

Bartolomé Sanz Albiñana. 2013.
***La expresión de la sexualidad en las traducciones
españolas de "Hamlet"***
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Sexual language and the subject of sexuality are certainly a constant in Shakespeare's work, as well as a topic of critical interest. In this monograph, Sanz Albiñana intends to identify the strategies used by translators in their attempt to render the double underlying sense of erotic wordplay in order to recreate the ambiguity of the original text, and assess the erotic puns and metaphors used by the bard. With that aim in mind, the author embarks on his analysis to discern how faithfully these rhetorical figures have been translated in four Spanish versions of *Hamlet*: one edited by the Shakespeare Institute and those by Angel Luis Pujante, Salvador Oliva and Vicente Molina Foix (the latter being an incomplete translation).

Although González and Klein's *Shakespeare and Spain* (2002), Carvalho Homem and A. J. Hoenselaars's *Translating Shakespeare for the Twenty-first Century* (2004), Pujante and Campillo's *Shakespeare en España: textos, 1764–1916* (2007), Zaro's *Shakespeare y sus traducciones* (2007) and Pujante and Gregor's "*Hamlet*" *en España: las cuatro versiones neoclásicas* (2010) are proof that recent studies on the translation of *Hamlet* into Spanish are hardly scarce,¹ it is nonetheless true that there is no previous scholarship regarding the analysis of

¹ There are some earlier monographs, as well, such as H. Thomas's *Shakespeare in Spain* (1922) and E. Juliá Martínez's *Shakespeare en España, traducciones, imitaciones e influencia de las obras de Shakespeare en la literatura española* (1918).

sexuality in the translations of *Hamlet* into Cervantes's language. Thus Sanz Albiñana's volume is a welcome addition to the field.

After an introduction where the author states the starting point of his study, structure, objectives and methodology, as well as the volumes he uses as reference works for quotations from Shakespeare's play, and a list abbreviations and symbols, he structures his book in three main chapters. The first chapter, entitled "Las traducciones de *Hamlet* en España," alongside a study of the history of *Hamlet*'s reception in Spain, offers an analysis of the kinds of translation problems encountered. In that respect, the tables included are very useful. He starts by offering an overview of the previous translations of *Hamlet* from the eighteenth century to the present, as well as a very accurate proposal of a time line of five different periods, based on the key moments in the reception of *Hamlet* in Spain. Then, the author analyses twenty-five Spanish versions of Act 3, scene 2, lines 106–14 and adds useful comments regarding the quality and accuracy of those translations. After a thorough coverage of the available Spanish versions, he explains that, given the impossibility of being all-inclusive, he has chosen to limit the scope of his study to the analysis of the translations offered by the Shakespeare Institute, Pujante, Oliva and Molina Foix. He has based his choice on the fact that they were done during the democratic period, due to the unprecedented boost in the number of translations of Shakespeare's plays at that time.

In the second chapter, "Los juegos de palabras," which approaches the topic from the perspective of lexicographic criticism, the author theorises on the use of word games and puns in Elizabethan and Jacobean drama and on the reasons for Shakespeare's profuse and exceptional use of them. He also studies the different functions of those word games and puns, their classification and approaches the issue of the possibility or impossibility of their translation into Spanish as the target language; finally, he focuses on puns and word games with sexual connotations. He certainly provides interesting insights both for translators and scholars.

In the third chapter, the author analyses sexual puns, studying the sexual elements in more depth, offering a theoretical justification for the analysis of the translation of puns, and focusing on four representative translations of *Hamlet*, three of them into Spanish and

the fourth into Catalan. One of Sanz Albiñana's achievements is his detection of many bad renderings, and his classification of those and of other more successful alternatives as "unsatisfactory," "satisfactory" or "very satisfactory," which proves very helpful not only for scholars interested in the study of the translation of puns, but also—together with the rest of the analyses and tables included in this work—for future scholars wishing to introduce themselves to the foundations and basic methods of scientific work in translation studies.

Following his conclusions—in which, among other remarks, he praises the way the translations studied represent a striking improvement with respect to previous efforts, regarding the translations of puns with sexual connotations—the author adds two appendices at the end of the book. Appendix 1 features the (re)translations of *Hamlet* from 1772 up to 2011; appendix 2 offers a chronology of the various films, television productions and adaptations of *Hamlet* in a number of different countries. Given that the book deals with the Spanish translations of *Hamlet*, I think perhaps the author could have omitted this second appendix and, instead, included a reference (perhaps in a footnote, for instance) to two Spanish productions: that directed by Celestino Coronado in 1976 and the more recent adaptation directed by Claudio Guerin Hill (2007). The contents of the second appendix are very interesting, but its relevance to this book is not entirely clear.

Notwithstanding the absence of some relevant studies such as *Ophelia's Satirical Diadem: The Herbs in Shakespeare's Hamlet*—in which Annis Ward Jackson (2012) explains the meanings of the herbs in *Hamlet* and how cleverly they are used by the English Renaissance playwright to unveil the sexual corruption pervading Claudius's court—Rose's "Sexuality in the Reading of Shakespeare: *Hamlet* and *Measure for Measure*" (1985), and a curious misspelling of the title of the book by Evelyn Gajowski, *Presentism,² Gender and Sexuality in Shakespeare* (2009) as "*Presentation (sic), Gender and Sexuality in Shakespeare,*" the last part of the book constitutes a very complete bibliography, structured in two parts: primary sources (including editions and translations of the play) and secondary sources.

² "Presentism" here refers to literary analysis that introduces present-day ideas and points of view, anachronistically, into narratives or interpretations of the past.

In conclusion, this work is no doubt the product of serious scholarship and a valuable addition to the field of Translation Studies and, particularly, to the progressively increasing criticism on various aspects of the Spanish translations of *Hamlet*. With this book, Bartolomé Sanz Albiñana has made a major contribution to the study of the expression of sexuality in the Spanish translations of *Hamlet* and he both paves the way and throws down the gauntlet for future studies on the Spanish translation of other Shakespearean dramas.

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