New Practice–Based Methodologies for Naturalistic Contemporary Drama Translation

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This portfolio of work is submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, May 2016
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Acknowledgments

I wish to express my sincere gratitude to the School of Arts and Media, University of Salford for having funded this PhD study during my lectureship. A very big thank you to Ignition Stages’ magnificent co-producer Joanne Walker, without whom I could not have directed and toured Prah. I am also indebted to Prah’s set designer Ian Scullion and dramaturg Enikő Leányvári whose artistic talent and integrity greatly contributed to the successful authentic recreation of Prah’s Hungarian world. I would like also to thank György Spiró and János Hày for having trusted me with translating their plays. I am greatly indebted to my supervisor Professor Alan Williams, who has been an inspiration and a great teacher to me and whose vast knowledge of Hungarian language and culture will never cease to amaze me. I also would like to thank my Hungarian poetry co-translator and co-supervisor Dr. Judy Kendall whose wisdom and encouragement was much appreciated. I also would like to thank my cast members, Zach Lee, Anne-Marie Draycott, Tim Lambert, Maggie Fox, Malcolm Raeburn and my director colleague Frances Piper who has been a stage-directing mentor to me. I am also very grateful to Dr. Ursula Hurley and Dr. Helen Pleasance for their friendship and support. Many thanks to my children Leo and Melody who may have had to learn self-reliance prematurely during my intensive periods of research, and to my husband Laurence Davey for putting up with mood swings. Finally, I dedicate this work to my mother Marianna Naray and to my late father Dr. Peter Naray. Thank you for giving me “the other’s” languages and cultures.

I hereby declare that section 3.1 of this thesis has been published by The Mercurian Vol 4 under the title True to the Life in the Text.
Abstract

This practice as research inter-disciplinary PhD’s purpose is to create new knowledge in the area of contemporary and naturalistic drama translation. It straddles the fields of Drama, Acting and Translation Studies but inevitably encompasses the fields of social semiotics and linguistics. The methodology used is of a hybrid nature as it consists of a portfolio of work. The work is divided into two major sections. The first comprises the translation of three Hungarian Contemporary plays into English by the author, followed by the thesis and self-reflection. The thesis will claim that it is by the precise use of the proposed mixed methodology and practical approach to drama translation that new knowledge will be contributed to the field of contemporary European naturalistic drama translation. The use of this methodology is novel in the sense that it claims that the act of translating itself is creating new knowledge. This builds on Nelson’s practice as research model in which the act of translation is the practice. New knowledge will also be generated by the practice, which is the mise-en-scène of two translated plays as well as the analysis of the Hungarian stage source productions.

The use of this hybrid methodology results in the creation of new concepts in the field of foreignising drama translation. The thesis part of the portfolio claims that these new concepts will also serve as tools that will aid the work of scholars and drama translators who chose foreignisation and resistance as their translation strategies. These methodologies will challenge prevailing views in Translation Studies of the primacy of the text in translation. It will challenge Susan Bassnett’s view that it is a superhuman task and not the translator’s role to decode sub-textual meaning in the dialogue. The aim of this methodology is to offer new working concepts for the foreignising contemporary drama translator. This thesis and reflective work will claim and defend the view that in order to achieve a foreignised (Venuti 1998, 2008, 2010) drama translation strategy that adheres to the much debated performability criteria, the drama translator needs to become a cultural anthropologist and perform an excavation of the source culture by using the source production as a tool for translation, especially in translating realia. It will also argue that the drama translator needs to expand and go beyond the traditional translation tools and borrow the naturalistic tools of the actor in order to help with translation challenges. The performance case studies will focus on Hungarian contemporary drama but although this new knowledge contribution is transferable to all contemporary naturalistic drama translation, it will be of a particular benefit to the field of contemporary Eastern European drama translation.