The role of epitexts in drama translation

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ABSTRACT

In recent years, the notion of paratranslation has grown in Translation Studies, particularly in the literary field. Nevertheless, little attention has been paid to the effect that paratextual components — peritextual and epitextual — (Genette 1997) may have on the rendering of theatrical texts into another language, especially if these texts are intended for performance.

This article will seek to deal with the issue of paratranslation in the theatre, and more specifically with the potential influence of epitexts on the reception of a particular stage play in a different culture, as well as with the significance of the figure of the translator in the process. Two recent British performances of the Spanish classic *Life is a Dream,* based on two different translations, have been used by way of example. The results will show how reviews, webpages, videos, posters, flyers and programmes can add to the manner in which a particular play is perceived in the eyes of its target audiences, and to what extent the final outcome may be felt as part of the recipient theatrical culture.

KEYWORDS

Paratranslation, paratext, epitext, theatre translation, Spanish drama.

1. Introduction

In recent decades there has been a growing curiosity in the role of paratexts in the various disciplines, as well as in their cultural, ideological and, of course, commercial implications. Much of this interest is based on the work of French theorist Gérard Genette, who defines paratext as those elements in a published work that accompany the text, constituting "a 'vestibule' that offers the world at large the possibility of either stepping inside or turning back" (1997: 2). Genette divides the paratext into peritext (features of the text in the published form) and the epitext, or "any paratext not materially appended to the text" (1997: 344). Both peritext and epitext interweave a series of linguistic and visual elements, internal or external, which not only attempt to attract readers, but also to serve as elements of explanation and guidance. More specifically, peritextual elements include footnotes and endnotes, prefaces and forewords, introductions, epilogues or afterwords, postscripts, dedications, acknowledgements, index, titles and subtitles (to which Genette dedicates a complete chapter), chapter synopses and headings, blurbs or dust jackets, and cover flaps, as well as other non-verbal features associated with the printing process: illustrations, photos, tables, charts, diagrams, dust jacket design, visual presentation (fonts, paragraphing, layout), and the so-called *imagetexts*, or "composite, synthetic works (or concepts) that combine image and text" (Bushell 2006: 190). For their part, epitexts embrace

interviews, reviews, censorship reports and all sorts of marketing material (see below).

Genette does not specifically mention the comprehensive applications of paratexts to Translation Studies, but this phenomenon is already — with regard to their impact on the source texts and to what extent this effect is retained in the target culture — opening up new paths of research in the field "as elements that bridge translated texts with their readers" (O'Sullivan 2016: 90). The ideological implications that such actions convey are also important, since publishers and editors can easily exploit paratextual potential in order to manipulate the translated text to aim at a particular readership (Pellatt 2013a), enhancing or downplaying certain features while adapting or reordering the components of a book, including the omission of elements, or "zero paratranslation" (Pellatt 2013a: 88).

This article will examine the notion of paratranslation in theatre translation, with the potential outcomes of epitexts in the reception of stage plays and with the impact of the translator on the process. This will be illustrated via two English performances based on two differing translations of the Spanish play *Life is a Dream*: one given by the Donmar Warehouse, the multi-award winning, subsided theatre in the heart of London's West End; and one by the Miracle Theatre, a British touring company that typically visits open-air venues. The reason for selecting the Calderonian classic is that it is, at least in the UK, "both the most frequently translated play of the Golden Age and the most performed in terms of numbers of productions" (Thacker 2013: 46).

We hope to illustrate how a particular image is constructed in the introduction of these target plays, and whether they are presented to British audiences as something foreign or as texts embedded in the recipient theatrical culture, with a status of their own. Attention will be also paid to the extent to which the translator emerges as a visible figure.

In the following, the focus will be on the notion of paratext in the translation of literature, with special emphasis on the concept of epitext in the theatrical sphere. Press reviews, posters, web pages and programmes will be therefore commented on as essential contributions to the reception of a translated play, with examples taken from the two above-mentioned productions. A final discussion will enable conclusions to be drawn.

2. Paratranslation, paratext and the translation of literature

'Paratranslation' is a relatively new concept, purportedly invented by Yuste Frías (founder of the Translation and Paratranslation research group), who claims that this term was born in his own office "with the

purpose of approaching and analysing the impact of the aesthetic, political, ideological, cultural and social manipulations at play in all the paratextual productions situated in and out of the margins of any translation" (Yuste Frías 2010: 118). For this author, if a text cannot exist without its paratext, by the same token a translated text "cannot exist without its corresponding paratranslation" (2005: 75; my translation). The objective of paratranslation is thus "to become a symbolic reference to the physical or virtual space occupied by all the possible productions that surround, wrap, accompany, extend, introduce and present a translation" (Yuste Frías 2010: 119).

Even though Yuste Frías (2005: 76) affirms that it is in contexts such as hyper-reading, cybertext and meta-edition where paratranslation is best exemplified, this notion can be extended to any text type and translation modality (Yuste Frías 2015: 324). In the particular case of translated literature, the notion of paratranslation draws attention to issues that have been traditionally considered peripheral, but which might be of special interest in understanding the status of a work as regards its target audience, since paratexts have "a special role as mediators between the text and the reader," as well as "a potential influence on the reader's reading and reception of the works in question" (Kovala 1996: 120).

Several studies have been carried out concerning the functions and conceptual implications of paratexts in the literary field (Gil-Bardají *et al* 2012), more specifically in the narrative genre (Maclean 1991, Kovala 1996, Tahir-Gürçaglar 2002), including children's literature (Watts 2000; Yustre Frías 2012) and poetry (Pellatt 2013b, Stratford and Jolicoeur 2014). However, little has been said about how determining paratextual components might occur in the context of the performing arts. Two factors in particular may account for this: on the one hand, Genette's notion of the paratext does not seem to have been originally designed to address the elements that revolve around a theatrical production; among Genette's abundant references, drama-related texts, with the exception of several allusions to the status of prefaces (1997: 165 and ff.), are barely mentioned. On the other hand, the conception of theatre as a spectacle rather than as a mere literary piece obviously renders irrelevant many of the visual aspects of paratexts that are strictly linked to printed publications.

Needless to say, the process of the reception of a translated play intended for its *mise en scène* is substantially different from that which is envisioned only to be read. While books undergo several textual and paratextual transformations before they reach their intended readership, the theatrical experience situates this on another level since, apart from the obvious linguistic aspects, the additional agents of a production (spectacular, visual, economic, commercial, political) must be considered, together with the theatrical conventions and

habits of the recipient culture (Braga Riera 2008).

Although several noteworthy studies approaching theatre from a paratextual perspective have been conducted, such as for instance the impact of playbills (Carlson 1993; Net 1993; Harbeck 1998, Heim 2006), or the importance of variations in theatre programmes (Fodstad 2006), the majority do not consider the factor of translation, and so do not bear in mind the implications of how a play is perceived when rendered for foreign audiences (especially if that text is unknown by the target language spectator). This does not necessarily mean that paratextual studies on translated drama have been neglected, although the rare existing studies tend to conceive the play as being in book form (Arias 2001; Fólica 2012), an exception being the approach of Brodie (2012; 2017) when analysing translations for performance.

The following three examples, taken from contemporary advertising campaigns for Spanish plays translated into English and recently performed in the UK, may account for the singularity of drama in this respect. In each, the alien character of the play in question is paratextually accentuated: for instance, prior to the start of the performance of Mayorga's *Way to Heaven* at the Royal Court Theatre (London, 2009), the audience was presented with an example of "classic European paperbacks," making it clear that, despite the English title (*Himmelweg* in the Spanish original), the play was not originally British (Brodie 2012: 75). Meanwhile the promotional video for the Spanish Golden Age Season in 2013 (Ustinov Studio, Bath) portrayed images of characteristic Spanish products, guitar playing and flamenco music and dancers, even though the plots of the three brand-new translations (*Punishment Without Revenge*, *Don Gil of the Green Breeches* and *A Lady of Little Sense*) were totally unrelated to those particular cultural stereotypes (See The Spanish Golden Age presentation). More recently, ticket holders for Jorge de Juan's Spanish adaptation of Cervantes' *Entremeses* could also enjoy free typical Spanish food, as announced on the theatre webpage: "tapas and a drink for the fully *entremés* experience" (Cervantes Theatre, London, February 2017). These simple examples demonstrate how certain paratextual features — a gift, a video or an announcement — may affect the way performance-oriented texts are perceived by potential or actual foreign audiences, in this case heightening their foreignness. The following section will analyse in more detail the relationship between epitextual elements and the theatrical experience.

3. Epitexts and theatre translation

This study is aimed at considers translations that are intended for use in stage productions. This distinction is significant since it creates a division between theatre translation, or translated drama meant for the

stage, and drama translation intended as printed text (Aaltonen 2000: 4; Bigliazzi 2013: 5). These two systems may show different translation strategies, since the stage-oriented text is more likely to be altered by the restrictions imposed by the target system (sometimes ideological), so that the power relations between the cultures will guarantee its acceptance (Aaltonen 2000; Mateo 2002). These relations are typically unequal, as the exchange practice can foreground foreign elements or rather resort to a particular culture in order to solve a given theatrical question (Espasa 2005: 140-141).

Bearing this in mind, and departing from Aaltonen's concept of theatre translation, this paper will consider the relevance of those epitextual elements associated with it and to what extent they can contribute to influence over the reception of a translated play. Several of the "visible aspects" (Pellatt 2013b: 2) of paratexts (the so-called peritext, see above) will accordingly not be taken into account. Also excluded are other verbal and non-verbal components inherent to the theatrical act such as dramatis personae, title[1], stage directions, customs, music etc., which some authors (Wilson 2014: 195 and ff.) embrace as part of the paratextual spectrum. Other elements that fall under the umbrella of the epitext instead emerge here as enormously relevant. These include publicity (press releases, ads and commercials, promotional videos and trailers), press reviews, interviews, posters, playbills, flyers and programmes, together with the photographic apparatus that usually complements them.

For the purposes of this study, the actual description will be limited to some of these components and condensed in an overview that will be illustrated, as stated above, with examples from Calderón de la Barca's *La vida es sueño* (*Life is a Dream*), and the two most recent professional performances in England, which are in turn based on two different translations: Jonathan Munby's production at the Donmar Warehouse in Helen Edmundson's new version (running from 18 to 28 November 2009) and Bill Scott's adaptation for Miracle Theatre (starting on June 16, 2016 in Falmouth, Cornwall, and touring in 13 different venues until July 31, London included)[2]. While Bill Scott's text apparently derives directly from the original source, Edmundson was provided with a literal prose translation that she eventually turned into verse (Larson 2015: 5). Productions by university departments have not been considered for this study, and neither have versions that claim to be 'inspired' by Calderón's text (for example *Rosaura*, a two-woman piece premiered in London in July 2016 as part of the festival "Women and War").

The following aspects will be discussed: press reviews, posters, theatre web pages (including videos), programmes, and study guides.

3.1. Press reviews

The media undoubtedly play a prominent role in the construction and dissemination of public opinion regarding a particular social or political issue, as the information given will inevitably carry ideologies that might otherwise pass unnoticed, including translations. In the theatrical sphere, press reviews share the same functions as other paratexts (notices, interviews, etc.), since they identify, place and provide background information, illustrating and serving as a reference to the reader, quite apart from the advertising, artistic and legal/bibliographic functions (Kovala 1996: 134).

The part played by the press surfaces as a powerful epitext that is most apparent in journalistic articles, interviews and, above all, reviews, which have the capacity to explain, contextualise and justify a product. In fact, theatre critics are supposed to offer independent judgement when articulating their views, and to validate their points with concrete examples (Mandell 2015). Consequently, reviews also serve "to reject and refute the text and deter the reader" (Pellatt 2013b: 3), if not to contribute to the failure of a given show. This explains the major role of theatre criticism in the survival of a particular production, despite its general brevity (space limitations in the press sometimes only leave room to sketch plots and provide a short note about acting) and the growing presence of amateur reviewers on websites, blogs etc., who can freely share their opinions. What is more, a true judgement of a foreign play also depends on the critic's command of the source language, as a poor grasp of it would inevitably impede a proper reading of the original and a sound comparative analysis of source and target texts. On top of this, and in the particular case of the Spanish theatre in the UK, it is true that there are few professional productions of Golden Age plays (Johnston 2009: 58), and those that there are do not run for extended periods. Even so, these *comedia* performances have managed to catch the attention of critics working for local and nationwide papers, as we see below.

Press reviews therefore emerge as fundamental to the purposes of this work, becoming epitextual transmitters of the translated text and its *mise en scène*: they can 'hide' or make the translator visible (and even decide if a particular production deserves to be reviewed), illustrate the possible imbalance between the source and recipient cultures, and influence target audience's opinion as propagators of a given ideology.

3.2. Posters

Apart from reviews, the role of theatre posters (and other associated promotional materials such as design, visual power, illustrations and photos, positive press quotes, etc.) must not be overlooked as persuasive tools in drawing audiences into theatres. They have

traditionally been a major form of play advertising (Haill 1983) and indeed still are, since "the poster epitomises the essence of the play, interprets the director's often particular and idiosyncratic vision of a script, intrigues and beguiles the audience, and persuades –all in a single image" (Argent 2016). This depiction of what is playing in theatres may vary in accuracy, from more "artistic" designs to others that favour pictures of costumes, scenery and actors (Diamond 2012: 60). The degree of "faithfulness" as to what is offered on stage can be very revealing as regards the image that is conveyed and the type of audience targeted by a given company or playhouse.

Generally speaking, two differing tendencies can be found: on the one hand, posters that exhibit relatively accurate representations, including scenes or photographs that give approximate detail about what is taking place on stage, as well as information about the event (tickets, venue, etc.) and the company, theatre or production in charge of the show; on the other, posters that offer would-be theatregoers a particular or personal recreation of the translated play. Rather than merely giving factual information, this second category attempts to catch viewer attention by other means (perhaps because the production is very modest, or because actors, director or translator are not particularly well-known). Posters are thus producer's epitexts, contributing to the public perception of a translated play, even impressing upon audiences the distinctive character a text may have across geographical boundaries.

3.3. Webpages and videos

Nowadays, it is not uncommon for theatres to take advantage of the possibilities of their web pages, since these show the style of the playhouse and increase visual interest by including insider information (for instance quotes from the director, actors…), and/or links to press reviews and photos, which strongly influence the way a translation is presented. In order to boost ticket sales, this can be complemented by promotion in the social media (Twitter, Facebook, or YouTube).

It is becoming increasingly common for these websites to include video technology as a part of their communication process, with information that ranges from simple replicated contents from the brochure to more sophisticated functions such as ticketing, donations, and outreach (Preece 2011: 24). These videos (which have traditionally been used as trailers for the promotion of films) are adapted to allow theatres and companies to offer previews of coming attractions to new or existing audiences. They typically utilise scene clips, music and narration (*ibid*: 26) in order to provoke a reaction on the part of the viewer, who may seek out further information from the website and eventually purchase a ticket. Their location within the website is also important, since "a prominent positioning signals a vestibule which helps to create

meaning and plays an important role in promotion, whereas, a buried position suggests periphery and less paratextual significance" (*ibid*: 28).

The several elements included in websites or videos (or both) are equally significant: actors (especially if celebrities), previous reception of the play (awards, reviews or other achievements), contents, plot summary, photographic still, music and text applications, and how they all merge together. Other than that, the effect of this information will be very different if seen by a habitual audience member (one who knows the ins and outs of a particular dramatic genre, for example) or to a broad range of users — with their varying levels of education and understanding of the theatre (Preece 2011: 27). In this sense, the small proportion of Spanish classical plays produced in the UK comes as a disadvantage, since very few spectators are familiar with the features of the Spanish *comedia*, or the reasons why a particular play might have been composed four hundred years ago.

The contents of theatre webpages, then, whether or not reinforced by video materials, constitute prominent epitexts, since they may exert a major influence on the users' expectations and on perceptions of the foreign author, text or genre.

3.4. Programmes and playbills (and study guides)

Presented in a variety of forms and sizes, programmes become part of Genette's "thresholds of interpretation'' (1997: 2), framing and contextualizing the theatrical act. They also guide the audience into the performance — well beyond providing credits and the synopsis of the play, and information about the people involved in it. As an accessory, they try to provoke some effect on the spectator: "to inform, guide, motivate, provoke or confuse him/her, to contextualise or explain something, to make the actors look interesting, or maybe to support or subvert certain presuppositions about a play" (Fodstad 2006: 151).

Unlike other elements, the programme is primarily read immediately before the performance (or during the interval). It is the only text designed "to enter the time and space of the event itself" (Harbeck 1998: 216), functioning as an element of familiarization with the play and of the production in general. Following Mark Sandberg, Fodstad (2006: 157-158) mentions several revealing features of programmes, such as the time devoted to their reading, the significance of the first impression, the presence of mixed sources of information, instant reviewer support, and their role as a trace of the production. Besides, functionally speaking they serve different purposes: from the theatre's perspective, they are used to provide information about the cast, production, and the artistic alternatives of the chosen play, as well as printed documentation of the performance history (2006: 159); from

the audience's point of view, they act as a guide, but also can influence interpretation. This is why programmes typically include historical notes about the play, cast biographies, director's notes and, more than often, advertisements (which may reveal something about the potential spectators and the interest of firms and associations in those viewers)[3], as well as displaying photographs of the actors, director or showing scenes.

In all cases, the presence of the name of the translator — whether or not accompanied by a short biography — and references to the historical period in which the original was created can place the reader in a different relationship with the performance. Consequently, programmes and playbills (sometimes reinforced by study guides) contribute to shaping the reception and understanding of the play, hence adding to the list of epitextual factors that acquire significance in the response to translated plays.

4. *Life is a Dream* at Donmar Warehouse

The Donmar Warehouse is a modern space with a reputation as one of the UK's leading theatres, adopting a performance policy that includes not only British contemporary writing and classics, but also revisions of foreign plays in new translations.

The epitextual elements surrounding Jonathan Munby's production mainly derive from the actor performing the character of Segismundo, the central figure of the play: TV and movie actor Dominic West, who was well-known at the time for his role as a Baltimore cop in TV series *The Wire*. Given the intense media attention West attracted, his popularity was successfully used to lure audiences into the theatre, and he even appeared on the cover of the specialised British magazine *Theatre Record* (8-21 October 2009).

A look at twenty-one mainly British reviews of this performance (sixteen of them contained in the influential journal *Theatre Record*, the rest to the work less well-known national critics) reveals the extent to which Calderón's play has somehow been 'tamed' for their readers. This is achieved in different ways. To start with, although the name of the original playwright is always mentioned, it is equally true that comparisons with works by authors who are more familiar to British audiences are fairly common: sometimes these comparisons refer to other actors, as with West being described as a young Richard Burton (*Daily Express*), or when the *Mail on Sunday* mockingly stresses the fact that West was at school with British politician David Cameron. References to Shakespeare clearly stand out (which may be perceived as a sign of lack of knowledge about Shakespeare's European contemporaries): *The Tempest* (*The Guardian*), *Much Ado About Nothing* (*Variety*), *King Lear* (*Sunday Times*) or *Hamlet* (*The Observer,*

The Evening Standard). The character of Hamlet is chosen by critic Sarah Hemming (2009) for her contrastive approach:

> But as Segismundo tries to puzzle out his experience, it shifts a gear and, like Hamlet, questions the very nature of consciousness. This is beautifully caught in Helen Edmundson's supple translation.

In fact, as it is with Hemming, the figure of the translator is almost always mentioned in the reviews, together with references to her task and the ease of the language used: "handsome new version" (Thomas 2009), "carefully lyrical" (*The Evening Standard* 2009), "immensely speakable" (Benedict 2009), "balanced" (Gillinson 2009), "fine" (Letts 2009), "excellent" (Maxwell 2009), "superb" (Hart 2009) or "enchanting" (McGinn 2009). No reference to the person responsible for the literal translation is made, as happens with the rest of the epitexts under consideration here, thus enhancing Edmundson's reputation as a much-awarded versionist.

Secondly, although there are constant references to the plot and philosophical interpretations of the classic, the intricate theme of honour — which is pivotal to the story — is either (perhaps deliberately) not mentioned or frowned upon: Paul Taylor (2009), for example, finds it "faintly tedious" in *The Independent*, whereas in *Variety* David Benedict (2009) thinks that "the seemingly happy double final coupling has a bitter aftertaste." Indeed, the consequences of an ending ruled by the code of honour are thought to be "woefully glib" (*The Evening Standard* 2009), and leave "niggling doubts" (Bassett 2009).

Thirdly, as for the visual component, practically all these reviews are accompanied — as expected — by powerful photos of Dominic West; in fact, references to the actor's looks are not infrequent, which strips the text somewhat of any excessively intellectual baggage. West's performance confers "sexy stardom on this solidly British actor" (Woodall 2009), whilst his physical appearance does not pass unnoticed: "radical haircut" (Letts 2009), "in explosive fine form" (Bassett 2009), "spellbinding and muscular" (McGinn 2009), etc. This position of West as a decoy stands clear in *Metro (London)*: "Female (and some male) fans of *The Wire* be warned: contrary to expectation, Dominic West doesn't get naked." (Alfree 2009). Only one review (Benedict 2009) dedicates a picture to the character of Rosaura (impersonated by Kate Fleetwood) who is described as "sexy and touching" somewhere else (Coveney 2009). In this respect, see also the conclusions reached by Braga Riera (2016) in his study of 22 notes/ads and 48 press reviews (in journals, magazines and web pages) following 27 performances of *La vida es sueño* which premiered in the United States from 1999 to 2014 (based on texts from eleven different translations).

At the same time, the webpage announcing this production also relies on West's participation as one of its major selling points (Donmar Warehouse: Past Production). Additionally, the Donmar Warehouse offers a complete behind-the-scenes guide including interviews, rehearsal diaries, characters and images (Donmar Warehouse Guide). Its contents are not focused on the provenance of the play: the cast and creative team are entirely British, and most of the photos are snapshots of the leading actor. When this is not the case, the characters are shown dressed in their costumes (which on this occasion are from the Napoleonic era), disregarding other aspects that the reader might identify as typically Spanish, such as the presence of the Holy Week *penitentes*, the flamenco stomping and the clapping, which were actually part of the visual performance (Ortiz Lottman 2010: 306).

The webpage incorporates, too, four related videos. In the first, actors Rupert Evans, Kate Fleetwood and David Smith discuss the challenges of speaking in verse and the importance of rhythm, praising the decision of the translator to choose the four-beat verses. The other three contain Mark Shenton's personal interview with Dominic West live on stage at the Donmar Warehouse during the final weeks of rehearsal. Here West acclaims Edmundson's translation as compared to previous versions, which he finds "indigestible." With the exception of this reference, the conversation mainly revolves around West's life and background as an actor (mainly as part of the cast of *The Wire*), again placing the emphasis on aspects other than the Spanish text.

Curiously enough, the theatre poster for this production does not use West, instead providing the reader with not only factual information, but also with an anatomical lithograph addressing certain parts of the upper human body, suggesting a body-mind dichotomy. This image, which grabs the viewer's attention exclusively, is identical to that appearing on the cover page of the printed edition of the play (Nick Hern Books)[4], and conforms to the basic design pattern that will also be present in the programmes. The allusion to the translator in the poster is also revealing, as the name of Helen Edmundson appears (as a versionist) just after that of the Spanish author, and in a very similar letter size. Less relevance is given to other aspects such as cast, director, designers, musicians and box office details. Also small in size but equally interesting is the presence in the poster of the main sponsors (Arts Council of England and Barclays Bank): with no Spanish agents apparently involved, these contribute to the Anglicisation of the production.

Finally, the Donmar Warehouse offers a 47-page study guide that comprises information about the cast and creative team, interviews, notes on bibliography and aspects on the "inside of the rehearsal room", together with 15 pages on the characteristics of Spanish Golden

Age theatre,including a short paragraph on the Hispanic code of honour (Donmar Warehouse Guide). A noteworthy aspect in this guide is the inclusion of both Calderón and Helen Edmundson under the "creative team" as "authors," thus positioning the translator at a level of creativity similar to that of the Spanish playwright (p. 6).

In short, the epitexts around the Donmar production indicate an appropriation of the play which is reflected in the weight given to the translator, leading actor, cast and the whole acting experience, a position that is also reinforced by a domesticating attitude on the part of the reviewers.

5. *Life's a Dream* by Miracle Theatre

For its part Miracle Theatre, as a touring company, has customarily emphasised inventive and flexible productions that allow them to play in a wide range of venues. Not being based in London in a fixed playhouse, and without an iconic celebrity as a cast member, Miracle Theatre's *Life's a Dream* — the choice of a title which includes an abbreviation echoes a less formal, perhaps peripheral setting — did not enjoy as much media impact as its predecessor, with fewer reviews and those in less widely-circulated publications. These reviews — a total of six were accessed, specifically in *The Stage*, *The Plymouth Herald*, *The Minack Theatre*, *Radio St Austell Bay*, *The Fine Times Recorder* and *The Dorset Echo* —, however, basically repeat the same pattern as those for Donmar Warehouse's production. Comparative allusions to Shakespeare's *Hamlet* are likewise made, but also to contemporary social aspects in Britain (politics, for example, in *The Fine Times Recorder*). References to Steve Jacobs (as King Basil) emphasise the presence of a relatively well-known actor, but the photos, far from relying on a particular famous personality, are less intense and depict different parts of the performance, creating an atmosphere of mystery (*The Plymouth Herald*) or fun (*The Stage*). According to director Bill Scott (as quoted in *The Packet*):

> The joy of open-air performance is that every night is different and it really is an etiquette-free zone […]. You can sit where you want, eat what you want, wear whatever you like. Plus, each setting is transformed as night falls –the actors can never be sure what to expect and must be ready to respond to a dramatic moonrise, a sudden shower or a wild animal trying to get in on the act. For players and audience this is a genuinely unique and shared experience.

In these reviews, attention is also paid to minor details, such as the decorative pennants and the peculiar shoes of the king (*The Minack Theatre*). This upbeat portrayal is also visible in the information about the show provided on the company's webpage (Miracle Theatre). Here the Miracle Theatre manages to mitigate the seriousness of Calderon's classic by putting the emphasis on two aspects: the freshness and

contemporaneity of the language and on the entertainment factor, which is accentuated by the use of music and the experience of an open-air show:

> Touring since 1979, ***Miracle*** has a gained a reputation for producing fresh and truthful adaptations. By trimming the text to the bone and fleshing it out with original music, physical performance and a joyful use of language, ***Miracle*** guarantees inspiring entertainment that can be enjoyed by all generations, set against the extraordinary backdrops of Cornwall's unique landscape (Cornish Riviera Box Office).
> [Bold is in the original].

The pictures contained on the webpage also appear to focus on the enjoyment of the experience, as they display light-hearted moments from the rehearsal sessions (in black and white) and performance (in colour), the latter showing even some anachronistic props (the presence of a pair of binoculars, for example) that serve to set the mood of the whole act. What is more, a small capitalised paragraph containing audience feedback reads "both funny and thought-provoking, I loved the innovative staging." Biographies of the cast and crew are included, although there is no mention of the (direct) translator of the play (who is also the company's director and manager). Finally, the page adds a link to a 'scrapbook' where samples of the performed music are inserted, together with a compilation of positive review quotes. As was the case with the Donmar production, no Spanish associations or companies seem to be among the supporters.

The graphic poster promoting Bill Scott's adaptation (Cornish Riviera Box Office), which shows a massive hand holding a comparatively small crown under the stars, contains no factual information, favouring an entirely visual design (an exception was made in an adaptation of this same poster for the performance held at the Trebah Amphitheatre, which includes data about location, dates and tickets for the particular event). The dark colours and the portrayal of different star constellations highlight the (im)possibility of escaping one's fate, providing the poster with an enigmatic tone that is accentuated by the subtitle: "Nothing is as it seems"[5]. No information on either author or translator is given, thus directing the attention towards the story and the theatrical aspects rather than to any literary features. Besides, the comic-like design created for the occasion would suggest a more relaxed approach to the play.

The same can be said about the programme, a simple joint print also promoting *The Magnificent Three* (which was also part of the 2016 summer season). The programme includes directors' notes, characters and credits, as well as a humorous note about the author of the play, whose name is exaggeratedly portrayed by mentioning his full multiple-word surnames: "Adapted by Bill Scott from *La Vida es un*

Sueño by Pedro Calderón de la Barca y Barrera González de Henao Ruíz de Blasco y Riaño" (notice the title is wrongly cited as *La vida es un sueño*).

The flyer contains some basic text and all the tour dates for both summer productions. In it, two pieces of information stand out: the fact that the repertoire is suitable for all types of audience and the venue of the shows: "See us at castles, clifftops and beaches!"

In summary, in this case the epitexts highlight the performative aspects of the production, which is also presented as having been domesticated for an audience supposedly in search of a comedy-rich theatrical experience.

6. Conclusions

The analysis of paratexts in translated theatre has — with some exceptions — not yet received a great deal of scholarly attention, despite the potential impact which paratexts may have on the treatment and dissemination of plays from diverse cultures and into different languages. This is especially true in the case of epitexts: sometimes they bring the foreign culture home and merge it with their own modes; other times, an exotic flavour is maintained and encouraged.

Departing from a stage-oriented notion of translated theatre, this paper has briefly revised several basic epitextual elements that influence the reception of a foreign play, mainly press reviews, posters, webpages (including videos) and programmes. By way of example, two British theatrical productions of the Spanish classic *La vida es sueño* have been selected: one by the Donmar Warehouse (2009) and another by the Miracle Theatre in 2016. Although both companies depart from radically differing positions (the former as a subsidized theatre with a long tradition of supporting and contributing to national and foreign drama, the latter as a promoter of a comic, joyful style with a particularly visual appeal), several conclusions can be drawn regarding the ideological trends they portray through the selected epitexts.

In the case of the Donmar production, the reviews consulted — mainly positive — clearly tell us about the provenance of the play and its author, with reflections on the storyline. However, critics tend to present facts from a target-context perspective: there are references to Shakespeare, allusions to British actors (and their looks), and a complete absence of typically Spanish motifs (honour or folkloric stereotypes). Besides, particular stress is laid on Edmundson's skills (this aspect is also mentioned in the videos provided on the Donmar website) to the extent that the translator's name is sometimes given

equal prominence to the original author's, with her name being printed in a similar letter size in posters, programmes and study guides (but without ever mentioning the literal she resorted to for her verse creation). All in all, the package is perceived as scarcely foreign at all, with poster, programme and webpage overwhelmingly forming part of the recipient spectrum. To this can be added the fact that no Spanish sponsors offer any support for the event, which contributes even further to the labelling of the product as local.

The epitexts relating to the Miracle Theatre's production also refer to playwright and translator, though to a lesser extent, and with hardly any comments on the translator's task. Reviewers systematically bring the play home by referring to cast, setting and anecdotal moments of the performance. The entertainment function is highlighted too, as is clearly manifest in the poster (where some mystery is also hinted at), flyer, programme and webpage. Hence the fact that this is a family event in an unusual setting predominates over any other consideration.

In both cases, *Life is a Dream* appears to have found a place within the British theatrical system. Apart from the inevitable references to Calderón, the epitextual product is mostly accommodated to the requirements of the anticipated audiences, with little allowance made for its Spanishness. Additional epitextual and peritextual studies on the reception of this and other Hispanic plays in the UK would appear to be crucial for fostering further discussion of this particular unexplored aspect of Drama Translation Studies.

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Notes

[1] The translation of titles also poses an excellent example of how commercial imperatives may become external forces imposed on the translator. For example, in the London theatrical scene foreign-language titles tend to be avoided, since they are widely perceived as less favourable for ticket sales (Brodie 2012: 74).

[2] Coincidentally, the premiere was held on the same day as World Tapas Day, an event celebrated in over 30 countries around the world (Great Britain included), organised by Spanish tourist offices with the support of the Spanish Embassy and other institutions. Although not strictly connected to the production, World Tapas Day was announced by Miracle Theatre on its Facebook page (post 16 June 2016).

[3] In his limited sample of American programmes at the end of the last century, Harbeck (1988) shows how restaurants, car manufacturers, jewellers and financial interests (banks, credit cards, and charities) are common sponsors, as well as educational institutions and other arts institutions.

[4] Due to copyright restrictions, this poster cannot be reproduced.

[5] Such an air of mystery is also seen in some contemporary North American productions of the celebrated Calderonian play. The poster for a stage reading at the University of Alabama (March 2017) includes a background photo of a dark forest as an invitation to reflect on the differences between truth and illusion. Similarly, the poster by Minnesota State University (February 2015) shows a kind of ghost-like mist that emanates from a king's crown, surrounding the noun "Dream" in the title. More curious in this sense is a production at Canadian Glendon College (March 2016), an eye-catching design that features a pixelated cartoon of a dog holding a duck in its hand, while another duck freely flies away out of a bush; the modern design hints at the updated approach to the play, whereas the picture invites reflection on present day non-conformism and on how humans would react (as Segismundo did) if deprived of everything material around them.