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**Boyle, Catherine, David Johnston, Jonathan Thacker, and Paul Spence, project dirs. Out of the Wings: A Contextualised Resource of Spanish-Language Plays for English-Speaking Practitioners and Researchers. Other.**

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**Boyle, Catherine, David Johnston, Jonathan Thacker, and Paul Spence, project dirs.**

**Out of the Wings: A Contextualised Resource of Spanish-Language Plays for English-Speaking Practitioners and Researchers. Other.**

London: King's College London / Oxford: University of Oxford. Accessed 12 May 2020.

outofthewings.org.

The Out of the Wings project defines itself as a virtual environment that makes accessible detailed information in English about a selection of Spanish-language plays to theatre professionals, including researchers and practitioners. With Catherine Boyle, David Johnston, Jonathan Thacker, and Paul Spence as project directors, it was developed by King's College London, Queen's University Belfast, and the University of Oxford through a project funded by the Arts & Humanities Research Council between 2008 and 2011.<sup>1</sup> At present, it only functions as a static website without the search capabilities of the project's database.

The project's scope comprises three areas of Spanish-language theatre: Golden Age drama, with a selection of twelve playwrights (including Portuguese author Gil Vicente, who also wrote in Castilian); modern theatre, "from the last decade of the eighteenth century [...] to new plays currently on stage in the major cities of Spain" ("Modern Spanish Theatre," [outofthewings.org/theatres/modernspain/index.html](http://outofthewings.org/theatres/modernspain/index.html)), represented by thirty-three dramatists; and "Spanish American Theatre," an admittedly controversial term that, in this project, covers thirty-one playwrights from Chile, Argentina, Uruguay, Peru, Bolivia, Colombia, Venezuela, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and Mexico. A definition and justification of these three temporal and geographical areas are presented

1. The dates of the project's development are not shown on its website. Only the year 2018 is appended to the copyright sign on the pages' fixed footer. The stated period between 2008 and 2011 is taken from two sites on the King's College London Research Portal: Out of the Wings: Spanish and Spanish American Theatres in Translation, accessed 21 January 2021, [kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/en/publications/out-of-the-wings-spanish-and-spanish-american-theatres-in-translation\(d2a4219f-7145-4e5d-8a37-e540f62ef0f8\).html](http://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/en/publications/out-of-the-wings-spanish-and-spanish-american-theatres-in-translation(d2a4219f-7145-4e5d-8a37-e540f62ef0f8).html), and Spanish and Spanish American Theatre in Translation: A Virtual Environment for Research and Practice, accessed 21 January 2021, [kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/en/projects/spanish-and-spanish-american-theatres-in-translation-a-virtual-environment-for-research-and-practice\(2b1d5634-4bf9-4e14-bdf4-47c667cf5a58\).html](http://kclpure.kcl.ac.uk/portal/en/projects/spanish-and-spanish-american-theatres-in-translation-a-virtual-environment-for-research-and-practice(2b1d5634-4bf9-4e14-bdf4-47c667cf5a58).html); and from the entry for "Out of the Wings," Queen's University Belfast, accessed 21 January 2021, [pure.qub.ac.uk/en/datasets/out-of-the-wings-spanish-and-spanish-american-theatre-in-translat](http://pure.qub.ac.uk/en/datasets/out-of-the-wings-spanish-and-spanish-american-theatre-in-translat).

on pages that can be reached through the “Hispanic Theatres” tab on the permanent top menu. The next tab on this navigation bar, “Approaches,” leads to generous definitions of the three key research areas with which the project engages: “Translation,” “Methodologies and Performance,” and “Historiography of the Spanish Golden Age.” All of these are peripheral to the heart and soul of the project: over two thousand HTML pages about dramatists, plays, and translators, sorted out through entries from an “Author index,” “Play index,” and “Translator index” displayed on a permanent side panel on the “Authors, Plays & Translators” page, through the second tab of the top menu.

The information on every author page consists of the name, date, and place of birth, a short biographical note, a discussion of the dramatist’s main themes and style, plays in the database (encoded as hyperlinks to their respective pages on the project’s website), and bibliographical information about useful readings and websites. The information for each play is denser and more complex. It is organized into nineteen fields, grouped in turn into the five broad categories of “Overview,” “Staging information,” “Translations,” “Sample translations,” and “Production history.” These categories are sorted out by means of a horizontal menu on every play page. The “Overview” information consists of fields dealing with the title (in Spanish and English<sup>2</sup>), date of composition and publication, keywords (such as morality > honor, morality > vice-virtue, identity, love > relationships, love > desire), title information (in some plays), genre and type, pitch, synopsis, sources,<sup>3</sup> critical response, editions, useful readings and websites, and similar plays.<sup>4</sup>

The “Staging information” gives an account of the play’s structure (under the heading “Scene”) and practical information—of interest mainly to theatre

2. It would have been helpful to see alternative English titles to the one chosen by the project. For instance, Lope de Vega’s *La dama boba* is recorded as “The Foolish Lady,” but other titles in English are “The Lady Simpleton,” “The Stupid Lady,” and “Lady Nitwit,” as seen in the translations the project compiles (“La dama boba,” accessed 21 January 2021, [outofthewings.org/db/play/la-dama-boba/translations.html](http://outofthewings.org/db/play/la-dama-boba/translations.html)).

3. The pitch and sources of a play and its critical response are singular fields not covered in the database projects of Lope de Vega ([artelope.uv.es/basededatos/index.php?-link=Home](http://artelope.uv.es/basededatos/index.php?-link=Home)) and Calderón de la Barca ([calderondigital.unibo.it/](http://calderondigital.unibo.it/)).

4. As stated on each play page, the choice of “similar plays” is “automatically suggested by our system based on similar fields such as genres and types or keywords.” See, for example, Guillén de Castro’s *El amor constante* (Constant Love) at [outofthewings.org/db/play/el-amor-constante.html](http://outofthewings.org/db/play/el-amor-constante.html).

directors and producers—such as the stage properties and costumes required (“Staging”), the minimum and maximum numbers of male and female roles needed (“Cast number”), and the list of roles (“Characters”). The content of the “Translations” section varies depending on the number of translations and the information for each of them. At least it provides the bibliographical reference of one edition or—in the case of unpublished translations or partial translations—the title, date, and name of the translator in the hyperlinks leading to samples of their texts. In plays with several translations, these are listed (not necessarily in chronological order) with title, date, and name of translator(s) in hyperlinks that refer to subsections on the same page. Other types of information may consist of a list of characters, theatre productions in which the translation has been employed, samples of the text, and further information about features such as the choice of versification form(s) in the target text.

The “Sample translations” offers a transcription of one or more excerpts, each with an explanation of the context and the corresponding bibliographical reference. A good number of the excerpts seem to be *ad hoc* translations, since they are subscribed by members of the project’s research team: Gwynneth Dowling, Kathleen Jeffs, and Gwendolen MacKeith, as well as Catherine Boyle and David Johnston. The texts are licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution – NonCommercial – No Derivatives 3.0 license. Finally, the “Production history” page is headed by lists of productions in Spanish and English (and occasionally in another language, e.g., Japanese) with hyperlinks to subsections on the same page. For each production, details for director, theatre company, dates, venue, and location (city) are given, as well as a comment on the critical response, which may include hyperlinks to external websites such as newspapers or magazines that publish reviews, or brief information about revivals.

The fact that translators are given prominence in the labels “Authors, Plays & Translators” and “Translator index” may create expectations of information about translators that are not fulfilled, since users only get to know the names of translators and the translations compiled in the project they are associated with; nevertheless, this feature serves the good purpose of giving visibility to these essential agents of intercultural production, a role that is too often overlooked.

The side panel also gives access to a helpful “Glossary” with entries for genres (e.g., “esperpento,” “zarzuela”), movements, groups, or styles (e.g., neo-classical), people (e.g., Margarita Xirgu), theatre companies (e.g., Fray Mocho), venues (e.g., Sala Beckett), and institutions (e.g., “Residencia de Estudiantes”).

There are only seventeen entries, however, which might suggest that the glossary is an underdeveloped feature of the project.

Overall, the project facilitates contextual information on seventy-six dramatists (fourteen of them female authors), 202 plays, 285 translations (full and partial) into English, around 450 samples of translations, over six hundred theatrical productions and revivals (in English and Spanish), and 168 translators (forty-six of them female translators). With only twelve playwrights from the Golden Age period (including female authors Ana Caro and María Zayas), the focus is rather on contemporary drama from both sides of the Atlantic. In the subsections for translations and productions, the absence of a number of references suggests that the project's aim is to facilitate information and to stimulate interest rather than to build an exhaustive repository.<sup>5</sup>

As is sadly the case with a number of digital projects when their funding period ends, the resource was converted to a static website without the possibility of adding new content.<sup>6</sup> The year 2018 in the copyright sign might presumably indicate the date of this conversion. In addition to the search function of the database being inoperative, other discontinued functionalities are the “My account” option (through which registered users could submit a record, post comments, and add tags to a play), the project's blog,<sup>7</sup> the hyperlinks in the “Keywords” and “Genre and type” features for each play, and other hyperlinks such as the “View all entries” on the Homepage.<sup>8</sup> However, the static website does allow browsing “all existing records, including their associated metadata,

5. For instance, while some plays (e.g., Leandro Fernández de Moratín's *El sí de las niñas* [The maidens' consent]) have their early performances in the “Productions” subsections, others only provide twentieth- and twenty-first-century ones. To name a few, Lope de Vega's *Las bizzarrías de Belisa* (The gallantries of Belisa) or Pedro Calderón de la Barca's *Los cabellos de Absalón* (The hair of Absalom) do not have any of the seventeenth-century productions provided by the CATCOM database ([catcom.uv.es/consulta/home.phpcatcom.uv.es/consulta/home.php](http://catcom.uv.es/consulta/home.phpcatcom.uv.es/consulta/home.php)), a performance calendar of early modern Spanish drama, now incorporated into the ASODAT project ([asodat.uv.es/](http://asodat.uv.es/)).

6. I am grateful to Catherine Boyle for her private email (5 August 2019) in which she explained these circumstances, an email that replied to a suggestion to add hyperlinks in *Out of the Wings* to three English-language translations published by the EMOTHE digital library ([emothe.uv.es/biblioteca/index.php?](http://emothe.uv.es/biblioteca/index.php?)).

7. The link to the blog is broken as of this writing.

8. A number of other hyperlinks are broken, e.g., for Ben Gunter's *Electing a Sheriff in Podunk County*, an adaptation of Cervantes's *La elección de los alcaldes de Daganzo*, whose entry is found at [outofthewings.org/db/play/la-eleccion-de-los-alcaldes-de-daganzo/translations.html](http://outofthewings.org/db/play/la-eleccion-de-los-alcaldes-de-daganzo/translations.html).

translations and histories” (“Modern Spanish Theatre,” [outofthewings.org/theatres/modernspain/index.html](http://outofthewings.org/theatres/modernspain/index.html)) contained in HTML pages. As readers of this review may have already guessed, access to these records/entries is possible through a well-systematized network of hyperlinks, organized around indexes. The above-mentioned “Authors, Plays & Translators” page (second tab on the fixed top menu) functions as the database index. This page has two permanent side panels: the left-hand menu displays the links for the “Author index,” “Play index,” “Translator index,” and “Glossary,” as well as “Search” and “Submit a record” (now inoperative); from the right-hand panel, users can choose to view by name or by date and select the period and geographical areas (an option that is also no longer active). A horizontal menu containing clickable buttons sorts out the access to the information in all the three main pages for the author, play, and translator indexes respectively. By default, the viewing option by name is shown, with these buttons displaying the letters of the alphabet. The list-by-date viewing only works for Spanish Golden Age drama, with the buttons dividing the period into groups of twenty years and giving access to the links for authors according to their year of birth.

The HTML pages have a responsive web design (which functions also on a mobile phone), include a breadcrumb navigation, and gracefully resort to collapsible text in order to hide long blocks of text in subsections. A data export facility may be missed by researchers, while some general users may miss the “light-on-dark” mode. The footer of the website contains the copyright advertisement assigned to King’s College London, the internal hyperlinks for “Top of page” and “About this website,” the now non-functional “Sign in” and “Register” options, and the logos of the universities involved and the funding institution.

A related product of Out of the Wings worth highlighting is John O’Neill’s digital edition and English-language translation of Miguel de Cervantes’s comedy *La entretenida* (*The diversion*), which has its own website<sup>9</sup> and deserves a review of its own.

All in all, Out of the Wings is remarkable for its comprehensiveness, bringing together performance and translation, and is a welcome contributor to the dissemination and promotion of Spanish-speaking theatre culture among Anglophone users. One may only miss the full text of the translation

9. John O’Neill, ed., *La entretenida / The Diversion*, by Miguel de Cervantes, accessed 21 January 2021, [entrenenida.outofthewings.org](http://entrenenida.outofthewings.org).

of some plays.<sup>10</sup> As a digital project, it is a robust website with an efficient user-experience design that succeeds in keeping “the database freely available for as long as possible in a sustainable manner” (“Home,” [outofthewings.org](http://outofthewings.org)), while it prompts reflections on the fact that information repository projects cannot be updated forever. This leads to questions about the sustainability of digital ventures in general. As a research and practice community, Out of the Wings is still very active at fostering play readings, workshops, and forums on translation into English of Spanish-language drama—events that can be followed at [ootwfestival.com](http://ootwfestival.com).

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**AHCT Board of Directors, project leads.**

**Association for Hispanic Classical Theater, Inc. Other.**

WordPress: Accessed 1 May 2020.

[wordpress.comedias.org](http://wordpress.comedias.org).

Theatrical production in Spain during the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods in England enjoyed a rich and prolific moment of creativity, often called the Golden Age. The Renaissance in Spain, influenced by Cinquecento theory and evolving neoclassical precepts, led to the baroque period, with verse drama becoming more and more ornate, elaborate, and rhetorically and conceptually complex, and with a certain resistance to strict neoclassical principles. The Spanish counterparts of William Shakespeare and his contemporaries and followers include Lope de Vega, Tirso de Molina, and Pedro Calderón de la Barca, among other playwrights, male and (in a definite minority) female. Lope de Vega (1562–1635) is credited with the formulation of the *comedia nueva*,

10. Nine plays of Golden Age drama in English translation are available at Spanish *Comedias* in English Translation, Association for Hispanic Classical Theater ([comedias.org/texteng.html](http://comedias.org/texteng.html)), and seven at the EMOTHE digital library ([emothe.uv.es/biblioteca/index.php?](http://emothe.uv.es/biblioteca/index.php?)), among them Lope de Vega’s *Madness in Valencia*, David Johnston’s 1998 translation of *Los locos de Valencia*, published in EMOTHE in 2012, accessed 21 January 2021, [emothe.uv.es/biblioteca/textosEMOTHE/EMOTHE0230\\_MadnessInValencia.php](http://emothe.uv.es/biblioteca/textosEMOTHE/EMOTHE0230_MadnessInValencia.php). This translation is featured in Out of the Wings, but only with a sample.