

TRANSLATION, MEMORY, AND CULTURAL
(RE)SOUNDINGS BETWEEN IRELAND AND
FLORIANÓPOLIS: THE CASE OF *AN OLD SONG*,
HALF FORGOTTEN, BY DEIRDRE KINAHAN

TRADUÇÃO, MEMÓRIA E (RE)SONÂNCIAS CULTURAIS ENTRE IRLANDA
E FLORIANÓPOLIS: O CASO DE *AN OLD SONG*, *HALF FORGOTTEN*, DE
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RESUMO: Este artigo examina o papel do som como sistema dramaturgico em *An Old Song, Half Forgotten*, de Deirdre Kinahan, e em uma adaptação brasileira ambientada em Florianópolis. Defende-se que a memória na peça é estruturada menos pela continuidade narrativa do que por motivos musicais, silêncios e fragmentação sonora. Assim, o estudo compara cenas selecionadas do texto-fonte e da tradução, a fim de analisar como som, espaço e referências culturais foram reconfigurados no processo de transposição de contexto. Com base nos trabalhos de Christopher Small (1998), Don Ihde (2007), Marvin Carlson (2003), Erika Fischer-Lichte (2008) e Gayatri Spivak (1993), o artigo reflete sobre alternativas aos modelos de tradução baseados na equivalência. Demonstra-se que a tradução musical opera como intervenção dramaturgica, reformulando como memória, lugar e identidade são percebidos em performance.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: Tradução teatral; Dramaturgia sonora; Adaptação cultural; Memória e performance.

ABSTRACT: This paper examines the role of sound as a dramaturgical system in Deirdre Kinahan's *An Old Song, Half Forgotten* and in a Brazilian adaptation set in Florianópolis. It argues that memory in the play is structured less by narrative continuity than by musical motifs, silence and auditory fragmentation. Thus, the study compares selected scenes from the source text and the translation in order to analyse how sound, space and cultural references were reconfigured in relocation. Drawing on work by Christopher Small (1998), Don Ihde (2007), Marvin Carlson (2003), Erika Fischer-Lichte (2008) and Gayatri Spivak (1993), the article reflects on alternatives to equivalence-based models. It shows that musical translation operates as dramaturgical intervention, reshaping how memory, place and identity are perceived in performance.

KEYWORDS: Theatre translation; Sonic dramaturgy; Cultural adaptation; Memory and performance.

1. INITIAL REMARKS

Deirdre Kinahan's (2024) *An Old Song, Half Forgotten* constructs memory as an acoustic process rather than a narrative one. In the play, recollection is patterned through rhythm and silence. Listening, in this sense, becomes the structuring principle of the play's dramaturgy, displacing linear narrative development in favour of a fragmented mnemonic structure in which discontinuous sonic traces shape the experience of time and subjectivity on stage. This has direct implications for translation, especially intercultural ones, since sound does not circulate as a stable material across languages or cultures. Moreover, the play's dramaturgical logic depends on historically situated habits of listening that cannot be transferred without transformation.

Kinahan's dramaturgy takes shape in a context where women's experience has remained structurally peripheral to Irish theatrical discourse (Sihra, 2007), and where contemporary playwriting has increasingly displaced nationalism as a dominant narrative horizon (Lonergan, 2010). Instead of approaching identity through national representation, her domestic dramas register conflict at the level of everyday life, foregrounding the friction between personal memory and inherited moral schemes. In *Spinning* (2014) and *Halcyon Days* (2016), for instance, ageing, illness, and domestic instability exert formal pressure on the pacing of the play. In *An Old Song, Half Forgotten*, these tensions are internalised by the dramaturgy itself, since memory does not merely motivate the action, but disrupts its continuity.

Taking Marvin Carlson's (2003) concept of "haunted stage" as an analytic lens, and Emilie Pine's (2011) account of Irish cultural memory as resistant to nostalgic closure, Kinahan frames the past as a disruptive presence. In *An Old Song, Half Forgotten*, Alzheimer's is embedded in the form of the play, in which temporal sequence is fractured, and the coexistence of James and Young James stages memory as estrangement from the self. In this context, silence, repetition, and musical motifs appear as compositional procedures that expose memory as labour-intensive and structurally unreliable. The dramaturgy is therefore organised through sound and any shift in its acoustic configuration necessarily alters how temporal rupture is experienced.

The action unfolds in the day room of a nursing home, where James, an elderly man with Alzheimer's disease, listens to a string quartet positioned on the stage alongside a younger version of himself. Their exchanges move associatively across different moments of James's life, producing memory as discontinuous recurrence. The string quartet remains visible throughout the play, establishing most musical interventions as internal to the dramatic situation, while brief insertions of popular songs function extradiegetically, providing recognisable sonic references that situate James's private recollections within a broader Anglo-Irish cultural horizon.

The relation between memory and sound can be specified through Christopher Small's (1998) understanding of "musicking" as a form of social action and through Don Ihde's (2007) account of listening as embodied and situated perception. In Kinahan's play, Paul Frost's score conditions the appearance of memory, and sound becomes the medium through which James's past is mediated. What emerges, thus, is a form of subjectivity organised by aural experience itself. Memory, here, is

less a repository of images than a process structured by auditory recurrence.

While Kinahan's work has most often been approached through questions of gender, trauma, and post-national identity, the sonic organisation of her dramaturgy has received comparatively little critical attention, particularly in relation to translation. Yet in *An Old Song, Half Forgotten*, meaning resides primarily in the way sound structures presence and absence on stage. Because the play does not construct place mimetically, relocation into another cultural context cannot proceed by substitution alone: it requires the reconstitution of the auditory conditions under which subjectivity takes form. Any translation that treats sound as decorative rather than structural suppresses the very logic that sustains the play.

The Florianópolis-based adaptation discussed in this paper emerged from a 2024 desk-based process developed within a practice-as-research framework. Rather than treating adaptation as a secondary outcome of analysis, this paper approaches translation itself as a mode of inquiry. The work was therefore conceived as an analytical intervention into Kinahan's text, allowing questions concerning memory and sonic perception to be explored through the practice of translation itself. Decisions regarding setting, musical references, and speech patterns were guided by the soundscape of Florianópolis as a structural variable through which the play's economy of memory could be recalibrated.

Following practice-as-research approaches that understand creative practice as a form of knowledge production (Kershaw, 2009; Sullivan, 2009) and drawing on Angela Tiziana Tarantini (2021) notion of the translator-researcher, the adaptation was treated as an exploratory framework through which questions concerning cultural relocation in this specific play could be investigated through practice. In this study, the translator-researcher occupies a dual position as both translator-adaptor and analyst of the adaptation process, examining translational decisions through the practice of adaptation itself. The adaptation therefore functioned both as a creative project and as a reflexive practice.

The analysis adopts a comparative approach, focusing on selected scenes from both the source play and the adaptation. The discussion concentrates on scenes in which sound appears as a primary dramaturgical device and where translation required substantial reconfiguration of musical or cultural references. These scenes were selected because they foreground the relationship between sound and memory that structures both Kinahan's dramaturgy and the translational interventions discussed in this article.

This paper thus advances the claim that *An Old Song, Half Forgotten* cannot be relocated into another cultural context through linguistic transfer alone. Focusing on the handling of music, silence and aural disruption in the source text, the analysis examines how these elements were reconfigured in the Florianópolis adaptation in order to expose the limits of translation understood as reproduction.

Throughout this article, translation refers to the broader process of reworking Kinahan's play across linguistic and cultural dimensions. Adaptation designates the specific Florianópolis version produced through this process, while relocation refers to the displacement of the play from its Irish

setting to a Brazilian cultural context. Finally, music translation is understood here as the rearrangement of the play's sonic dramaturgy through new musical references and listening practices.

These distinctions resonate with Patrice Pavis's understanding of intercultural transfer. Pavis argues that intercultural performance – which is the case of the Kinahan Florianópolis project – entails the transformation and recontextualization of theatrical signs as they move between cultures. Using his well-known metaphor of the “hourglass”, through which the grains of culture pass in a slow flow, Pavis affirms:

In the upper bowl is the foreign culture, the source culture, which is more or less codified and solidified in diverse anthropological and artistic modelizations. In order to reach us, this culture must pass a narrow neck [...] into the lower bowl, that of the target culture, from which point we observe this slow flow. The grains will rearrange themselves in a way which appears random, but which is partly regulated by their passage through some dozen filters put in place by the target language and the observer (Pavis, 1992, p. 4).

Pavis's model is particularly useful for understanding the Florianópolis adaptation because it emphasizes that intercultural transfer is not a neutral process of transmission but one of selection, transformation, and re-signification.

A similar concern underlies Susan Bassnett's reflections on theatre translation. One of the pioneers in theatre translation as an academic field, Bassnett initially regarded it as a “labyrinth” (1984), particularly when the translator is unable to work collaboratively with the theatre group. Her emphasis lies in the fact that writing for the page and writing for the stage pose different challenges and consequently lead to different translation outcomes. Her acknowledgement of these differences paved the way for more integrated approaches between praxis and theoretical approaches. More recently, thus, Bassnett, along with Catalina Iliescu-Gheorghiu (2025), has highlighted the plurality of approaches to theatre translation, encompassing the negotiation of cultural, performative, and audience-related dimensions.

This perspective is particularly relevant to the Brazilian adaptation of *An Old Song, Half Forgotten*, in which the relocation of the play required not only linguistic translation but also the re-configuration of its sonic dramaturgy through new musical references and listening practices. With these distinctions and definitions in mind, the following analysis examines how these processes operate within the Florianópolis adaptation.

MUSIC AS DRAMATURGICAL AND CULTURAL LANGUAGE IN *AN OLD SONG, HALF FORGOTTEN*

In *An Old Song, Half Forgotten*, the encounter between James and his younger self organise memory as intermittent reappearance. Scenes emerge and recede without casual linkage, often initiated or curtailed by musical interventions that unsettle any stable distinction between past and

present. Music, in this sense, operates as a compositional principle: it determines when memory surfaces, how long it persists and when it dissolves. Its agency, however, is not uniform. At times, it governs the tempo of perception; at others it withdraws, yielding to the silence of verbal disintegration. This instability is structural, since memory in the play is exposed to sound.

Kinahan's use of sound is inseparable from the form of cultural memory *An Old Song, Half Forgotten* inhabits. Patrick Lonergan (2010, p. 3) notes that contemporary Irish theatre has increasingly retreated from nationalism as its organising narrative, with "the category of 'the national' [becoming] less influential in theatrical production than it has been in the past". This retreat does not simply displace political content; it alters the formal conditions under which history appears on stage. In the absence of a unifying national framework, memory no longer functions as a coherent narrative of origins or continuity. Pine (2011, p. 55) similarly characterises contemporary Irish cultural memory as anti-nostalgic, structured by rupture rather than continuity by contested recollections, silences and losses that resist recuperation.

This aesthetic logic becomes materially legible in the scene in which James recalls his grandmother's reaction to the 1916 executions at Kilmainham Gaol. Kinahan does not propose staging the Easter Rising as historical narrative or nationalist memory. The event instead returns in the form of acoustic trauma as the "volley of shots" that continues to reverberate inside the domestic space:

BOTH. It was my grandmother's house.

YOUNG JAMES. And Ma always said that my grandmother was haunted by the volley of shots that rang out when Ireland's patriots were being murdered by the British there in 1916.

JAMES. She did, she always said that.

YOUNG JAMES (*dropping to his knees*). And Ma always said that Granny used to kneel by her bed, hands over her ears, trying to think of lovely things.

JAMES. Lovely things Granny, think of lovely things.

YOUNG JAMES. Because she was only a little girl back then but all she could see in her mind's eye was blood splattering onto the back walls of the gaol and blood running up through our floorboards, seeping into her little-girl world with the terror of it all. And Ma said that she never got over it because if anything every upset Granny she would just close her eyes, drop to the floor and put her hands over her ears. Traumatized, that's what my ma said...

JAMES. Traumatized.

YOUNG JAMES. Lived on her nerves. Lived on her nerves, like Ma.

The musicians play. The two JAMESSES listen (Kinahan, 2024, p. 161).

This recollection is immediately followed by the stage direction "The musicians play. The two JAMESSES listen" (Kinahan, 2024, p. 161). Here, history collapses into sound. The national past, instead of being remembered as a coherent event, survives as affective disturbance, registered in the grandmother's gesture of covering her ears and in the sonic interruptions that punctuate the scene. This is precisely the condition Pine describes as memory structured by rupture, silence and

loss. And it is equally the formal consequence of what Lonergan identifies as the erosion of “the national” as an organising framework. The play offers history as a fragmented sensory memorial. Kinahan’s dramaturgy thus stages not Irish history, but the unassimilable remainder of it.

Christopher Small (1998, p. 2) defines music as an activity, “something that people do”, thereby relocating musical meaning from the artefact to the relational event of “musicking”. In *An Old Song, Half Forgotten*, this activity is not organised around participation as agency but around participation as exposure. James undergoes music. Listening is configured less as a cultural competence than as a situation of vulnerability, where sound acts upon the subject. In this sense, Kinahan radicalises Small’s premise: “musicking” here is an asymmetrical encounter. Don Ihde’s (2007, p. 117) phenomenology of auditory polyphony clarifies this dynamic by framing listening as a simultaneous negotiation of perceptual and imaginative modes:

With the introduction of a second modality of experience, in addition to what has been the predominantly perceptualist emphasis, listening becomes polyphonic. I hear not only the voices of the World, in some sense I ‘hear’ myself or from myself. There is in polyphony a duet of voices in the doubled modalities of perceptual and imaginative modes.

It is this auditory polyphony that the play makes visible. Sound fractures memory into interruption, overlap and displacement. Listening is therefore figured as the condition under which subjectivity loses coherence.

By shaping the relations between voices, temporal shifts and spatial orientation, Paul Frost’s soundtrack functions as a dramaturgical system by its own right. Silence is treated as interruption, the points at which continuity fails, and the body no longer aligns with memory. In these moments, coherence is neither repaired nor compensated for; it is exposed as fragile. As Christopher Small (1998, p. 163) argues, the combination and succession of sounds activate associative processes in the listener that generate meaning. In Kinahan’s play, such associations are immediately disrupted. Narrative surfaces only to be suspended again by sound.

The opening scene establishes listening as the play’s primary dramaturgical action. James and Young James sit side by side in the day room while a string quartet performs, and respond to the same sound from different temporal positions:

We are in the day room of a nursing home.
There are musicians playing a vigorous piece of classical music.
JAMES O’BRIEN, a dapper man in his seventies, sits listening appreciatively.
A YOUNGER MAN sits by his side, also listening appreciatively.
[...]
JAMES. Bravo! Bravo!
YOUNG JAMES. Toi! Toi! Toi!
JAMES. Wonderful. Beautiful.
YOUNG JAMES. Mesmeric!
[...]
YOUNG JAMES. It’s the river, isn’t it? It’s the Liffey. I was born on it... bred on it... (Kinahan, 2024, p. 167).

Here, music functions both as a social act and as the trigger through which memory enters the scene. What appears is duplication, two versions of James produced by a single acoustic event. When Young James names the Liffey, he introduces an affective imprint activated by sound. The river is not represented; it is acoustically summoned. This moment gives dramatic form to Ihde's account of auditory polyphony: James hears the present performance while simultaneously receiving a memory that does not belong to it. Listening becomes an experience split between perception and intrusion. Sound and silence alternate to interrupt narrative continuity, so that memory appears as disturbance.

The play's articulation of sound and memory can be understood in light of Marvin Carlson's (2003) notion of theatre as a "memory machine", a mechanism that reactivates experience through repetition. In *An Old Song, Half Forgotten*, this function is assumed primarily by sound. Music activates memory in the present of performance, placing the audience in contact with a past that returns as sensation. Christopher Small's (1998, p. 139) claim that musical meaning operates through gesture further clarifies this process. In Kinahan's dramaturgy, music performs memory, which appears not as an action unfolding in time.

Thomas Turino (2008) distinguishes between presentational performance, structured around the display of musical competence to an audience, and participatory practice, in which musical meaning emerges from collective doing. In *An Old Song, Half Forgotten*, the performance clearly conforms to the presentational model at the level of staging, with musicians performing for a seated audience. Yet the dramaturgical function of music destabilises this taxonomy. James does not participate sonically, but listening itself becomes structurally productive, since memory is acoustically precipitated. While this does not constitute participation in Turino's sense, grounded in bodily and sonic co-production, the play exposes the limits of his framework by staging listening as a dramaturgical agency, where temporal organisation and affective intensity are generated without physical action.

Moreover, music in *An Old Song, Half Forgotten* operates as a culturally overdetermined medium, drawing on idioms associated with Irish life, emigration, and historical loss. Turino's (2008, p. 6) claim that sound participates in the formation of social bonds illuminates how both Frost's live score and the extradiegetic mechanical inserts mobilise recognisable musical codes as a mode of imagined collectivity. Yet in Kinahan's dramaturgy, this cultural resonance does not consolidate identity. Composed of sounds marked by timbral cues, harmonic tendencies, and stylistic allusions to Irish musical culture, the score evokes its erosion. Musical forms operate within shared structures of feeling associated with rural continuity and intergenerational belonging, yet here these structures surface only as unstable residues. References to the Liffey, to James's youth, and to a national affective climate emerge as discontinuous flashes; his listening can no longer integrate. Here, music registers the disintegration of the cultural grammar that once made identification possible, staging the widening disjunction between collective memory and subjective capacity for recognition.

James's experience of Alzheimer's intensifies the instability that structures Kinahan's dramaturgy. As Oliver Sacks (2008, p. 378) observes, musical memory can persist even when other

cognitive functions deteriorate, calling forth sensations and emotions in the absence of narrative coherence. In *An Old Song, Half Forgotten* this “calling” produces residue. What returns is a bodily echo, a fleeting resurgence that cannot be held. When Sacks (2008, p. 381) describes familiar music as capable of reanimating forgotten worlds, Kinahan radicalises this insight by emptying it of restorative promise. In this context, the evocation of the Liffey marks the brief flicker of an affective imprint already slipping away.

This logic becomes precarious when the play is transplanted into another cultural soundscape. The Florianópolis adaptation performs a domesticating operation, replacing Irish sonic references with Brazilian sensory markers in order to produce recognition. Yet this substitution is not neutral. Because the dramaturgy depends on the friction between cultural residue and cognitive inaccessibility, altering the sonic field risks reconfiguring the very mechanism by which memory functions in the play. Translation, here, cannot be reduced to the replacement of references; it must test how much domestication the dramaturgical architecture can endure without dissolving its central tension between affective return and mnemonic failure.

3. MUSIC, MEMORY, AND THE POLITICS OF TRANSLATION

Translating *An Old Song, Half Forgotten* demands attention to the aural system through which the play organises memory. In Kinahan’s dramaturgy, sound establishes the conditions under which meaning takes form. Relocating the play to Florianópolis therefore involved reworking its auditory framework and not just substituting its verbal content. This is already evident in the adaptation’s opening, where the original string quartet is replaced by a small ensemble of local instruments:

<i>We are in the day room of a nursing home. There are musicians playing a vigorous piece of classical music.</i> JAMES O'BRIEN, <i>a dapper man in his seventies, sits listening appreciatively.</i> A YOUNGER MAN <i>sits by his side, also listening appreciatively.</i> [...] JAMES. Bravo! Bravo! YOUNG JAMES. Toi! Toi! Toi! JAMES. Wonderful. Beautiful. YOUNG JAMES. Mesmeric! [...] YOUNG JAMES. It's the river isn't it? It's the Liffey. I was born on it... bred on it... (Kinahan, 2024, p. 167).	<i>Sala de convivências de uma casa de repouso. Um pequeno conjunto de instrumentos populares toca uma música enérgica.</i> JAIME DE SOUZA, <i>um homem elegante com os seus setenta anos, aprecia a música sentado.</i> Um HOMEM MAIS JOVEM, <i>sentado ao lado de JAIME, também aprecia a música.</i> [...] JAIME. Bravo! Bravo! JOVEM JAIME <i>levanta e bate palmas vigorosamente.</i> JAIME. Maravilhoso. Explêndido. JOVEM JAIME. Esplendoroso! [...] JOVEM JAIME. <i>(para o conjunto)</i> É sobre o Centro, não é? Eu sou de lá, sabia? Nascido e criado.
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This shift alters the conditions under which the scene is heard. The Dublin soundscape associated with chamber music and with the figure of the Liffey is replaced by an auditory environment drawn from Florianópolis. Translation thus operates as intervention; it reconstructs the framework through which memory becomes audible.

The stakes of this operation emerge in the scene that recalls Danny Murray as “the boy from the Alley”. In the source text, remembrance is keyed to a musical motif that encodes the social weight of place, allowing sound to register both personal memory and spatial stigma. In the adaptation, this configuration is displaced onto the Morro do Mocotó, a community historically associated with social marginalisation. However, this is presented as a risk-laden interpretive choice that exposes the ethical tensions involved in translating place and poverty across cultural contexts.

<i>The musicians play a notif that comes to represent Danny Murray.</i> YOUNG JAMES. That's him! Danny Murray. My best friend, the best friend any boy anywhere could ever hope to call his friend. JAMES. Danny Murray lives in the small row of cottages on the Alley. YOUNG JAMES. The Alley, the Alley, the Alley, the Alley... JAMES. White cottages they are with two families living in each. One on the top floor and one on the bottom floor. My ma seems to think it is some kind of affliction to live in the “alley”, some great shame or curse that might follow you up-and-out from your breakfast and sit like a threat, a warning on your chest! YOUNG JAMES. (as Ma). This fella is bad, this fella is no good... this fella comes from the Alley! JAMES. But I think it's a great place altogether. Teeming it is. <i>“The Music of the Alley” comes in (Kinahan, 2024, p. 159).</i>	<i>Os músicos tocam uma melodia que representa Daniel.</i> JOVEM JAIME. Daniel. Meu melhor amigo... O melhor amigo que qualquer menino poderia sonhar em ter. JAIME. Daniel mora em uma casinha de madeira no morro. JOVEM JAIME. O morro, o morro... JAIME. As casinhas de madeira são construídas no chão batido. Minha mãe acha que é uma vergonha morar naquele morro... Um tipo de maldição que te segue desde o café da manhã até a hora de dormir. Um tipo de aviso colado bem no peito... JOVEM JAIME. (<i>imitando a mãe</i>). Esse cara não é flor que se cheire. Esse cara vem do morro. JAIME. Mas eu não acho que é um lugar ruim. Muito pelo contrário... <i>Música que representa o Morro do Mocotó.</i>
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As Marguerita Laera (2019, p. 13) observes, “the very notion of equivalence obscures the material and cultural frictions generated by translation”. In this case, what is at stake is the displacement of a listening framework. Replacing the Alley with the Morro do Mocotó does not reproduce an Irish social formation; it situates memory within a different urban history, marked by specific patterns of spatial segregation and social exclusion in Florianópolis. The musical motif associated with Daniel no longer evokes Dublin's working-class imaginary, instead, it participates in a locally grounded soundscape whose meanings are historically and culturally distinct. Here, what emerges is a reorganisation of how memory is sonically encoded within the dramaturgy.

Thus, the substitution of the Alley by the Morro do Mocotó inevitably alters the political and cultural coordinates through which Kinahan's dramaturgy becomes legible. The adaptation does not preserve the historical specificity of the Irish setting, nor does it seek to establish an equivalent relationship between two distinct social formations. Such a gesture involves the risk of domesticating cultural difference by relocating it within a framework that may be more immediately recognisable to the Florianópolis' audience. Yet, as Homi K. Bhabha (1990) argues:

Translation is also a way of imitating, but in a mischevious, displacing sense - imitating an original in such a way that the priority of the original is not reinforced but by the very fact that it can be simulated, copied, transferred, transformed, made into a simulacrum and so on: the 'original' is never finished or complete in itself (Bhabha, 1990, p. 210).

In this context, the Morro do Mocotó functions as what Bhabha (1990) describes as a Third Place of enunciation – the adaptation produces a hybrid cultural space in which different histories enter into negotiation. The resulting dramaturgical landscape remains marked by Kinahan's concerns while simultaneously incorporating references that emerge from the social and sonic environment of Florianópolis. What is translated, therefore, is a set of relationships that acquire new meanings through their displacement into another context.

Yet the hybrid space produced through adaptation is not politically neutral. Following Tejaswini Niranjana (1992), translation can be understood as a practice that actively participates in the construction of cultural difference. The relocation of the play to Florianópolis therefore involves more than a change of setting, it also reshapes the conditions through which cultural meanings are produced and recognised.

For Lawrence Venuti (1995, p. 61), fluency is a “discursive strategy ideally suited to domesticating translation”, one that performs ethnocentric violence while concealing it beneath the illusion of transparency. When this logic governs the relocation of Kinahan's sound proposal, formal tension risks being converted into mere accessibility and strangeness could be neutralised. The unfamiliar becomes locally legible, and the auditory discontinuities that structure Kinahan's dramaturgy are smoothed into recognisable acoustic patterns.

It is at the level of perception that the theatrical consequences of this operation become fully legible. Fischer-Lichte's (2008, p. 88) notion of performative reception conceptualises aesthetic experience as an oscillation between sensorial immediacy and symbolic intelligibility:

A spectator first perceives a certain movement of an actor in its specific energy, intensity, thrust, direction, and tempo, and then suddenly understands it as a symbolic appeal to or threat of the character. Despite the shift from the material to the symbolic sphere, the actor's specific physicality might still affect the spectator in a particularly intense manner.

This oscillatory mechanism extends directly to sound. A musical motif is as force — timbre, rhythm, volume — acquiring associative and mnemonic value only subsequently. Sound translation therefore intervenes at the level of perception itself. By altering the sonic field, the translation

reorganises how the spectator listens, and thus how memory becomes sensible in performance. Musical meaning emerges through embodied, historically situated frames of audition. To modify the soundscape is therefore to recompose what can be heard, what resonates affectively, and which temporal strata of experience become perceptible on stage.

In musical dramaturgy, the limits of transfer are structural. Since music operates through culturally and historically sedimented practices of listening, it calls for re-inhabitation as a dramaturgical procedure grounded in embodied perception and situated sonic knowledge. Translating music, in this sense, concerns the activation of affective and sensory response. From this standpoint, the displacement of the Irish soundscape by a Brazilian sensory horizon aligns with what Laera (2019, p. 26) defines as “translation as adaptation”, according to which “a translation is always already what we now call an adaptation”. The movement from fidelity to effect, and from replication to resonance reconfigures the politics of authorship itself, foregrounding questions of authority, cultural memory, and erasure: who is entitled to adapt, and whose sensory histories are being mobilized in the process?

The scenes examined in this section are organised around technologically mediated sound. Acousmatic sound, understood here as sound dissociated from a visible source, reorganises the economy of theatrical listening by shifting attention away from liveness and toward sonic memory. The musical material mobilised in these scenes draws on repertoire already embedded in British and Brazilian cultural contexts, in dialogue with both the source text and its adaptation. Recognition, in this case, precedes interpretation, as familiar songs activate shared affective and historical associations before any narrative meaning is processed. What enters the stage, therefore, is memory in circulation. The following analysis traces how mediation and musical recognisability converge to recalibrate processes of recognition within the dramaturgical structure.

JAMES. But then I found the acting. The Acting! YOUNG JAMES. Oh yes, the Acting. BOTH. Plough! <i>The two JAMESSES seem agitated.</i> <i>Then the music changes. YOUNG JAMES responds to the music and begins to set up the stage for a short extract from Seán O’Casey’s play The Plough and the Stars, where he takes up the role of Young Covey, prompting JAMES to respond as Uncle Peter. They recite lines from Act One of the play in which young Covey gently taunts Uncle Peter as they remember their performance</i> (Kinahan, 2024, p. 164).	JAIME. Mas aí, eu descobri a atuação. (<i>Enfático</i>) A atuação! JOVEM JAIME. Ah, sim! A atuação! AMBOS. E Eles Não Usam Black-Tie! <i>Os dois JAIMES ficam agitados.</i> <i>A música muda. O JOVEM JAIME responde à música e começa a preparar o palco para um breve trecho da peça Eles Não Usam Black-Tie, de Gianfrancesco Guarnieri, onde ele assume o papel de Tião, levando JAIME a responder como Otávio. Eles recitam falas da peça, enquanto lembram da sua apresentação.</i>
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In this case, one canonical reference does not supplant another; it displaces the political coordinates through which memory is articulated. In Kinahan’s text, the allusion to O’Casey inscribes James’s recollection within the historical formation of Irish republicanism and its theatrical lineage. In the adaptation, resistance ceases to be mediated primarily through nationalist struggle and is re-routed through the history of labour mobilisation in Brazil, restructuring the semantic

framework of the memory being staged. What was previously anchored in anti-colonial discourse is rearticulated through class antagonism and urban working-class experience. This political reorientation is inscribed sonically and performatively.

O'Casey's theatre is marked by an inherited gravitas shaped by the conventions of early twentieth-century realism and by the authority of the nationalist repertoire. Guarneri's dramaturgy, by contrast, draws on a lineage forged within political theatre and popular mobilisation. The aesthetic consequence of this shift becomes audible, and orchestral suggestion gives way to practices associated with Brazilian working-class performance and activist sound cultures.

At this point, translation no longer functions as mediation. The translated text does not aim to preserve Ireland within a Brazilian frame but seeks to produce a political memory through which Brazil reflects on itself by means of a borrowed dramaturgical form. Translation thus operates as cultural intervention, revealing that memory becomes intelligible only when refracted through conflicts embedded in a local soundscape. Domestication, in this context, but reorganises the conditions under alterity becomes perceptible by displacing its acoustic coordinates. Music continues to operate as a "speech of memory", yet its form is recalibrated to act within a different historical and affective field. The aim is neither restoration nor imitation, but the production of intelligibility through situated aural and performative codes. This shift is clarified in the transformation that follows:

JAMES. The world! The world! Imagine! This life. This theatre. This acting that Frank D gave me. That Ma gave me. Well, it opened up everything, everyone, everyone that is dear to me. It opened up the world. YOUNG JAMES. London! JAMES. London! <i>'London Calling' by The Clash comes crashing in. YOUNG JAMES gets all punky, miming singing it and interacting with older JAMES, who enjoys it all immensely. Both join in for some of the lyrics.</i> YOUNG JAMES. Apollo Theatre, Lyric Theatre, Piccadilly Theatre. JAMES. Her Majesty's, St James's, Old Vic. I played them all (Kinahan, 2024, p. 167-168).	JAIME. O mundo! O mundo! Imagina isso! Essa vida. Esse teatro. Esse papel que o Seu Chico me deu. Que mamãe me deu. Bem, isso me trouxe tudo. Todos... Todos que são queridos pra mim. Isso me deu o mundo. JOVEM JAIME São Paulo! JAIME. São Paulo! <i>"Sampa", de Caetano Veloso, começa a tocar. JOVEM JAIME se anima, fingindo cantar e interagindo com JAMES, que aprecia a interação. Ambos se juntam para cantar algumas das letras.</i> JOVEM JAIME. Teatro São Pedro, Teatro Oficina, Teatro Municipal... JAIME. Teatro Ruth Escobar, Teatro Sérgio Cardoso... Eu atuei em todos.
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This shift becomes explicit in the substitution of the song "London Calling" by The Clash with Caetano Veloso's "Sampa". While the British punk anthem encodes alienation, urban decay, and generational unrest, *Sampa* articulates displacement through ambivalence and affective estrangement. The operation exceeds a simple exchange of settings: it repositions the dramaturgical function of the city itself. In Kinahan's play, London functions as a city of cultural antagonism and historical saturation; in the adaptation, São Paulo becomes a space marked by mobility, artistic

reinvention, and social fracture. Memory is thus no longer organised around post-imperial decline. Instead, it is about developmental contradiction and metropolitan excess.

Following Laera's (2019, p. 19) claim that "the translator is like a theatre-maker creating a performance of the source", translating music can be understood as an act that stages the play under altered historical conditions. Translation thus emerges as an ethical practice oriented toward linguistic alterity and rhetorical resistance. As Gayatri Spivak argues, the political force of translation resides precisely in its refusal to neutralise difference in the name of accessibility: "without a sense of the rhetoricity of language, a species of neocolonialist construction of the non-Western scene is afoot" (1993, p. 182). To translate, therefore, is to work within rhetorical friction, negotiating the tension between intelligibility and foreignness. In musical translation, this negotiation extends beyond linguistic equivalence to cultural and semiotic processes that resist full legibility, positioning the translator at the threshold between rendering and erasure.

Within this framework, the musical relocation enacted in the Florianópolis adaptation constitutes the production of a localized archive of memory. As Jéssica Vilvert Klöppel, Renata Stein de Souza and Daniela Spudeit (2013) demonstrate, musical practices in Florianópolis register geography and urban history, positioning sound as a form of spatial knowledge. Translation, in this sense, mobilises an auditory field shaped by historical sedimentation, in which instruments operate as cultural markers that carry social memory. What enters the stage, therefore, is an acoustically structured repository of local experience that recalibrates both perception and place, rendering memory audible and territory legible through sound.

The replacement of the string quartet with an ensemble consisting of *violão*, *viola caipira*, *gaita*, *pandeiro*, and percussion redesigns the performative geometry of the scene. These instruments establish different relations between body, rhythm, and space through the performance techniques they require. Their timbral density and patterns of circulation reshape how sound inhabits the stage and how memory is registered through listening. What changes is the regime of sonic inscription: harmonic enclosure gives way to rhythmic exposure, and the spectator's position shifts from distanced audition to corporeal proximity.

The restructuring of musical memory becomes explicit when Sara's central love memory is articulated through sound and place in both the source text and the adaptation:

<i>The song 'She Loves You' by The Beatles blasts in. YOUNG JAMES starts singing it too. He invites older JAMES to dance.</i> <i>The two of them dance happily to the song. The two of them then sit down.</i> YOUNG JAMES. London. Sara. London. JAMES. London. Sara. London. Trotting out into Leicester Square. Soho. Covent Garden. Day trips out to Hampton Court... that's where Sara hails from. YOUNG JAMES. Beautiful. JAMES. So beautiful out there on the river. So different to Dublin, to Emmet Road. YOUNG JAMES. Wealthy, rooted, assured. JAMES. And the city. Oh wow, the city... YOUNG JAMES <i>dances through this to the light impression of 'She Loves You'</i> (Kinahan, 2024, p. 174-175).	<i>"A minha menina", dos Mutantes, começa a tocar. JOVEM JAIME começa a cantar e convida JAIME para dançar.</i> <i>Os dois dançam alegremente ao som da música. Em seguida, sentam-se.</i> JOVEM JAIME. São Paulo. Sara. São Paulo. JAIME. São Paulo. Sara. São Paulo. Passeando pelo Bixiga. Vila Nova Conceição. Moema. Aqueles dias de sol que a gente passava no Parque Ibirapuera... A Sara morava tão pertinho de lá. JOVEM JAIME. Era lindo. JAIME. Era tão lindo quando a gente fazia piqueniques perto do lago. Tão diferente de Florianópolis, da Bocaiúva. JOVEM JAIME. Abastada, enraizada, segura de si. JAIME. E a cidade? Meu Deus, a cidade... JOVEM JAIME <i>dança ao som distorcido de "A minha menina"</i>.
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The substitution of the song *She Loves You* with *A minha menina* displaces an entire generational and cultural sensorium. While the Beatles' track condenses the ethos of British pop modernity and post-war optimism, the Mutantes mobilise the affective and political resonances of Brazilian counterculture. Here, the shift alters the cultural grammar through which love becomes memorable. Memory, in this configuration, unfolds through urban inscription rather than nostalgic idealisation. Leicester Square, Soho, and Covent Garden are replaced by Bixiga, Moema, and Ibirapuera, and with this substitution the spatial logic of intimacy is reorganised, recalibrating how affection is mapped onto the city.

Massimiliano Morini (2022, p. 70) identifies four operations in stage translation — interlingual, intralingual, intersemiotic, and intrasemiotic — providing a framework for situating musical relocation in this translation. The adaptation of *An Old Song, Half Forgotten* operates primarily within the intersemiotic and intrasemiotic domains, translating one perceptual regime into another. What is rewritten is the logic of experience, transforming sound in re-scripted through cultural habitus. The criterion governing this operation is therefore the capacity to stage memory as rupture and to sustain estrangement as a structural force.

The replacement of the string quartet with local instrumentation and Brazilian rhythmic idioms cannot be reduced to localisation. It constitutes a performative intervention in how the audience is invited to listen, remember, and recognise. To alter the musical codes in theatre translation is therefore to intervene in the cognitive architecture of the scene. In this case, intertextuality sustains the translation's intelligibility. It is here that Carlson's (2003) notion of the "haunted stage" acquires analytical force. The Irish quartet returns as structural absence and residual pressure. What emerges is a palimpsestic dramaturgy in which the source endures uneasily within the target, persisting as disturbance.

FINAL REMARKS

Translating *An Old Song, Half Forgotten* into the soundscape and memoryscape of Florianópolis constitutes a project of reconfiguration. The result is not a replica of Kinahan's play, but a distinct acoustic architecture through which memory becomes intelligible. In the source text, memory is staged as a fragile event structured by fracture, absence, and discontinuity. A serious engagement with this dramaturgical logic involves neither the attenuation of dissonance into generic affect nor its reification as a sign of "Irishness". It is important to draw attention to how sound structures time, perception, and loss, consonant with Spivak's (1993, p. 180) characterisation of translation as "the most intimate act of reading".

Within this framework, the substitution of the string quartet with Brazilian instruments and the recomposition of the soundtrack through regional rhythms and repertoires do more than register cultural difference; they reposition the affective codes through which memory is staged. Following Small's (1998) insistence that music functions as a practice, this analysis treats sound as an epistemological domain. To translate through sound is thus to determine which histories and geographies are summoned by a given timbre or rhythm, and which modes of belonging or estrangement are thereby enabled.

The proposal of "translation as resonance" is approached here in material terms. The Florianópolis adaptation undertakes a dramaturgical remapping that shifts the play's ideological coordinates from postcolonial Irish memory toward the layered formations of Brazilian cultural and political life. Such remapping entails risk, but it cannot be reduced to a process of cultural substitution. As the analysis has indicated, domestication of Kinahan's dramaturgy produces a hybrid space in which Irish and Brazilian histories enter into negotiation without becoming equivalent. Domestication remains a constitutive tension of this process, since local intelligibility is achieved through the reorganisation of cultural differences rather than its preservation. The political force of *An Old Song, Half Forgotten* resides in its resistance to full memorialisation. To relocate this resistance without resolving it requires a mode of listening attuned to rupture. By doing this, the Florianópolis adaptation constructs an acoustic space in which Irish traces and Brazilian resonances coexist without synthesis. Carlson's notion of the "haunted stage" (2003) is therefore apposite, since the translation of *An Old Song, Half Forgotten* could never efface the Irish quartet or the original sound cues, which persist as structural absences and residual pressures within the new sonic environment.

From Morini's (2022) account of intersemiotic and intrasemiotic translation, this project may be read as a transmutation of sensory logics, where musical dramaturgy recalibrates the audience's experience of subjectivity. In theatre, fidelity concerns the form through which memory is staged. The ethical orientation proposed here is accordingly grounded in resonance rather than sameness: it seeks proximity to the fractures of the source text while allowing them to be rearticulated within another historical and cultural field. It is within this unstable proximity that *An Old Song, Half Forgotten* becomes *Uma velha e esquecida canção*, as a reconfiguration of how memory is rendered audible.

Ultimately, this translation practice deliberately situates itself within a zone of epistemic risk. Translating memory through sound and locality exposes the work to loss and political misreading. The relocation of *An Old Song, Half Forgotten* within the sonic ecology of Florianópolis entails the possibility of new erasures alongside the forms of resistance it seeks to enable. Such vulnerability defines its critical orientation. Translation is approached here as an intervention into memory, and by engaging memory as something that resists stabilisation across cultural and historical borders, the adaptation treats instability as an ethical horizon.

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