Introduction

Drama begins with the entry of a character. The exposition of *King Lear* is a frantic piece of action, featuring the irrational fury of a senile monarch who, with a single blow, destroys his kingdom, his family, and his friends. Viewed from the contemporary perspective, Lear's fatal rage is a fact of the play the audience knows well enough before it begins. And yet, there is a new and genuine tension in the way we watch Lear's entry. For it is a gripping view, like the sight of a convict the moment before the loop will crush his throat, a fascination our civilization may enhance, not eradicate. Thus, Lear rushes towards his death from the moment he walks onto the stage. An yet, typically Shakespearean, his entry is a textual variant, a choice left to the editor, or, possibly, the translator. Accordingly, Lear may come onto the stage alone, as in the Folio, or may be preceded by "one bearing a coronet" (1.1.31), as in the Quarto version of the play.[1] The coronet is an important piece of property: if he brings it now, it will only increase

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[1] All quotations from *King Lear* are based on the Arden Shakespeare edition by R. A. Foakes (1997), unless indicated otherwise. Fragments originating exclusively in the Folio or Quarto version of the play are marked by the letters "F" and "Q" in the upper script.

the pressure on Cordelia, if he brings it later, it will become yet another gesture to seal his verdict, and antagonize his heirs. "This coronet part between you" (1.1.40), says Lear to Albany and Cornwall, pervasively echoing Solomon's wisdom when he probed the honesty of two women by ordering to cut in two a child both claimed their own.

The manner of Lear's entry is meaningful because it helps us to understand who he used to be before he decided to become nobody. But *enter* is a transparent word, it calls for action, at the same time not offering any clues as to the way it should be performed. It is a mutation, via French, of the Latin verb *intrare*, or still deeper, though perhaps more obvious, the preposition *inter* denoting the space in between, within, inwards. Its long forgotten use as a prefix still resounds in words such as enterprise or, fittingly enough, entertainment. Therefore, *enter* has a history behind it, and also has its heyday now, when we validate most of our consents by pressing *enter*. In the plays, however, *enter* always figures in the third person imperative, singular and plural, thus emphasizing the truly commanding nature of stage directions. For an actor, *enter* is like the Rubicon, dividing the on and off-stage world, forcing them to move forward and plunge into fiction, in full view of the audience. To watch this transition is an exclusive privilege of the theatre. In the cinema, the camera usually cuts to the inside, revealing the characters already settled down in whatever space they were supposed to enter. The word also undergoes a heavy test in translation, when its conventional neutrality may be moulded by inflection and charged with more suggestive semantics. In Polish, Lear *wchodzi* ("comes in"), thus the spatial dimension of *enter*, yields to the emphasis on movement, human movement in particular. Given its paradigmatic neighbourhood, there is a tint of dignity in the word, for those who come in do not rush, dash, or stagger onto the stage. In a compulsive, routine response to words, we imagine those who come in better than those who are to enter, though naturally we have also learned to suppress our associations when it is necessary. How much of this imagination, let loose or bridled, can be translated?

Perhaps it is this enormous complexity of the translation process that has led to the paradox of Translation Studies. For years academic interest in translation had been perceived either as a branch of applied

linguistics or associated with comparative literature. In both cases there was a predominance of prescriptive models of translation with an underlying assumption that translation is, and should be, a transfer of stable meaning. As a result, critical interest found its expression in proliferating comparisons of source versus target texts. These comparisons were performed according to some arbitrarily established criteria of equivalence and based on the conventional source text exegesis. With the emergence of Translation Studies as an independent field, academic interest shifted to more target-oriented approaches and, eventually, to the very process of translating and the supposed norms governing the translator's behaviour. The nebulous criterion of faithfulness versus unfaithfulness used for distinguishing appropriate from inappropriate renderings has been finally replaced by the notion of translational ethics, which builds on the plurality of concepts of equivalence.

Another feature of Translation Studies is the impression of syncretism. Given the variety of source materials subject to translation and the complexity of the processes of transfer of meaning, research in this area, if it is to be incisive, has to draw on the conclusions of related disciplines. Indeed, extending its insights beyond linguistics and literature, the discipline has accepted a broader sociocultural perspective and approached the field of semiotics, sharing its fundamental interest in all cultural processes with a particular focus on processes of communication and systems of codification.[2] However, the essential openness and dynamics of the discipline has led to the development of a set of related theories rather than a comprehensive theory of translation. If openness proves stimulating, plurality of approaches posits also the risk of chaos. It is, however, the very eclectic nature of Translation Studies which makes the discipline capable of approaching domains as different as interpreting, machine translation and, last but not least, the vast area of literary translation.

Due to the aesthetic value, semiotic richness and availability of large corpuses of translated texts, the field of literary translation[3]

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[2] For the epistemological dimension of semiotics see Eco (1976: 8).
[3] Following Toury (1995: 168-9) literary translation is understood as the translation of texts which are regarded as literary in the source culture and the translation of any texts in such a way that they are received as literary in the recipient culture.

appears to be one of the most rapidly developing branches of Translation Studies. Needless to say, the rewriting of literature stimulates research but it also generates emotional responses from translators, readers, critics and, a phenomenon which is nowadays becoming more and more frequent, authors. In no other case is the question of what constitutes and what does not constitute meaning, as well as what enhances and what does not enhance aesthetic value, so much contested. Hence, the relation between form and function becomes critically important to the success of a translation. Indeed, some of the most engaging analyses conducted within the descriptive framework of Translation Studies have aimed at identifying the translator's manoeuvres between retaining features of the source text, and adjusting them to the requirements of the target culture. The tension between the inherent logic and aesthetics of the source text and the shaping pressure of the receiving system is particularly conspicuous in the case of drama.

With the exception of closet drama, plays are received both as self-contained literary texts and as theatrical playscripts.[4] Hence, the nature of requirements imposed on drama, and accordingly on translations of drama, is essentially heterogeneous, i.e. literary and theatrical. Drama, as a literary discourse, fulfils a referential role by telling a story set within an imaginary context of there-and-then. Yet, unlike other genres, drama is also predisposed towards the performant function, i.e. towards enactment of the story within a framework of a concrete stage. The essence of drama lies in the way it provides for theatrical dimension. The dramatic text foreshadows theatrical enactment due to the presence of a multitude of (in)direct hints which are developed subsequently into relevant features of performance. Thus, setting, properties, gestures and movements as well as facial expression are

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[4] There have been certain attempts to abandon the traditional division into literary vs. theatrical approaches to drama in contemporary drama theory (cf. Pfister 1988: 6-7). Yet, preserving the distinction between literary and theatrical reception, and even more so, between the dramatic text (referred to also as a literary, fixed or verbally stable text) vs. performance (understood as a multimedial presentation of the dramatic text, and roughly equivalent to the *testo spactaccolare*, *mise-en-scène*, performance text), seems convenient when it comes to discussing the mechanisms and principles of the passage from page to stage. In the present study the term text will always refer only to the verbal text of the play.

determined by the presence of implicit and explicit stage directions and derived from the illocutionary force of utterances. The built-in component of nonverbal codes is adjusted to the codification systems (stage conventions) and technical properties (the use of acting area, availability of stage effects, etc.) of the stage for which the play is envisioned. The pitfalls of translating drama begin with the translator realising that the stage for which the play was written differs substantially from the stage which is to host the translation of the play.

Juxtaposing the conditions of the original stage with those of the target place of enactment brings out the never solved issue of form versus function. Adherence to the original modes of representation revives the flavour of the epoch, yet it may also prove misleading or all-in-all meaningless for the contemporary audience. On the other hand, achieving equivalent theatrical effect requires adopting current theatrical standards, and may entail brutal intrusions into the matrix of the text. Naturally, the discord between the way in which a given play was envisioned and the way it is going to be performed once it is translated may vary in degree. Thus, not all nonverbal components find their way into the dramatic text, and not all directors feel bound by what the text seems to imply. A well-made play, however, integrates all levels of theatrical communication and, often enough, achieves it by multiplying references to nonverbal codes. These references, themselves derived from a certain concept of theatre, take an active part in shaping the conditions of future performance. In many cases it is up to the translator to decide whether they will be accepted as natural, perceived as fossilized remnants of some by-gone theatrical conventions, or, given their ambiguity, encourage alternative stagings. Aware of the complexity of the processes of construction of meaning, the translator cannot remain completely neutral.

Whether willingly or not, the translator finds himself in the position of a director. The translated text includes features testifying to the workings of the shaping power of the stage for which it has been written. This shaping power is constituted by a complex codification system which, ideally, should be shared by those involved in the creation, enactment and reception of a play. The very necessity of translation means that such a unity no longer exists. To the contrary, the ways of generating meaning and enhancing aesthetic pleasure differ as much as the physical properties of the Elizabethan *wooden o* differ

from the conventional box-frame stage and, incidentally, as much as the latter differs from the modern cinema screen. Similarly, there are differences between spectators packed onto the galleries, seated in the comfortable seclusion of velvet armchairs, and those forcing their way to chairs in darkened cinema halls. In these circumstances, how should the translation be conducted so that the target text generates identical nonverbal codes? Or, perhaps, should the text generate nonverbal codes whose function will be equivalent to the function of nonverbal codes in the original play? Should the text be stripped of references to outmoded conventions or, perhaps, retain the features which decide about the uniqueness of its linguistic and dramatic make-up? And, finally, should the translator, aware of the essential ambiguity of the text, avoid double meaning and strive to render a coherent vision of the play or, alternatively, preserve the plurality of meanings?

These and similar questions call for a recourse to concrete examples. The following lines, quoted from the Quarto and Folio version of the play, come from one of the final scenes of *King Lear*. A naive spectator is likely to accept the scene as a happy ending, in which case the play would close with a long-awaited image of re-conciliation and forgiveness. Indeed, the full impact of the benediction scene can be appreciated only if the scene is juxtaposed with the opening scene in which Lear banishes Cordelia for her refusal to make a public profession of filial love. The parts in the division scene, like the shares in the kingdom, are precisely assigned. It is Cordelia's refusal to participate in a public show of emotions which arouses Lear's rage. Angered and humiliated, he turns against his daughter, and they both leave the stage hurt. But the vicissitudes of fate teach them to compromise. When Lear awakens from a long, healing sleep, he finds Cordelia at his side. Cordelia's plea for benediction opens one of the most moving Shakespearean scenes. This time, however, it is she who initiates the action and gives directions for a public show of unmatched emphatic appeal:

> O look upon me, sir,
> And hold your hands in benediction o'er me!
> ^QNo, sir,^Q you must not kneel. (4.7.57-9)[5]

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[5] I have omitted all non-authorial stage directions here to underscore the theatrical dimension of the primary text.

On the bare Elizabethan stage, the emblematic quality of the reunion of father and daughter grips the audience's attention, half eclipsing other players. Words, pregnant with emotions, impose stage action. However, though the text refers clearly to a ritual of gestures and movements, the implicit stage directions remain contradictory or imprecise. Does Cordelia kneel for benediction in the way it was done in earlier versions of the play? Does Lear kneel, or just intend to do so? If so, does Lear kneel when he recognizes Cordelia or when she, also kneeling, asks for a blessing which she was denied at the outset of the play? Does Cordelia try to keep the king from kneeling or, perhaps, helps him to rise? The vicissitudes of textual history blurred the clarity of Shakespeare's designs, and the Folio-Quarto variations gave grounds for further confusion. Does Cordelia keep addressing Lear with the formal "Sir", or, moved by his devastation, turn to a more intimate "you". Is her speech a gentle persuasion or strict injunction? Is it proclaimed openly or whispered hastily to spare the father humiliation in front of all the French court? The paradigm of options derived from the text testifies to the fundamental role that the dramatic text fulfils in creating the conditions of staging. Being one of many elements of theatrical polyphony, it initiates and inspires other non-linguistic signs which eventually, given the appeal of visual art, may surpass in importance the verbal component. For all that, the text remains the matrix of the scene, even though the call for action may be imprecise, and leave the door open for alternative stagings.

Translators are left to their own devices when groping through this sphere of uncertainty. Though the process of drama translation apparently does not change the medium, it affects the way in which the text will generate non-linguistic signs of performance. Again, the issue is by no means confined to the question of whether Lear indeed kneels down or only intends to do so. What is in question is rather the mood of the scene, ranging from courtly formality to moving intimacy. It concerns also a broader issue of the evolution of the main characters. The visual image of Lear's humble penance at the feet of his daughter seems to constitute the emotional core of the scene. But is also Cordelia learning how to express her feelings, lavishly offering love and support which she refused to offer in the opening

scene? The translations of Cordelia's lines may encourage different stagings. Similarly, the perlocutionary effect of those lines may be different when they are delivered from the stage. Translation of drama never occurs across mere linguistic barriers. The formal and functional shifts perpetuated by translators may result from their well-motivated decisions, but they may also result from their inability to retain in the target text the same proportion of ambiguity and clarity which informs the original. In other words, the process of translation appears to be inseparably bound with manipulation.

The notion of translation as manipulation of literature has become the cornerstone of Translation Studies. The manipulative nature of the translation process makes the translators respond to a variety of factors ranging from the expectations of the literary milieu to the demands of the popular audience. Though market profitability often turns out to be more powerful than refined aesthetic concepts, it is the adherence to the latter that opens the way to literary canons. However, in the case of drama, the nebulous horizon of expectations of the receiving culture yields to the shaping power of the stage, which constitutes the immediate receiving system. The stage imposes, somewhat independently, its own requirements resulting from its current technical properties as well as the prevailing theatrical conventions, both of which jointly contribute to the translator's ultimate vision of the play. The translator may choose to adjust the play to contemporary theatrical standards or, alternatively, neglect them and adhere to the theatrical vision of the original. Taking into consideration the dual, literary and theatrical, reception of a work of drama, both strategies find substantial vindication. However, acceptance within one domain is by no means tantamount to acceptance in the other. To the contrary, canonized works are often rejected by the stage, and plays enjoying box-office success are deemed worthless by the high-brow literary establishment.

Yet, not all translations of plays show consistent preference for the requirements of a concrete form of theatre. Even a cursory look at the sphere of nonverbal codes, a component most sensitive to the shaping power of the stage, reveals hesitation or misunderstanding and, which is surprisingly common, a desperate search for middle-of-the-road solutions. These translations become battlegrounds of op-

posing theatrical conventions. Indeed, given the disappearance of the common code shared by authors, actors and audience, the task of translating drama turns out to be particularly challenging. This challenge becomes enhanced when it is Shakespeare who becomes the subject of rewriting. The histories of translating Shakespeare into various languages bear witness to numerous clashes between the shaping power of the Elizabethan stage and the requirements of the stages on which Shakespeare was to appear. The reasons underlying substantial modifications of Elizabethan masterpieces ranged from aesthetic, such as the Neoclassical requirements of the three unities, to purely practical such as the necessity of limiting the number of changes of locale which could not be accommodated by the nineteenth century realistic theatre, for example. The quality and type of translations of Shakespeare was also determined by the position which Shakespeare occupied in the canon. A high position in the canon has usually entailed reverence and tolerance for distant conventions and, consequently, has encouraged formal adherence in translation. Yet, staying in the canon also gives rise to the temptation of tampering with a canonized relic in search of new meanings and hidden potentials of a well-assimilated text.

This book traces the relationship between translation strategies and the stage history of *King Lear*. The basic research assumption consists in the belief that Shakespeare's plays reflect the stage practices of the Elizabethan age which, in translation, wrestle and compete with the conventions of the stage for which the plays are translated. Bearing in mind the manipulative nature of the translation process, the translator may neglect the pragmatics of the stage, and choose to adhere to the original features of the text or, alternatively, seek harmony with contemporary standards, and adjust the play to the expectations of the future spectators. The rationale of this choice consists in the realization of the canonized position of the translated text, and the resulting willingness of the audience to explore the text on its own terms. And yet the choice is also motivated by the translators' understanding of the theatre of their own time, and their willingness to rewrite Shakespeare for the contemporary stage. The methodological assumptions are derived from Descriptive Translation Studies (Toury 1985/1995) and embrace in particular Toury's concept of translation norms

and the relation between the translation strategy and the prospective function of the translation in the hosting system (Chapter 1). Taking into consideration the intricacy of drama translation, and the absence of genre-specific translation models within Translation Studies, the analysis draws on the research methods elaborated within the field of the semiotics of drama and performance, mainly in areas where these disciplines underscore and elucidate the theatrical dimension of the dramatic text (Chapter 2). The resulting combination of the descriptive methods of DTS, and the semiotic insights into the structure and interpretation of dramatic discourse serves as an analytical model for the examination of the corpus of the Polish translations of *King Lear* and the designation of four translations which appear most successful from the literary and/or theatrical point of view (Chapter 3). Chapters 4, 5, 6, and 7 offer four independent studies of Polish translations of *King Lear*, of which two originate in the nineteenth century (by Jan Nepomucen Kamiński and Józef Paszkowski, respectively), whereas the other belong to the second half of the twentieth century (Maciej Słomczyński and Stanisław Barańczak).

The reasons underlying the choice of *King Lear* stem from the nature of the play itself, as well as from the specific literary and theatrical reception of the work in Poland. Throughout the ages critics have frequently assigned to *King Lear* the status of one of the greatest of Shakespeare's tragedies based on radically different interpretations of the protagonist's fate. Inasmuch as some critics emphasised the Christian content of the play, others, most notably Jan Kott, identified grotesque elements, and proclaimed Shakespeare a forerunner of the Theatre of the Absurd. The multiple readings of *King Lear* result also, to some degree, from the textual predicament which has been bothering editors ever since the Folio version of the play was published.[6]

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[6] From 1623 two basic texts have been available to the English editors of *King Lear*: the Quarto (1608), which gives 300 lines the Folio omits, and the Folio, which gives 100 lines absent in the Quarto. Initially, no conflation was attempted, and, for example, Nicholas Rowe in his 1709 edition of the complete works of Shakespeare relied entirely on the Folio. However, in 1723 Alexander Pope made some additions from the Quarto, and strongly argued for the alleged theatrical degradation of the Folio text. Also Lewis Theobald believed the Folio to be a theatre-derived, inferior version, and in 1733 made new additions from the Quarto. In the years 1767-8, Edward Campell provided a single composite version based on the Quartos. Finally, Edmond Malone in 1790 edited a text

Equally surprising and changeable appears to be the theatrical reception of the play. While the nineteenth century theatre saw the play as a pretext for a spectacular show of stage machinery, critics, like Charles Lamb, deemed the play utterly non-theatrical. And yet the play continued to be staged, and later on screened, with interest particularly reviving when twentieth century interpretation turned it into an exercise in the grotesque and the absurd.

Translations of *King Lear* into Polish started appearing earlier, and in greater numbers, than other translations of Shakespeare's plays. So far the play has been translated into Polish fourteen times from the original text, and at least three times from the French or German adaptations of the play. Of all Shakespeare's plays only *Hamlet* has been translated more frequently. Despite a significant number of available translations, the Polish stage history of the play appears less fortunate. Throughout the nineteenth century the play was staged frequently, though exclusively in adaptations or conflated versions based on the available translations. In the years 1805-1935, for example, there were more than 60 premiere performances *of King Lear* on the Polish stage.[7] Its popularity continued well into the second half of the nineteenth century and the play was customarily chosen for anniversary performances of the leading actors of the day. However, the twentieth century and especially the post-war period, witnessed surprising variations in the number of *King Lear* productions. In the years 1945-92 the play was staged only five times (*Hamlet*, for example, was staged more than fifty times, and the total number of Shakespeare productions reached almost four hundred), each time in a different translation. Two of these productions of the plays staged in this period stirred a great deal of interest, though for vastly different reasons. *King Lear*, produced in Warsaw in 1977, and directed by Jerzy Jarocki, featured in the repertoire for five years and drew

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which became a standard for subsequent editors. Malone generally preferred the Quarto text, yet he included all the lines present only in the Folio, and thus the practice of conflation became a strongly established tradition. The composite text of *King Lear* was reprinted in Charles Knight's edition of 1839-43, and in the Cambridge edition of 1863-6. The editorial practices with regard to *King Lear* are discussed in detail by Steven Urkowitz in his essay "The Base Shall to th'Legitimate: The Growth of an Editorial Tradition" in Taylor and Warren (1983: 23-43).

[7] The estimated number of performances is quoted after Hahn (1958).

enthusiastic critical response. *King Lear*, rehearsed in Poznań in 1992, and directed by Eugeniusz Korin, was never staged in its intended form, due to the sudden death of Lear, Tadeusz Łomnicki, a week before the premiere performance. As if going against the sad memory of the event, and certainly against the trend which emerged in the post-war period, the turn of the millennium brought new and powerful Lears played by Jan Englert (1998), Jan Frycz (2000), Zbigniew Zapasiewicz (2001), and Daniel Olbrychski (2006).

The intricacies of the Polish theatrical reception of *King Lear*, his triumphs, disappearances and spectacular comebacks, make the play a particularly interesting choice for investigating the relationship between translation and performance. What part did the translators play in the Polish history of *King Lear*? Did they look to Shakespeare only or lean towards the theatre by supplying scripts rewritten for their own time? Did they act as prompters, whispering words into the ears of the actors, or command the stage themselves to tamper with Shakespeare's designs? And last but not least, are we aware of the nature and extent of their share in the performance?

This book is an attempt to find out the answers.