also acculturates another traditional feature which bears a deep cultural meaning, that is the 'capitone', which is cut up to represent

una sorta, insomma, di rottura simbolica del Tempo che, dopo essere stato consumato (cronofagia) e cancellato, viene rigenerato in un tempo completamente nuovo nel quale tutti rinascono a una vita non piú basata sul privilegio e la discriminazione.<sup>99</sup>

The duck plays a central role also in the dialogue between Connie and Ralph, the caretaker, but while the Neapolitan text emphasizes the role of Concetta as a martyr and the motor of the family Connie shows a rather different attitude. Here follows both dialogues and it is clear that the English one is considerably longer than the Neapolitan one.

CONNIE Honestly, Ralph. I'm telling you. He couldn't even get a duck on time!

RALPH I know, I know...

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<sup>97</sup> De Filippo, II, 773. The setting of the action on Christmas Day is probably due to the fact that in England the main celebration with a big dinner takes place on this day and not on Christmas Eve.

<sup>98</sup> See on this point see Luciano De Crescenzo, *Così parlò Bellavista* (Milan: Mondadori, 1977). The author describes the people who put up the tree as 'people of freedom', and those who make the *Presepio* as 'people of love'.

<sup>99</sup> De Simone, *Il presepe popolare napoletano*, p. 6.



CONNIE Half the night! Looking for a duck. 'Friend of a friend', eh? Couldn't find the friend, couldn't find the duck... Couldn't find a match in a box, him. And does he give up? No off again, trying again. And you know what? We don't even need a duck.

RALPH I know...

CONNIE: And if we did, it's too late now. Eh?

RALPH I know...

CONNIE And it's typical, Ralph! Typical!

RALPH I know...

CONNIE I mean if Norman hadn't give us a turkey... He sent us a turkey, you know...

RALPH I know, I know...

CONNIE You know? How do you know?

RALPH You told me. In the hall. You said... all that.

*Pause.*

CONNIE (*Sniffs*) Thirty years of married life's done this to me, you know. My mind's a sieve, my... I'm floorcloth. Me! Rubbed out, squeezed out, chucked out. An old mop, because of him. Him!

RALPH I know. No, I do...

CONNIE That! Look at that! I ask you: is it normal? Man of his age, fiddling with models?

Is it? No!

RALPH No.

CONNIE No it's not! No. Huh!

*Pause.*

RALPH Still, the lift's been working well, lately, hasn't it? I've kept it, you know, cleaner, too. And the hall. Foyer you know...

CONNIE Look at it. Look! His masterpiece!

*She bangs a plug into a socket, and switches on. A tiny light comes on inside the stable, and another tiny light on a wire above it twinkles on and off...*

CONNIE Well? Well though?

RALPH I know. He showed me. He told me. I know.

CONNIE And can you tell him? No!

RALPH No.

CONNIE You say to him, 'Why? The kids are grown-up, they never noticed anyway, I don't want the thing, nobody wants the thing, what are you doing it for?' And he says, 'For me. For myself'. And then he goes out chasing round for a useless duck. 'Friend of a friend'! Huh! (Stott, II, 1)

CONCETTA Don Rafe', mi credete, me è venuto lo sconfido...

RAFFAELE Ma c'ò 'o ddicite a fà... io saccio tutte cose...

CONCETTA Ch'avit'a sapé... che avit'a sapé... Io sono una povera martire. 'O cielo m'ha voluto castigà cu nu marito ca nun ha saputo e nun ha voluto fà maie niente. In venticinque anni di matrimonio m'ha cunsumata, m'ha ridotto nu straccio. Che so' cchiù chella 'e na vota? E se non era pe me, chissà quanta vote sta casa sarebbe andata sotto sopra.

RAFFAELE Io e mia moglie lo diciamo sempre: vuie avivev'a nascere c' 'o cazone!

CONCETTA Adesso avete detto una cosa santa. (*Indicando il Presepe*) Vedete se è possibile: n'ommo a chell'età se mette a fà o Presebbio. So' ghiuta pe le dicere: «Ma che 'o faie a fà...» voi capite, don Rafe', nuie nun tenimmo creature, me pare na spesa e nu perdimento di tempo inutile... sapete che m'ha risposto? «'O faccio pe me, ci voglio scherzare io!» Che ne volete sapere... Adesso è uscito.

RAFFAELE E come correva!

CONCETTA È andato a San Biagio dei Librai, dice che doveva comprare certi pastori che si sono rotti. (De Filippo, II, 773)

The English dialogue depicts Connie's anger, rather than her resignation to living with a hopeless husband. Apart from the miss-translation referring to the number of years spent together (it is twenty-five and not thirty), what is missing here is Concetta's portrayal as the pillar of the family while Luca has never taken responsibility in the management of the family ('E se non era pe me, chissà quanta vote sta casa sarebbe andata sotto sopra'). Noticeably, the line 'vuie avivev'a nascere c' 'o cazone!', uttered by Raffaele to stress that Concetta is 'the man' of the family, has been replaced with a reference to the lift, showing Ralph's lack of interest in the matter. From a linguistic point of view, the use of the words 'martire' on the one hand and the phrase 'ci voglio scherzare io!' give a clear picture of the relationship between husband and wife. Besides, the tone of Concetta's words is of resignation rather than anger, as it appears in the English text which describes Connie as she 'bangs' a plug to switch the lights on.

Another character who has been reinterpreted following domestic canons of humor is Tommasino. He has been caught once again stealing from his uncle Pasquale. This time he stole a banknote which had previously been marked as a precaution. When his father challenges him, he cheekily denies everything, so his pockets are emptied to find the evidence of the theft. The stage directions describe the scene as follow:

*LEN grabs him, and starts emptying his pockets. He passes the contents to ARTHUR: an odd assortment: a tie, string, a toy car, one of those things with a feather on the end that whizzes when you blow it... the kind of things a kid might have... including an aerosol that squirts sticky green spaghetti... But also three knives, one of them a flick knife, a catapult, two shaved-down spoons, a pack of porno playing cards, etc. and finally, a £5 note. (Stott, II 12)*

LUCA Io sono tuo padre. Famme vedé. (*Lo trae a sé e gli rovista in tutte le tasche.*) Si trovo ‘a cinche lire... (*Tira fuori una cravatta, da un'altra tasca una trottola e la cordicella per metterla in azione, poi, finalmente, il biglietto da cinque lire; in disparte, al figlio*) Eccola qua. Ma è possibile che devi fare queste figure? (De Filippo, II, 783)

The endless description of objects found in Tommy's pockets aims to exaggerate the comic effect, while the addition of the knife and the porno photos adds an element to the character completely missing in the source text. Indeed, Tommy's risqué attitudes and remarks are scattered throughout the play, as shown by his comments on Arthur's sexual aberration, which are not in the original:

TOMMY And I'll tell you this! Blokes who go in public bogs don't always get what they want.

*Pause.*

ARTHUR What? What're your saying? What's he saying? What?

*Pause.*

ARTHUR Just because I've got a weak bladder. That's why I go in bogs. Because of my bladder. That is the only reason I go in bogs, because of my bladder. Well, isn't it? Connie? (Stott, II, 5)

Arthur's sexual deviation is mentioned also at the end of Act Two, when the three men stage the procession of the Three Kings who bring Concetta their presents. Indeed, Arthur who brings a hand bag is described as 'camp' and moves Tommy to giggle. It is important to note that sexual references are made also by Len, with reference to his wife. When Luca is reproaching Tommasino who demands his breakfast in bed, his father attempts to use his

authority forbidding his wife from bringing it and uses the expression ‘tua madre non serve’, with the double-meaning that not only does she not serve breakfast in bed, but she is hopeless. Interestingly, the subtle word play in the Neapolitan text has been adjusted so as to allow for sexual references: «Your mother doesn’t serve anybody anything in bed. Do you know? No?». <sup>100</sup>

As I have noticed before, the adaptation abounds with contemporary English references. I have also argued that this acculturation is the result of the extra elements which are introduced into the text to bring it as close as possible to the receiving culture, so that full identification with the story being told on stage can be achieved. Apart from the already mentioned food transposition, other adjustments can be found in the list of groceries prepared by Derek Mooney, the neighbor who has come to visit Len, which includes ‘Weetabix. Tomato soup. Bickies. Fairy liquid and baked beans’. Interestingly, also this feature does not have any correspondence in the source text, where the neighbor, Luigi Pastorelli, is depicted as indecisive and keeps asking his wife Olga whether it is better for him to leave or to wait for the doctor. Other cultural transpositions regard specific events and people in British history. For example, due to the stroke, Luca has intermittent recognition of people, so he mistakes Concetta for Don Basilio, a character in the *Barber of Seville* which they saw at the *San Carlo* theatre a few days before. In the English version, this has been replaced with two female politicians, Shirley Williams and Margaret Thatcher. Moreover, Luca confesses his squabbles with Concetta, although they are not serious after all:

LUCA [...] Io pure faccio sempre questione con mia moglie... È vvote se sentono ‘e strille fin’abbascio ‘o palazzo... Ma poi ci vogliamo bene. Parlate male di me a Concetta, seh!

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<sup>100</sup> On this point see also Acqua, ‘Ducking Out’.

Vi mangia vivo... C'è l'affetto, siamo attaccati l'uno all'altra e così ho educato anche mio figlio Tommasino [...]. (De Filippo, II, 789)

In the English version instead Len makes a reference to an incident which happened between the Pope John Paul II and Mr Paisley:

LEN [...] Look at me and Connie. What? Fight? Foof! What? Megaphones, we need, us. Like Paisley and the Pope, some nights. But, that's what it's about, isn't it? Marriage. Bit of a dust-up, bit of a cuddle, better than watching tele, eh? [...] (Stott, II, 18)

Another strong indigenous reference concerns the doctor who comes to examine Luca. In the source text he is referred to simply as 'o duttore'; instead the English version spends half a page on his identification.

DR PATEL Right. Now then...

*He stirs in a few flecks of sugar, looks at Len, and drinks his coffee.*

DR PATEL Ah, yes. Mmmm...

CONNIE Ur, Dr MacIntosh?

DR PATEL No. Patel. He's not here.

DEREK What? Sick, is he Eh?

DR PATEL No. skiing. In Austria.

CONNIE Oh. Oh.

DR PATEL I'm fully qualified. I'm a native.

*He smiles.*

CONNIE (Smiles) Yeh. Sorry, just...(Stott, III, 8)

RAFFAELE (*dal fondo, recando una guantiere con due tazze e una piccola caffettiera*)

Donna Cunce', 'o duttore.

CONCETTA Dotto', aspettavamo a voi con ansia. (*Intanto Raffaele ha riempito la tazza di*

*caffè e la sta porgendo ad Alberto*) Rafe', 'o ccafé ô dottore.

So, the English version has created a huge cultural shift, introducing a racial element with the intent of creating a somehow comic effect, deriving from the absurdity of mistaking a Dr. Patel with a Dr MacIntosh. However, this interposition on the one hand breaks the rhythm of the scene and alters the nature of it, which is indeed rather dramatic. On the other hand it introduces a totally redundant and questionable element in the text.

From a linguistic viewpoint, I have argued that the code-switching in Eduardo's plays far from being a pure stylistic device is the expression of the wish to use dialect as an inter-class, cross-cultural medium. In fact

la lingua di Eduardo è certamente interclassista, ma nel senso di veicolo di comunicazione tra ceti diversi, non un edulcorante piccolo-borghese; essa consente per un verso all'Autore di elaborare a partire dalla struttura sintattica del suo proprio pensiero e, per l'altro, di incontrare non tradotto il parlante italiano.<sup>101</sup>

As it has been shown in the analysis of other plays, also in *Natale in casa Cupiello*, the use of dialect, without carrying a specific class connotation, serves to juxtapose different characters as well as to modulate the single character's lines, as happens with Luca, when he switches continuously between dialect and approximate Italian according to his interlocutor. In the target text such code-switching is eliminated since standard language

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<sup>101</sup> Puglisi, *In casa Cupiello: Eduardo critico del populismo*, p. 92.

has been employed, though with unrefined, simplistic undertones. I can safely suggest that the reason why neither Luca nor the other characters ever make use of sexual reference or swear words is not necessarily to be found in the temporal collocation of the play. In fact the language was revised in the various editions, until the 1977's television broadcast, and the author could have modernized and maybe enriched it with more contemporary words or even with swear words. Conversely, the play has moved more towards the traditional and less Italianized dialect keeping the register free from any form of strong language.<sup>102</sup> However, in the following extracts I will show how, on the contrary, the tone of the adaptation is generally harsh and bad language is widely employed by the characters.

In the passage that follows Pasquale is complaining with Luca because Tommasino has sold his shoes, on the assumption that his cold would have killed him, and Luca is rather annoyed that his brother is making such a fuss, especially considering that he is a guest and contributes very little to the household finances. In contrast Pasquale rebukes Luca who has just claimed his right over his brother's belongings once he is dead. It is important to note that the dialogues leading to this exchange have been substantially re-crafted leaving out a lovely piece of dark humor to give more space to the nasty exchange between the brothers.<sup>103</sup>

LUCA (*punto dalle considerazioni fatte dal fratello*) Io odio di contrastarmi con mio fratello, perché poi si esce all'impossibile. Pasquali', tu sei l'eterno scontento.

PASQUALE (*trasecolato*) So' scontento? (De Filippo, I, 755)

LEN Arthur, since the day you were born, since the day I was born and got to know you, and I do, you've been, you've been a miserable, moaning, doom-ridden, gloomy, down

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<sup>102</sup> De Blasi, 'Nota filologico-linguistica', in *Eduardo De Filippo: Teatro*, p. 836.

<sup>103</sup> See De Filippo, I, 754.



in the mouth, hypochondriarchichal complainer [...] You turn on me. Your own brother. Savagely. [...] what can I do? Strangle him? Slit his throat?

ARTHUR: Me? Me? I'm one of the most cheerful people I know. When I've not got flu. When I've got my shoes. And my coat. Me! (Stott, I, 14)

As appears from the above dialogues, the tone of the adaptation is more confrontational and aggressive than the original, where Luca is indeed reluctant to get into a quarrel with his brother («io odio di confrontarmi con mio fratello») and his remark is dry as well as incisive. Conversely, the adaptation stresses the bitterness and resentment between the brothers.

Another character who is depicted in the English version as aggressive and rude is Nicolette. However, it must be noted that although she is rebellious, she is also very affectionate to her parents. Besides she is the only one in the family who has completed her studies and this is confirmed by the fact that she speaks standard Italian. Even at the height of her rage her language is always controlled. Here follows the description of the arrival of Ninuccia who has had yet another row with her husband, Nicolino. She is obviously very angry and fed up with his jealousy, but she refuses to speak about it, although Luca repeatedly encourages her to talk and even uses standard Italian to show some authority and to establish a closer contact with his daughter. Luca tries without success to obtain from his daughter some information, even praising his son in law's generosity and affection towards her. The result is only a stubborn silence. Ninuccia does not speak a word. In the English version, on the contrary, Nicolette bursts immediately into an explosion of insults towards her husband as one can see from the following extract:

NICOLETTE Well that's it. That is it! The lot! I've had it! Up to there! Tcha!

LEN Ur. Love? Nicolette? Do you want to tell us all about it?

NICOLETTE Huh! Bloody, stupid, pig-ignorant, fat-gutted, obnoxious, self-centred, useless... gobbin!

LEN Are we talking about Norman, pet?

NICOLETTE Huh! Pasty-faced, pathetic, pock-marked pillock of piddling piss-artist!

LEN We are, aren't we? We're talking about Norman. I can tell. (Stott, I, 20)

Here, while the English dialogue introduces an element of crudity absent in the source text it alters the rhythm of the scene which in the original builds up from the girl's silence and reaches its apex when she finally says to her mother: 'Io non ne posso più! È un uomo che mi tormenta con la gelosia', but only when her father has left the room. The fact that Ninuccia only speaks to her mother contributes to create that exclusion of Luca from the family's matters, so he cries 'Insomma, io non devo sapere niente!' only to get from his wife a dry reply 'Che Vuo' sapé... Fa' 'o Presebbio, tu...'.<sup>104</sup> In the English text, instead, the atmosphere is tense right from the beginning and culminates with Nicolette's rage attack against the *Presepio*.

However, where the language reaches its highest level of coarseness is in Act Two. Ninuccia and Concetta are in the kitchen, chasing the live capitone which eventually slips away, and during the fight Concetta bangs her head against the cooker.

NINUCCIA (*entrando*) Se n'è scappato nu capitone per tramente 'o tagliàvemo!

LUCA Nun sapevo che era...

NINUCCIA Ma chella mammà p'afferrà 'o capitone ha túzzato cu 'a capa vicino 'o fucolare.

(De Filippo, II, 794)

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<sup>104</sup> De Filippo, I, 761.

NICOLETTE 'There's a duck! There's a fucking duck in there! It's alive! It's pecking!

Len Oh...

NICOLETTE 'It's quacking! It's pecking! It's not even fucking plucked! She's banged her head on the stove! (Stott, II, 22)

The English version depicts the characters in a way which is very distant from the original and creates a shift from the source culture towards a domestic stereotype. Interestingly, such a portrayal does not seem to be in tune with the English cultural system, that is probably why some critics have suggested Ireland as a more realistic location.<sup>105</sup> However, my argument is that the choice of Ireland, which is considered a more warm-hearted country with a Catholic faith, would have represented an Anglo-Saxon stereotype, rather than rendering the play in a way which goes beyond regional and religious clichés. The preoccupation of both the adaptor and the critics seems to be how to reproduce Mediterranean passion, whether in a Catholic environment or in a regional setting, whereas this element is secondary in the play, which contains very few animated scenes.

The choice to transpose the play into an English cultural environment, thus detaching it from the so-called 'spaghetti' genre, represents an interesting approach, nonetheless in order to fulfill its innovative purpose the domestication should have extended to all the cultural facets. I am referring in particular to elements such as the *Presepio* as well as to the topics of family unity and adultery, which are of central importance in a Southern Italian family but bear very little significance in the receiving system. Indeed, in England such matters were not problematic in the eighties and this is probably why the emphasis shifted to the problem of lack of work, which was considered a more contemporary issue. Likewise, the fact that in England the *Presepio* does not carry a

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<sup>105</sup> See Benedict Nightingale, *New Statesman* and Francis King, 'Those excitable Lancastrians'.

strong cultural valence renders this element in the English adaptation somehow out of place, especially when ‘grandfather, great grandfather ... My Dad, rest in peace, carried on the tradition, for us kids, when we were kids. Then I took it up, you know for my kids’.<sup>106</sup> But one wonders, what does an English audience feel about making a *Presepio* in the first place?

In my discussion of *Ducking Out* I have referred to the work as an adaptation and not a translation, stressing the fact that a translation must have the ‘*rispetto giuridico del dettato altrui*’<sup>107</sup> whereas in our case the work can be described as ‘*liberamente tratto*’, as I have suggested earlier in this chapter. I have also noted that the relocation in West Lancashire is certainly an interesting experiment of reinterpretation of the source text and certainly a better solution to the problem of translation of dialect than the Italianization of the English accent. However I have questioned the freedom of the translator/adaptor to manipulate the source text, introducing elements which are not only absent in the original, but contrasting with its content, as in the case of redesigning the characters which change from a ‘*uomo di fiducia*’ to an unemployed security man ‘with a childlike obsession for building Nativity cribs’,<sup>108</sup> or from a rather boring uncle to a homosexual voyeur, or else from a business man into a butcher, or even to introduce contemporary elements such as a whole video collection of the ‘Dallas’ series, owned by Nicolette at her luxurious modern apartment with converted stables where they have ‘discos’ and a ‘DJ comes out’. In the case under examination the adaptor has made his choices and has given his interpretation of the source text, and this is certainly what all translators do, but

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<sup>106</sup> Stott, II, 9.

<sup>107</sup> See Umberto Eco, *Dire quasi la stessa cosa: Esperienze di traduzione* (Milan: Bompiani, 2003), p. 20.

<sup>108</sup> See David Roper, *Daily Express, London Theatre Record* 1982, II, 23, 619.

l'aver isolato alcuni livelli significa appunto *imporre la propria interpretazione del testo fonte*. [...] Dunque abbiamo una cosiddetta traduzione che seleziona un solo livello della sostanza espressiva, e così facendo ci comunica un contenuto diverso.<sup>109</sup>

In this case of acculturation, therefore, the story of the source text has been rewritten by the adaptor who has told his own story, although the basic plot has been left generally unchanged. In other words, the source text has been 'used'<sup>110</sup> to tell something culturally very different. I would like to stress that keeping some of the cultural features of the source text has created a 'faint air of homelessness',<sup>111</sup> as they have been transmuted without creating the same effect as in the source culture. As a result the audience has been offered an account of Neapolitan Christmas which is the result of the adaptor's rewriting rather than the representation of this piece of Neapolitan theatre.

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<sup>109</sup> Eco, *Dire quasi la stessa cosa: Esperienze di traduzione*, p. 334.

<sup>110</sup> On the concept of use of the source text Umberto Eco in his *Dire quasi la stessa cosa: Esperienze di traduzione*, p. 341 notes that 'tra le infinite modalità d'uso c'è anche quella di partire ad un testo stimolo per trarne idee e ispirazioni onde produrre poi il *proprio* testo'.

<sup>111</sup> See Sheridan Morley, *Punch*.

## CONCLUSIONS

*La differenza tra il teatro dialettale e quello cosiddetto Italiano è che quest'ultimo non ha né tradizioni né repertorio; i nostri grandi commediografi sono dialettali: Goldoni, Ruzante, Machiavelli, Pirandello.*

**Eduardo**

Eduardo's words on dialect theatre at the beginning of this concluding chapter draw attention to the multifaceted nature of Italian culture and of its theatre.<sup>1</sup> I have suggested in this thesis that the different languages present in the country, far from being the rejection of a national culture, constitute Italian culture. In particular I have drawn on De Mauro's point that:

ciò che è da tutelare non è il fantasma o l'orgoglio micronazionalistico, ma la concreta libertà di riconoscersi in un patrimonio linguistico nativo per farne il punto di partenza della maturazione di più vaste capacità comunicative.<sup>2</sup>

In fact, dialect theatre is a clear example of such linguistic heritage insofar as dialect appears to be closer than standard Italian to people's emotions, even among those strata of the population who do not normally speak dialect. Indeed, the vast resonance of Eduardo's theatre both in Italy and abroad demonstrates that he wrote 'per tutti: ricchi, poveri, operai, professionisti... tutti, tutti! Belli, brutti, cattivi, buoni, egoisti...'.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The citation has been taken from Quarantotti De Filippo, *Eduardo: pensieri, polemiche, pagine inedite*, p. 172.

<sup>2</sup> De Mauro, *L'Italia delle Italie*, p. 46.

<sup>3</sup> Eduardo, cited in Quarantotti De Filippo, *Eduardo: pensieri, polemiche, pagine inedite*, p. 142

My analysis of the English translations of the plays examined has raised a number of questions with regard to the representation of minority cultures and languages. In the first instance, it has revealed that while foreign play texts have been introduced into the target theatrical system, language domestication has somehow impoverished the representation of the source culture's distinctive features. For example, in the case of *Il sindaco del Rione Sanità* and in *Filumena Marturano* the neutralization of dialect has removed the cultural elements embedded in the source language and has also produced an alteration of the style of the plays insofar as the juxtaposition of standard language and dialect has been lost in translation. This was particularly striking since such a linguistic feature represents one of the major characteristics in Eduardo's theatre because it defines the social status of the characters, establishes their closeness to each other and contributes to create comic effects.

One of the most significant effects of the neutralization of dialect has been the elimination of the Otherness of the plays which have been assimilated linguistically to the target system. In this sense my study confirms that the elimination of the Other is a precondition for the introduction of foreign theatre in the receiving milieu.<sup>4</sup> My study has in addition raised questions regarding the role of standard English in establishing the predominance of a particular tier of society to the detriment of other sections of the cultural and social environment. Although sometimes domestication is necessary, like for example in those cases where a total foreignization would misrepresent the original meaning and sound obscure to the target audience, nevertheless the eradication of the unknown through language neutralization or cultural domestication affirms the predominance of the dominant target culture and of its expectations.

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<sup>4</sup> See Brisset, A *Sociocritique of Translation: Theatre and Alterity in Quebec, 1968-1988*, and Aaltonen, *Acculturation of the Other: Irish Milieux in Finnish Drama Translation*, cited in Chapter One respectively on p. 55 and p. 60.

With regard to the rendering of Neapolitan with regional variants, be it Liverpool as in *Napoli Milionaria*, or West Lancashire as in *Ducking Out*, this thesis has shown that, on the one hand the experiments had the advantage of detaching Italian culture from the stereotype of ‘Spaghetti language’, and contributing to create an English Eduardo, who was more easily comprehended by the target audience. On the other hand, these versions have substituted the previous cliché with the new clichés of over-excitabile, religious-bound, working class representation even though the source texts have no specific class connotation and offer an example of understated humor. It is worth here recalling Eduardo’s words when he described his theatre:

io credo che le mie commedie siano tragiche. Io sono convinto che le mie commedie siano sempre tragiche, anche quando fanno ridere.<sup>5</sup>

By contrast, the translational choices emphasized humor and over excitement which were obtained through the use of longwinded dialogues and impoverished English which is often associated with bad language and slang.

As a more general point I argue that the English adaptations have represented Neapolitan culture following domestic theatrical canons. The textual analysis has shown that the source text has been transformed using cultural points of reference, such as for example *Coronation Street*, which are familiar to the spectator even though they do not represent the author’s ‘cultural and linguistic universe’.<sup>6</sup> However, in doing so it appears that the adaptors have isolated only one level of the source text that is the narrative level,<sup>7</sup> so that the cultural one has been incorporated in the target environment. In this sense, a

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<sup>5</sup> Eduardo, cited in Di Franco, *Il teatro di Eduardo*, p. 26.

<sup>6</sup> Eco, *Experiences in Translation*, p. 22.

<sup>7</sup> Eco, *Experiences in Translation*, p. 125.



resistant strategy, as suggested by Venuti,<sup>8</sup> while making the translator more visible, would have made the source culture more present and would have brought the spectator closer to it.

This study has highlighted a novel aspect in translation, underscoring that the post-colonial attitude towards foreign literature and theatre which characterized translation in the eighties and nineties in some cases seems to confer an immense power of culture transmission to the translator-rewriter. It is undeniable that translators play an essential role in the ‘encounter of cultures’; nevertheless we should also bear in mind that the starting point remains the source text whose identity and stylistic features, including dialect, need to be preserved. Foreign texts are known by the receiving milieu through translations which become the ‘originals’; therefore foreign cultures are brought into the target system through the representation made by translators. As to Neapolitan dialect, I can safely argue that it is a language in its own right, and it represents a specific culture through specific linguistic structures. From this premise it follows that what is changed or misinterpreted by translators becomes that particular ‘original’ culture.

The above argument indicates that translators need to be bicultural, as this quality allows them to decode and re-encode in the target text the cultural elements embedded in the source text. In addition, translators need extensive knowledge of the source language whose nuances are as important as those of the target language. In fact, language and culture are tightly linked and the understanding of the latter cannot happen without mastering the former. This observation, while stressing the importance of the source culture, inevitably questions the so-called two-tier translation system commonly practiced in British theatre, where literal translations are produced as a base for dramaturgical

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<sup>8</sup> See Venuti, *Rethinking Translation*, cited in Chapter One on p. 46.

elaboration, where the adaptor or dramaturge has in some cases no knowledge of the source language.

What is more, this thesis has underscored the fact that while Italian theatre has a long-lasting actor/author tradition, English theatre is more director-oriented, and this reflects on the rapport between text and *mise en scène*, since the play text is regarded mainly as an instrument for performance. In this sense, the actor/author tradition of Italian theatre implies an inverse relation with the play text to the English one. We have seen how Eduardo's plays have strong literary characteristics which reflect on the way they are staged. The long, painstakingly created stage directions and the meticulousness in the construction of characters demonstrate the presence of the actor/author/director. Conversely, this presence has been generally weakened in the adaptations which have acted as stage instruments for the English director oriented *mise en scène*.

Translating theatre is a problematic task, given the duality of the play text which lingers between literature and performing arts, with the further element of its exploitation as a staging tool, employed at different levels by different individuals with different needs. Indeed, the translator, the director, the stage director and other technicians, the actors and the audience all take part in the transfer of the play text. When the transfer regards minority cultures, like dialectal cultures, the task becomes even more arduous, as the knowledge of that minority culture is more limited and more specific.

From what I have said above, comes the final point raised by this thesis which is the need of collaboration between translators, authors (if this is possible) and directors. The synergy between translators and practitioners would hopefully produce target texts imbued with features coming from both source and target culture, which would adequately represent the former and usefully serve the latter. As to dialect translation, notwithstanding the fact that it remains a greatly difficult task to perform and that no guarantee can be given

as to the full achievement of cultural transfer, the presence of the bilingual and bi-cultural translator during the transposition from page to stage seems to be even more desirable, given the specificity of the linguistic medium and the richness of cultural elements.

A perfect translation does not seem to exist. Besides, since theatre translation is linked to the practices and acting conventions of different times, it lends itself to reinterpretation and modernization. While such a process contributes to the development of new perspectives in theatre, adopting a cultural approach in translation may empower minority languages and cultures.

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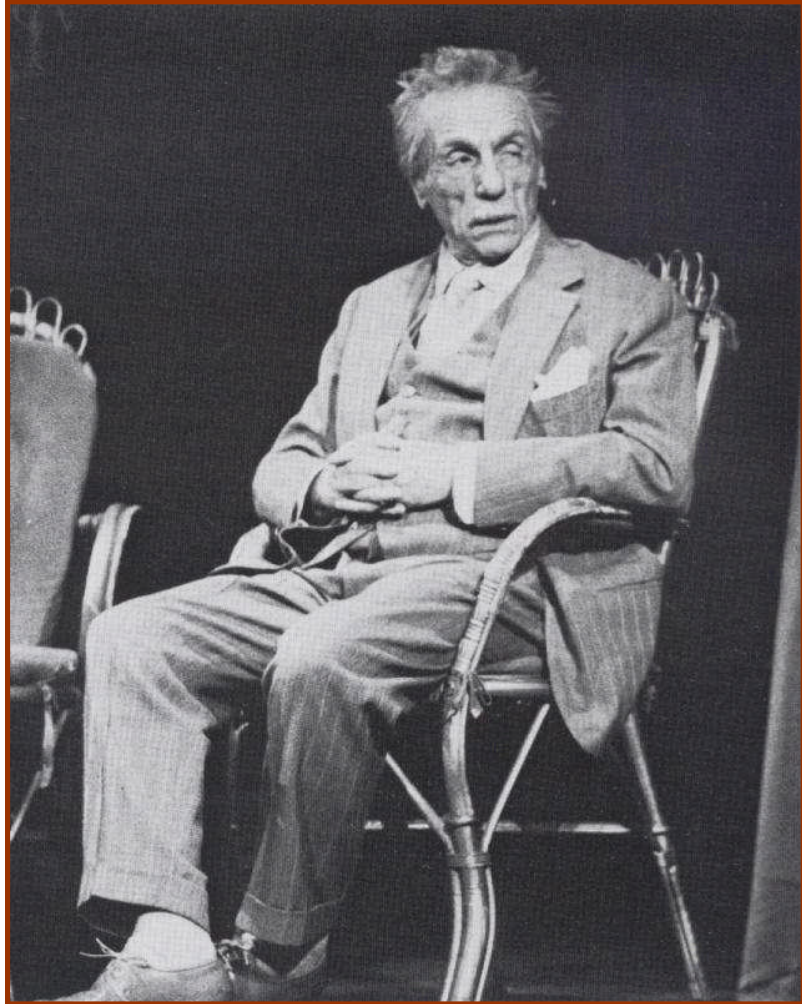
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**ILLUSTRATIONS**

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# OCTAGON THEATRE



Howell Croft South, Bolton BL1 1SB  
Theatre Director: Wilfred Harrison  
BOX OFFICE: BOLTON 20661

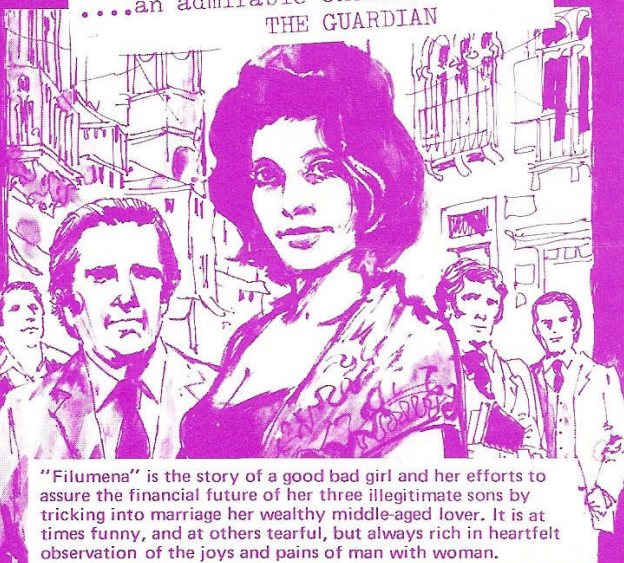
May 4th – May 29th 1982

## FILUMENA

"...a warm-hearted, loving play"  
BOLTON EVENING NEWS

by  
*Eduardo de Filippo*  
(translated by Carlo Ardito)

"...a bitter-sweet comic classic  
....an admirable choice."  
THE GUARDIAN



"Filumena" is the story of a good bad girl and her efforts to assure the financial future of her three illegitimate sons by tricking into marriage her wealthy middle-aged lover. It is at times funny, and at others tearful, but always rich in heartfelt observation of the joys and pains of man with woman.

Of a highly successful West End run (1977-1979) the reviewers said '... it shines like a real gem ... a comic classic.'  
'perfect escapist entertainment ... warmly received.'  
'completely endearing.'



n. 3



n. 4





n. 5



Len Coppel  
Connie Coppel  
Tommy, their son  
Arthur Coppel, Len's elder brother  
Nicolette Lovegrove, their daughter  
Norman Lovegrove, her husband  
Ralph, the caretaker  
Vincent Kelly  
Maureen Mooney  
Derek Mooney  
Dr. Patel  
Rick  
Justine  
Neighbour

**WARREN MITCHELL**  
**GILLIAN BARGE**  
**KEVIN KENNEDY**  
**LESLIE SANDS**  
**DIANE BULL**  
**PHILIP MCGOUGH**  
**CHAS BRYER**  
**KEVIN LLOYD**  
**DOREEN KEOGH**  
**ALAN DEVLIN**  
**RENU SETNA**  
**PAUL HARGREAVES**  
**JANET HAMPSON**  
**ROBB SABAN**

Directed by **MIKE OCKRENT**  
Designed by **POPPY MITCHELL**  
Lighting by **LEO LEBOVICI**  
Assistant Director **BRUCE HYMAN**

**DUCKING OUT**

A comedy by  
**Eduardo de Filippo**  
In a new English version  
by **Mike Stott**

The action takes place in the Coppel's flat in Derwent Block, the Lakeview Estate, in a town in West Lancs.

Act I  
**Christmas Eve**  
INTERVAL  
Act II  
**Christmas Day**  
INTERVAL  
Act III  
**Ten days later**

A discussion of the production of **DUCKING OUT** with the Director, and probably most of the cast, is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 23rd November in the auditorium after the performance.

**OPENS TUES DEC 14**

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H.M. TENNENT LTD PRESENTS

**WARREN MITCHELL**

**"Proving yet again what a very fine actor he is"** FINANCIAL TIMES

**DUCKING OUT**

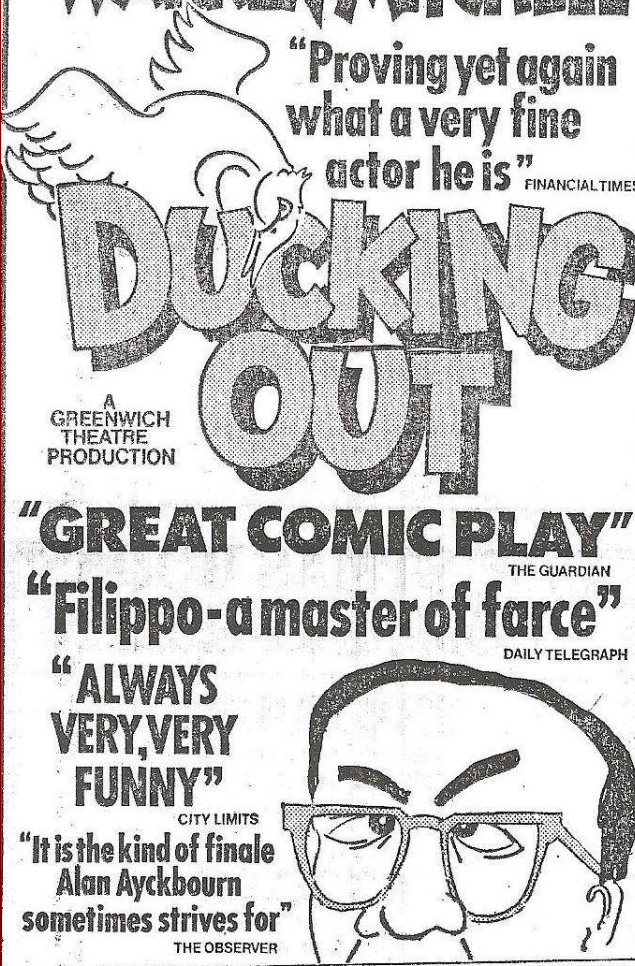
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**Warren Mitchell gives a deeply moving performance'**

The Guardian

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Punch

**'Very, very funny. Queue for seats.'**

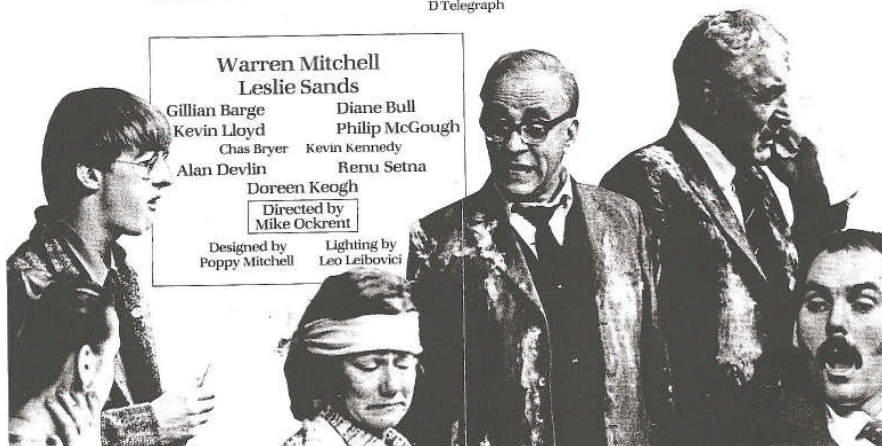
City Limits

**'Mounting farcical crescendo with each gag generating the next with ferocious energy'**

Times

**'Very funny . . . the play and Mike Stott soon have us laughing easily . . . thanks to the immense skill of De Filippo and director Mike Ockrent.'**

D Telegraph



n. 9



n. 10





n. 11

