

Atti e convegni

IRISH-ITALIAN STUDIES
New Perspectives on
Cultural Mobility and Permeability

Edited by Chiara Sciarrino



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Cultural Mobility and Permeability*

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Translating for the stage: the case of Owen McCafferty's *Quietly*

MONICA RANDACCIO

Theoretically speaking, the specificity of drama translation has always troubled its theoreticians and practitioners alike. The semiotic approach that flourished in the 1970s and 1980s had the merit of providing a sound theoretical basis for the exploration of the relationship between the dramatic text and its performance. Thus, the innovative studies conducted in those years by Ubersfeld ([1978] 1999, 158-188), who considered the written text as 'troué', incomplete, or those by Ruffini (1978, 83-85), Serpieri (1978, 11-54) and Elam (1980, 32-184), highlighted the dual nature of drama and its typical imbalance, as the written text and the performance text belonged to different semiotic systems. In the move from page to stage, the translator was seen as "operating within to different semiotic systems (textual and audiovisual) and consequently addressing two types of audience (readers and spectators) which seldom overlap" (Soncini 2007, 272). Hence, the almost proverbial 'paradox of the translator', according to which the translator was asked an impossible task, i.e., "to treat a written text that is part of a larger complex of sign systems, involving paralinguistic and kinesic features, as if it were a literary text created solely for the page, to be read off that page" (Bassnett McGuire 1985, 87).

Although the idea of the drama translator as "master of two servants" (Soncini 2007) remained central, in the 1990s interculturalism and the so-called 'cultural turn' in Translation Studies opened up new horizons in drama translation. The emphasis was on translation as intercultural transfer and the original play text became a product for the target culture and audience. Pavis, in fact, defined drama translation as a "hermeneutic act" (Pavis 1989, 26): in order to understand what the source texts mean, questions must be asked from the target's language

viewpoint. Similarly, Aaltonen described the relationship between the source text and its translation with an apt metaphor which hints at the relevance of the spatial-temporal coordinates in this type of translation. She sees the choices made by the drama translator as always tied up to “the time and place of the occupancy” (Altonen 2000, 29).

More recently, the study of drama translation has moved from the ‘cultural turn’ to the ‘performative turn’. Drawing on Schechner’s work, the notion of performativity allows interpretation of the world we live in, drama, and by extension, drama translation, as performance, privileging “the performative over the representational” (Marinetti 2013, 309). Thus, “translation as performance implies a dynamic process of (re)signification integrated with the overall event in its various phases of production” (Bigliuzzi et al. 2013, 1). This process brings to the fore issues such as the playfulness of performance and the consequent creative and translation options; and the blurring of the boundaries between translation, version and adaptation; the importance of audience-targeted relocation practices.

As this brief introduction indicates, drama translation as a field of investigation is characterised by fragmentariness and conflicting strategies. For this reason, my analysis of Owen McCafferty’s translation into Italian and its staging, without privileging one of the above-mentioned approaches, readapts three relevant notions derived from semiotics, from the ‘cultural turn’ and from the ‘performative turn’ in drama translation. These notions, which work as guidelines to cast light on the translation process and account for micro- and macro-changes in the Italian version, will be considered sequentially for clarity of exposition. They are: first, the deictic orientation of the communicative situation among characters in the original and in the translation/adaptation. Second, the possible capacity of the translation to “write forward” (Johnston 2013, 375), according to which the semantic charge and the hermeneutic potential of the original is reactivated for a new audience through space and time. Third, the analysis of the paratextual elements, i.e., the Italian reviews of the play as a zone of transaction between the original, the translation/adaptation in Italian and the new audience. According to Genette, among the characteristics of the paratext there are the functions of communicating “pure information”, “impart intention or interpretation” (Genette 1997, 268). In other words, many paratextual elements have a performative function, the “power

to accomplish what they describe" (Genette and Maclean 1991, 264) and, therefore, to start a process of re-signification of the play, which is an integral part of the translation process.

My analysis was made possible thanks to the generosity of the translator, Natalia di Gianmarco, who sent me the unpublished script of the play and of the two directors, Paolo Mazzarelli e Marco Foschi, who also featured in the roles of Jimmy and Ian respectively and who made available the dramaturgical changes and cuts they made to the script. Moreover, a filmed version of the Italian play is available on line. Unfortunately, The Abbey Theatre denied any access to the filmed version of the original play and this was partly detrimental to deeper insights.

McCafferty's *Quietly* premiered at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin in 2012. The following year the Abbey Production of *Quietly* played at the Traverse Theatre during the Edinburgh Festival, winning a Writers' Guild Award for Best Play, an Edinburgh Fringe First Award and The Stage Awards for Best Actor for Patrick O'Kane as Jimmy.

Quietly opens in a pub in Belfast, reminiscent of a Northern Irish version of Murphy's *Conversations on a Homecoming* or McPherson's *The Weir*, where a Polish barman, Robert, while watching Poland playing against Northern Ireland in a World Cup qualifier, is joined by the Catholic Jimmy and the Protestant Ian, both in their fifties, who have arranged to meet after sixteen years. In a rising atmosphere of tension and violence, broken only by the exchanges between Jimmy and Robert in the role of the observer, the story of the protagonists unfolds. At the time of another match, Northern Ireland – Poland in 1974, Ian, as a member of the Ulster Volunteer Force, threw a bomb into a pub where six people watching the match were killed, including Jimmy's father. This bombing proves devastating to both protagonists' lives. After the loss of his father, Jimmy abandoned his studies and joined the IRA, but was incapable of offering solace to his mother in her grief. On the other hand, Ian who had a clumsy sexual encounter with a girl given to him as a reward to celebrate the successful attack, years later came to know that she had become pregnant and had an abortion. When the two men leave in what seems an apparent reconciliation, the play ends with another outburst of violence. From outside the pub, Northern Ireland fans start to throw stones and shout 'Polish bastard' echoing Jimmy and Ian's speaking of 'orange' and 'fenian' bastards throughout the play.

The translation by di Gianmarco is a literal one and provided the basis for verbal and non-verbal changes in performance made by the directors, who were also the actors playing Jimmy and Ian. These changes testify to a different deictic orientation of the source text as compared to the target text.

As noted in the late 1970s, “in the theatre... meaning is entrusted in *primis* to deixis” (Elam 1980, 140), which can be defined as the verbal indices which actualise the dramatic world, the “here and now” of the performance. Moreover, deixis subsumes and activates other channels of communication, and accounts for the visual, kinesic and proxemic relations of the characters on stage. Consequently, in drama translation the recreation of a text through its verbal and non-verbal counterparts for new audiences, involves a new communicative situation, which changes the dialectical interplay for the new dramatic here-and-now of the translated text. However, it must be noted that there are discordant views on how deixis is used in drama translation. An almost canonical example is given by Bassnett-McGuire’s and Pavis’s position on the use of the deictic system. As Katerina Nicolarea reminds us, Bassnett-McGuire, revising her initial position held in the 1970s, suggests that the best method for comparing the source text (ST) and the target text (TT) is to analyse the deictic units and their functions in both the source text (SL) and the target text (TT). Bassnett-McGuire, however, sees these deictic units more as linguistic structures than a gestural patterning. On the contrary, Pavis considers the entire deictic system as an encoded gestural patterning in the written text (Katerina Nicolarea 2002). The analysis of deixis has engaged linguists, translation scholars and literary critics since then.¹

I would argue that changes in deixis re-orient the Italian translation/adaptation of *Quietly* from the offset and this, in turn, will have consequences for the receiving Italian audience. In particular, I will compare two passages from the original play and its translation/adaptation which best exemplify how deixis references are responsible for triggering a different interpretation of the play in Italian. These passages are the initial scene and the height of Jimmy’s and Ian’s confrontation (McCafferty 2012, 11, 23; McCafferty 2014a):

¹ To mention only a few: Rosa Lorés Sanz (1990), Peter Van Stapele (1990), Vimala Herman (1995) and David Horton (1999).

Translating for the Stage: the Case of Women McCafferty's Quietly

<p><i>The stage is in darkness. Lights up.</i></p> <p><i>A bar in Belfast, 2009. Northern Ireland are playing Poland in a World Cup qualifier on a big screen TV.</i></p> <p><i>Robert is playing the poker machine. He receives a text message.</i></p> <p>I can't live like that. I'm not happy either Do u luv me Of course I do Then what I don't know I'm feel alone – what am I doing here- I want to get back to Poland Can't talk now the place is starting to fill up I need u Talk later</p> <p>Robert: fuckin torture – she wanted to be here – begged me – I didn't force her – fuckin made it happen that's what I did – and what – this shit</p> <p><i>He moves behind the bar and watches the match. Jimmy enters.</i></p>	<p>Il palcoscenico è al buio.</p> <p>Siamo nel retro di un pub. Tavolini e sedie coperti da teli di plastica, in penombra, in un luogo che pare abbandonato da anni. In altro a sinistra una tenda fa intuire – fuori scena al di là della tenda stessa – la presenza del pub vero e proprio, che non vedremo mai, ma dal quale giungeranno la voce di Robert e, successivamente, la telecronaca – in arabo – di una partita di calcio che scopriremo essere Irlanda del Nord- Polonia.</p> <p>La voce di Robert si sente da dietro la tenda, inizialmente parla al telefono.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Robert: Che tortura del cazzo – lei voleva stare qui – mi ha implorato – non l'ho costretta – glielo ho reso possibile, cazzo, ecco cosa ho fatto – e ora – questa merda.</p> <p><i>A quel punto si incomincia a sentire la telecronaca in arabo della partita. Poco dopo, nel bar intuiamo che entra Jimmy.</i></p>
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<p>Ian: my name is Ian...</p> <p><i>Jimmy head-butts Ian. He holds Robert in place with his stare.</i></p> <p>(To Robert.) it's fine- ya understand it's fine</p> <p>(To Jimmy.) – that it – that the only reason you agreed to see me.</p> <p>Jimmy: yes</p> <p>Ian: I think you want more than that</p> <p>Jimmy: right – I need you to understand something – the head-butt was just an indication ya understand- it's not out a character either – I'll kick you all over the fucking street – the only thing stopping me doing that – at the moment – is the fact that a wouldn't stop until ya had no fucking head left</p> <p>Ian: (to Robert) two pints of harp please</p> <p>Robert: you all drink harp – harp is dog piss – should drink good polish beer</p> <p>Ian: I'm not askin you to drink a</p> <p>Robert: ok – two pints</p> <p>Jimmy: you expecting someone else</p> <p>Ian: no</p> <p>Jimmy: ask me do I want a pint a harp</p> <p>Ian: do you want a pint of harp</p> <p>Jimmy: I want fuck all from you</p> <p>Robert: just the one then</p> <p>Ian: I ordered two – just set them on the counter</p> <p>Robert: you watch the football</p> <p>Ian: Robert not really</p> <p>Robert: nobody watch the football – nobody support their country</p> <p>Ian: who is playin</p> <p>Robert: northern Ireland and Poland – not very good</p> <p>Ian: you polish</p> <p>Robert: yes polish</p>	<p>Ian: Mi chiamo Ian...</p> <p><i>Jimmy dà una testata a Ian. Con uno sguardo immobilizza Robert.</i></p> <p>(a Robert) Va tutto bene – davvero – va tutto bene.</p> <p>(a Jimmy) – ecco qui – questa è l'unica ragione per cui hai accettato di vedermi.</p> <p>Jimmy: Sì.</p> <p>Ian: credo che tu voglia più di questo.</p> <p>Jimmy: Credo che tu voglia più di questo – ti prenderei a calci lungo tutta la strada – l'unica cosa che mi impedisce di farlo – al momento – è il fatto che non mi fermerei se non ti staccassi la testa prima.</p> <p>Ian: (a Robert) Due pinte di Harp, per favore.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>Jimmy: Stai aspettando qualcun altro?</p> <p>Ian: No.</p> <p>Jimmy: Chiedimi se voglio una pinta di Harp.</p> <p>Ian: Vuoi una pinta di Harp?</p> <p>Jimmy: Da te non voglio un cazzo</p> <p>Ian: Ne ho ordinate due – (A Robert, dietro la tenda)</p> <p>Mettile sul bancone.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>
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The analysis of some deictic markers – especially those words referring to time and place and to the encoding of the participant relations² – in these two passages will help to show concretely how the dramatic world of translation/adaptation differs from the original.

In the first passage, the original play shows Robert who is receiving and sending text messages in the opening scene. The spatial and time deictic markers – ‘a bar in Belfast, 2009’ – define the framework of the dramatic situation on stage. However, in the exchange of text messages there are other examples of spatial and social deixis (‘Poland’; ‘I can’t live like that/I’m not happy either/Do u luv me/Of course I do’), which are anaphoric references to Robert’s dramatic world outside the stage. In this case, “deixis has the potentiality of putting entities into the dramatic world and keep them alive, entities which are only perceptible through the discourse [and]... may exist in another space and possible in another time than the time and space on stage” (Van Stapele 1990, 336).

These deictic markers, therefore, help to create Robert’s background – the reader/audience will later discover that he has a wife and a girlfriend – and establish his character as the impartial observer from ‘Poland’ between the two antagonists. Although some critics have seen him as a ‘handy device’ that lacks any depth, his presence is nonetheless relevant for the communicative situation as he represents another participant in the original dramatic discourse, a visual presence entering in proxemic relation with Jimmy and Ian on stage. In the Italian translation/adaptation, spatial and time deictic markers become more vague – the action takes place in the back of a pub (‘retro di un pub’) – and spatial and social deixis as anaphoric references to Robert’s background disappear. Although the spatial and time deictic markers of the original – ‘a bar in Belfast, 2009’ - are aurally and iconically shown on the Italian stage as the Irish national anthem is heard and an Irish flag is seen, nonetheless the sense of vagueness

² I will refer to this as ‘social deixis’ in its widest possible meaning, according to Horton’s definition. For him, participants relations “can be read off from the text in a large number of markers which serve to encode, more or less directly, relative status, group membership, the type of transactions being conducted, the mutual degrees of formality and intimacy and general attitudes obtaining between interlocutors” (Horton 1999).

of the location remains because the Italian audience may not be familiar with these non-verbal signs. In fact, Snell-Hornby reminds us that the impact of non-verbal signs in drama translation is strongly dependent on the spectator's familiarity with the culture in question. According to her, the system of signs belonging to the world of theatre is always a mixture of three types of signs, the iconic sign, which "can be taken as it stands and it is fully interpretable as long as the spectator can situate it in context" (Snell Hornby 2007, 108); the indexical sign, which "is interpretable as long as the spectator can understand the point of connection" (Snell Hornby 2007, 108); and the symbolic sign, "which is only understandable if the spectator is familiar with its meaning in the culture concerned" (Snell Hornby 2007, 108). The vagueness of reference to a specific setting is also reinforced by the radio commentary of Northern Ireland Poland in Arabic, as the stage directions show (*la telecronaca – in arabo – di una partita di calcio che scopriremo essere Irlanda del Nord- Polonia*).

Most importantly, in the Italian translation/adaptation the dramaturgical choice of the two directors/actors was to reduce Robert's character to an off-stage presence. This choice, especially visible in the encoding of the three characters' interaction, strongly changes the directness of discourse in the play and results in new dynamics of the dramatic action, as shown in the second passage. In the original play, the verbal exchange follows two lines of communication. The main exchange is that between Ian and Jimmy, and the secondary exchange is that between Ian and Robert, who comments on the football match and serves pints of beer to the others. Ian's and Robert's exchange has the function to downplay the rising violence of Ian's and Jimmy's exchange about what happened that day which changed their lives. The main and the secondary exchange also create two temporal levels: Ian and Jimmy are mainly focusing on past events, whereas Ian and Robert bring the conversation back to the present. Throughout the play, Robert thus has the double role of someone who is extraneous both to the wider historical context of the Troubles and to Jimmy and Ian's personal story. Therefore, the secondary exchange between Robert and Ian serves as an indication to recall Robert's situation as a foreigner in a foreign country and indirectly anticipates the final act of violence perpetrated by the Northern Ireland fans against Robert. In the Italian translation/adaptation, Robert's off-stage presence results in the elicitation of the secondary line of communication – there

are no references to the football match and most of Robert's lines referring to his own situation have been cut – with the result that Jimmy and Ian's exchanges acquire a symbolic value.

The symbolic value of Jimmy and Ian's confrontation is in line with the two directors/actors' declaration of intent, as they state in their preface to the play (Owen McCafferty 2014b):

Se è vero che la questione irlandese è non solo presente ma centrale in tutta la vicenda, è vero anche che in *QUIETLY* quelli che si incontrano in quel pub sono - in fondo - solo due uomini, due uomini che come tanti altri sono stati messi dalla storia e dal destino sulle opposte baricate di un conflitto...

Ma la storia, sia quella generale che quella privata, è irripetibile e allo stesso modo inevitabile: ogni generazione ricomincia da capo di nuovo l'esperienza del conflitto, del trauma, dell'elaborazione, come se ciò non fosse mai avvenuto prima. Condizione e destino dell'esistenza umana. Ecco perché, nelle semplici scelte di interpretazione e di messa in scena, abbiamo cercato di dare spazio al carattere "assoluto" dell'incontro fra i due...che, pur parlando del conflitto irlandese e delle sue specifiche questioni, possano rimandare a ogni altro conflitto che affligge e divide gli uomini e le donne del nostro dannato presente.³

The universalistic approach deriving from the joint effort of the translator and the directors/actors invites reflection on what the specific strategies adopted in drama translation are. In the case of *Quietly*, these strategies try to make literal translation acquire a more stimulating and thought-provoking impact on the target language and culture in the attempt to restore the signifying process of the original work through performance. *Quietly*, as an act of translation, becomes a fully understandable praxis only when referred to its framework of reception (Cronin 2003, 42-76), "an act of locating and crossing, simultaneously finding a place for communication, and opening up and moving across

³ Although the Troubles remain central, the two men featuring in *Quietly* are only men whom history and fate put on the opposite side of the fence...For them, history is both private and collective, it is unique and at the same time ineluctable: each generation must face afresh the conflict, the trauma and its personal re-elaboration, and this concerns the human condition and fate. This is the reason why in our interpretation and staging, we have decided to give a universal value to the two men's encounter which, through the Irish conflict, would reflect any other conflict tormenting and dividing many men and women of this damn present (*translation mine*).

new space" (Johnston 2013, 367). For Johnston, the greatest achievement of a drama translator is to "write forward", protecting the context of the original and, at the same time, projecting that context into the emotional landscape of the new audience, a sort of middle ground between "core experiences lost" (Johnston 2013, 371), and those newly recreated.

However, the 'core experiences' which get inevitably lost in the re-creative process at work in *Quietly* on the Italian stage are the dense web of intertextual connections the play establishes with the Northern Irish dramatic tradition of the 'Troubles'. Since the late 1960s, the relationship between theatre and the Northern Ireland conflict had to deal with a "complex series of expectations, sensitivities, entrenchments, imperatives and responses, questioning the very essence of both writing and performance" (Jordan 2010, 111). The connection between politics and drama has a long tradition in Ireland, dating back to the early productions of the Abbey theatre, when the stage became implicitly and explicitly the arena where the soul of the nation would find its communal expression. Similarly, the 'Troubles' and its many violent manifestations, expressing competing nationalisms and conflicting identities, exploited the public nature of drama to address issues of civic strife. In a sort of mutual mirroring, the politics of the Northern conflict often borrowed a vocabulary of performance and spectacle, whereas playwrights were exploring the performative possibilities of the conflict (McDonald 2001, 232-233). As many commentators have outlined, these possibilities resulted in a variety of different dramatic modes. According to Murray's tripartite template, the plays' structures ranged from the 'O'Casey model', 'to the 'Romeo and Juliet typos' to 'the Theatre of Hope' (Murray 1997, 188-199). Thus, the sectarian difference hiding class struggle, the tension arising from a love affair between a Catholic and a Protestant and humor as essential to the dramatisation of violence were all topics which gave rise to a prolific production of Northern Irish plays in the 1980s and the 1990s (Murray 1997). These include conventional domestic dramas such as Christina Reid's *Joyriders* (1986) and Anne Devlin's *Ourselves Alone* (1985); history plays as Friel's *Translations* (1980) and *Making History* (1988), Heaney's *The Cure at Troy* (1990) and Gary Mitchell's *Tearing the Loom* (1997); and the more experimental dramas such as Mary Jones's *A Night in November* (1995) and Owen McCafferty's *Mojo Mickybo* (1997).

Far from being exhaustive, this list of plays not only testifies to the huge variety of Northern Irish drama, but also to the collective tropes and dramatic devices which Northern playwrights have at their disposal. In

the case of *Quietly*, the sporting metaphor, which has often been employed to assert national identity, is a powerful one and strongly recalls its use in Mary Jones's *A Night in November*. In both plays, in fact, a football match represents the device which allows the characters' personal stories to be inscribed on the wider backdrop of Northern Irish history.

The profound implications that the football match has in the original play is what gets lost in Italian and further confirms the tendency towards a universalistic approach of the translation/adaptation, partly 'sanitised' of specific Irish contextual factors. This change in the spatio-temporal dimension of the play, the new 'time and place of the occupancy', the creative translation options and, most of all, the importance of target-audience relocation practices is especially clear in the paratextual elements surrounding the translation/adaptation.

A preliminary observation is that *Quietly* was first staged in Italy, at the Teatro Belli in Rome late in 2014 in a production for a theatre festival called "Trend" dedicated to the new British dramaturgy. In my opinion, 'British dramaturgy' is for the audience a misleading label, which somehow blurs the identity of Owen McCafferty as a Northern Irish playwright. *Quietly* was performed along with other plays by Duncan McMillan (*Lungs*), Penelope Skinner (*Eigengrau*), Vicky Jones (*The One*), Charlotte Josephine (*Bitch Boxer*), Philip Ridley (*Dark Vanilla Jungle* and his four monologues, *It, Wound, Killer, Now*). In turn, this 'new dramaturgical context' has consequences for its reception, as shown in some reviews that appeared in Italian newspapers and on-line magazines. Although references to the *Troubles* are made, the critics' prevailing focus was on the universal dimension of Jimmy's and Ian's painful confrontation.

Leaving aside the ludicrous distinction between the 'Christian Jimmy' and the 'Protestant Ian' featured in one of the on-line reviews, this is an example taken from *La Repubblica*, one of Italy's leading Italian newspapers (De Simone 2014):

Un match di corpi contundenti, di rancori affilati dall'attesa, di memorie scomode da sottosuolo, *Quietly* è uno strappo inatteso alla banalità del vivere, alla quotidianità anonima di due esistenze segnate da un dolore...E si avverte un sentimento della sconfitta perenne, come se dai conflitti non si potesse mai prescindere, quali fossero un'epidemia congenita all'uomo.⁴

⁴ *Quietly* is a clash of blunt objects, hard feelings sharpened by waiting and uncomfortable memories from the underground, it is an encounter of two sorrowful men who

Although an acclaimed and successful performance, the emphasis on the 'universal dimension' of McCafferty's play on the Italian stage hides nonetheless a danger, which, surprisingly enough, concerns both the presentation of the Troubles abroad and drama translation at the time of globalisation. Bauman reminds us that in a globalised world, localised existences are a sign of social deprivation and that localities are losing their meaning-generating and meaning-negotiating capacity (Bauman 1998, 3). Discussing contemporary Irish drama and globalisation, Lonergan tries to come to terms with this dispersal of meaning and notes that "the conflict of identities must now tackle (or exploit) the commodification and essentialization of identity within global society" (Lonergan 2010, 27). With particular reference to the Troubles, he sees that there is "a tendency to reject, ignore or transcend the postcolonial paradigm... and to present the Troubles within an historical context only" (Lonergan 2010, 27), because as other countries are becoming more like Ireland, Ireland is becoming more like other countries. Although I agree that this is what is actually happening, not only in Ireland, I have the impression that sometimes this straightforward one-to-one identity obfuscates difference, as partly happens in *Quietly*. This concealment is also lamented by those who sometimes see translating for the stage as a missed opportunity to create 'itineraries of encounters', the opening up of a dynamic space between the translation and the spectators, a space increasingly sacrificed on the altars of marketability (Espasa 2000, 49-62) and performativity. In Johnston's opinion, "good plays have the potential to suspend their spectators between two differentiated worlds, so that liminality is a constant promise in theatre performance. Translated plays additionally generate spaces-between, confluence of cultural stream and thoughts, confluence in which other time and place become real and visible again for the audience" (Johnston 2013, 377). He is, however, adamant that these itineraries of encounters rely on commonality more than universality, because universality makes us lose sight of the bilateral negotiations of cultures. Thus, in Owen McCafferty's *Quietly* the translation/adaption process, which might

unexpectedly break away from the banality and ordinariness of life... There is a feeling of ongoing defeat, which forever recalls the presence of conflicts, as if they were an inbred human plague (translation mine).

have brought more effectively on the Italian stage the subversive potential for 'truth and reconciliation' (Gardner 2013) or, as some would have it, for 'truth and recrimination' (Hennessy 2014) is diluted into a more domesticated 'universality of conflict'. A conflict too dangerously similar to any other conflict around the world.

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