

Performing *Dancing at Lughnasa* on screen

by Mariagrazia De Meo

Abstract

Considered one of the most representative playwrights in the contemporary Irish scene, Brian Friel offers in his plays a changeable and inconstant perception of language, where words are mainly understood as transitory and translational as they are able to generate ambiguity, due to a variety of contradictory interpretations. Therefore, through the search for new channels of communication that go beyond words, he moves away from realism, presenting theatre as a liminal space of physical liberation and rituality, a means of expression that sets free from the tyranny of words.

The article examines the adaptation from the play to the film of one of Friel's most acclaimed plays, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, in which words fail their communicative intent and leave ground to dance, as a way for the characters to rediscover a form of archaic rituality that marks the triumph of irrationality and communicates a sense of alienation to the audience. The aim of the research is to analyse the linguistic re-modulation and renegotiation between words and images in the cinematic performance, highlighting those features of Friel's theatre that find a new form on screen. To talk about adaptation as a form of translation presents, on the one hand, the enduring issues concerning fidelity and equivalence and, on the other, the necessity for the adaptation to find an independent voice, following its new semiotic dimension. Without departing from a comparative analysis, the basic perspective will consider the film performance in its intertextual dimension, therefore as a product of transformation and re-modulation of different discursive practices that determine autonomy from its source.

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to analyse the transition from the stage to the screen of *Dancing at Lughnasa* (1990), the award-winning and probably the most representative play of the contemporary Irish playwright, Brian Friel. The film adaptation, directed by Pat O'Connor (1998), unlike its theatrical source version, did not achieve the same international approval, despite the actors' convincing performance, among whom starred the internationally known and acclaimed Meryl Streep. Despite a favourable audience response at home, most review-

ers and critics¹ considered the screen adaptation as still largely dependent on stage conventions, failing to abandon its theatrical essence and to balance the verbal and visual elements effectively. Moreover, the presence of beautiful but scattered and empty landscape shots, the predominance of interior settings and the lack of action did not add enough cinematic rhythm to the adaptation, negatively labelled, in some cases, as a mere film of the play².

Leaving aside the commercial and economic reasons that might partly explain the negative reception, this paper is going to focus on the process and product of film adaptation through a descriptive and target-oriented approach, as suggested by Cattrysse³. He maintains that, in both Translation and Adaptation Studies, the relationship between a source and a target text, initially confined to issues of equivalence and faithfulness, should not detract attention from acknowledging the «cultural emancipation»⁴ and the aesthetic value of the object of analysis. Applying the polysystem theory⁵ to the study of film adaptation helps to free the film from dependence on a single source text, revealing instead its intertextual dimension, its relationship with multiple sources and the interplay of different discursive practices and norms. As argued by Stam⁶ the issue of fidelity and the idea of essence is unsustainable in agreement with post-structuralism and deconstruction theories that tend to overthrow the hierarchy between an original and its derivation and the value of comparative analysis. However, it will be argued that, although adaptation is an «ongoing intertextual process»⁷, comparative issues are still necessary for understanding and perceiving the target performance in relation to its main source and also in the perspective of appreciating the adaptation as an independent art form⁸.

Therefore, does theatricality necessarily represent a negative feature if transferred into cinematic performance? And is an explicit adaptation unable to escape the burden of fidelity and faithfulness to its immediate source? Starting from central features in Friel's drama that are considered relevant to the adaptation process, the following analysis will present, through a comparative perspective, the relation between stage and film performance in order to highlight its transformation and re-modulation.

I

Performing liminality

Since human behaviour is the central object of investigation in Performance Studies⁹, theorists have been observing the circumstances and ways in which certain behaviour has been externalized. Performance is understood, first of all, as an artistic practice, as «a process and a product of communicating interaction»¹⁰ between a performer/actor and an observer/spectator. Therefore, it is a wide umbrella term, which includes different forms of expression, ranging from those intended in a more traditional sense such as dance, music, and

theatre to those closer to real life, as in ritual practices. Moreover, distinguishing between them is not always possible. Turner¹¹ argues that a ritual is a kind of liminal performance, where a limen functions as a passageway, a moment of transformation caught between spaces. Here the participants stand in a position of vulnerability, open to change, as «taboos are lifted, fantasies are enacted»¹² and a kind of wilderness enables individuals to set themselves free from social conventions and established social roles. This liminal condition is delimited in space and time and it is only the prelude to a new phase that will bring either prosperity or destruction.

In *Dancing at Lughnasa*, the liminal space of the ritual is performed both on stage and on screen, since it corresponds, at certain moments, to the special dimensions of the drama and it materializes through dancing. The action takes place in the month of August during a festival celebrating the pagan god of the harvest, Lugh. The ritual consists in the lighting of bonfires and a gathering in which people walk their cattle through the fire, as an act of purification against the bad spirits, drinking and dancing with no refrain. This ceremony, which is recounted by the sisters in the play, finds a visual representation in the film. In this liminal space, a sense of spontaneity and disruption of the imposed social order adds a new dimension to the idea of community, a moment of liberation from conflicts and crisis, where people are free from ordinary constraints¹³. Dancing is the ritual gesture, which is performed in order to be transported into the liminal space of pagan ceremonies, whereas language is mainly presented as the counterforce, the barrier of rationality that controls emotions.

The drama, like most of Friel's plays, is set in what can be considered as the liminal space of imagination, the fictional town of Ballybeg¹⁴ in County Donegal, a border space, situated in the North but still part of the South. It is a place that, despite its harsh life, is a nostalgic homeland of emigration and exile¹⁵. Set in 1936¹⁶, the play portrays the grim existence of the five unmarried Mundy sisters and their older brother Father Jack, struggling to survive and hold their family together amidst a background of poverty and uncertainty and on the verge of dramatic and inevitable collapse. Inspired by Friel's real aunts, whose names are kept unchanged, Kate is the eldest of the sisters, portrayed as a strict but good hearted schoolteacher who is the only one with a stable income to sustain the family. Maggie, who is mainly in charge of the housekeeping, embodies Irish wit and light spirits. Agnes and Rose knit gloves at home as their share to the upkeep of the household, and the youngest, Chris, is the unmarried mother of a seven-year-old son. Michael performs the double role of the child in the play and of the narrator who, many years later, recounts his memories of that particular summer, populated by the images of his loving aunts and mother, of his uncle Jack whom he met for the first time after his return from a mission in Uganda, and of his father Gerry Evans. Above all, Michael remembers getting their first radio, which is

almost considered a character in the performance because of its uncontrolled presence.

1.1. Language shaping memory

If the performance of rituals and dance embodies the inevitable forces of change and disruption, language embodies identity and expresses the fundamental tension between the human search for stability and the hidden and intimate desire for transformation, between rationality and imagination. Friel uses language in a performative rather than a mimetic, representational sense, as «a disclosure of a personal and historical meaning»¹⁷ as well as an aesthetic, cultural and political phenomenon. Identity is dependent on and performed through the creation of personal narratives and memory, which are shaped by language. Therefore, when our personal narratives diverge from the collective ones, conflict and crisis inevitably develop.

Rethinking the myths and memories that shaped Irish consciousness marked Friel's artistic and political life. Brought up in a nationalist Northern Catholic family, he developed «a cautious and questioning scepticism about his heritage»¹⁸, building a sense of displacement. Although he was an activist in the Nationalist Party, and his plays are deeply political as the themes of independence, emigration and exile are recurrent, the accusation about political propaganda is not appropriate. He remains deeply critical and prone to *demythologizing* the nationalist cultural legacy, which he saw as responsible for immobility in Irish society¹⁹. As illusions, memories, and cultural identity are all constructs of mendacious language, Friel adopts a postmodern attitude in the development of his plays that often disclose multiple points of view and fragmented identities, with little agreement between individual and collective images. As in Beckett's theatre, Friel's distancing from realism is evident in the rejection of a plot-driven arrangement of events, «creating theatre from a largely static situation»²⁰, particularly in his recent plays. On the other hand, the playwright succeeds in creating realistic characters that suggest familiarity and intimacy, as in *Dancing at Lughnasa*, where memories are «more real than incident and everything is simultaneously actual and illusory»²¹. The repressive reality of a small Catholic community does not allow free expression of individuality, therefore, coming into contact with the hostile inhabitants of Ballybeg reveals the sisters' state of outcasts, their social marginalization. Since memory shapes our identity, Jack's way of establishing a new contact with the long lost sisters is through his account of his life in Uganda, which is associated with pagan rituals, sacrifices to the gods, the open acceptance of polygamy and of children born outside marriage. His narratives are not disguised but openly expressed and in contrast with Kate's stubborn attempt to pull him back into her narrow, Catholic reality. It does not surprise that Jack's native language fails him many times and the

simplest English words seem to have disappeared from his memory, but, as language fails in its communicative purpose, dance and silence open up new possibilities.

2

Adaptation as translation

According to Cattrysse²², adaptation analysis requires us to consider its function in the receiving culture, the preliminary norms pertaining to the reasons behind its creation and the operational norms, concerning the way in which the adaptation develops. Film adaptation should be approached «as a set of discursive (or communicational, or semiotic) practices, the production of which has been determined by various previous discursive practices and by its general historical context»²³. Considering the intertextual relations and the multiple interpretations that participate in the creation of the adaptation at a narrative, rhetorical, pragmatic, aesthetic, and socio-cultural level, helps to shed new light on the comparison between source and target text. The central issue has less to do with the level of comparison chosen than with the relevance and usefulness of that comparison for the interpretation, following a target-oriented approach. In the 1990s the development of Screenwriting Studies²⁴ followed a similar approach to the one suggested in Descriptive Adaptation Studies; thus it tried to identify norms following a target-oriented and descriptive approach, starting from the analysis of the relation existing between the screenplay and the stage version, not simply in search of what is maintained or lost in the theatrical source, but focusing on how the cinematic version offers an independent reconsideration that challenges and adapts both the theatrical and cinematic canons, adding new and independent connotations. As «the text is conceived as being *within* the performance, rather than *above* or *beside* it»²⁵, the present analysis sees the screenplay and the cinematic performance as entangled in the historical and social circumstances.

Nearly a decade separates the first stage performance of *Dancing at Lughnasa* in 1990 from Pat O'Connor's film adaptation in 1998. This is a year that brought fundamental change to Ireland's troubled history, due to the signing of the Good Friday Agreement, a document that managed to finally put an end to the violent conflict between Protestant and Catholics in Northern Ireland. The Irish playwright Frank McGuinness wrote the screenplay in close cooperation with the director, and while placing due importance on the source material, they stressed the need to start the process of re-writing and adaptation from scratch²⁶. During a lecture at University College Dublin, McGuinness referred to the translation process, pointing to the contrast between Friel's declared lack of interest for film adaptation on the one hand and, on the other hand, the mixing in his dramas of different codes, the use of cinematic techniques and innovative changes as well as intertextual reference to multiple

sources²⁷. Aware of the slipperiness in the adaptation of such a successful and authoritative play, McGuinness aspired to constructing a new interpretation and performance through a different art form, enforced by the conviction that every text is born out of multiple sources and adaptations. Leaving aside the reference to other material that certainly had a role in the interpretation and transformation brought about in the film adaptation, our research focuses on the interplay between the theatrical and cinematic narratives and connotations as the film and the play are tightly interrelated as regards their historical and sociocultural functions.

2.1. Negotiating verbal and visual elements

In the adaptation process, the superficial similarity between theatre and film performance, due to the presence of actors, sound effects, lighting, costumes, directors and producers, and a similar duration, leads to an illusory expectation of finding similarities in the work's structure and dialogue. Unlike the theatrical three-dimensional possibilities, films are constrained into a two-dimensional space. In both media the action is performed to an audience. However, while the point of view remains mainly static in theatre, the distancing effect created by camera movement, foci and angles gives them the illusion of different perspectives. Costanzo²⁸ argues that since the existence of superficial affinities may work against the appreciation of the cinematic product as independent of its direct source, it is essential to «negotiate specific ways of eliminating the stagy feeling that would seem disruptive and discrepant in a film»²⁹.

One of the main operational norms in adaptation concerns the translation of the verbal text into images and movement through the inclusion of different frames, location shifts, and reduction of the original text. Films have the possibility of shifting instantaneously between locations, projecting emotional response through extreme close ups, revealing minimal facial expressions³⁰.

In *Dancing at Lughnasa* the re-modulation of the verbal and visual elements is already evident in the opening credits, where the central reference to pagan rituals is visually performed through the images of natives, recalling Jack's ceremonial hat exchange. These frames create an immediate analogy between Ryangan ceremonies and the Irish tradition of the harvest dance, conveying the Dionysian force that accompanies the performance and thereby creating the illusion of a displaced setting that might well not be Ireland but Africa. The first image of the kite to the backdrop of a blue sky maintains this ambiguity of place, which is soon to be abandoned in the subsequent scene that shows the sister's remote cottage. As McGrath³¹ observes, the Dionysian spirit, which recalls the myth of an ancestral pagan Irish myth, remains part of the performance, in all those events that stand as rebellions to the oppressive

Catholic order. A part from the pagan festival of Lughnasa in the back hills, evident signs of disruption are brought by Father Jack's memories, by Gerry Evans' visit, and also by the signs of modernization, such as the opening of the knitting factory and the uncontrolled incursions of the radio set, christened after the pagan god Lugh. «Friel himself describes the pagan as a requisite for humanity»³², its denial leaves the characters vulnerable and unaware, facing inevitable change.

2.2. The narrative structure

The changes in the narrative structure and the visual sequencing of actions are related to linguistic changes in the film adaptation. In order to add cinematic rhythm, the action is rearranged and the film translates into images events which, on stage remain embedded in the sisters' stories and past memories. The director opens up the play, making locations visible: i.e. the village of Ballybeg, Kate's school, the untouched Irish countryside, the trip to Lough Anna on Danny Bradley's boat, the Lughnasa bonfire, among the others. Clearly, new settings require the physical presence of minor characters that were only mentioned, such as Vera McLaughlin, who buys the hand-knitted gloves from Agnes and Rose and tells them about the opening of the knitting factory, the young Sophia, Danny Bradley and Father Carlin who fires Kate out of sheer prejudice.

Rearranging the sequences of locations and dialogues determines considerable changes at a linguistic level. Through a creative mixture of strategies, including the use of unassimilated words and sentences as explicit reference to the source text³³, switching utterances, condensation, addition, transformation, and reduction, McGuinness moulds the film dialogue into the cinematic performance. As an example of linguistic transformation, the following extract shows how a similar piece of dialogue is re-contextualised and performed by different characters, with a different purpose. In the left column, the scene in the film creates a sense of intimacy between Gerry and his son Michael, while in the right column, the extract comes from the play, where it is Chris who speaks about unicorns to Gerry [Table 1].

As already outlined above, language functions as an instrument that empowers lies. In the film (1), the audience shares the visual experience of the characters that are riding a motorbike through the countryside. The sight of sheep is not an obstacle to Gerry's imagination, which triggers an illusionary image of unicorns, useful to fill the embarrassing silence, but Michael breaks the illusion with a rational answer. While language fails to create a contact between the two, gestures do not, as shown by the sudden kiss that charges the scene with sentimental efficacy. In the play the interlocutors are different: although Chris agrees to play along with Gerry's image, he feels mocked, as language is damaging and mendacious.

TABLE 1³⁴

<p>(1) <i>Gerry</i>: Do you see that strange animal over there? <i>Michael</i>: What's strange about it? <i>Gerry</i>: The horn is in the middle of its forehead. Could it be a unicorn? <i>Michael</i>: A unicorn's a horse. That's a cow. And there's no horn. <i>Gerry</i>: Maybe it's invisible. <i>Michael</i>: It's not there. It's not a unicorn. Could we go home now? I'm hungry. <i>Gerry</i>: All right. (<i>Michael suddenly throws his arms about Gerry and kisses his cheek.</i>) What's that for? <i>Michael</i>: I don't know.</p>	<p>(2) <i>Gerry</i>: You'd never guess what I met on the road out from the town. Talk about good luck! A cow with a single horn out of the middle of its forehead. <i>Chris</i>: You never did! <i>Gerry</i>: As God is my judge. Walking along by itself. Nobody near it. <i>Chris</i>: Gerry! <i>Gerry</i>: And just as I was passing it, it stopped and looked me straight in the eye. <i>Chris</i>: That was no cow you met –. That was a unicorn! <i>Gerry</i>: Go ahead and mock. A unicorn has the body of a horse. This was a cow – a perfectly ordinary cow except that it had a single horn just here. Would I tell you a lie?</p>
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

2.3. A shift in perspective

Although in the play, the leading characters are female, the perspective remains essentially male, through the convention that sees the adult narrator remaining on stage, unseen by the other actors, while he addresses his long, lyrical monologues directly to the audience. The boy Michael remains invisible and the sentences addressed to him, although not being addressed directly to the narrator, get a response in the adult's voice. As McGuinness remarks «the play *Dancing at Lughnasa* is male and the challenge of translating it into film lay in making as best as I could [...] a woman's movie»³⁵. In order to accomplish this, in the film, the narrator's voiceover is considerably reduced, limited to the initial presentation of the characters and to the final epilogue, whereas it is the boy Michael who interacts with the other characters.

The aim to abandon the male perspective explains the forward shift of the most celebrated scene in the entire drama, the powerful outburst of a frantic, ferocious dance that reveals the temporary triumph of the Dionysian spirit, transforming the sisters and freeing them from control and repression. The essential spirit of the scene is explained in the play by long and detailed stage directions that describe the exasperated movements. Kate is the last one to start dancing, after resisting the outburst of her inner desire, but she dances alone and in silence. She performs «a pattern of action that is out of character and at the same time ominous of some deep and true emotion»³⁶. The dance symbolizes «a sense of order being consciously subverted, of the women consciously and crudely caricaturing themselves, indeed of near-hysteria being induced»³⁷.

In the film, through the camera close ups on the sisters' faces and feet, it is possible to catch that sparkle of excitement, triggered by traditional Irish music that suddenly comes from the radio. Kate's outburst is performed and interpreted differently; she not only shouts and dances with the others, but also leads them outdoor in an exasperated choreographic display. While, usually a dance performance shows «a vivid example of bodies materializing gender within historical codes and conventions»³⁸, in the drama dancing sets us free from the social order. Going round and round in circles and always holding each other, the sisters are dragged into the ritual space of liminality, a moment of transition, driven by a common impulse and extraordinary force³⁹. Men remain astonished spectators of the dance. Whereas in the play's opening the narrator had mentioned the memory of his mother and aunts' being turned by the music into «shrieking strangers»⁴⁰, anticipating the violent dance scene, in the film the audience is left to experience the performance. McGuinness's intention is to present the dance totally out of men's control and comment.

[T]his is the women's war dance and the victory is an assertion of strength that needs no formality of male address, no monologue to dignify it, it thrives through the cracked grace of the camera, capable of many foci, refusing to centre on a single unifying male voice. Control is collective instead – the passion I wished to explore in the film, that passion is sisterly, not masterly⁴¹.

When the music stops that intense emotional climax, which is also shared by the audience, is still evident on the sister's faces, but it immediately turns into an expression of shame and sadness, in the awareness of «things changing [...] too quickly»⁴². From the middle of act one, the dance scene shifts towards the end of the film. The performance takes place on the very eve of everything collapsing and of the sisters' separation; it is the final expression of that ancestral force and sisterly act of self-determination. Placing the dance in the middle of the film would have weakened the dramatic power of the outburst. From this moment the film performance is a tragic sequence of events leading to the moving end. Chris meets Gerry in the barn for a last intimate goodbye as they will not see each other again: she knows his promises are not to be trusted but also that his feelings are sincere. Vera visits the sisters to deliver the bad news about not being able to buy gloves from Agnes and Rose anymore, because of modernity advancing. A desperate glance between the women reveals the bitter awareness that there will be no other job for naïve Rose. The idea that she might become a burden for the whole family leads Agnes to take the final decision. Bell⁴³ argues that the resolution of conflict through the collective performance of a ceremony usually leads to a final sacrifice. In the film the ceremonies are all performed in the last sequences to reinforce this sense of final sacrifice. First, there is the collective and tribal celebration during the

bonfire for the festival of Lughnasa, where Danny Bradley takes Rose, then the women's dance and finally the ceremony of the hat exchange between Gerry and Jack, sealing the friendship between the men. Once these ceremonies are performed, Agnes and Rose sacrifice themselves for the sake of the family and the community going into exile and ending up dying alone in the streets of London. Because of her illegitimate son and of the shame brought to her family, also Chris will sacrifice herself, choosing to work in the knitting factory for the rest of her life.

The film is pervaded by a new sense of rhythm. The narrator's monologues and Jack's long digressions, as they are in the play, would slow the pace of the performance down, therefore they are considerably reduced and Jack's parts are broken up into much shorter comments in between the sister's conversations. Moreover, the camera movements create sequences of intimacy in private locations, as it happens when Maggie is listening to Jack's stories in his bedroom, when Chris and Gerry are away in the forest and locked in the barn, or when Jack is walking with Kate and Gerry.

However, it is language, rather than actions that moves the narration forward and embodies the dramatic conflict between inner emotions and reality. Through deceitful and charming language, the family celebrates their memories and images from the past, makes jokes, laughs and plays, Kate shows her split nature, biting and severe but also affectionate and understanding, whereas the lack of action metaphorically translated the emotional stillness of the women. Furthermore, the focus on language serves the purpose of dismantling its reliability and preforming its failure, celebrating the liberating power of music and dancing «as if language had surrendered to the movement, dancing as if language no longer existed, because words were no longer necessary»⁴⁴. The screen adaptation suggests the impossibility in separating the actor's performance from action: praising the former while blaming the stillness of events does not serve justice to the spirit and intentions of both the screenwriter and the director who, in the process of adaptation, aimed at maintaining intact the centrality of language as the essential carrier of action.

Conclusions

In describing the process of adaptation in relation to translation and reading, Stam suggests that the use of terms like «dialogization, cannibalism, transmutation, transfiguration and signifying»⁴⁵ are more appropriate than fidelity to account for the relation between the source and target text in a comparative analysis. This paper aimed to show, through a descriptive approach, that the film, in spite of it evidently being an adaptation of what is considered a sacred and authoritative Irish theatrical text, stands as an autonomous aesthetic creation, reinterpreting and reshaping the dialogues and characters through the actors' performance and the employment of cinematic features. The risk is to

remain entangled in a net of parallelisms, which would impede the appreciation of the adaptation *per se*.

In *Dancing at Lughnasa*, language and dialogue form the real action; the intimate conversations on familiar and repetitive topics in most of the film, even the bitter words of criticism and slight insults, convey a sense of peace and familiar good spirits that stands fiercely against change and disruption. Therefore, the film remains essentially language driven and centred on character portrayal. This probably accounts for the generalized criticism levelled against the film as being too theatrical, failing to deliver an effective and convincing cinematic performance. O'Connor stated that the film intended to «draw together [...] romance, humour, tragedy, realism and mysticism» and was «a tribute to the human spirit»⁴⁶. This article shows evidence that he succeeds in mixing the apparently static conversations around the kitchen table and theatrical acting with cinematic elements like close ups, re-modulation of sounds and silence, rapid changes of perspective, idyllic landscape shots, choosing a dialogic approach between the two media. The film's theatricality should be interpreted as a feature of intertextuality that undeniably binds the film to the cultural and aesthetic Irish context.

Notes

1. J. F. Dean, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, Cork University Press, Cork 2003.
2. H. O'Brien, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, in <http://homepage.eircom.net/~obrienh/dance.htm>, 1998.
3. P. Cattrysse, *Film (Adaptation) as Translation: some Methodological Proposals*, in "Target: International Journal of Translation Studies", vol. 4, n. 1, pp. 53-70.
4. Ivi, p. 56.
5. I. Even Zohar, *Polysystem Theory*, in "Poetics Today", vol. 11, n. 1, 1990, pp. 9-26. Also *Papers in Culture Research*, Tel Aviv University, Tel Aviv 2010 (Electronic Book, <http://www.even-zohar.com>).
6. R. Stam, T. Miller (eds.), *Film Theory: An Anthology*, Wiley Blackwell Publishers, Malden-Oxford 2000.
7. Ivi, p. 64.
8. D. L. Kranz, *Trying Harder: Probability, Objectivity and Rationality in Adaptation Studies*, in J. L. Welsh, P. Lev (eds.), *The Literature/Film Reader: Issues of Adaptation*, Scarecrow Press, Lanham 2007, pp. 77-102.
9. R. Schechner, *Performance Studies: An Introduction*, Routledge, New York-London 2006.
10. E. Bell, *Theories of Performance*, Sage Publications, Inc., Thousand Oaks 2008, p. 11.
11. V. Turner, *Liminality and Communitas*, in H. Bial (ed.), *The Performance Reader*, Routledge, New York-London 2004, pp. 79-87.
12. V. Turner, *The Anthropology of Performance*, PAJ, New York 1988, p. 102.
13. A. Halprin, *Moving toward Life: Five Decades of transformational Dance*, Wesleyan University Press, Hanover 1995.
14. The word *Ballybeg* comes from the old Irish word *Baile Bag* that means small town.
15. C. Tóibín, *Brian Friel: trapped in silence*, in "The Guardian", Friday 10th August 2012.
16. This was a period when the conservative values of post-independence Ireland tried to reinforce the revival of Celtic traditions together with conservative Catholic values, in a time of profound change marked by exile and emigration.

17. R. Kearney, *Language Play: Brian Friel and Ireland's Verbal Theatre*, in "Studies: An Irish Quarterly Review", vol. 72, n. 285, 1983, pp. 20-56, p. 46.
18. F. C. McGrath, *Brian Friel's (Post)Colonial Drama. Language, Illusion and Politics*, Syracuse University Press, New York 1999, p. 16.
19. D. Kiberd, *Dancing at Lughnasa: Between First and Third World*, in H. Mikami, M. Okamura, N. Yagi (eds.), *Ireland on Stage: Beckett and After*, Carysfort Press, Dublin 2007, pp. 153-76.
20. Dean, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, cit., p. 24.
21. B. Friel, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, Faber & Faber, London 1990, p. 71.
22. Cattrysse, *Film (Adaptation) as Translation: some Methodological Proposals*, cit.
23. Ivi, pp. 61-2.
24. P. Cattrysse, *Adaptation and Screenwriting Studies: Methodological Reflections*, in http://www.academia.edu/1182567/2011_Adaptation_and_Screenwriting_Studies_Methodological_Reflections 2011.
25. P. Pavis, *Analyzing Performance: Theatre, Dance and Film*, The University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor 2003, p. 199 (translated by D. Williams).
26. G. M. Bryant, *An Irish Renaissance with Pat O'Connor's "Dancing at Lughnasa"*, in http://www.indiewire.com/article/an_irish_renaissance_with_pat_oconnors_dancing_at_lughnasa, 1998.
27. In *Dancing at Lughnasa*, like in previous plays, the central presence of the narrator, for instance, borrows directly from Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie*, that also inspired different film and television adaptations.
28. L. Costanzo, *Literature into Film: Theory and Practical Approaches*, McFarland and Company Inc. Publishers, Jefferson 2006.
29. Ivi, p. 145.
30. P. Zattin, *Theatrical Translation and Film Adaptation*, Multilingual Matters Ltd., Clevedon 2005.
31. McGrath, *Brian Friel's (Post)Colonial Drama. Language, Illusion and Politics*, cit.
32. Dean, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, cit., p. 3.
33. D. Andrew, *Concepts in Film Theory*, Oxford University Press, New York 2000.
34. In table 1, the left column (1) shows the screenplay from F. McGuinness, *Brian Friel: Dancing at Lughnasa: Screenplay*, Faber & Faber, London 1998, pp. 48-9, while the right column (2) shows the play script from B. Friel, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, Faber & Faber, London 1990, p. 30.
35. F. McGuinness, *Filming Friel: Lughnasa on Screen*, in P. J. Mathews (ed.), *The Art of Popular Culture: From "The Meeting of the Waters" to Riverdance*, University College Dublin Scholarcast, Dublin 2008, p. 3.
36. Friel, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, cit., p. 22.
37. Ivi.
38. Bell, *Theories of Performance*, cit., p. 182.
39. Halprin, *Moving toward Life. Five decades of transformational dance*, cit.
40. Friel, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, cit., p. 2.
41. McGuinness, *Filming Friel: Lughnasa on Screen*, cit., p. 4.
42. McGuinness, *Brian Friel: Dancing at Lughnasa: Screenplay*, cit., p. 9; Friel, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, cit., p. 2.
43. Bell, *Theories of Performance*, cit.
44. McGuinness, *Brian Friel: Dancing at Lughnasa: Screenplay*, cit., p. 45; Friel, *Dancing at Lughnasa*, cit., p. 71.
45. Stam, *Beyond Fidelity: The dialogics of adaptation*, cit., p. 62.
46. Cfr. P. O'Connor, *Thoughts on "Dancing at Lughnasa"*, in <http://www.sonyclassics.com/dancingatlughnasa/filmmakers/thoughts/t-oconnor.html>, 1998.