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Puppet, Death, and the Devil:
Presences of Afterlife in Puppet Theatre

Edited by Nicola Pasqualicchio

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RAFFAELLA DI TIZIO*

A Journey to the Border Between Theatre and Literature: *Theateradaptionen. Interkulturelle Transformationen moderner Bühnentexte*, edited by Olaf Müller and Elena Polledri, Heidelberg, 2021*

Abstract

This article examines the essays collected in the volume *Theateradaptionen. Interkulturelle Transformationen moderner Bühnentexte* (*Theatre Adaptations. Intercultural Transformations of Modern Theatrical Texts*),¹ edited in 2021 for the Universitätsverlag Winter of Heidelberg by Olaf Müller and Elena Polledri, creating a dialogue between them and some hermeneutical proposals by Italian theatre studies. *Theateradaptionen* offers a multi-voice analysis of examples of influences and adaptations of theatrical texts between Germany and Italy and the connections between translations and the world of the stage. While based on the point of view of literary studies (particularly of Romance philology and German studies), the book investigates the border between literature and theatre. It is, therefore, particularly interesting to examine what has been said by scholars who have walked the opposite path: looking at literature from a theatrical perspective.

KEYWORDS: theatre adaptation; translation for theatre; cultural exchanges; theatre and literature; Italy and Germany; Giorgio Strehler; Claudio Mellolesi; Ferdinando Taviani

On the front cover of *Theateradaptionen. Interkulturelle Transformationen moderner Bühnentexte* (*Theatre adaptations. Intercultural Transformations of Modern Theatrical Texts*), edited in 2021 for the Universitätsverlag Winter of Heidelberg by Olaf Müller and Elena Polledri, there is a photograph of Milva and Giorgio Strehler on stage. Next to them, we see the poster of *Io, Bertolt Brecht* (“*I, Bertolt Brecht*”), which is the anthology of poems and songs produced in 1966 by the director and founder of *Piccolo Teatro* in Milan, with Paolo Grassi, whose role was central in the post-war period for the Italian

* Universitätsverlag Winter, 2021, ISBN 9783825347857. pp. 257

¹ Translations mine.

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reception of the German author. However, Strehler is only one of the many protagonists of this book, which provides a multi-voice analysis of the influences and adaptations of theatrical texts between Germany and Italy and the connections between translations and the world of the stage.

The introduction explains that the starting point for *Theateradaptionen* was a conference held in 2015 at the University of Mainz, Germany, in collaboration with the *Staatstheater* and the *Zentrum für Interkulturelle Studien*. The conference aimed to reflect “on processes of intermedial translation from the German and Italian perspectives” (“über intermediale Übersetzungsprozesse aus der deutsch-italienischen Perspektive zu reflektieren”), to create a dialogue between different disciplines on the intersection between literary and translation studies, and the —not always convergent— practices of translators, theatres, and publishers.

The perspective is that of literary studies (indeed, the two experts who promoted and edited the book are an Italianist from the Institute of Romance Philology at the Philipps University in Marburg – Müller – and a Germanist from the University of Udine – Polledri). However, as detailed in the first few pages, their interest is also programmatically addressed here to the concrete world of theatre operators to initiate a discourse that will continue in subsequent investigations on the theme of translation for the theatre. Therefore, it will be useful to observe whether and how much the point of view of the stage practices (i.e. not only with regard to the translators involved) is taken into account, in order to create a dialogue between the thematic insights presented here and the perspectives assumed over the last few decades by the most advanced Italian theatre studies. This comparison is useful because it is not facilitated by the language of *Theateradaptionen*, which was written in German and specifically addressed to a German-speaking audience.

The essays collected by Müller and Polledri are diverse in their specific interests. However, they recall each other for the questions they pose about the modalities and motivations of translation. They are divided into four thematic sections: (i) “German theatre in Italy, Italian theatre in Germany”; (ii) “Adapting and transforming the classics”; (iii) “Italian poets in German-speaking theatre”; and (iv) “German authors on the Italian stage”.² It is not possible here to fully examine all perspectives interwoven into *Theateradaptionen*, where each article examines a different facet of the problems (and opportunities) linked to the transmission of texts between cultures, in connection with theatre and its practices. However, a few key points will be discussed, such as reflecting on the ‘betrayal’ constituted by the vari-

² (i) Deutschsprachiges Theater in Italien, Italienisches Theater in Deutschland; (ii) ‚Klassiker‘ adaptieren und transformieren; (iii) Italienische Dichter im deutschsprachigen Theater; (iv) Deutschsprachige Autoren auf der Italienischen Bühne.

ous nineteenth-century theatrical translations of Goethe's *Werther*. Polledri compares these to the opinion of Foscolo, who considered the text suitable only for reading (like his *Ortis*). Goethe's *Werther* had actually been written by weaving feelings more than actions throughout the text —while the comedies that were derived from it could only be based on newly invented actions, moving irremediably away from the original (“Von Verter bis Pulcinella. Goethes *Werther* auf dem italienischen Theater”, 103-17, here 103-4). Although from the author's point of view there were good reasons to complain, as Polledri wrote, the “productive reception” (“produktive Rezeption”) of *Werther* belongs to the history of theatre: In Italy, it gradually became comedy, farce, puppet shows, and finally drama for music, and ended up celebrating values —i.e., those of the family and bourgeois order— that clearly contrasted with the romantic individualism of the novel (cf. 117). These were rewritings rather than adaptations, new versions created on the wave of the success of an English theatrical abridgment by Frederick Reynolds in 1786 (although the first dramatisation of *Werther* was in France in 1775) and built up through the introduction into the text of other logics, to ensure the stage functionality of the drama and to gain the attention of the audience. Simone Sografi, who was a successful playwright and admirer of Goldoni, Molière, and Diderot, added servants, poisons, and pathetic scenes of repentance and redemption to his Italian *Verter*, effectively transforming it into a comedy of sentimentality and intrigue.

If we look at it from the perspective of the text, the story of the theatrical *Werther* is that of complete ‘betrayal’. “Wo bleibt Goethe?” (“What remains of Goethe?”, *ibid.*), wrote Elena Polledri in the conclusion, underlining that theatrical adaptations say more about the taste of the audience of the time than about the work source. It is a correct observation, which implicitly invites us to bear in mind that theatres have their own precise production and survival strategies, from which their own artistic laws derive. This was especially true in a time well before the modern dynamics of state subsidies, when the stage was a risky business for the companies. However, theatres —at least when they are “alive”— always speak their own language: a specific medium that cannot but produce interference when in contact with literature. Claudio Meldolesi, who was one of the main re-founders of Italian theatre studies in the 1980s, dedicated an essay to the reception of Shakespeare in nineteenth-century theatre (1979). At that time, the Great Actors reshaped the characters on the basis of theatrical plausibility and of their interpretative strategies: it was a peculiar kind of “translation”, which was indeed later seen from the outside as a “betrayal”—on the principle that the actor should be a more or less faithful “mediator” between the text and the audience. However, from the theatre's point of view, this perspective reverses into the opposite: why not consider Shakespeare as the “mediator” for actors of a

newly found independence in acting, providing them with his dramaturgy a useful tool to achieve an individualistic and effective art form that responded to the taste of the time? In the same way, the theatrical *Werther* was effective for his time, saving, in the end, the protagonist from suicide, as other eighteenth- and nineteenth-century adaptations would save Romeo and Juliet from death (cf. Meldolesi 2013, 93). These represent plot twists that surprised the literati at the time and still make us smile today; but are we right?

As mentioned above, the contributors to *Theateradaptionen* are scholars of German and Italian literature and language, and translators working in the field of theatre. It is therefore normal that the main point of interest – even if there is no lack of openings and problematic views – is the text as a value in itself: this is observed in the complexity of its possible translations, and the stagings are also described as translations, even if *sui generis*. As we started to clarify, the panorama changes a lot if we take on the point of view of the scene. However, we could try to overcome this persistent dichotomy in the way we reason about theatrical matters by listening to what the theatre historian Ferdinando Taviani innovatively proposed in the 1990s: why not look at texts – not only plays – as part of a “literary space of theatre” (“spazio letterario del teatro”), observing the fluid boundaries between “everything that pours from literature into the world of performances and that flows from performances into literature”? (“tutto ciò che dalla letteratura si riversa nel mondo degli spettacoli e dagli spettacoli confluisce nella letteratura”, 2010,³ 18-19).

This is precisely what is offered by an essay at the centre of *Theateradaptionen*: a long reasoning by Henning Hufnagel on the aesthetics of “disguise” (“travestimento”) in the poetics of Edoardo Sanguineti (“Wirrwarr um Weimar. Zu Edoardo Sanguinetis Ästhetik des ‚Travestimento‘, ihren Wurzeln in Performances Cathy Berberians und ihren textuellen Effekten in Sanguinetis *Faust-Übertragung*”, 119-57). Starting from an analysis of a poem written in 1971 (during the six months in which Sanguineti lived with his family in Berlin) that condenses echoes of a performance by Cathy Berberian, Hufnagel invites us to consider how a theatrical event can be the basis of a particular line of literary research and how the suggestions gathered on that occasion can become the thread around which to develop precise poetics of translation over the years. This approach is anything but obvious. If we take the passage from text to stage for granted, to the point of considering – as Strehler did, when echoing the words of the French Director Jacques Copeau and the Italian critic Silvio d’Amico – the former as a musical score and the latter as its execution, the attempt to trace the opposite path from stage to book is still quite uncommon. In Italy, as early as the 1930s, a Germanist involved in

³ The book cited here is an extended edition of Taviani 1995.

theatrical practices, Alberto Spaini, tried to defend this point of view. It was a time when the debate on the relationship between text and stage was particularly intense, given the innovative impulses brought about by the new art of directing – which used text in performances as one material among others, claiming, for its own scenic creations, the dignity of autonomous works of art. In his history of German theatre, which was published in 1933 and updated in 1937 (*Il teatro tedesco. Dai tempi di Hauptmann al dramma socialnazionale*. Milan: Treves), Spaini described how the expressionist dramaturgy owed a debt of origin to the inventions of Max Reinhardt and emphasised that some poetic creations would have been unthinkable had it not been for this director's ability to construct "a theatrical technique capable of any miracle" ("una tecnica teatrale capace di qualsiasi miracolo", 1937, 288-9). Almost a century has passed, and such a perspective, which invites us to be attentive to the exchanges and mutual conditioning between stage and drama, continues to be a minority one.⁴

How often do we manage to consider theatre – and even a single performance – as a central part of the culture from which values and perspectives derive? Thanks to Hufnagel's essay on Sanguineti, who was influenced by the interpretative "disguises" of a theatrical evening held by Berberian in Berlin, another important aspect about the life of theatre can be verified: that his effectiveness, pervasiveness, and diffusion do not coincide with statistical parameters; in other words, numbers are not sufficient to define the impact of the scenic practice.⁵

However, diagrams are very useful for visualising the presence of specific dramaturgies on a country's stage. Here, for example, Diana Di Maria and Imke Momann used them to observe the diffusion in Germany from 1990 to 2013 of many more texts than those considered canonical, by Luigi Pirandello, Dario Fo (with Franca Rame), and Eduardo De Filippo ("Wann gab es sie eigentlich nicht, diese Krise des Theaters? Eine Bestandsaufnahme zeitgenössischer italienischer Dramatik auf deutschsprachigen Bühnen im

⁴ This is also unusual in theatre studies, despite the example in Italy of Claudio Meldolesi's complex analyses of the "theatre hidden [or, if you like, 'translated'] in novels" ("teatro nascosto nel romanzo", 2001, 56).

⁵ On this point, too, the obligatory reference is Ferdinando Taviani, who on several occasions expressed the need for a different consideration of the "weight" of theatrical events, recalling that the capacity to echo – that is to produce culture – of a theatrical phenomenon does not necessarily coincide with the number of spectators it reaches, just as the importance and quality of a restaurant cannot be judged by counting the number of seats. An evening or a meeting can have profound and concrete consequences on people's lives, in artistic poetics, and in the subsequent building of relationships and creative paths, consequences that would appear invisible if merely the point of view of statistics as a parameter is adopted.

Zeitraum 1990/91 bis 2012/13", 27-55). In this way, other authors who were known, or lesser known, emerged, and the analysis also reveals that everything is – and could not be otherwise – connected to the material reality of the theatre and that translations arise in connection with specific events (festivals, performances); in short, they always depend on the activities of theatres, publishers, contexts, and even the initiative of individuals (e.g. Sabine Heymann, to whom we owe a great part of the translations into German of the most recent Italian dramaturgy, as is recounted here). Thus, looking at one of the most translated and performed Italian playwrights in Germany, Fausto Paravidino, the authors note how the success and spread of his dramatic texts were linked to a set of circumstances that were not always easy to trace and which can only be understood by recalling biographies. The promotion of Fausto Paravidino arose, for example, from the interest in his work that was shown by the influential critic Franco Quadri (who allowed Paravidino's texts to be published for the first time), by the prizes he won, and by his decisive collaboration with the Teatro Stabile in Bolzano, which was in a position and tradition of continuous exchanges with the German scene. To these factors, we can add the correspondence of his style with a growing public interest in deconstructed texts and, as can be read here, even a certain fortune. Less convincing is the reasoning around the absence of translations based on the work of directors such as Romeo Castellucci, who was cited as one of "the best-known representatives of the new Italian theatre abroad" ("zählt zu den bekanntesten zeitgenössischen Repräsentanten des neuen italienischen Theaters im Ausland"). Why should questions of translation arise about his performances, which are ensemble compositions linked to the collective of actors involved, and in which the word has a non-central role? Perhaps we still (or again) struggle to recognise the art value of theatre in itself, even in the wake of certain modes of analysis of contemporary theatre (thinking here of the hermeneutic proposal – of great pervasiveness, despite the open contradiction with the cognitive basis of theatre studies – of Erika Fischer-Lichte's *Ästhetik des Performativen*, 2004, which aimed to unhinge the very idea of *opus* (work), replacing it with "event", with respect to performances). Indeed, if we consider the overall sense and complexity of the language of a play and not only the text, it goes without saying that it can be translated by others, just as Van Gogh's *Sunflowers* can be "translated" by another artist.

A merit of the essay is to focus on the importance for theatrical translations of personal initiative, whether by translators, editors, or theatre performers. This also stresses the importance of structural conditions for the concrete possibilities of cultural exchange. This last topic is highlighted by the first contribution in *Theateradaptionen*, a comparison between German and Italian theatrical institutions and dramaturgical traditions by Luigi Re-

itani, a well-known Germanist who recently passed away, and who was a specialist on Hölderlin, and director of the Italian Cultural Institute in Berlin for five years. The point of view here is exclusively that of literature, and it is effective in showing something decisive in terms of the differences between the dramaturgies of the two countries: the cultural weight acknowledged for the theatre for centuries in Germany – and not in Italy – which also means for German authors today “eine konkrete Möglichkeit, ein breites Publikum zu erreichen und Geld zu verdienen” (“a concrete chance to reach a wide audience and to earn money”). Italian theatre would be less appealing to authors and less suitable in terms of providing a breeding ground for translations, not least because the system of public theatres that lasted for so long in Germany was adopted much later in Italy, and not as pervasively. It should be remembered, however, that in Italy many sorts of “theatre” exist, which, alongside the official system, include stable groups who create their own productions, actor-narrators, and myriads of self-built theatrical houses. However, here we are examining the theatre on the basis of the reproducibility of texts on stage and looking for systematic reasons of functionality – or not – of the passage between cultures.

This viewpoint also brings to the surface a common thought about theatrical history that we still struggle to overcome, the one whereby the *Commedia dell’Arte* is described as the work of actors who are only interested in “showing off” their virtuosity, as street art made up of improvisation, and far removed from literature. Nevertheless, the actors were often cultured and authors of poetry, and the companies chose to call themselves by names that echoed those of the well-respected literary academies – such as the *Gelosi*, or the *Accesi* – and their repertoire did not only include masks, but also pastorals and other texts from the recognised canon. If anything, it was their versatility as interpreters of different types of theatre that had gained them commercial success.⁶ Taviani has repeatedly argued that also the emphasis on improvisation should be greatly reduced: on the one hand, as has been said, it was not the only specialisation of “professional actors” (“comici di professione”), who “often wrote and performed erudite comedies” (“spesso scrivevano e recitavano commedie erudite”, 2015, 273); on the other hand, as theatre historian Roberto Ciancarelli recalled in a recent review, there was much more room for improvised creation in the repeated staging of “pre-packaged” texts than in the compositions of *canovacci* that had been

⁶ These are issues that Ferdinando Taviani has explored in several studies: a synthesis of the characteristics of the *Commedia dell’Arte* can be found in Taviani (2015), but see also the posthumous Taviani (2021), which contains a bibliography of his contributions on the subject, among which Taviani and Schino (1982) has a central place.

long studied and worked upon by the actors of the *Commedia dell'Arte*.⁷

How can we proceed to prevent the history of literature from becoming the history of a process of colonisation when it encounters the theatrical terrain? Reitani had a point here, as his view closely resembled the normal way of imagining the *compagnie dell'Arte* from abroad (and indeed it was the freezing of such a style that the Italian companies in France tended to conform to in the eighteenth century to meet the expectations of audiences and to find success; cf. Meldolesi 1988). This represents an idea that has been made canonical by the twentieth-century reinventions of “directorial” theatre, imagining a popular, improvised, non-literary *Commedia dell'Arte*, which was at the basis of many creations by directors such as Mejerchol'd and Copeau. However, it is precisely these persistent misunderstandings that confirm the need for the dialogue between disciplines that *Theateradaptionen* itself calls for, and which it is hoped can continue on an equal footing, without remaining closed off within the fences of old established “certainties”.

The strength of *Theateradaptionen* lies in an aspect that elsewhere often brings weakness: its structure is made up of separate and divergent essays. The reality it describes — that of cultural exchanges in terms of the theatre — has many different facets, and the answers to the questions posed by Müller and Polledri in the Introduction (e.g., Who decides to translate a text? When and why? With what difficulties?) cannot lead to systematic results. Thus, the different voices and perspectives offered by the authors help to break the illusion of a simple and univocal path and gain an idea of the complexity of the reality of theatre, even when seen through the lens of text translations.

⁷ Ciancarelli explains that this is the reversal of a typical cliché in looking at theatre: by analysing the “modes of production of actors of *Commedia dell'Arte*, Taviani gives an account of procedures and rules for action that provide for the materials used by the actors to be rigorously fixed, and for any variation or invention to be controlled and contained before being destined to be ignited in the fire of the action. Contrary to what is taken for granted, he thus shows that it is in the theatre that is linked to the repetition of texts, to the “premeditated”, that evening after evening, in the sequence of repetitions, new inventions, inevitable adaptations and extemporary variations are produced and multiplied (“modi di produzione degli spettacoli dei comici, Taviani dà conto infatti di procedure, di regole d'azione che prevedono che i materiali impiegati dagli attori siano rigorosamente fissati e che qualsiasi variazione, qualsiasi invenzione sia arginata e contenuta prima d'essere destinata ad accendersi nel fuoco dell'azione. Può dimostrare così, al contrario di quanto considerato scontato, come è invece nel teatro legato alla ripetizione dei testi, al ‘premeditato’, che sera dopo sera, nella sequenza delle repliche, si producano e si moltiplichino nuove invenzioni, inevitabili adattamenti, estemporanee variazioni”, Ciancarelli 2022, 12. We quote here, by permission of the author, the original version of the text, published unfortunately with some editorial oversight).

The following examples (in no particular order) demonstrate how *Theateradaptionen* makes history of subtle transitions and mutual influences, trying to focus on the heterogeneous elements that condition the reception of a work. Michael Rössner (“Die Crux des Erfolges. Zu Übersetzungs- und Aufführungsschwierigkeiten Luigi Pirandellos im deutschen Sprachraum von den *Sechs Personen zu den Riesen vom Berge*”, 171-84) observed the parabola of Pirandello’s theatrical success in Germany from the time of his first tours and Reinhardt’s productions; he recalled the importance of German culture for the development of the Sicilian writer and the themes of his dramas, and showed how the reception of a theatrical work is linked to the translatability – or not – of the cultural contexts from which it originated. Francesca Tucci (“Von den lateinischen Trauerspielen welche unter dem Namen des Seneca bekannt sind”. Lessings Auseinandersetzung mit Seneca”, 69-80), recalled the contributions from translations to the enrichment of the cultural landscape of the 18th century and highlighted the importance for Lessing of Seneca’s works, which were so distant from the literary trends of the time, but also for that reason were effective for planning the construction of a new national theatre. In the field of theatre practice, Sabine Heymann, already mentioned here as a translator of dramaturgy from Italian into German, wrote “,Konzept‘ und ,Wort“”. Luca Ronconis Methode der ‚Zweigleisigkeit‘ bei der Inszenierung von übersetzten Texten” (245-52); she focused on the work of Luca Ronconi, a director of texts that were considered unrepresentable. Sabine Heymann tells of his ability to turn the untranslatable components of theatre literature into a fertile ground for the possibilities of the stage by giving value to the ambiguity of the translated word, which would be the opposite, she explains, of how a translator would usually act in the effort to “normalise” a text with respect to the culture of the new, foreign audience. This represented a form of theatre that in Germany garnered both praise and criticism: this essay, the last in *Theateradaptionen*, ends with German critic Peter Ideen’s opinion that Ronconi was inferior to Strehler in bringing splendour to the *Piccolo Teatro*. However, is it the task of theatre workers to provide lustre for an institution? Shouldn’t institutions rather exist to support the ever-evolving needs of theatre practices?

Strehler’s poetics is at the centre of two other contributions, one by Flavia Foradini, a translator who has long collaborated with the *Piccolo Teatro* (“Strehler und Brecht im Dialog. Adaptionen Giorgio Strehlers für das Theater”, 234-44) and the other by Marco Castellari, a Germanist at the University of Milan (“Dal libro alla scena. Paolo Grassi, Giorgio Strehler und die deutschsprachige Dramatik im Italien der 1940er-50er Jahre”, 225-34). This is an idea of the direction that is well known in Italy and linked to the faithful staging of the text; however, examined more closely, as is done here, it shows how faithfulness also means knowing how to change a text, how to

bring it closer to the present audience and time, without twisting it. This is what happened for the *Opera da tre soldi* (“*The Threepenny Opera*”) presented in 1956 with the approval and contribution of Brecht, who wrote a new ending for the occasion. These are useful openings that can serve to move ideas: if on the one hand, *Theateradaptionen* here and there expresses the difficulty of tracing the fortunes of texts and translations in a theatre that today only occasionally makes itself representative of an author’s script, on the other hand, we encounter overviews capable of also including in their gaze performances that are not centred on a single text but are born from creative confrontation with the entire production and cultural world of an author. This was done, for example, by Peter Goßens’ essay on Pasolini’s theatre in Germany, where Pasolini proves to be extremely present, despite the ever-decreasing attention to the direct staging of his theatrical texts (“Pier Paolo Pasolinis Theater in Deutschland”, 201-17). Indeed, why should we not include in the reflection about translations, as it is done here, the miscellaneous performance that Milo Rau dedicated to Pasolini in 2016 and pay attention also to those theatrical creations that put Pasolini at the centre as an object, as a theme, as well as the ones that referred to him as an author?⁸

Certainly, this complicates matters if we aim to trace translated plays. However, if addressed to dramaturgy, the questions posed by translation studies lead to an inevitable interconnection with the complex material reality of theatre and with the multiplicity of its modes of production. Also, it will not be possible to determine in advance what is negligible: It needs to be remembered that even a performance by a lesser-known author than the one referred to, or even the work of an unknown group operating on the periphery of “official” theatre, can have a deeper impact than a lot of museum theatre – which is what theatre is reduced to when its sole purpose is to display classical works of the present and the past as exhibits.

Something should still be said about Strehler: He is often described as the father of directing in Italy, but this is an optical illusion. His theatrical “revolution”, as Castellari defined it, would for Italy have meant “the birth of a true directing theatre, linked to a political commitment” (“Strehlers Theaterrevolution, die für Italien nicht weniger als die Geburt eines echten Regietheaters, verbunden mit einem sozialpolitischen Engagement, bedeutete”, 229). It should, however, be made clear that this was also a form of normalisation with respect to more radical tendencies, which could not be placed

⁸ This theme is explored in depth in Taviani (1978). However, even the founding fathers of directing did not necessarily make use of a single text, using texts as part of the materials for new and complex creations. See, for example, the descriptions of Mejerchol’d’s work in Ripellino (1965) or the overall view of the theatrical revolution of the twentieth century by Schino (2003).

within the boundaries (also considering the inevitable political compromise) necessary for the life of a permanent repertory theatre. Theatrical direction had also been practiced before the Second World War, and until the 1950s, it remained a plural trend. Although the “critical direction” (i.e., a way of directing that starts from the text to give it a possible interpretation) was later predominant, at the beginning it was only one of the many different possibilities for the Italian theatre.⁹ For this reason, Castellari’s invitation to observe Strehler’s work on German dramaturgy before and after his well-known Brechtian path is of particular interest. This is a thesis that agrees with the one advanced on the theatrical front by Meldolesi that assumed that the success of the mature Strehler somehow obscured the earlier, more experimental phase of his theatrical commitment (1987). This is indeed a period that is generally omitted from memories and analyses, while if it was taken into due consideration, it could provide new perspectives and a better understanding of a director who was central to the Italian scene and of a complex and rich season of national theatre history.

These case studies in *Theateradaptionen* on the exchange between Italian and German theatre literature and the world of the stage also include the following: an essay on the role of theatre magazines in the dissemination of foreign dramaturgy in post-war Italy (Gabriella Catalano, “Das Theater entdecken. Deutschsprachige Werke in den italienischen Theaterzeitschriften der zweiten Nachkriegszeit”, 69-80); a study of Schiller’s adaptation of Shakespeare’s *King Henry* in his *Maid of Orleans* (Ulrich Port, “Marienfromme Militanz. Eine Shakespeare-Adaption (*King Henry VI, Part 1*) in Schillers *Jungfrau von Orleans*”, 81-101); an examination of a new German translation of Goldoni’s *Servant of Two Masters* (Dietrich Scholler, “Goldonis *Servitore di due padroni* in neuer Übersetzung”); and an analysis on the translation and staging of Primo Levi’s *The Versifier* (Marco Menicacci, “Die Dichtung am Theater. Übersetzung und Inszenierung von Primo Levis *Il Versificatore*”). These all provide images of a wide and jagged landscape that reveals itself rich in points of interest. It is to be wished that this journey will continue and further strengthen the dialogue between disciplines and perspectives.

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⁹ The reference study on the subject is Meldolesi (1984), rich in data and information as it is in still innovative hermeneutical proposals.

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