

Performing Recognition: El castigo sin venganza and the Politics of the 'Literal' Translation

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Cielos, / hoy se ha de ver en mi casa / no más de vuestro castigo.

– *El castigo sin venganza*

In the opening scene of *El castigo sin venganza* the Duke of Ferrara is in disguise. So soon before his wedding to Casandra, and despite the rumours of his debauchery, it is imperative that his hunt for female entertainment goes unnoticed. His position requires him to take a wife; in so doing, he ensures justice for the people by avoiding civil war. Yet by denying his freedom-loving nature, he must do injustice to himself. When he learns of Casandra's affair with his son Federico, rather than make their adultery public he contrives her death at Federico's own hand. What the people see, however, is the righteous execution of the man who murdered Casandra out of jealousy for his lost inheritance. Through lies and subterfuge the Duke ensures that in public his honour is protected while in private he enacts their punishment.

This is a play that deals in disguise. It locates itself in the slippery distinctions between duty and desire, private sentiment and public action, moral justice and its public fulfilment. Unlike today, where transparent democracy demands that every stage of the criminal justice process is available to public scrutiny, in Ferrara, where honour is directly proportional to public standing, due process is a function of public perception. This situation places the Duke in an invidious position. He has been harmed on two fronts – by his wife's adultery and his son's treachery – but to seek justice would be to make their betrayal public, damaging his reputation and thereby creating a third, even greater harm: the loss of support

for the legitimacy of his rule. By ordering Federico's execution as punishment for the supposed murder of Casandra he delivers justice for the people *and* for himself, retaining his honour while taking revenge, and at the same time avoiding further harm in the court of public opinion. These ideas find expression in a seminal essay by political philosopher Charles Taylor, in which he writes of the causal link between personal justice and public perception and the damage that results when others misrecognize the fundamental precepts upon which our identity is built. In this 'politics of recognition', Taylor argues that because we depend upon positive reinforcement from those around us, our identity "is shaped by recognition or its absence" (1994, 25). In this Hegelian view, identity is bound so intimately with how we are perceived by others that a person "can suffer real damage, real distortion, if the people or society around them mirror back to them a confining or demeaning or contemptible picture of themselves". "Misrecognition" can therefore be "a form of oppression, imprisoning someone in a false, distorted, and reduced mode of being" (25). Just as the Duke's public standing depends upon how well his subjects view him, the health of our identity depends upon the quality of its public recognition. The Duke secures justice precisely by ensuring that his reputation remains intact, despite the revenge he takes, avoiding the risk of further harm. 'Justice' is thus a fluid concept, for it is served only when that which is reflected back to us from the *outside* matches that which we believe to be true on the *inside*. But recognition is a tricky business, for if justice is about seeing others as they see themselves, then it follows that we must first make a judgement about that which we see. Before we can 'reflect' something back to someone we must identify what that 'something' is. Recognition is precisely 'political' because, as with all understanding, it requires critical positions to be taken and defended about what is understood. This article argues that the interrelated problematics of justice, honour, harm and revenge in *El castigo sin venganza* can best be understood as a 'politics of recognition' in which private identity and public

recognition are not only inextricably linked but also direct contributors to an ultimately mobile conceptualization of justice.

These lessons come to us, however, by way of an act of *translation*. As scholars of Lope's plays we employ the depth and breadth of our combined academic knowledge in the study of something that was first performed in Spain over four hundred years ago. In the case of *Punishment Without Revenge*, performed on 26 September 2013 in the Ustinov Studio, Theatre Royal Bath, as part of the 2013-2014 Golden Age Season, the experience of Lope's play comes by way of its literal translator, adaptor, director, performers, production team, dramaturges and academic consultants. As much for scholars in the academy as for spectators in the audience a politics of recognition is present here too, for our motivations are the same: to interrogate the play and decide for ourselves what it says today. These translational acts require us to make decisions about the play's identity – in Taylor's terms to define its "mode of being" and to decide for ourselves how best to recognize it – in a different time, place and language. Within these contexts of recognition both internal and external to the play, this article addresses two key questions: What does 'misrecognition' look like and to what extent does this constitute an act of 'harm'? And how do translators enter into their own politics of recognition? Using as a context for analysis the author's experience as the translator commissioned to provide the 'literal' translation on which the Theatre Royal Bath adaptation was based, it examines the differential ways in which the role of the literal translator has been characterized and how this contrasts with the complex work of recognition at translation's heart. Through the illuminating discourse of the politics of recognition, and with reference to the concerns of *El castigo sin venganza*, it brings to light assumptions about the creation of literal translations and their bearing on the productions to which they lead. With a focus on the practical work of literal translation, it argues for a renewed understanding of the strategic decisions translators make and their creative contribution to the politics of performance.

Personal justice through public recognition

Exercised by the plight of distinctive cultural traditions in modern-day multicultural society, Taylor maintains that the critical significance of recognition is its psychological function. 'Misrecognition' happens when our identity is undervalued, misunderstood or maligned:

Here injustice is rooted in social patterns of representation, interpretation, and communication. Examples include cultural domination (being subjected to patterns of interpretation and communication that are associated with another culture and are alien and/or hostile to one's own); nonrecognition (being rendered invisible via the authoritative representational, communicative, and interpretative practices of one's culture); and disrespect (being routinely maligned or disparaged in stereotypic public cultural representations and/or in everyday life interactions). (Fraser 2014, 14)

In this way, misrecognition operates through delineators of collective identity such as nationality, ethnicity, race and gender. Nancy Fraser gives the example of homosexual people: the mode of collectivity they share is that of a "disparaged sexuality", suffering not only the heterosexism of societal norms that privilege heterosexual people over homosexual people but also the homophobia that devalues homosexuality through discrimination and violence (1995, 18). For Taylor, the danger is that we can internalize such characterizations to the extent that we see ourselves through the eyes of those who dominate us; making misrecognition a "grievous wound, saddling its victims with a crippling self-hatred" (1994, 26). At the centre of this model is an identity paradigm predicated on an ethics of the good life. "There is a certain way of being human", he writes, "that is *my* way. I am called upon to live my life in this way, and not in imitation of anyone else's life" (30). If we each have

something unique to say, then for our relationship with ourselves to be ‘authentic’ it must be accompanied by authentic relations reflected back to us, because the principle of human dignity states that we are unable to flourish in our lives if the fundamental aspects of our identity are not properly recognized. ‘Recognition’ thus enables us to make sense of how social actors experience injustice because without it they cannot develop any identity at all. The imperative that Taylor articulates is one in which the possibility of human flourishing is linked inextricably to our ability to sustain instrumental contact with our inner nature. If this contact is absent, it is the same principle that demands that this injustice be addressed.

Taylor’s solution is a politics of difference in which there is “an acknowledgement of specificity” for every individual or group misrecognized by others (39). This recognition accords respect to the identity of misrecognized groups in terms of their relevance in society, driven by the belief that “all human cultures that have animated whole societies over some considerable stretch of time have something important to say to all human beings” (66-7). If cultural domination on the basis of identity is the ‘harm’, therefore, the ‘remedy’ is some form of symbolic change by which formerly disrespected identities are upwardly valued in response – by “esteeming” the identity of others we valorize what is distinctive, recognizing them “as a source of valuable particularity; their traits and abilities are treated positively contributing to the shared projects of that community” (Rogers 2009, 189). In the aforementioned case of the “despised sexuality”, Taylor’s model promotes strategies such as gay-identity politics which re-evaluates the status of gay and lesbian identity, treating homosexuality “as cultural positivity with its own substantive content, much like (the commonsense view of) an ethnicity” (Fraser 2014, 24). At base, Taylor’s politics is concerned with the affirmation of particular identities and their value in society. But before we can upwardly valorize the particular we must first identify it as distinct from the *universal*. This requires an overarching evaluative framework against which an individual’s

eligibility for valorization is measured. As Fraser warns, one effect of affirmative recognition strategies such as valorizing gay-identity politics is to impose “a single, drastically simplified group identity, which denies the complexity of people’s lives, the multiplicity of their identifications and the cross-pulls of their various affiliations” (2001, 24). In this Derridean ethics of discriminatory hospitality, in other words, by imposing representative frameworks on heterogeneous realities, even when it is intended as a public ‘good’ recognition demands discrimination.

Consider the following scene from Act One. Ricardo believes he has found the Duke a suitable female companion and knocks at her door. He tells her the Duke wishes to see her but she appears incredulous and rebukes him sarcastically:

CINTIA: Dudo,
no digo el venir contigo,
mas el visitarme a mí
tan gran señor y a tal hora.

RICARDO: Por hacerte gran señora
viene disfrazado así.

CINTIA: Ricardo, si el mes pasado
lo que agora me dijeras
del Duque, me persuadieras
que a mis puertas ha llegado;
pues toda su mocedad
ha vivido indignamente,

fábula siendo a la gente
su viciosa libertad.
Y como no se ha casado
por vivir más a su gusto,
sin mirar que fuera injusto
ser de un bastardo heredado,
aunque es mozo de valor
Federico, yo creyera
que el duque a verme viniera;
Mas ya que como señor
se ha venido a recoger,
y de casar concertado,
su hijo a Mantua ha enviado
por Casandra, su mujer,
no es posible que ande haciendo
locuras de noche ya,
cuando esperándola está
y su entrada previniendo;
que si en Federico fuera
libertad, ¿qué fuera en él? (1966, 30)

The Duke knows his honour depends on his good standing in the eyes of the people and undertakes his nocturnal activities in disguise. But Cintia is wise to his deception and in this devastating speech – to which she knows the Duke must listen – she reflects back to him a

vision of himself that contrasts sharply with how he would like to be seen, as he himself acknowledges:

Basta, que oí del papel
de aquella primera dama
el estado de mi fama:
bien claro me hablaba en él.
¿Que escuche me persuades
la segunda? Pues no ignores
que no quieren los señores
oír tan claras verdades (34)

Cintia's rejection is a thinly-veiled critique of the Duke's lascivious lifestyle but she also captures the conflicting politics of recognition in which the Duke is mired. As a famed libertine his intentions are obvious. But she also knows that his presence on the eve of his wedding holds a much greater significance, for the very security of his reign is at stake; if he does not relinquish his debauched ways and provide a legitimate heir the people will perceive a vacuum of power and rise up against him. Her words do him harm – as the Duke observes, “*Quien escucha, oye su daño*” (31). But they do so not just because they misrecognize the fundamental traits of honour, valour and respect he holds true for himself but because they suggest the wages of misrecognition on a much larger, geopolitical scale. For the Duke, recognition and its absence are political precisely because every action he contemplates, from taking a wife to taking revenge, must be risk-assessed against the self-same politics of public perception to which he is subject.

Nowhere is this strategic dimension clearer than when Federico and Casandra's affair is revealed in Act Three, when each of the Duke's actions is touched by his acute knowledge of the ineluctable power of public perception. If he takes revenge their adultery will be revealed and his honour will be ruined. And yet if the affront of their affair goes unpunished the injustice of their actions will persist:

¿Cómo sabré con prudencia
verdad que no me disfame
con los testigos que llame?
Ni así la podré saber;
porque ¿quién ha de querer
decir verdad tan infame?
¿Mas, de qué sirve informarme?.
pues esto no se dijera
de un hijo, cuando no fuera
verdad que pudo infamarme.
Castigarle no es vengarme,
ni se venga el que castiga,
ni esto a información me obliga;
que mal que el honor estraga,
no es menester que se haga,
porque basta que se diga. (105)

Knowing that to speak their betrayal is to destroy his honour, he must gain proof of their affair without making it public:

No es menester más testigo:
confesaron de una vez;
prevenid, pues sois jüez,
honra, sentencia y castigo.
Pero de tal suerte sea
que no se infame mi nombre;
que en público siempre a un hombre
queda alguna cosa fea.
Y no es bien que hombre nacido
sepa que yo estoy sin honra,
siendo enterrar la deshonra
como no haberla tenido. (112)

At every step of this calculated revenge, the Duke is painfully aware that the tenuousness of honour lies in the fact that it is subject to the vicissitudes of public opinion. When he exclaims, “*¡Ay, honor, fiero enemigo! / ¿Quién fue el primero que dio / tu ley al mundo, y que fuese / mujer quien en sí tuviese / tu valor, y el hombre no? /*”, it is not so much in woman that honour lies but in the *other* more generally (114). The punishment he devises must be viewed as a just action on the part of the State:

Cielos,
hoy se ha de ver en mi casa
no más de vuestro castigo.
Alzad la divina vara.

No es venganza de mi agravio,
que yo no quiero tomarla
en vuestra ofensa, y de un hijo
ya fuera bárbara hazaña.
Éste ha de ser un castigo
vuestro no más, porque valga
para que perdone el cielo
el rigor por la templanza.
Seré padre, y no marido,
dando la justicia santa
a un pecado sin vergüenza
un castigo sin venganza.
Esto disponen las leyes
del honor, y que no haya
publicidad en mi afrenta,
con que se doble mi infamia.
Quien en público castiga,
dos veces su honor infama,
pues después que le ha perdido,
por el mundo le dilata (115.)

In this politics of recognition, he who punishes in public loses his honour twice. But this politics also dictates that the Duke's honour will remain intact for as long as the people recognize him as honourable. What the Marquis describes as "*el castigo / sin venganza* /"

(120) is a special brand of personal justice in which the Duke successfully negotiates both the opportunities and constraints of recognition.

The translator's recognition

When it comes to Lope's theatre on the English-speaking stage, what do these mechanics of recognition illuminate about the role of the translator? In what sense is translation an act of recognition, and, in the case of the so-called 'literal' translator, what is it that makes it *political*? At first glance, the literal translator's job description appears distinctly *a-political*: to translate a play written originally in a foreign language so that it can be adapted for performance. This work of adaptation is often carried out by an experienced writer who transforms the literal into living theatre. When such adaptors do not speak the language of the original they seek as close a reflection of the play as possible. Much of the language used by theatre professionals to describe literal translation suggests a process aimed primarily at transparency, as "an information map" (Katherine Mendelsohn), giving a "fractured x-ray of the play" (Howard Brenton) and "a very accurate picture in English" (David Eldridge) of a text written originally in another language.¹ In an interview in May 2011 Alan Ayckbourn discussed his adaptation of Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya*:

I got a literal translation of the play from Vera Liber, a lady I'd worked with before on Ostrovsky's *The Forest*. This was written as faithfully to the original as possible and is quite nice and simple. Vera Liber writes without any judgement as far as I can see; she's also quite passionate about the precise meanings of words. (Murgatroyd 2011)

Simplicity, faithfulness, the absence of judgement: this is the apparent task of the literal translator. But the paradoxical intention Ayckbourn also outlines is that of advocating for the

words of the foreign text – making a passionate case for certain meanings over others – while suspending personal investment in the process. The question we must ask is whether it is possible to impute meanings to the words of a foreign text while also writing, in Ayckbourn’s words, “without any judgement”. It is at this point that we can look to the politics of recognition for answers.

In the context of *Castigo*, a play which has been performed in English a number of times, the first level of recognition the literal translator enters into is one of belief: that by undertaking a fresh translation the play will produce something new to say to us. For George Steiner this is the ‘hermeneutic trust’ we place in the text: “All understanding”, he writes, “and the demonstrative statement of understanding which is translation, starts with an act of trust” (1998, 312). If literal translation is about ‘understanding’ the foreign text then the translation process starts when the translator invests psychologically in the belief that there is something in the play that continues to demand to be understood. My own translation process, for example, starts with attempting to understand what the characters themselves are most invested in. When I have access to an electronic version of the playtext-for-translation, which I did in this case, I use a software-based word-count algorithm to rank the frequency of every word. I remove proper nouns, articles, determiners and quantifiers, separating the semantically load-bearing content from the linguistic bricks and mortar. This sifting process is always extremely illuminating: by categorizing Lope’s words in this way we gain a panoramic vision of his characters’ chief concerns. My analysis revealed that issues of justice, honour, harm and revenge are not just salient themes but a constant preoccupation. *Agravio*, and its related forms *agravios*, *agraviado*, *agraviarse* and *desagravio*, appear on 17 separate occasions; *ofensa* and its related forms appear 14 times; *daño* and related forms a further five times. *Justicia*, and related forms, appears 12 times while *venganza* and related forms appears 16 times. Whether we conceive of these ideas as ‘injury’, ‘harm’, ‘justice’ or

'revenge', they are repeated again and again, in morphological derivation or grammatical inflection. But by far the most frequent word does not have anything to do with questions of harm or revenge. *Amor* appears 75 times, followed by *dios*, 41, and *alma*, 37. *Quiero* is uttered 27 separate times; *valor*, 27; *razón*, 22; *honor*, 21. Over and above their perception of harm and desire for retribution, these are characters concerned with bigger things. Certainly, the theme of vengeance is integral to the plot, but I find the word-count analysis urges us to remain open to other measures of significance.

When I turn to the practical work of translation itself, I look for clues to each of the play's relationships, to the dynamics of power that unfurl and extend themselves through the language of the speeches. Consider the following from Act Two; Casandra is now married and here she speaks with Federico for the first time since she has learned of the Duke's infidelity:

FEDERICO Mi señora,
dé vuestra Alteza la mano
a su esclavo.

CASANDRA ¿Tú en el suelo?
Conde, no te humilles tanto,
que te llamaré Excelencia.

FEDERICO Será de mi amor agravio;
ni me pienso levantar
sin ella.

CASANDRA Aquí están mis brazos.

¿Qué tienes? ¿Qué has visto en mí?

Parece que estás temblando.

¿Sabes ya lo que te quiero? (1966, 67)

Here, my hermeneutic trust concerned Casandra's use of the informal form of address. Throughout Act One exchanges between Casandra and Federico are characterized by their rigid formality and copious honorifics. This exchange in Act Two, however, comes after Casandra confides in Lucrecia that the Duke has returned to his libidinous ways. When she encounters Federico and says, "*¿Tú en el suelo? / Conde, no te humilles tanto, /*", this is the first time she employs the second person pronoun. In translating this scene it was my belief that it is here that the air between them changes. By this stage the audience knows their mutual attraction – both Batín and Lucrecia have been made well aware of their masters' feelings – but they have not yet spoken openly about their desires. I investigated the grammar of their exchanges in more detail. At this point, Federico is in a miserable state. Having asked Batín to give them privacy, Casandra scolds Federico for his apparent bitterness over the loss of his inheritance. The audience knows that the real cause of Federico's distress is the impossible love he has for his stepmother. It is in his response to her rebuke that he himself first uses the second person singular:

Comenzando vuestra Alteza

riñéndome, acaba en llanto

su discurso, que pudiera

en el más duro peñasco

imprimir dolor. Qué es esto?

Sin duda que me ha mirado,
por hijo de quien la ofende;
pero yo la desengaño
que no parezca hijo suyo
para tan injustos casos.
Esto persuadido así,
de mi tristeza, me espanto,
que la atribuyas, señora,
a pensamientos tan bajos. (70)

Yet he does not reveal his true feelings and continues to address her as “vuestra Alteza” until much later in the Act. When he finally uses this construction for the last time, Casandra is attempting to establish the cause of his inexorable sadness. In response to her questioning he replies, “*En tanto mal / responderé a vuestra Alteza / que es mi tristeza inmortal.*” (84). His foolish qualms, he goes on to say, are his to bear alone. Casandra’s solution is to tell him the story of Antiochus, who so loved his stepmother that he fell into a deep malaise. No doctor could establish the cause. But wise Herostratus knew that such an illness was a poison that lay somewhere between the lip and the heart. He called for the women of the palace and took Antiochus’s pulse as they passed. When the stepmother arrived, Herostratus felt the quickening of Antiochus’s pulse and knew at once she was the cause of his pain. The story enables Casandra to ask Federico directly if he suffers the same problem and with this singular device they are able to bring their feelings into the open. From then on, Federico’s need for formality dissipates. My understanding of their romantic dynamic was predicated on the belief that the future course of their affair from this point onwards – when Federico here admits his love and no longer addresses her as ‘highness’ – was foreshadowed when

Cassandra first addresses Federico informally and the emotional distance between them starts to close.

My literal indeed attempted to deliver clarity, precision and maximum objectivity – “You on the ground? / Count, do not humble yourself so much; / for I will call you “Excellency” /”. I provided a footnote in which I discussed the issue of grandeeships and the *Nueva Recopilación de las Leyes* in which it states that no one may use the term *Excelencia* unless they are *Grande* (Vega 1966, 129). Having been invited by the Theatre Royal Bath to provide academic support during the rehearsals period, I advocated personally for the significance of the change in register with the director and actors, affirming both my belief in its presence in the text and my evaluation of its dramatic value. As we are reminded with Taylor’s paradigm, affirmative recognition strategies start from an assumption: that a kernel of mystery exists externally to us. In order to recognize it a certain essentialism must be enacted, for, being external, we must employ evaluative methods in order to discern what it is we wish to recognize. Even when undertaken for positive reasons recognition requires a certain perspicacious discrimination. In the case of Federico and Cassandra, by affirming that there was something ‘there’ to be recognized, and then by articulating for the director and actors precisely what that something was – in this case the T-V distinction and its portentous role in their affair – I submitted their exchange to a process of critical evaluation. By advocating for an active recognition of that which I myself had already actively recognized, I was, in effect, as much *creating*, as I was calling attention to, the performative value of their words.

The hermeneutics of recognition

To make sense of this act of performative creation, we must further explore the notion of hermeneutic trust. Historically, hermeneutics was concerned with the exegetical problem of

how to understand a text, beginning with its ‘intention’ and proceeding on the basis of what it ‘says’. Recent approaches, however, address the more fundamental problem of the person doing the understanding. As Paul Ricoeur observes, “every reading of a text always takes place within a community, a tradition, or a living current of thought, all of which display presuppositions and exigencies – regardless of how closely a reading may be tied to the *quid*, to ‘that in view of which’ the text was written” (2004, 3). In the spoken realm discourse involves someone saying something to someone else, but in the written domain symbols are not confined to their original creator. With the passage of time the author disappears and a work’s addressees become unclear – it is thus an open-ended communication whose ‘addressees’ are limitless. Separated from the original communicative ‘event’, the modern day reader is distanced in time and space from the text in its past context of production and reception. This hermeneutic ‘distanciation’ creates what Richard Kearney describes as the “open horizon of interpretations” through which meaning is liberated from its original range of reference and becomes ‘autonomous’, inviting a multiplicity of readings (2007, 31). As a result, readers are bound in a circle of competing historical intersubjectivities in which the worlds of the original author and their text become inseparable from the time and place from which we read them. To interpret meaning within this circle is thus “to arrive in the middle of an exchange which has already begun and in which we seek to orient ourselves in order to make some sense of it” (5).

This distance need not risk paralysis, for we can make an imaginative leap into the hermeneutic abyss and offer up our best ‘guess’ at the text that stands before us. The task of such leap, Ricoeur explains:

is to conquer a remoteness, a distance between the past cultural epoch to which the text belongs and the interpreter himself. By overcoming this distance, by making

himself contemporary with the text, the exegete can appropriate its meaning to himself: foreign, he makes it familiar, that is, he makes it his own. (2004, 16)

Given the autonomy of the text's meaning in respect of this circular distancing, the goal of hermeneutics is not to recover what is lost to the vagaries of time and space but to appropriate meaning to ourselves, making contemporary that which is past and rendering familiar that which is foreign. What we appropriate is neither the intention of the author nor a secret design behind the text but "the proposal of a mode of being-in-the-world, which the text discloses in front of itself by means of its non-ostensive references" (1981, 192). Wolfgang Iser explains this idea through the example of two people gazing at the stars. Both are faced with the same blanket of stellar phenomena but while one focuses on the plough the other sees the image of the dipper. The manner in which we interpret a text is therefore given not by the text itself but in its meeting with the mind of its reader (1972, 286). It is for this reason that what we appropriate is never the 'essence' of a text but the proposed world we inhabit when we project our interpretation upon it. When Ricoeur writes that hermeneutics is "self-understanding by means of understanding others", he suggests that by studying the mechanics of this interpretive proposal, we learn as much about our own subjectivity before the text as we do about the text itself (2004, 16).

The hermeneutics of (literal) translation

As 'readers' of Lope's play, we are at a distance: from the 'event' of its language, themes ideas and characters in the time and place of its production and reception. Whether adaptor, actor, director, scholar or literal translator, when approaching the play from this critical distance our task is to *understand*. To do so we inhabit the play – we furnish it with our readings, we project ideas onto its empty walls and we remodel its foreign architecture to

respect familiar tastes. As with Taylor's politics of recognition, something external demands to be recognized. We enter into a *translational* hermeneutics precisely when this demand requires us to project ourselves into a world of potential meanings. Taylor's politics is about turning the fruit of this imaginative projection into affirmative action, actively valorizing and upwardly advocating our response to what we read. As with recognition, hermeneutics is at base normative because the reader's distanciation from the objects of interpretation requires judgements to be made. In their reliance on deliberative gestures of critical evaluation, recognition and hermeneutics coincide, for they each require positions to be taken, over the meaning of what is perceived and how best to attribute value to it.

What do these insights add to our understanding of literal translation? We can say first that the process of writing a literal translation is as partial an exercise as any other form of interpretation. Its goal may indeed be to communicate as clearly as possible the full range of dramatic possibilities within the foreign text, to open up rather than foreclose its potential for adaptation to the stage. But from a hermeneutic perspective the inevitable distance of space and time that separates the translator from the text he or she is tasked with understanding and the critical judgement required to bridge it also mean that literal translation is an entirely purposeful act. In a roundtable discussion at the Gate Theatre in 1994, Joseph Farrell recalls a similar scenario:

I was once asked to do a literal translation and I refused; it wasn't just arrogance, there were other considerations as well. I really don't know precisely what a literal translation might mean, because at each point you must be making an interpretation; you've got to be deciding obscure points, thinking this is possibly what this means, or this is the meaning that fits into the overall context of the play, or what do we know about the overall ideas of this man and what do we pick up from the language itself?

[...] It is his/her responsibility to try and get as close as possible to what is being said in the original play; to provide a product which isn't too closely married into the expectations of the audience, but rather something that will challenge those expectations. (Johnston 1996, 284-5)

Literal translations occupy a curious ontological space somewhere between texts in their own right and texts-as-yet-unfulfilled. They are created not to enjoy an existence of their own but to give life to a different text – the performance text – that crafts the foreign playtext into a work of theatre for production on the local stage. The destiny of a literal, therefore, is fulfilled precisely in the condition of having no destiny of its own. It is for this reason that the practice of literal translation is often dismissed as automatic, as a transparent window onto the foreign play or the uncomplicated transfer of meaning between two stages. As David Johnston argues:

At the heart of the creation of the playable translation is a dramaturgical remoulding, because such a remoulding creates the vehicle which transports – the root meaning of the very to translate – the audience into the experience of the play. In other words, rather than giving new form to an already known meaning, translation for the stage is about giving form to a potential for performance. (2013, 58)

Johnston most recently translated and adapted Lope's *La dama boba*, which was also produced by the Theatre Royal Bath in 2013. Here, he focuses specifically on translation for the stage, as opposed to literal translation which does not purport to yield a performable text. He describes such a form of stage-orientated translation as above all a process of writing for actors. But there are lessons here too about the practice of literal translation, for at every step

of the way the literal translator makes decisions about how to understand the play, to explain it in another language, and, as Farrell recognizes, to consider the expectations of those on the receiving end of its curiously unfulfilled destiny. It is the literal translator's *knowledge* of these expectations that determines its shape, for a literal translation writes for the future: for the adaptor who will transform it, for the director who will bring its vision to life and for the actors who will embody such a vision. A literal translation is as much a work of prognostication as it is a process of precision, for the translator must imagine the needs of a play's adaptor and director and craft a way to meet them – simultaneously interpreting the play in its original language, while also interpreting how it will be used in translation.

In my own literal the traces of this hermeneutics of expectation were evident as much in form as in content. While many editions of the play provide line numbers on every fifth line, I wanted the literal to offer maximum flexibility by displaying numbers at every line. If the adaptor Meredith Oakes had a question about a particular term I wanted her to be able to reference it efficiently in her communications with me. I submitted the literal alongside a copy of the original play, which I reformatted to follow the same line numbering so that individual lines in the literal could be cross-referenced with their corresponding lines in the Spanish original. What I wanted was to provide as transparent a vision as possible: not of Lope's play, but of my own engagement with each and every line. I tracked versification changes and colour-coded these in both the Spanish companion text and the literal. I synthesized the secondary literature into a series of explanatory footnotes that showed points of consensus and disagreement in the scholarship, alongside independent research of my own. When Ricardo, for example, acts as the local tour guide on the Duke's clandestine visit to the town and describes the "imposible sufrillo" (1966, 37) of the seraphim-like woman who has "Un cierto maridillo / que toma y no da lugar" (39), I discussed how the *-illo* suffix deviated from the standard to produce a playful, transgressive effect. While Meredith was writing her

adaptation I fielded queries, undertook further research and clarified problem areas. I advised on the Romance verse form and discussed its role in Lope’s theatre, its semiotic significance and function in the play. We discussed numerous historical terms and I recommended various ways in which a particular expression might be read.

To recall the notion of the literal as an “information map” to the original foreign play, even at the subtle level of individual word-choice the literal translator must enter into a hermeneutics of purposeful meaning-making, for multiple possibilities present themselves, options must be weighed and decisions must be made if it is to fulfil its remit to provide as accurate and as detailed a ‘map’ as possible for its adaptor. The following examples are taken from Act Three and trace the Duke’s inner turmoil and subsequent crisis of revenge when he learns of Federico and Casandra’s affair. The literal I submitted to the Theatre Royal Bath is shown alongside Meredith Oakes’s adaptation and two previously published translations.

Lope de Vega 1966	Maitland 2013	Oakes 2013	Booty 1961	Edwards 1999
(1). ¿Cómo sabré con prudencia/ verdad que no me difame/ con los testigos que llame? (105)	How will I know with prudence a truth that does not defame me/damage my reputation with the witnesses that I	But how can I, with care and prudence, Find the truth without exposing My reputation in the process? (81)	How can I prudently discover the truth? For no man would dare to reveal this horror to me. I must tread warily, since any	How can I, then, be sure that I learn the truth and not expect The witnesses I call to draw Attention to the full extent Of my ignoble

	call?		whispered reports against my son dishonour my name also. (270)	fall? (251)
(2.) Sin tormento han confesado.../ pero sin tormento no;/ que claro está que soy yo/ a quien el tormento han dado. (112)	Without torment/torture they have confessed... but without torment/torture no; for it is clear that I am the one to whom they have given torment/torture.	They've confessed everything, without torture. Without torture, did I say? No, for I'm the person they Have tortured almost past endurance. (87- 8)	They have confessed all without the rack, for they have me upon it/ No more is needed. They have confessed. (273)	They have Confessed their sin without the need To torture them. But who can say There is no torture here if I Am forced to listen to this foul Confession? (258)
(3). Que aunque parece defensa/ de la honra el desagravio./ no deja de ser agravio/	For even though [redress] seems a defence of honour, it does not stop being an	For even though redress appears To be defending honour, it Can't remove the stain from it,	Once the offense is known, nothing can erase it from the minds of men. (273)	For it is not enough for any man To cleanse his honour, when others are

cuando se sabe la ofensa. (105)	insult/offence when the offence is known.	Once news reaches people's ears. (88)		Prepared to speak of it forever. (258)
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What is striking is not so much that individual words I suggested – “reputation”, “torture”, “redress” – made their way directly to the stage but the degree of individuality that surrounded their translation in the first instance. In the case of *tormento* in (2.), which I offered as “torment/torture”, my rationale for a less ambiguous, unequivocal secondary choice was not only the fact that “torture” and “confession” share the same semantic field, but when speaking of the horror of having to spy on the very people who have betrayed him, “torture” functions like a transitive verb: what they do to the Duke is like an active injury. When he says “¿Cómo sabré con prudencia / verdad que no me difame /” in (1.), numerous translations such as “slander”, “malign” or “slur” would have been logical but instead I provided a close translation, “a truth that does not / defame / me” and an alternative, “a truth that does not / damage / my reputation”. Lope’s text itself did not demand such elucidation; unlike other speeches the syntactical logics of this line is relatively easy to follow and yet I had offered something *more*. In addition to precision I had offered a more interpretive alternative – I had attempted to *understand* and to communicate the fruit of this understanding to my reader. At stake in (3.) is the play’s central paradox of revenge: injustice must be dealt with if one’s honour is to be restored; but by taking revenge one makes injustice public and suffers the injustice of losing one’s honour all over again. In *desagravio* the full binding force of this paradox is present in the *-des* prefix and its suggestion of the deliberate undoing of insult, grievance or offence. The Booty translation, for example, avoids this paradox entirely while the Edwards translation, which speaks of “cleansing” the Duke’s

honour, misses out on the reparative, recuperational nuance it implies. Having invested this belief in the dramatic significance of the *-des* prefix, with “redress” I was determined not to transform Lope’s evocative noun into a verbal gloss.

As Ricoeur maintains, hermeneutics starts where there is a mystery to be solved. For translators, the bulk of this mystery resides within the text-for-translation. But for the *literal* translator specifically, the task of translation itself creates a second set of mysteries, for the translation is destined to be ‘translated’ again by its adaptor. At every stage I knew that the words I was writing would themselves be examined as intimately as I had examined those of Lope’s original. With this in mind, one of the final stages of my process is to attempt to put myself in the shoes of the adaptor who would use my words to craft the performance text, to imagine into the future the ways in which my text would be read – to interpret, in other words, the mysteries my own words could create. By projecting forwards into the work of adaptation and looking backwards at my literal, I revisited my own choice of words and searched for the possibility of unwarranted ambiguities. Towards the end of Act Three, for example, when the Duke dispatches Federico to kill the supposed assassin, Federico replies, “Ten la espada, y aquí aguarda; /” (2961). In my literal, I translated this as “Have [take] the sword, and here await; /” in an attempt both to remain close to Lope’s Spanish while also heading off any undesirable departures from my use of ‘have’.

When tracked in this way, literal translation is far from a detached linguistic transaction. In what Kathleen Mountjoy (Jeffs) calls the “unfinished linguistic bridge” between the original and its dramatic presencing (2007, 76-7), it is a creative process of decision-making and discernment on the part of the literal translator, who takes their place alongside the adaptor and director as figures charged with bringing meaning to the play. Much has been written about the lack of symbolic and financial status accorded to literary translators. But as the *Encyclopedia of Literary Translation into English* observes, “this is no

doubt partly the making of literal translators themselves. Perhaps some of them, too self-effacing, undervalue their own contribution. This attitude obstructs the efforts of those who do fight for recognition and improved rates of pay” (2000, 858). With these words we return to the politics of recognition, for by focusing on the literal translator’s contribution to the process of meaning-making in the theatre, perhaps the time has come to seek recognition, not symbolic or financial, but of the strategic politics the *hermeneutic* work of literal translation necessarily entails. What we gain from the politics of recognition is the insight that the accordance of putative value to any object of our perception is a tactical move: it requires us to evaluate what we see and to make a judgement about the extent to which it is worthy of valorization. From hermeneutics we learn that every act of understanding requires an interpretive gesture that implicates the interpreter directly in the texture of his or her own interpretation – everything is mediated by the interpreter’s response to what they perceive and how they understand it. To valorize the contribution of literal translators in this way is to recognize first that literal translations cannot give unmediated access to the foreign-language plays on which they are based, for there is no transparent lens through which such plays can be viewed except through the subjective gaze the translator’s interpretation demands. But it is also to acknowledge that as with any act of recognition, to valorize literal translation requires submitting it to a process of evaluation. A literal can and should be subjected to a process of perspicacious interrogation by its users – to question its value, not as a transparent window but as a means towards the creation of new and living theatre through its adaptor. Ricoeur always intended for our hermeneutic guesses to be tested, to be put into practice and called into scrutiny, for a literal is only one possible interpretation out of many. In the case of the theatre of Lope de Vega, this recognition not only liberates literal translation from the constraints of its impossible representational burden but also creates the need for fresh

translations, written in new places, in new times, by different translators, undertaking different guesses and offering up new potentials for performance on the stage.

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ⁱ See: Tanioka (2006), Bosanquet (2013) and Mullarkey (2014).