

Institution: King's College London
Unit of Assessment: Sub-panel 28. Modern Languages and Linguistics
Title of case study: Out of the Wings: The Research and Practice of Spanish American Theatre in Translation
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>This case study describes the impact of making academic knowledge of Spanish-language theatre widely available so that it creates opportunities for translation, performance and learning. Since 2008, the AHRC-funded project 'Out of the Wings' has provided the English-language theatre professional with access to thoroughly researched and contextualized information about Spanish-language theatre that is fit for professional purpose through a database that provides comprehensive information for and about translators, writers, key practitioners and scholars. The work has created the environment for engagement with previously unknown theatre, resulting in new translations, the development of methodologies for the rehearsal of the translated text and the creation of new audiences.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>Catherine Boyle joined King's in 1990 and is Professor of Latin American Cultural Studies. The initial research on which this case study is based was carried out by Boyle for her PhD thesis on Chilean theatre in dictatorship, the publication of which (as <i>Chilean Theater, 1973 – 1985. Marginality, Power and Selfhood</i>, 1992) and all subsequent research have been completed since Boyle joined King's. The study of theatre as in a complex relationship with the context from which it emerges, and sustained engagement with practice through translation and performance have opened up innovative ways of exploring Hispanic theatre. An inter-disciplinary methodology engages with cultural history and the socio-political, intellectual and creative contexts for the formation of new writing and new theatre audiences and environments. Through this approach Boyle has forged methodologies for the study of theatre as a complex process of production, and it is this 'thickness' of cultural analysis that in turn informs the approach to translation and performance. The researcher becomes an active mediator between cultures, and academic knowledge is positioned in interaction with creative processes. Shadowing theatre translation in practice, the language of research has to communicate across the different stages of interpretation and interrogation of the text that form the process of the movement of the theatre text from one place to another. The research is informed by the desire that is at the heart of all translation: to see the text brought to life in a new place and time, forcing engagement with a new complexity of production and research.</p> <p>The underpinning research and methodology was called on by the Royal Shakespeare Company for their Spanish Golden Age Season in 2004. Boyle was called upon as an academic expert on Latin American theatre and as the translator of <i>Los empeños de una casa</i> (<i>House of Desires</i> [3.2]) by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, a play for which she had already acted as academic advisor and dramaturge (Battersea, 1993). The model of research and collaboration developed through this season, which defied the usual distinctions between 'academic' and 'creative', was explored in a edited volume of essays [3.3] and was the source of the AHRC-funded project, 'Spanish and Spanish American Theatre in Translation. A Virtual Environment for Research and Practice' (www.outofthewings.org [3.1]), 2008 - 2012. With Boyle as PI, and co-investigators Professor David Johnston [Queen's University Belfast], Dr Jonathan Thacker [University of Oxford] (both of whom worked on the RSC season) and Paul Spence [Digital Humanities, King's College London], the project has created a virtual Spanish-language theatre environment, designed to emulate a 'real' theatre environment. That is, it provides the body of knowledge that informs the understanding of theatre production within specific cultures, and is structured around research expertise across the Hispanic world in theatre historiography, translation theory and methodologies for performance.</p>

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In the context of this project, Boyle gained further funding for the development of work with practitioners on 'Translating Cultural Extremity' (3.1). Three core areas of investigation inform this project: i) the linguistic translation of culturally distant theatre; ii) the 'transportation' of plays from perceived cultural extremity; iii) the development of a process of translation that engages the academic as a practitioner in the rehearsal room. Two plays have been developed using this research: *Babilonia*, by Armando Discépolo and *Las brutas / Beasts* by Juan Radrigán, the latter reaching a full professional production in 2011. The specific impact described here relates to the translation and performance of Latin American theatre through the mobilisation of academic research in theatre practice.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)**Funding**

3.1 AHRC Grant as Principal Investigator: Spanish and Spanish American Theatre in Translation. A Virtual Environment for Research and Practice (2008 – 2012). Value: £760,000. The project can be accessed here: www.outofthewings.org. And related funding from King's Future Fund for the project 'Translating and Performing Cultural Extremity. Methods and Methodology for Practice and Research' (£12,250).

Translation, including introduction

3.2 *House of Desires*, Translation and introduction of *Los empeños de una casa* by Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz (London: Oberon, 2004). ISBN: 1840024445.

This edition has been used as the basis of at least six new productions of the play since its publication.

Edited volume based on RSC Spanish Golden Age season

3.3 *The Spanish Golden Age in English: Perspectives on Performance*, with David Johnston (London: Oberon Books, 2007). This includes Boyle's essay, 'Perspectives on Loss and Discovery. Reading and Reception', pp. 61 – 74. ISBN: 978-1-84002-815-7.

Commissioned by Oberon Books as a result of the Royal Shakespeare Company Season.

Essays on cultural translation and the performance of the translated text [all peer reviewed]

3.4 'Nicanor Parra's Transcription of King Lear: The Transfiguration of the Literary Composition', in Bernice Kliman and Ricardo Santos, eds., *Latin American Shakespeares* (Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 2005), pp. 112-129. ISBN 0-8386-4064-8.

3.5 'The Force of the Classics and the Challenge of Cultural Extremity', *Revista de traductología*, 13 (2009), 33-42. ISSN: 1137-2311.

3.6 'On Mining Performance: Marginality, Memory and Cultural Translation in the Extreme', in *Differences on Stage*, eds. Alessandra De Martino, Paolo Puppa and Paola Toninato (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), 207-223. ISBN: 978-4438-4463-5.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

The first stage of the impact predates the REF period, but is important as a model for subsequent impact. The RSC's Spanish Golden Age Season sold out in Stratford, Newcastle, Madrid (where it won the prestigious Critics Award), and in London's West End, and the RSC views *House of Desires* 'as one of the great successes of the RSC's award winning season of Spanish Golden Age Plays' (5.1.2). Within the REF period, there have been at least six known productions of *House of Desires* in the UK and USA, including three university productions and three commercial ones, and a number of further readings. Each corroborative statement cites Boyle's translation as the motivation for the production: the director of the Duke University production saying that 'Catherine Boyle's contemporary translation makes the piece very accessible for modern audiences' (5.1.3), and a University of Massachusetts Sor Juana calls the translation 'by far the best' of those available (5.3.1). In 2012, the Royal Shakespeare Company returned to Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, in *Heresy of Love*, a play by Helen Edmundson based on her life story (audience figures: 7,641).

The author indicates Boyle's 'invaluable contribution' to the play, saying that 'it was after seeing Catherine Boyle's translation of Sor Juana's play ... at the RSC ... that I became interested in the life of Sor Juana and decided I wanted to make her the subject of a play' (5.3.2). Boyle acted as academic expert for the company through discussions with the director and writer, and workshops with the actors, and 'really inspired everyone to further reading and research' (5.3.2).

The impact of cultural and historical research on the practice of rehearsing the translated text was tested through the process of developing Boyle's translation of *Las brutas / Beasts* by Juan Radrigán (Chile). Development took place in the context of the 'Translating Cultural Extremity' project, and a dramatised reading performed for an audience of theatre professionals, students and researchers at King's College London (2010). In 2010 the script won an 'Everyone has the Right' award in the competition run by iceandfire theatre and Amnesty International, one of five plays chosen 'following an overwhelming response for development and performance at Amnesty International's Human Rights Action Centre' (5.2.1). The development of the work through sustained dialogue between academic research, the process of rehearsal and active engagement with new theatres and audiences – led to the programming of a full production at Theatre 503, London (2011). The run attracted an audience of more than 3000 and received consistently excellent reviews, being a Guardian critics' recommendation for the entire run, and also received press coverage in Chile (5.2.3). Premiered in the aftermath of the London riots, its resonance with contemporary Britain was noted by a number of critics: 'the play resounds strongly in today's political climate' (5.2.3); 'the production as a whole makes a case for the play as a work of considerable power and importance' (5.2.3); 'Beasts is a demanding, passionate play, and with deprivation and marginalisation so high on the current domestic agenda, its UK premiere could not come at a better time' (5.2.3). Another said: 'The kind of production that gnaws away at the soul, *Las brutas* is rarely easy but beautifully haunting and highly recommended' (5.2.3). A series of talks engaged the theatre-going community, and a young director was mentored (through an Out of the Wings competition) in the staging of a reading of a second Radrigán play, *Hechos consumados / When All is Said and Done*.

In 2012, Boyle joined the advisory board of the CASA Festival of Latin American theatre, and has co-curated a series of readings of Latin American plays in translation, most of which are sourced through the Out of the Wings database. According to the CASA director, around '500 people have discovered new Latin American plays that have come about thanks to OOTW, while about 3000 have seen my version of *Fuenteovejuna* that was so influenced by OOTW resources' (5.3.3). The OOTW project is described by CASA as 'an essential database for the heritage of Spanish and Latin Americans living in the UK' and as 'supporting CASA to evolve as an organisation by opening the possibilities for interdisciplinary and cross cultural projects' (5.3.3).

Out of the Wings created the opportunity for a young director to do a full production of a play from the archive through an open competition, judged by London theatre professionals. The winning group, Silver Lining Theatre company, premiered the translation of a play by the major Argentine dramatist Griselda Gambaro, *Los siameses / Siamese Twins*, by King's-based Out of the Wings Post-doctoral Research Assistant, Dr Gwen MacKeith. The director gives testimony of the impact of the 'phenomenal' experience on her practice, her understanding of theatre traditions and of 'a greater understanding and confidence in a method of translating Spanish-language texts through workshops with actors' (5.3.5). This expanded the impact of the research into the formation of young directors and actors through: mentoring in the translation process; the introduction of the play work to a new demographic (also through its publication by Oberon Books); diverse opportunities for public engagement. This is an experience that encapsulates the goals of this research, summed up in the words of CASA director, who talks of using it 'as a living resource rather than a dead archive' (5.3.3).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

5.1. Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz

These sources relate to the impact of the research on a) the performance of work by Sor Juana

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Inés de la Cruz and b) new writing inspired by her work and life.

5.1.1 Heresy of Love: <http://www.rsc.org.uk/explore/other-writers/the-heresy-of-love.aspx>;
interviews about research: <http://www.rsc.org.uk/explore/other-writers/heresy-of-love-interviews.aspx>

5.1.2 Looking back at House of Desires: <http://www.rsc.org.uk/explore/other-writers/heresy-of-love-the-house-of-desires.aspx>

5.1.3 Production in the USA: Duke University: Duke Theater Studies Department, Durham, USA: <http://theaterstudies.duke.edu/tickets/house-of-desires>; Washing University: Performing Arts Department, St Louis, USA: <http://news.wustl.edu/news/Pages/9134.aspx>; University of Massachusetts (UMASS): UMASS Theater, Amherst, USA: <http://www.umass.edu/theater/contact.php>.

5.2 Juan Radrigán, *Las brutas / Beasts*

These sources relate to the stages of the development of the full production of *Las brutas / Beasts* and its reception at different stages.

5.2.1 Everyone has the Right: (<http://iceandfire.co.uk/participation/everyonehastheright/history-of-the-project/>)

5.2.2 Theatre 503: <http://theatre503.com/gallery-2/beasts/>

5.2.3 Reviews. These are commentaries on the impact of *Beasts* during the London season, and the reaction to its performance from Santiago, given that Radrigán won the national prize for theatre on the day the play opened in London. *The Guardian*:

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/stage/2011/sep/15/beasts-review>; The Public Review:

<http://www.thepublicreviews.com/the-beasts-las-brutas-theatre-503-london/>; The Stage:

<http://www.thestage.co.uk/reviews/review.php/33404/beasts-las-brutas-> ; Spoonfed:

[http://www.spoonfed.co.uk/spooners/dominicdinezza-22612/beasts-las-brutas-at-theatre-503-](http://www.spoonfed.co.uk/spooners/dominicdinezza-22612/beasts-las-brutas-at-theatre-503-5818/)

5818/; blogspot: [http://oughttobeclowns.blogspot.co.uk/2011/09/review-beasts-las-brutas-](http://oughttobeclowns.blogspot.co.uk/2011/09/review-beasts-las-brutas-theatre503.html)

[theatre503.html](http://oughttobeclowns.blogspot.co.uk/2011/09/review-beasts-las-brutas-theatre503.html); *La Tercera*, Chile: [http://www.latercera.com/noticia/cultura/2011/09/1453-390896-](http://www.latercera.com/noticia/cultura/2011/09/1453-390896-9-juan-radrigan-obtiene-el-premio-nacional-de-las-artes-de-la-representacion.shtml)

[9-juan-radrigan-obtiene-el-premio-nacional-de-las-artes-de-la-representacion.shtml](http://www.latercera.com/noticia/cultura/2011/09/1453-390896-9-juan-radrigan-obtiene-el-premio-nacional-de-las-artes-de-la-representacion.shtml); *El Mercurio*,

Chile: <http://buscador.emol.com/dispatcher.php?query=&offset=0&portal=todos&sort=publicationdate&sortdir=descending&query2=&per=V%C3%ADctor%20Jara&emp=BBC&cn=emol&Submit=Buscar>

[ar](http://buscador.emol.com/dispatcher.php?query=&offset=0&portal=todos&sort=publicationdate&sortdir=descending&query2=&per=V%C3%ADctor%20Jara&emp=BBC&cn=emol&Submit=Buscar)

5.3 Statements by individual users & beneficiaries

These are individuals or groups who have engaged with Spanish-American theatre through *Out of the Wings*, for purposes of translation, performance, research and teaching.

5.3.1 University of Massachusetts at Amherst; Professor Emerita: impact of the translation of Sor Juana on performance of her plays in USA.

5.3.2 Royal Shakespeare Company; Writer: impact of research and translation of Sor Juana on the play, *Heresy of Love*, 2012

5.3.3 CASA Festival; Director: Boyle's research & *Out of the Wings* virtual environment used for dramatised readings, and the creation of audiences for Latin American theatre.

5.3.4. RADA, Head of Directing: research as the basis for developing new plays and new methods for working with translation.

5.3.5. Silver Lining Theatre Company, Director: the impact of *Out of the Wings* on possibilities for new directors, new writing and the creation of widening audiences for LA theatre