Conor Mcpherson's The Weir *into Italian as Intertextual Translation*

by Monica Randaccio*

This paper will compare Conor McPherson's *The Weir* with its two Italian translations to investigate the linguistic and wider cultural implications of such a transfer. First performed at the Royal Court Theatre Upstairs in London in1997, *The Weir* was translated for the first time in 1999 by Anna Parnanzini and Maggie Rose and, some years later, by the acclaimed Italian director and playwright, Fausto Paravidino in 2005. I would argue that the process of translation activates powerful intertextual references because it is in the context of reception that a translated play becomes most productive, as many scholars have claimed. In Translation Studies attention has also been paid to intertextuality and some recent publications have proven particularly fruitful for the investigation of intertextuality in drama translation. Drawing on Farzaneh Farahzad's view of intertextuality in translation, my analysis will focus on McPherson's *The Wier* in relation to all other similar plays in the Irish dramatic tradition, and on the relation of the translated text *La Chiusa* with the Italian dramatic tradition. Finally, I will briefly show the major translational changes which occurred in *La Chiusa* by Anna Parnazini and Maggie Rose and in the later version by Fausto Paravidino.

Keywords: translation studies, Conor McPherson, intertextuality.

Introduction

This paper will compare Conor McPherson's *The Weir* with its two Italian translations to investigate the linguistic and wider cultural implications of such a transfer. First performed at the Royal Court Theatre Upstairs in London in1997, *The Weir* was welcomed as the work of another talented Irish playwright, which continued the

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*In*Verbis, n. 2, 2021, pp. 123-142

ISSN 2279-8978

tradition of native Irish narrative and reinforced the stereotype of the Irish genetic predisposition for storytelling. In Italy, McPherson's play was translated for the first time by Anna Parnanzini and Maggie Rose in 1999 as *La chiusa* and it was staged in the same year by director Nanni Bruschetta for the "Festival of Benevento Città Spettacolo." Some years later, in 2005, a new version of *The Weir* by the acclaimed Italian director and playwright, Fausto Paravidino, was brought to the Italian stage by the director Valerio Binasco for the Teatro Stabile di Genova and published in 2007 in *Tre storie da pub*, together with the translation of Eugene O'Brien's *Eden* and Farquhar's *Ash to Ash*. This production was awarded the UBU prize, a prestigious acknowledgement as best foreign play in 2006. To give a wider overview of the comparison between the English version and its Italian translations, I have focussed my attention on the process by which a product reaches its audience in the form of a translated theatre text. Since the earliest studies in both Translation Studies and Theatre Studies, drama translation as process gained momentum: in the early 1980s, Reba Gostand underlined how "drama, as an art form, is a constant process of translation" (1984: 1) and Franz H. Link claimed that there is a complex interdependence and a necessity of cooperation between playwright, translator, dramatic advisor, stage manager and scholar (Link 1984: 24). From a semiotic perspective of drama, Keir Elam emphasised the polysemic nature of the theatrical sign which can generate "not one but *n* second-order meanings" (Elam 1980: 11) in the performance process, while Alessandro Serpieri noted how theatre is not a 'story 'told' from one perspective but rather a dynamic progression of speech acts (Serpieri *et al*. 1981: 165). At the turn of last century, David Johnston, in underlying the creativity of writers/translators who work with a production in mind, claimed that drama translators are engaged in intra- and inter-lingual processes, processes that move within and across the various languages and together constitute the grammar of performance (Johnston 2004: 28). Cristina Marinetti, Manuela Perteghella and Roger Bains, in theorising the relationship between written text and performance, focussed on translation as "an empirical process," (Marinetti, Perteghella and Bains 2011: 2) which either shows the actual practice of translating and staging or gives space to the performative dimension of dramatic language.

Most importantly, I would argue that process of translation activates powerful intertextual references because it is in the context of reception that a translated play becomes most productive, as many scholars

have claimed (Fischer-Lichte 1990; Brisset 1996; Aaltonen 2000). Intertextuality, which, in very general terms, makes a text "a mosaic of citations, […] an absorption and transformation of other texts," (Kristeva 1969:146) is not a new concept and has played a crucial role in fields such as discourse analysis and literary studies. Attention has also been paid to intertextuality in Translation Studies, but some recent publications have proven particularly fruitful for the investigation of intertextuality in drama translation. Panagiotis Sakellariou shows that the application of the "protean notion of intertextuality" (Sakellariou 2015: 36) involves "a significant reconceptualization of both the practice of translation and the role of translator." (ivi, p. 35) Farzaneh Farahzad instead uses intertextuality to explain the nature of the relationship between the source text and the target text, the prototext and the metatext prototext and the metatext. He argues that the two texts stand in an intertextual relationship to one another because the metatext repeats the prototext in terms of content and form without being limited to it. He also singles out two levels of intertextuality in translation. The first is the intralingual (local) level, at which the prototext relates to all texts appearing before it in its own language in terms of content and form. The second is interlingual (global), at which the metatext relates to the prototext and to its all other possible metatexts appearing either in the same language or any other language (Farahzad 2009: 125-131).

In this article I shall adopt Farahzad's view of intertextuality which operates at various levels. My analysis will initially focus on McPherson's *The Wier* in relation to all other similar plays in the source language and culture and I will argue that, although *The Weir* is firmly anchored in the Irish dramatic tradition, it also triggers a process of revision of that tradition. I will then show how the translated text, *La chiusa*, relates to the target cultural and theatrical system and adapts to contents and genres crucial to the Italian stage and society, as shown in the paratextual material of the performance. Finally, I will briefly show how the process of translation goes from the original published play, to the first Italian translation and to another version, written by Fausto Paravidino, one of the leading dramatists and director of contemporary Italian theatre.[1]

[1] I am grateful to the Teatro Stabile di Genova for providing the final script of the *Weir*, momentarily unavailable in its published version, which has allowed me to move from a macrolevel to a microlevel of analysis to examine in detail the major translational changes.

The Wier *as source text and its intertextual relation with the Irish dramatic tradition*

The Weir, which premiered at the Bush Theatre in London on 19 February1997, along with *St. Nicholas* which soon followed (4 July 1997, Royal Theatre Upstairs), made McPherson an internationally known and acclaimed playwright. In particular, *The Weir* was widely translated and performed and its production at the Royal Court won the Olivier Award for Best Play. McPherson, as many Irish playwrights in the 1990s, became famous *via* the London stage: the praise lavished on his *The Weir* was mainly due to the "quality and authenticity of the production" (Wallace 2006: 40) and its Chekhovian sense of "pure theatrical poetry" that aligned the play alongside the 'giants' of contemporary Irish drama, like Brian Friel and Thomas Murphy, whose Chekhovian reworkings were well known both in Ireland and in The United Kingdom. Claire Wallace claims that McPherson's drama certainly appealed to the more conservative critical establishment in Ireland and the United Kingdom as it is represented both "what an Irish playwright should be" and a "welcome antidote to *In-Yer-Face Theatre*," (Wallace 2006: 40) a return to a more comfortable experience of language based drama rather than a theatre of sensation, which is "tap[ed] into more primitive feelings, […], mentioning the forbidden, creating discomfort." (Sierz 2001: 4)

Wallace's observations, however, may be inscribed in the wider context of the 1990s that marked a period of significant change for Irish drama, as acknowledged by many Irish drama scholars who analysed this change from various perspectives (Roche 1994; Murray 1997; Grene 1999; Jordan 2000; Richards 2004; Lonergan 2007; Pilkington 2010). From the early 1990s many new Irish plays started to gain critical attention and the emergence of a new generation of playwrights, both in the Republican and in Northern Ireland, was welcomed. *The Weir* therefore is aligned with the works of Martin McDonagh, Marina Carr, Donal O'Kelly, Enda Walsh, Eugene O'Brien, Marie Jones, and Owen McCafferty to mention only a few.

Most of these works were written and staged during the Celtic Tiger era, the period of rapid growth of the Irish economy that drove Irish society into a serious questioning of the social, economic and political order. Among the major concerns of Irish society that had an impact on Irish drama, there was especially the phenomenon of globalisation and the Lyotardian massive delegitimation of the

mastercodes, the 'dismantling of Gran Narratives […] in favour of little narratives (*les petits récits*)." (Kearney 1997: 63) Globalisation changed Ireland radically in little more than a decade and one of its most striking effects was undoubtedly that Irish drama started to be viewed as "a commodity of international currency." (Grene 1999: 262) However, this new situation was greeted with mixed feelings: on the one hand, there was a fruitful and wide circulation of plays between Dublin, London and Edinburgh and, through translation, a rapid flow of plays from United Kingdom and Ireland throughout Europe, which did not suggest unidirectional movement of influence but a complex network of beneficial cultural and theatrical interrelations (Wallace 2006: 18). Emblematic are the examples of McDonagh's *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* (1996), an Irish play, first staged by the Druid Theatre in Galway, which was produced in London by a London-Irish dramatist; Marina Carr's plays, *The Mai* (1995), *Portia Coughlan* (1996) and *By the Bog of Cats* (1998), which were presented respectively in the Czech Republic, in the United States (2001) and in the Netherlands (2002) (Rapetti 2014: 250); and Enda Walsh's work, which was highly praised in Germany. On the other hand, scholars of Irish drama started to reflect on the potential of signification of many recent Irish plays in order to establish whether they were mere simulacra, a replica of an imagined Ireland in a globalised world. One of the first, and harshest, voices against the damage that globalisation caused to Irish theatre was that of Vic Merriman, who firmly condemned Carr's and McDonagh's plays and their staging of "Ireland as a benighted dystopia." (1999: 312) Pilkington suggests that in contemporary Irish theatre "there is a dominant trend that involves an emptying out of all ethical attachments to a country and a history […] and a full-scale, no-holds-barred embrace of compliance and adaptability." (Pilkington 2010: 73) Lonergan starts from the assumption that globalisation is a *de facto* situation in Irish drama in the 1990s. Although he concedes that globalisation has tended to ignore and homogenize those aspects of a society that cannot be easily understood internationally, he also acknowledges that globalisation has created new opportunities for playwrights and theatre companies, pushing writers and audiences to deal with the social changes brought about by contemporaneity (asylum seeking, tourism, multiculturalism and interculturalism and universal human rights (Lonergan 2010: 4). Without delving into the complexities of this debate, I would argue, in line with Christopher Murray, that most Irish playwrights in the 1990s oscillate, sometimes uneasily, between tradition and innovation

(Murray 1997: 11). The 'little narratives' of their plays represent their personal response to the collapse of the grand narratives of 'history', 'religion' 'nation', 'progress', 'community', 'exile' and 'memory', at a time when public institutions, such as 'family', 'home', 'church', and notions of individual, social and national 'identities' are put under severe scrutiny. Thus, Marina Carr, like Marie Jones and Enda Walsh have portrayed "the fractured state of the families or the concept of home" (Middeke and Schnierer 2010: xii) in which families [are] broken by violence, cruelty and the inability to communicate," (ivi, p. xi) McDonagh harshly parodied and deconstructed de Valera's vision of Ireland 'as a land whose countryside would be bright with cosy homesteads, whose fields and villages would be joyous with the sounds of industry […] and the laughter of happy maidens, whose firesides would be forums for the wisdom of serene old age'... In the set of *The Beauty Queen of Leenane,* pre-modern and post-modern Ireland are brought on stage side by side. The 1950s is laid over the 1990s like two "superimposed pictures:" (O'Toole 1999: xi) the mores of rural Ireland with its tyrannical mothers and returned Yanks co-exist with the contemporary chaos of Australian soap operas and sexual liberation. Although the set is redolent with traditional pieties – Our Lady, the Sacred Heart, John and Bobby Kennedy – the focus of the family life is the television hosting 'a cast of characters whose motives and actions are conditioned by a culture different from the Irish'. McDonagh's west of Ireland, located at the margins of a globalised culture, is even more remote and lonely than Synge's. The oscillation between tradition and innovation is also present in the "remapping of the boundaries of gender regulation and gender stereotypes," (Middeke and Schnierer 2010: xii)in the reflection on the marginalization of women that gives rise to a revision of views on wifehood, motherhood and pregnancy, as shown in the plays by Carr, Emma Donoghue and Marie Jones, and in issues concerning "the construction of masculinities and the inability to find and expression of men's identity in a fatherless society," (ivi) as Owen McCafferty and Owen McPherson aptly show. The political crisis in Northern Ireland, The *Troubles*, was a prevalent subject in contemporary Irish drama since the peace process in the mid-1990s, and was treated extensively from various perspectives but it seems to remain an unresolved issue. (ivi). Moreover, the traditional sectarian violence of Belfast invites comparison with a more globalised violence that expands beyond the borders of Northern Ireland, as testified, for example, by McCafferty's recent plays.

In this constant oscillation between tradition and innovation, McPherson's *The Weir* is not an exception. The play belongs to McPherson's early production and on the surface seems a quite conventional naturalistic play, but a deeper reading reveals the powerful intricacy of its intertextual relations with some of the most established themes and tropes of the Irish dramatic tradition. *The Weir* has been variously defined as a "clever confection of different tradition of drama" (Dromgoole 2002: 188-189) or "a species of semiotic shorthand for a traditional Irish drama;" (Wallace 2006: 75) and yet its postmodern 'little narrative' questions authenticity and brings to the fore deconstructed visions of traditional Irish drama[2]. *The Weir* is set in a pub of a rural part of Western Ireland and the characters, the barman Brendan, the three locals, Jack, Jim and Finbar, and a newcomer to the village, Valerie, share a conversation typical of pub chit-chat for most of the play. The conversation is low key, at times formulaic, until each character starts to tell his story, typical of McPherson's favourite mode of expression, the monologue. The businessman Finbar prompts the recounting of their supernatural stories. Jack, an ageing mechanic, begins with a traditional Irish story of fairies; Finbar continues with a description of his ghostly experience with a Ouija board; Jim tells how he met the ghost of a man, allegedly a paedophile, for whom he had dug a grave some years before; and Valerie concludes with the story of her dead young daughter with whom she thought she had spoken on the phone. To everybody's final astonishment, Jack narrates how he lost his chance to get married and his confession gives a sentimental tone to the play's conclusion. *The Weir* thus raises a strong current of empathy, gives appropriate moral responses and, through storytelling, the sense of communion acquires, for some, almost religious overtones (Wood 2003: 49). Scott T. Cummings believes that 'McPherson has stories, therefore he is' and that personal narrative, public confessions and private sins not only provide an entertaining evening but become an investigation into the nature and function of the story itself (Cummings 2002: 303). More recently, Eamonn Jordan reminds us that all personal stories, like cultures and societies, have a conscious and unconscious, and it difficult to trace the influence of one over the other. In contemporary Irish drama he sees that

[2] For insightful analyses on the relationship between postmodern grand and little narratives and 'a penchant for small-scale stories' in McPherson and contemporary Irish drama, see Wallace (2006: 39-84); Grene (2002: 75-80).

history, myth and religion are both beneficiaries and exploiters of this instinct to narrate. Public narratives therefore can have a double function: they either "inspire, signal freedom and possibility, and can configure change and encourage ambition," or "be relayed to limit, repress, manipulate, trick and ensure acquiescence with the tradition, authority and order." (Jordan 2019: 20) Far from being exhaustive on McPherson's narratives, I will conclude this section by describing how storytelling and the performative space of storytelling, the pub, are dealt with in *The Weir*, especially when considered in their intertextual relations with the 'grand narratives' of Irish drama. The first plays that invite comparison with *The Weir*'s storytelling are Brian Friel's *Faith Healer* (1979) and Tom Murphy's *Bailegangaire* (1985). In *Faith Healer* the three monologues of the artist-healer, Francis Hardy, his wife Grace and his stage manager tell a part of the story of Frank's family and artistic life. Although flawed with gaps and uncertain truths, their storytelling symbolically ends with Frank's death by the hands of those whom he had not been able to cure. Paradoxically, the faith healer comes to terms with 'his awesome gift' at the time of his death: "For the first time I had simple and genuine sense of homecoming" (Friel 1996: 376) and the wider implications of this homecoming is the reconciliation of the artistic, individual and communal Irish identity in 1980s. The same reconciliation is found in Mommo's storytelling in *Bailegangaire*. The senile, bed-ridden Mommo will eventually be able to articulate the story of how the town of Bochtán, "came by its new appellation the place without laughter." (Murphy 1988: 43) With the help of her two granddaughters, the narrative of the past and the present of Ireland reunite. In *The Weir*, Jack's, Jim's, Finbar's and Valerie's storytelling of supernatural events foresee for a moment 'the possibility to configure a change' to their individual and communal *status quo* in an Ireland swept by globalisation: after all, "*The Weir* can be seen as part of a tradition of Irish plays which explore threshold moments of fundamental cultural and political shift at key historical junctures" (Mathews 2012: 152) and it is an astute analysis of "that transition in exploration of a society caught between impulses of heroic isolation and willing submission to the forces of globalization." (ivi, p. 153) Although it must be conceded that their storytelling creates a sense of empathy and communion, nonetheless none of the lead characters seem to experience a real 'homecoming', a true coming to terms with themselves and with the uneasiness of contemporary Ireland.

The small rural pub, which has often been the backdrop of storytelling, has also undergone a change (Trench 2012: 165-183) and lost its place as the site of Christy Mahon's possible 'heroic deed' in *The Playboy of the Western World* (1907) and of future hope in Tom Murphy's *Conversation on a Homecoming* (1986). The pub in *The Weir* has instead the function of 'a third space' that, on the one hand, foregrounds a particular form of meaningful social relations in a divisive contemporary society, but, on the other, more importantly, shows how the world their clients inhabit is a 'world elsewhere' (Grene 1999: 262).

The Weir *as target text and its intertextual relations with the Italian theatre in 2000s*

As mentioned in the Introduction, I shall now analyse how the translation and the staging of *The Weir* function at what Farahzad has termed the interlingual (global) level, i.e., when the prototext relates to all other texts in another language and, therefore, creates new intertextual references. To do this, I will refer to Italian culture and theatre from the late 1990s/early 2000s to the present day, to show how *La Chiusa* (2005) establishes new forms of intertextuality crucial to the Italian stage, as emerges in the paratextual material of the play. As it would be impossible to testify to the major changes that Italian theatre underwent at the end of the twentieth century, I will only briefly refer to some favourable conditions within Italian theatre that constitute the backdrop of *La Chiusa* and which allows us to see the new intertextual relations the play created with the Italian theatrical scene. The start of the new century marked the end in the Italian theatre of the model of *regia critica*, critical direction model, which defined a typically Italian way of staging. The *registi critici,* such as Giorgio Strehler (1921-1997), Luca Ronconi (1933-2015) and Massimo Castri (1943-2013), were not only the final guarantors of the staging, but they also "took on the role of dramaturg (they applied themselves to the dramatic application of texts), of pedagogue (for the actors) and artistic manager (they directed the most important national theatres, the programmes of which they shaped with their choices)." (Canziani 2019) In fact, they also became a sort of co-authors, along with the playwrights, of the works being produced. Sometimes "they rose above the writer in visibility." (ivi) The emergence of a new generation of directors, such as Carlo Martone, Antonio Latella and Valerio Binasco made

the *regia critica* less pervasive due to parallel experiences in the fields of cinema and opera. Other directors instead have preferred a different *modus operandi* and concentrate on the creation of a very individual and original dramaturgy. Pippo Delbono**,** who has often dealt with the issue of his own social marginality, has recently brought to the stage his own depressive illness as his artistic driving force in *La gioia* (*Joy*, 2018), a piece that achieved a strong emotional connection with audiences. Emma Dante instead shows her strength in the improvisational work with selected performer ensembles. *Bestie di scena* (*Stage Beasts*, 2017) and her recent *Eracle* (2018) are enhanced by the Mediterranean climate, reflecting her ability to read her own land of origin, Sicily, especially Palermo. The rise of the monodrama, which started in the 1990s, has emerged as a response to the increasingly less important place that theatre occupied in the Italian system of culture and entertainment. This new type of theatre is a form can be considered as a form of social critique (*teatro civile*) and Marco Paolini, Marco Baliani, Laura Curino and Ascanio Celestini are today the critical cantors of contemporary Italy and their stories are often told in the many dialects of Italian. Finally, prizes like UBU, HYSTRIO, and ANCT, awarded to new Italian and foreign dramaturgy, have been a means of finding one's way in the Italian theatre (Canziani 2019).

Certainly not a work for the traditional *regia critica*, *The Weir* reveals strong intertextual relations with the Italian theatre of today. In fact, it belongs to a very individual and original dramaturgy, which is rooted *mutatis mutandis* in the strong emotional connection with its audience (Pippo Delbono), reflects the ability to be part of and belong to its place of origin (Emma Dante) and, at the same time, to make a critique to the world it portrays through the privileged use of monologue (Marco Paolini and Ascanio Celestini). Moreover, the UBU prize awarded in 2006 proved how McPherson's play has gained a leading position as one of the most acclaimed works on the Italian stage and has helped to promote contemporary Irish playwrights in translation (Randaccio 2017: 186). What most reviewers of the play have underlined is the importance of telling stories, "a contemporary *winter's tale*" in which the word allows the characters a 'resurrection' (Scarpellini 2006). Each story gives balance to the text and creates a fascinating performance (Poli 2006), but the audience nonetheless "remains metaphorically closed in that pub," caught between contemporary discontent, loneliness and spooky folklore, a folklore which is defined, quite incorrectly, as belonging to the "anglo-

saxon tradition." (Palazzi 2006) Quite interestingly, it has also been noted that Binasco's staging and Paravidino's translation make contemporary Irish drama suitable to move from Dublin to the Italian stage, not only to Broadway, while the Chekhovian's echoes of the play recall Cesare Pavese's atmospheres and settings in *Lavorare Stanca* (Zanovello 2006a). The intertextual relations of the *Weir* with a specific Italian reality are highlighted in Paravidino's words. He states that the 'pub' has always hoisted aspirations, daydreams and different lives and evoked symbolic presences, as in Binasco's film *Texas*, where a group of young people sit at a typical bar of the Ligurian and Piedmontese hinterland, dreaming of America as a myth of freedom (Zanovello 2006b).

From The Weir *to* La Chiusa *(1999) to* La Chiusa *(2007): from 'page to page to stage'*

The process of translation that brings McPherson's *The Weir* to Parnanzini and Rose's fist translation and then to Paravidino's later version encompasses a series of translational strategies which somehow imply a domestication of the text. It has been noted that issues of domestication and foreignization can sometimes create confusion in the analysis of playtexts and have led to the use of a non-specific terminology, sometimes chaotically defining a play as a 'version', an 'adaptation' or a 'rewriting' (Che Suh 2002: 54). It is important, however, to show how the process of translation can use either acculturation or naturalisation to deal with what can be perceived as an obstacle in translation. Aaltonen defines 'acculturation' as "the process which is employed to tone down the Foreign by appropriating the unfamiliar 'reality'… and blurring the borderline between the familiar and the unfamiliar." (Aaltonen 2000: 55) She then clarifies: "In rewriting the source text, the *vraisemblance* is established on the level of the audience's competence in the general cultural conventions of the language, manners, moral standards, rituals, tastes, ideologies, sense of humour, superstitions, religious beliefs, etc., and the specific dramatic and performance conventions of theatre and drama." (ivi) As I have argued elsewhere for McDonagh's *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* (Randaccio 2015: 110), *The Weir*, as many plays of Irish theatre translated into Italian, falls into the new category that Debora Biancheri terms "accommodation" (Biancheri 2013) in order to render more flexible what is usually referred to as "acculturation" in the field of drama translation. The

translated plays thus create an 'interstitial space' which re-inscribes the role of the translator, who sometimes shares multiple cultural affiliations, without participating in any of them (Simon 1996: 162). Biancheri thus claims that "measuring the translation strategy against the target's assumed knowledge and expectations *does not necessarily entail the assimilation of the foreign to domestic intelligibilities* (Biancheri 2013: 8 emphasis mine). Drawing on these observations, I would argue that, at textual level, Parnanzini and Rose adopted in *The Weir* a translation strategy that accommodates McPherson's play to the Italian target system, partly assimilating the foreign to the domestic, but still leaving an 'interstitial space' that is neither Irish, nor Italian. At a performative level, Paravidino's strategy instead seems to be in line with the broader empirical process of translation envisaged by the so-called 'performative turn' in drama translation. Importance is therefore given to 'performativity', the theatrical potential of a play, because "translation *as* performance and *in* performance […] implies a dynamic process of (re)signification integrated in the overall event in its various phases of production […] which can hardly be assimilated to a more traditional text-based concept of theatre with its hierarchical systems of roles." (Bigliazzi, Kofler and Ambrosi 2013: 1-2)

Among the major adaptive interventions in Paranzini's and Rose's translation, I have decided to focus on some culture-bound terms or realia, which are intimately close to "the universe of reference of the original culture" (Lefevere 1992: 122) and the rendering of the typical discoursive marker 'like' used in Irish-English. Moreover, a comparison of the opening of Paravidino's translation illustrates how the text moves from 'page to stage' and how it adapts to adhere to the conventions of theatre and to the audience's expectations. In Paranzini's and Rose's translation some culture-bound terms have remained unaltered like 'Guinness," "Harp" with one interesting exception. When Jack says that he has just come back from a walk and that there was wind until he came "around the Knock" where there "was a bit of shelter then" (McPherson 1998: 4) the mention of 'Knock' is not fortuitous. In fact, the Marian Shrine of Knock is a well-known place of Catholic pilgrimage in County Mayo in the west of Ireland, where the Virgin Mary is said to have appeared in August 1879. Since then, pilgrims have come to Knock in search of healing, reconciliation and peace. This place is therefore immediately recognizable to an Irish and British audience and anticipates the supernatural narratives of the protagonists' stories. In Italian 'Knock'

has been translated with "Montorio," an equivalent of Knock as it refers to the Santuario di Nostra Signora di Lourdes – the Sanctuary of Our Lady of Lourdes – near Verona, a place of pilgrimage where Our Lady of Lourdes is said to have appeared and a miracle to have taken place. The reference in Italian, however, can be missed as 'Montorio' is not widely known by an Italian audience. There are two other important geographical and spatial references that have lost their cultural connotations in Paranzini's and Rose's translation. When Jim tells Brendan and Jack that he saw Finbar and Valerie together, thus implying that Finbar might have a love affair with her, he specifies that "they were in Finbar's car going up the Head." (ivi, p. 9) The 'Head' is allegedly Mullighmore Head, a holiday destination with an enchanting beach in County Sligo, and, together with 'Knock' and 'Carrick' mentioned later in the play, the reference helps to locate the area around which the story's events take or have taken place. McPherson deliberately leaves a certain vagueness about the setting and simply states that the play is set in a rural part of Ireland, which is nonetheless familiar for an Irish and British audience. The pub of *The Weir* is in fact somewhere in "Northwest Leitrim or Sligo," as the initial stage directions make clear. In Italian 'Head' has been translated with the hyperonym "la strada del mare" [the road to the sea], which does not retain any geographical reference. There is, however, another layer of meaning that gets lost for the Italian audience: the 'geography of the story', including the three Counties of Leitrim, Mayo and Sligo, reveals that the events unfold in one of the provinces of Ireland, Connacht, in the West of Ireland, one of those areas that may represent a symbol of resistance against cultural imperialism. Similarly, another geographical reference that has a strong historical connotative meaning gets lost for an Italian audience. When Finbar boasts to Jack, Jim and Brendan that he went to seek his fortune, he sarcastically says that "they all stayed out here on the bog." (ivi, p. 13) In Italian 'bog' has been translated with a deictic marker 'here' ["loro sono rimasti qui/ they have remained here"] and therefore loses the resonance that the 'bog' has in the Irish collective imaginary. At the time of the Great Famine (1845-1849), the bog, in fact, was one of Ireland's most characteristic geographical features covering1/6th of the island surface, and it was the only source available of fuel. The bog has come to represent rural backwardness and poverty and, especially in Irish theatre, it has been seen, in Marina Carr's words, as 'a sunken and frozen place, stalked by ghosts, grotesques and vengeful characters steeped in myth'.

However, the opposition between those like Finbar, who 'went the town to seek their fortune', and those 'who stayed out here in the bog/have remained here', reveals the powerful trope of the urban/rural divide, which has also meaning for an Italian audience.

The rendering of Irish-English in many Irish plays and its implications represent a challenge for the Italian translator and the discoursive marker 'like' is a case in point. 'Like' has been described as a mere, redundant filler, a meaningless interjection and has often been dismissed as a non-standard, dialectal, and even vulgar (Schweinberger 2012: 182). In *The Weir* McPherson makes an extensive use of 'like' but in Italian it has been translated very differently according to its function in the play. For example, at the beginning of the play when Jack cannot find his usual beer, he says "I'm having a bottle […] I'm not happy about it, now mind, right? But, like" (McPherson 1998: 4) has been translated as "Me la sto prendendo una bottiglia […] Ma non faccio i salti di gioia, ricordatelo. Ecco" [I am getting a bottle, but I wouldn't jump for joy. Mind you. That's it]. In this case, the clause-external syntactically unbound 'like' maintains in Italian its functions as a floor-holding device (ivi, p. 184). Later in the play, when Brendan, Jim and Finbar tell Valerie the story of the weir and how the area is 'steeped in old folklore', Brendan mentions the local abbey and says that when it was built: "Oh, back in oh, fifteen something, there was a synod of bishops all came and met there for… like… eh." (ivi, p. 19) The function of like is in this example is very different from the previous one: although it maintains a clause-external syntactically structure, it signals here a planning difficulty that is well rendered in Italian: "Mah… intorno al Cinquecento, o giù di lì, ci tenevano un sinodo con tutti i vescovi che si riunivano là per… sì, per…" [Oh… back in fifteen something, there was a synod of all the bishops who came to meet there for…yes, for…"].

Comparison of the initial exchange between Brendan and Jack in McPherson's original and in Paravidino's translation shows instead how the translational process fully 'accommodates' to the Italian stage and to the context of reception:

BRENDAN. Jack. JACK. Brendan (*Lifting glass*). What's with the Guinness? BRENDAN (*putting peat in the stove*). I don't know. It's the power in the tap. It's a new barrel and everything. JACK. Is the Harp one okay? BRENDAN. Yeah. JACK. Would not switch them around and let a man have a pint of stout, no?	BRENDAN. Jack. JACK. Brendan. *(alzando il bicchiere)* Cosa succede qua? BRENDAN *(Trafficando col termosifone)* Non lo so. Si è rotta la pressione della spina. JACK. E <u>questa</u> qui va? BRENDAN. Sì. JACK. E perché non le scambi?
BRENDAN. What about the Harp drinkers? JACK (*derision*) 'The Harp drinkers'.	BRENDAN. E <u>quelli</u> che bevono <u>quella</u>, cosa bevono? JACK. Ma <u>questa</u> chi la beve, nessuno.
BRENDAN. Your man's coming in to do it in the morning. Have a bottle. JACK. I'm having a bottle. (*Pause*). I'm not happy with it, now mind, right? But, like. BRENDAN. Go on out of that. JACK (*drinks*). What the hell. Good for the worms.	BRENDAN. Domani la aggiustano. JACK. '<u>Quelli</u> che bevono <u>quella</u>'…Ma la beve davvero qualcuno <u>questa</u> qui? BRENDAN. Prendila in bottiglia JACK. L'ho presa in bottiglia. *Pausa.* Ci mettono dell'acido nella birra in bottiglia, lo sai?
BRENDAN. I'd say you have a right couple of worms, alright. *They laugh*. *Pause*.	*Ridono.* BRENDAN. Ma smettila, acido! JACK. Acido e acqua… Mi farà bene ai vermi... *(beve)* BRENDAN. Qualcuno da qualche parte ce l'hai. *Ridono.* *Pausa.*

What is particularly interesting in this exchange is the complete omission of culture-bound terms or realia ('Harp', 'Harp drinkers'); the addition of a funny gag '(Ci mettono dell'acido nella birra'/They put acid in the beer'), and especially the increase in the use of deictic markers that allows language to achieve an active and dialogic function.

Another feature that may be seen in Paravidino's translation is to make the narrative parts of the text more coherent and acceptable to an Italian live audience. This may be noted especially when Jack tells the frightening story of Maura Nealon:

JACK: She was a well-known woman in the area. A widow woman. She was a bit of a character. Bit of a practical joker and that, you know? And Maura would say that when she was young, she was, Bridie, always doing things on the other kids, hiding their clothes and all this, you know?...	JACK: Bridie. Era una donna molto conosciuta qui. Vedova. Era un bel personaggio. Le piaceva scherzare sempre, cose. E Maura diceva che quando era piccola, la madre, faceva sempre gli scherzi ai figli più grandi, gli nascondeva… i vestiti, cose così, no?...
And Maura used to say that one Saturday evening back in 1910 or 1911, the older one getting ready to go out for a dance or whatever was happening. And the mother, Bridie, came down the stairs and said, 'Did no-one get the door?'	E Maura diceva che un sabato sera tra il 1910 e il 1911, i più grandi si stavano preparando per andare ad un ballo o quello che era e sua madre, Bridie, dalle scale disse, "C'è qualcuno alla porta, non va nessuno ad aprire?"

In the first example, 'Bridie' is substituted with the Italian 'her mother' and makes the anaphoric reference more clear for the audience; the same result is achieved in the second example by a change in punctuation. All these changes show how Paravidino's translation is indissolubly bound to and depends on its performance to gain a favourable reception. In fact, the greatest advantage of 'a *performative* translation' is that it "allows [us] to place originals and translations, source and target texts, dramatic texts and performances on the same cline, where what counts is not the degree of distance from an ontological original but the effect that the reconfigured text (as performance) has on the receiving culture and its networks of transmission and reception." (Marinetti 2013: 311)

Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated how the process of translation that brings Conor McPherson's *The Weir* to the Italian audience's attention through the two Italian translations shows the wider cultural implications of such a transfer. It also describes in detail how that process of translation activates powerful intertextual references because it is in the context of reception that a translated play becomes most productive. In recent times, several studies in the field of Translation Studies have proven useful for the investigation of intertextuality in drama translation and have brought about a reconceptualization of both the practice

of translation and the role of translator. I have adapted one of these studies to analyse McPherson's *The Weir* and its translations from a wider intertextual perspective. *The Weir* has thus been analysed in the source context and in relation to many other Irish plays of the 1990s that opened a new period in contemporary Irish drama. All these plays oscillated between tradition and innovation. They were, in fact, written during the Celtic Tiger era, the period of rapid growth of the Irish economy that brought about a serious questioning of the social, economic and political order. The Celtic Tiger and the phenomenon of globalisation, which contributed to the delegitimation of the Lyotardian Gran Narratives, had undoubtedly a great impact on the new generation of Irish playwrights. Here I describe how the translated text, *La chiusa*, can be seen in relation to contemporary Italian theatre and, through many reviews in the Italian press, how the translation, *La chiusa*, was received. Finally, some translation strategies in the two Italian translations have been highlighted to show how Parnanzini's and Rose's translation only partly assimilates the foreign to the domestic, whereas Paravidino's translation gives more importance to how the play is re-configured on stage.

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