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Frames and Framing: Marina Carr's *The Cordelia Dream* and its Italian Translation

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Abstract:

After a brief introduction to "frame" and "framing" in various disciplines, I will attempt to show that these notions can be applied to the analysis of the play *The Cordelia Dream* (2008) by the Irish playwright Marina Carr. I will analyse the various interrelated frames which compose the macro-construct and cognitive worldview of the play. This play is a contemporary reworking of William Shakespeare's *King Lear* in which I highlight similarities, dissimilarities and references. In moving from one frame to another, in fact, a conceptual activation process is started, and it partly revises the 'acquired knowledge' underlying Carr's play, such as the father-daughter relationship and the reading of *King Lear*. Finally, I will apply frame analysis to the process of translation in the Italian version, highlighting the various translational strategies adopted.

Keywords: "frame" and "framing", Marina Carr's *The Cordelia Dream*, William Shakespeare's *King Lear*, Translation Process, Translation Strategies

1. Introduction

This essay attempts to show how cultural exchange between Ireland and Italy may occur in dramatic narrative, in the light of the concept of "frame" and "framing". In particular, it wants to demonstrate how the notions of frame and framing can be productively used to analyse the play *The Cordelia Dream* (2008) by the Irish playwright Marina Carr and its Italian translation.

Prior to my analysis, and without any pretence of being exhaustive on the topic, I will introduce what frame and framing are and how they have been applied.

As Ernest R. Wendland declares:

> A frame, […] may be defined as a psychological construct that furnishes one with a prevailing point-of-view that manipulates prominence and relevance in order to influence thinking and, if need be,

subsequent judgment as well. It is a cognitive schema involving a set of interrelated signs (in a semiotic sense) that guides a strategy of perception and interpretation which people rely on to understand and respond to the world around them. (2010, 28)

This means that people project their experiences and circumstances in the interpretative frames which allows them to make sense of the reality surrounding them. When some contradiction, incongruity, dissonance or a change in the context of discourse intervenes, then they normally shift frames. I would argue that the broad assumption that frames and framing in general can be identified as a segment of background knowledge that involves a particular aspect of the world, generates expectations and inferences in communication and action, and is associated with particular lexical and grammatical choices in language (Semino, Demjén, Demmen 2018, 227).

Erving Goffman, from a sociological point of view, was among the first to develop and apply a frame theory in the early 1970s. In *Frame Analysis* (1974), Goffman maintains that people interpret what is happening around them through their primary framework. This primary framework is taken for granted by the user. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson in *Metaphors We Live By* (1980) examine what they termed conceptual metaphor theory, corresponding to metaphorical framing, which is a type of framing that allows decision-making to be influenced by mapping characteristics of one concept to another. Conceptual metaphor theory has often been used in political rhetoric to influence political decision making. George Lakoff, as Wendland quotes, also adds that frames are cognitive clues that tell everyone how to understand what has happened. They are also a structure of expectation and a body of knowledge that is elicited in order to provide an inferential base for the understanding of an utterance (2010, 28). Lakoff applies the notion of frame and framing to political discourse to show how it explains some of our fundamental thought processes and deeply felt ideals, which are then evoked and argued in public debate. There are also other dominant framing effects in the terminology of public and private media, for example, in the presentation of events concerning the notion of free election in nations as different as Afghanistan and Zimbabwe, in public relations, in the shift of discourse from taboo or controversial topics to more acceptable ones (i.e., sexual orientation as it affects his/her qualifications for a particular public position, elected office, or civic role) (Wendland 2010, 29). More recently, the notion of framing as a central function of metaphor has been applied to a study of violence-related metaphor for cancer. The two metaphors "ask your chemo nurses or your specialist if you are looking for anything that might be of help in your fight against cancer" and "[t]here are certain points in the cancer journey where the plan has to change" typically suggest different framings of the experience of being ill (Semino, Demjén, Demmen 2018, 625-626). In the first example, cancer is an aggressor, in the second it is a journey to undertake.

To be more specific for our analysis of Marina Carr's play, we should consider how cognitive linguistics and literary critics have made popular the concept of frames and framing as a vital aspect of human perception, reason and communication via various modes and means of communication. There are some sample citations that can clarify this.

Peter Stockwell in *Cognitive Poetics: An Introduction* maintains that:

contextual *frame* theory was developed in order to understand how readers track reference to characters and events through the process of reading. The basic notion involves the idea of a contextual frame, a mental representation of the circumstances containing the current context. This is built up from the text itself as well as from inferences drawn directly from the text […] A reader must thus keep track of which information applies in any particular context, and this knowledge is arranged in terms of contextual frames. (2002, 155)

These are not simply static pictures of successive moments across the narrative but are a series of ongoing and shifting mental representations of the world of the literary work. As the narrative moves on, different contexts move into the primary focus: "the current frame that is being monitored is said to be primed. Characters, objects and the location of the main context currently being monitored are all bound to that frame and primed too" (156).

A so-called deriving notion that must also be mentioned in relation to frame is the idea of "frames of reference", which "derive" from the conceptual metaphor:

> PERCEPTION IS CONSTRUCTION— i.e., human perception involves (among other things) composing, prioritizing, and interrelating cognitive mini- and macro-structures with respect to distinct aspects of what we experience, think about, and then attempt to communicate to others via verbal and non-verbal signs. (Wendland 2010, 27)

In general cognitivist terms, there are different approaches among those who consider framing as a function of metaphor and those who see metaphor as a result of framing. The former sees how metaphorical patterns play a crucial role both in everyday language and literary discourse. For them, the conventional use of metaphors reflects conceptual connections and the worldview that is likely to be widespread amongst members of the same linguistic and cultural community. On the other hand, the latter makes creative use of metaphors and provides novel perspectives on reality, either through linguistic realisation of conventional metaphor or through entirely novel conceptual mappings (Semino 2002, 108-109; Steen 2002,183-207). It considers framing as a "cognitive model selected, used or discarded in the process of reading a narrative text" (Jahn 1997, 442). The narrative is therefore seen as an arrangement of contextual frames, a series of ongoing and shifting mental representations, in which the focus moves from one frame to another.

I will analyse *The Cordelia Dream* in terms of a series of interrelated macro-constructs and cognitive worldview frames, which include overlapping and shifting mental representations. From these frames, which are rooted in the reader/audience's background knowledge and allow them particular inferences, I move to more specific textual frames. *The Cordelia Dream*, which has been described as a contemporary reworking of William Shakespeare's *King Lear* and was first performed by the Royal Shakespeare Company at Wilton's Music Hall in 2008, moves from one frame to the other and the conceptual activation process for such frames shows that it involves the situational context of the linguistic communicative event of the verbal text. In fact, these frames activate a process that partly revise, the 'acquired knowledge' underlying Carr's play, as we will see, with regard the father-daughter relationship, the reading of *King Lear* and the concept artistic competition. The analysis of the translation will follow Ernst Wendland's approach (2008, 2010), who is among the few scholars to consider that any translation-related activity can be conceptualized and discussed in terms of frames and framing.

2. Contextual Frames: The Cordelia Dream *and* King Lear

The Cordelia Dream opens with two characters who are not named. They are instead identified as "An Old Man and Woman". The woman rings at his door to visit him, bringing a bottle of wine and some cheese to dine with the elderly man. The Old Man who lives in a bare flat where he cannot see "no tree, no grass, no birds, no sea" (Carr 2009, 243), is sitting at his piano. She starts reproaching him for the too many numerous women he sees, for his disinterest in her and her children and she deprecates his inability to conclude his compositions. In his turn the Old Man accuses her of having disturbed his creative talent, of stealing his "gift" and he declares that her compositions are "mediocre". In a crescendo of recriminations, she puts forth that "you were

destroying all around you" (Carr 2009, 243) and this is the reason why she came to see him, to come to terms with this situation.

In frame 1 these first exchanges are still vague: Woman may be a former lover, the Old Man may have been her maestro; the readers/audience can only infer that there is a strenuous artistic competition between the two. This is a contextual frame which is the mental representation of the circumstances containing the current context. However, contextual frames are not a sequence of successive moments across the narrative, but a series of ongoing and shifting mental representations of the world of the play. As the narrative moves on, different contexts move into primary focus. The first contextual frame does not place focal information in the initial exchanges between the Old Man and Woman but has the effect of establishing an explicit frame of reference for the subsequent exchanges in the play. When Woman eventually reveals the reason why she came, this contextual frame is in primary focus and establishes an explicit frame of reference. The two characters and the location of the main context "are [thus] being monitored and are all bound to this frame and primed" (Stockwell 2002, 155-156).

> Woman. I came here because I had a dream.
> Man. You had a dream, so you came.
> Woman. That's all.
> Man. So what was the dream?
> Woman. About my life and my death. About your life and your death. We are horribly mashed. I dreamt of the four howls in *King Lear*.
> Man. When he carries the dead Cordelia on?
> Woman Yes.
> Man. How is anyone meant to deliver those four howls?
> I've seen *Lear* more times that I can remember. Not one of them, and they were good, but not one of them could deliver those four howls to my satisfaction. It is four howls, isn't it?
> Woman. Yes. Four.
> Man. Not five?
> Woman. There is five nevers. Four howls. Some argue for three, that they've stolen from Hecuba.
> Man. The brazen genius of if it. The four and the five. The proximity. It shouldn't work. It's wizardry. *Lear* is impossible. (Carr 2009, 244)[1]

This citation initiates frame 2, which aligns with the definition given above by the cognitive narratologist Manfred Jahn, according to whom frames "denote the model that is selected and used (and sometimes discarded) in the process of reading a narrative text" (Jahn 1997, 442). These models may be in constant use when we read and engage in new interpretation. The model selected in this case is *King Lear*, the "prior text or pretext" (Wendland 2010, 38). *King Lear* is therefore related to *The Cordelia Dream*, by means of various degrees of similarity (citation, allusion, echo), dissimilarity and intertextuality.

Those who are familiar with Marina Carr's dramaturgy know that there are various "prior text" or "pretext" in her earlier plays. For example, *The Mai* (1995) leads back to Euripides' *Hippolyte*; *Portia Coughlan* (1996) to Sophocles' *Antigone*; *By the Bog of Cats* (1998) to Sophocles' *Medea*. In a recent and informative article that traces the relationship between all Shakespearean plays and Carr's work (Maley, Van der Ziel 2018), there are some general indications that can help to better understand *The Cordelia Dream*. Among the

[1] All quotations from this text are taken from Marina Carr (2009), *The Cordelia Dream*, in Marina Carr, *Plays 2*, London, Faber and Faber, 233-278.

many suggestions, a few are particularly worth mentioning. Carr is indebted to Shakespeare in a way that is never singular or ego-driven, her responses are always nuanced and nimble. Though she claims that Shakespeare is her greatest influence, he is never straightforward, unproblematic; rather, he is at times a baleful presence, an intrusive author to be adapted, confronted or resisted, and not merely admired (179). Carr is also struggling against patriarchal order and tradition and she does that more through artistic engagement than academic expertise. Furthermore, *King Lear* and *The Tempest* have attracted by far the most attention from contemporary female authors and playwrights rewriting Shakespeare, partly because of the centrality in those two very different plays of the father-daughter relationship, which allows criticism of the patriarchal authority as well as colonial heritage. *The Cordelia's Dream* (2008) and *Ariel* (2002) have drawn the most overt dramatic responses from Carr, although her engagement with this popular feminist source material has been more conflicted and ambivalent than that of many contemporaries. In *The Cordelia Dream*, for example, we find "Carr's bleak and oblique approach to *King Lear*, a daughter dreams of independence from a father who will not relinquish authority" (180).

The beginning of this second frame, which works through analogy and contrast, is signalled stylistically by using inversion ("I came here because I had a dream / You had a dream, so you came", Carr 2009, 243) and parallelism ("About my life and my death. About your life and your death", 244) and semantically constitutes the backbone of the play. This frame explicitly makes clear the filial relationship between Woman and Old Man like that between Cordelia and Lear, but Woman's attitude is not Cordelia's. In Act I Scene 1, when Cordelia is asked by Lear "what would you say to draw a third more opulent than your sisters?", her reply is "nothing, My Lord" (Shakespeare 2022 [1608], 12). This very famous exchange helps to portray her character as the sister unable to speak her own feelings, which will lead to her own ruin. Before this exchange, in fact, in various asides, she says:

> 'What shall Cordelia do?
> Love, and be silent' (10),
>
> 'Then poor Cordelia!
> And yet not so; since, I am sure, my love's more richer than my tongue'. (10)

This is reinforced in her second to her second reply to Lear:

> '[…] I cannot heave
> My heart into my mouth: I love your majesty
> According to my bond; nor more nor less'. (12)

From a lexical point of view, this difficulty to let her feelings speak is expressed by the association love-silent; love-tongue; my heart-my mouth and underlines how Cordelia can be considered as the woman silenced by the patriarchal order and how Lear interprets her answer as an example of filial ingratitude. Woman instead speaks all her disappointment towards her father and her bitterness: their artistic competition is the trigger which makes their confrontation particularly violent. Unlike Cordelia, Woman speaks and tries to explain why a woman's hatred can never equal that of a man, "it goes inward" (Carr 2009, 246) and concludes that it has never been a good time for women since the Bronze Age until the present day.

The Old Man's attitude instead parallels that of Lear and he is resentful of Woman's filial ingratitude ("I just want to go silent. Leave me the field for a while", *ibidem*). From this moment on, there is another frame of reference composed of interrelating micro-structures which have

the effect of further clarifying the perspective of the reader/audience on the relationship between Woman and Old Man, but also the allusion to *King Lear*. The enmeshed love and artistic competition heighten the violence of the confrontation. Woman is outraged to have lied to her father's colleagues who were sure that Old Man would be proud of Woman success. But now "I stand there and say, we are in competition. I say, the only thing that would make my father happy right now is to be putting flowers on my grave" (247). The Old Man instead angerly admits his jealousy for her daughter: "… and they say your daughter this and your daughter that and I say, yes, yes, it's great…. Pretend I love you… It's not easy to watch your own outstrip you" (249). More calmly, woman regrets that sometimes she might have been more like Regan and Goneril than Cordelia, but, the Old Man's sarcastic comment is: "to go back to your Cordelia dream, when Cordelia dies, Lear dies to… We won't survive each other". She revendicates that she wants them "both to live and flourish" (*ibidem*) and calls for "the blood bond of parent and child". The only answer she obtains from her father is that "you stopped to be my daughter a long time ago" (250).

This frame of reference brings us back to frame 2 of *The Cordelia Dream* and to the model of *King Lear*, where various dissimilarities come to the fore. In *King Lear*, when Lear enters with Cordelia dead in his arms, the complete citation of the "howl" and "nevers" is as follows:

> Howl, howl, howl, howl! O, you are men of stones.
> Had I your tongues and eyes, I'ld use them so?
> That Heaven's vault should crack. She's gone for ever! (342)
> […]
> My poor fool is hang'd! No, no, no, life!
> Why should a dog, a horse, a rat, have life,
> And thou no breath at all? Thou'lt come no more,
> Never, never, never, never, never. (348)

Earlier, when Cordelia and King Lear are made prisoners in the British camp near Dover, King Lear says to Cordelia:

> No, no, no! Come, let's away to prison.
> We two alone will sing, like birds i' the cage.
> When thou dost ask me blessing, I'll kneel down
> And ask for thee forgiveness. So we'll live,
> And pray, and sing […]. (314)

Although both Cordelia and Lear die at the end of *King Lear*, they die in reconciliation and forgiveness, in contrast with frame 2, at the end of Act I, in *The Cordelia Dream*. Even if the use of repetition tones down their confrontation, nonetheless the bleakness of their relationship is explicitly perceived:

> Old Man. Will you come to my funeral?
> Woman. Will you come to mine?
> Old Man. I'll be there.
> Woman. With your speech prepared.
> Old Man. With my speech prepared.
> Woman. So be it. (253)

The frames in the second Act of *The Cordelia Dream* are more difficult to construct as there is sometimes a lack of clarity on the set of interrelated signs which guides the set of perception and clues that the reader/audience relies on to understand and respond to the world of the

narrative. George Lakoff puts it concisely: "[f]rames are […] clues that tell everyone how to understand what has occurred […] a structure of expectation […] a body of knowledge that is evoked in order to provide an inferential base for the understanding of an utterance" (qtd. in Wendland 2010, 24, 47). It seems to me that here "the structure of expectation" is more deeply related to in Woman and Old Man's exchanges themselves and the reader/audience may struggle more to give a definite meaning to what is happening on stage.

Frame 3, the next frame, in Act II, is a new time frame: five years have elapsed since the last confrontation between Old Man and Woman. Woman goes again to visit him, but he is deranged; he asks her if she is the nurse or the dog-hearted one, the vicious snake-eyed ingrate who lives under the piano. She admits she might indeed be her. In that case, Old Man adds, he must stitch her lips. What's more, he is also trying to fight off his mother who flies around the room on her broomstick and, like all witches, curls up on people's chest with their suffocating snooze. He is apparently scared off by the domineering matriarcal/filial line of his life. Then they talk about his last concerto for piano and string, "The Cordelia Dream", which he defines as "a snatch of something someone threw my way a long time ago" (Carr 2009, 256). Woman says she is very proud to see his concerto advertised but nonetheless she is critical of her father's work as he rarely finishes his compositions. Old Man says he is not left in peace by the dog-hearted, the vicious ingrate and the witch on the broomstick and wants to wear his hat to protect himself from them. He admits that is afraid because women do not understand all a man gets from the moment he is born is rejection. Especially those men "who love music, who dream, who weep, they are lower than women" (262). Then Woman changes discourse and starts talking about the great eightieth birthday party they had for him where he played her and he couldn't be stopped because he "had all by heart" and "knew all her scores" (263). Again, as in frame 2 in Act I, they have a harsh confrontation on music, on who had the gift, who silenced whom, and who was heartless. Woman also asks him why, even if he was left in peace for five years, he did not "flourish" as he said he would, in a sort of ongoing quarrel. Woman says she regrets her cruelty, but he was heartless too and wrong about her, but what she gets in reply is "I am never wrong. That's what living intensely means. To be never wrong" (265). This "eternal battle", as Woman calls it, apparently ends when she tells him that he managed to stop her working, how he succeeded in silencing her, how the magic gradually had gone. His reaction is delight: he has eventually found his daughter's Achilles heel, even if he pretends not to be ecstatic at the news, he can take his hat off and celebrate the event. It is interesting to note that "playing with the hat" is not only a visual dramatic device. Before, when he feels challenged by his mother and his daughter he put his hat on to prodect himself and he takes it off once he feels safe. In *King Lear* there is a reference to a hat:

> This is a good block [– a wooden block carved into a shape of a hat –];
> It were a delicate stratagem, to shoe
> A troop of horse with felt, I'll put 't in proof;
> And when I have stol'n upon these sons-in-law,
> Then, kill, kill, kill kill, kill, kill! (276)

If we compare the functions of the two quotes, the ambitious revenge of Lear against his sons-in-law who must be killed, the poor protection from mother and daughter of Old Man is marked by anti-climax, especially if considered with what comes next. Frame 4 in Act II eventually gives the clues to understand what has occurred: there is an awful turn in the structure of expectation and a new set of perception and clues which surprise the reader/audience and guide them to the end of the play. However, frame 3 and 4 are strictly intertwined, and the

full meaning of frame 4 is retrievable not only in the light of some clues of frame 3, but also in the references to "the prior text or pretext", the model of *King Lear*.

When Old Man tells her that magic can come and go but that after all "he is glad she escaped with her life, he is glad she is alive" (272), there is a complete change in perspective in the narrative:

> Woman. Oh, but I'm not alive.
> Old Man. What are you saying?
> Woman. I thought you knew. I'm dead.
> Old Man. What?
> Woman. Didn't the siblings tell you? I imagine you were at my funeral.
> Old Man. I was at a gathering recently. Was that your funeral? (272-273)

While Old Man, more and more forgetful, guesses that she hung herself and she tells him that his youngest child found her body, he says that there is no mention of her death in his diary for the day she committed suicide. His notes for that day are instead his observations about Act III of *King Lear*, "a sublime act", when King Lear says "oh fool, I will go mad, let me not to go mad" (275), and his comments about the four howls and the five nevers in Act V, lines that sometimes possessed him: "howling and nevering for what was, for what had never been and for what has yet to be…" (*ibidem*).

Act III in *King Lear* is one of the most powerful moments of the play. There is a prevailing sense of compassion for Lear's madness: he is in the heath and, as a Gentleman says, he is

> Contending with the fretful elements,
> Bids the wind blows and the earth into the sea,
> Or swell the curled water 'bove the main,
> That things may change or cease; tears his white hair,
> Which the impetuous blasts […] catch in their fury, and may nothing of;
> Strives in his little world of man out-scorn
> The to-and-fro-conflicting wind and rain.
> […] unbonneted he runs,
> And bids what will take all. (Shakespeare 2022, 162)

However, the relevance of the allusion of Act III in this forth frame of *The Cordelia Dream* is found in Lear's complaints for his daughters' ungratefulness:

> No rain, wind, thunder, fire are my daughters.
> I tax not you, you elements, with unkindness;
> I never give you kingdom, call'd you children,
> You owe no subscription […]
> A poor infirm, weak and despised old man […]
> I am a man
> More sinn'd against than sinning. (168-170)

These complaints culminate in Lear at the height of his madness, who imagines Goneril and Regan on trial before a tribunal made up of Edgar, Gloucester's son disguised as madman-beggar to escape his death sentence decreed by his own father, the Fool, the Earl of Kent, and himself.

These clues refer back to the conversation in frame 3 and explain why Old Man explicitly associates Woman with Goneril and Regan, as he cannot get over his inference of

ungratefulness for a daughter incapable of appreciating her musical gift. From a lexical point of view, in the first part of the conversation Old Man apostrophises Woman with various epithets that were used by Lear for Regan ("struck me with her tongue, / Most serpent like", 146) and by the Earl of Kent for Goneril and Regan ("to his dog-hearted daughters", 250). Although he had already used these apostrophes in Act I, here there is remarkable increase in their use: "[y]ou are not the dog-hearted one are you? (Carr 2009, 255), "[t]he dog-hearted one that lives under the piano" (*ibidem*), "[t]he vicious snake-eyed ingrate?" (*ibidem*), "I like the dog-hearted one that has fouled my life" (256), "[o]h, you mean the dog-hearted one, the vicious ingrate" (257), "[o]h my God. It's you […] the dog-hearted ingrate" (259), "[s]omeone come to save me from this dog-hearted, snake-eyed, vicious ingrate" (*ibidem*), "[t]he dog-hearted that silenced me" (263).

Frame 5 brings the play to a conclusion and shows another shifting representation, allowing a new interpretation for the reader/audience. Woman wants to give Old Man, who is bound to die, a last gift and invites him to sit at the piano and play with her. She tells him that she was the most beautiful thing in his life but admits they will say that the way she lived was unforgivable and they will say the same of him. She concludes: "[t]hey are savage here. The indisputable savagery of the wise and the true" (278). A declaration that our life is not a straight line but is made up of errors, of tours and detours, which recalls the Old Man's words in frame 4: "howling and nevering for what was, for what had never been and for what has yet to be…" (275). Unlike in *King Lear*, there might not be a reconciliation, but father and daughter are for the first and last time together at the piano regardless of what they think of each other and of what can be said about them. In Woman's last words there is a glimpse of similarity between Cordelia and Woman, because, after all, Woman, like Cordelia "never sets out to please through flattery" (Maley, Van der Ziel 2018, 1) and is not afraid of the truth.

3. The Cordelia Dream / Il sogno di Cordelia

The translation of frames is controversial: not many agree on the usefulness of such a methodology. Wendland mentions a few scholars who see instead this practice as fruitful. For example, Maria Tymoczko was in favour of applying frame analysis to the process of translation: "I see attention to cognitive and conceptual metaphors as an important key to the future growth of the field of translation studies" (2010, 139). David Katan is also convinced that

> Frames are a combination of prior knowledge, generalizations and expectations regarding the text. As the text is read so it is checked against expectations and degrees of fit with other similar known or possible texts. As this process unfolds, a meaningful, but still virtual, text begins to unfold in the mind of the translator […]. From the meaningful but wordless text, the translator then sketches a pattern of words in the target language. (2004, 169)

Although many cognitive stylistic analysis has often been applied to literature (Semino, Culpeper 2002), its application to the analysis of the translation of frames are very few (Abed, Ahmed 2024). It must be pointed out, however, that the method of Wendland, who is interested in the exegesis and translation of the Scriptures, lends itself better to show how the idea that a frame approach helps to conceptualise both the process of textual interpretation and translation (2010). In *Il sogno di Cordelia* instead a frame approach is more difficult because the TT (target text) language very often tends to reproduce many of the effects of the ST (source text) language. This is not unusual in translated playtext, especially in contemporary drama. However, it is interesting to analyse how the frame approach helps the process of interpreta-

tion and translation. According to Wendland, all types of translation-related activity can be conceptualized and practiced, in terms of the notion of framing and frame, and he singles out four frame-related categories:

- "re-framing" (to compose a TL – target language – text with careful reference to the semantic and pragmatic sense of the original);
- "de-framing" (render a text in the perspective of the cognitive-emotive frames of the TL language-culture – domestication – or adopt a linguistically unnatural approach so that the audience cannot understand or misunderstand the intended sense of the SL – source language – text – foreignization;
- "hyper-framing" (to enrich or supplement the conceptual framework of the TL readership through various paratextual means, e.g., footnotes, introductions, illustrations, cross-references, glossary entries, etc., to match the cognitive frames of the SL text);
- "co-framing" (to complement the prevalent linguistic (including lexical) and literary uses of frames and framing by means of other socioculturally-oriented applications, such as, for example, the intertextual frame of reference).

I would argue that *Il sogno di Cordelia*, translated by Valentina Repetti for Editoria e Spettacolo (2011) and first presented as a reading at the Festival Trend in Rome in 2015, can be loosely ascribed to the categories of "re-framing" and "de-framing". On the one hand, "re-framing" attempts to render both the semantic and pragmatic sense of the original. On the other hand, "de-framing" renders the text in the perspective of the cognitive emotive frames of the TL culture-language which, in the text in question, very often coincide with the perspective of the original. It must be pointed out that; 1) the frames in the original usually coincide with the frames in translation; and 2) the thematic progression is respected. In comparing *Il sogno di Cordelia* with the original version, I will also highlight and comment some of the translational strategies used in the various exchanges of the five frames[2], which, however, do not change their rendition "in the translation" as "re-framing" and "de-framing". Finally, I will conclude by highlighting some intertextual frames of reference that have an important role in the TL language culture, as very often happens in drama translation (Randaccio 2022).

In the following exchange in frame 1, Old Man reproaches his daughter that she is pleased with middle-class values. In TT there is a linguistic amplification – the use of more linguistic elements - that makes the sentence more fluid: however, the perspective of the ST does not change, and the TT maintains the exact cognitive and emotional impact of the original:

Woman. I have known moments when I'm in love with the earth. Old Man. You in love is one thing. Your soul is another. Your soul to be seduced by all that. It's pathetic. Cars, houses, the rising sun, children romping in the garden come evening. To think it doesn't get better than this. (237)	Donna. Ci sono momenti in cui anch'io sono innamorata della terra. Uomo. Che uno si innamori è un conto, che si innamori l'anima è un altro. La tua anima sedotta da tutto questo. È patetico. Macchine, case, il sole che sorge, i bambini che si scatenano in giardino verso sera. Pensare che non si possa avere di meglio. (80)[3]

[2] The translational strategies used are those classified in Molina and Hurtado Albir 2002, 498-516.

[3] All quotations from this text are taken from Marina Carr (2011), *Il sogno di Cordelia*, in *Teatro I*, trad. it di Valentina Repetti Spoleto, Editoria &Spettacolo, 77-115.

This is true for two other statements that Old man says later on to express his scorn for the conservatism of middle-class couples and their children's education:

Old Man. If I was a woman I'd have a different father for each child. Think of the variety, the expanding gene pool, the colour spectrum, from snow-white to blue-back. Really women are terribly conservative when it comes down to it. (240)	Uomo. Se io fossi una donna avrei un padre diverso per ogni figlio. Pensa che varietà, che espansione genetica, che spettro di colori, dal bianco neve al nero bluastro. È proprio vero che le donne sono fin troppo conservatrici su quest'argomento. (83)

Old Man. No, only passion. Find the child's passion. Feed it. And you will have an extraordinary individual. The rest are dodos […]. (241)	Uomo. No, solo la passione. Scova la passione in un bambino. Nutrila. Diventerà un individuo straordinario. Tutti gli altri sono morti e sepolti […]. (83)

In these two statements, various translational strategies are used: "really woman / è proprio vero che […]" is a transposition and signals a change in the grammatical category; "comes down to it / su questo argomento" is a particularization because a more precise term substitute the pronoun 'it'; "The rest are dodos/Tutti gli altri sono morti e sepolti" is a generalization where instead of the figurative meaning attributed to the extinct bird dodo – "dead as a dodo" – the translator has preferred to use a more common and immediately understandable expression for the reader/audience. In all these cases, the cognitive and emotional import of the TT is the same of the ST, sometimes with some major clarifications for the TT reader/audience.

Old Man. You are wrong, you know. Why do you think I have chained myself to this room, this piano? Why do you think I have chained I've given up kitchens and dining rooms and wine and champagne and cigars? I want the channels clear for the incoming signals. Woman. And are the signals coming? Old Man. They are getting closer. Woman. This will be your great opus? (242)	Uomo. Ti sbagli, lo sai. Perché pensi che mi sia incatenato a questa stanza, a questo pianoforte? Perché pensi abbia rinunciato alle cucine, ai salotti, al vino, allo champagne e ai sigari? Voglio che i canali siano liberi di ricevere tutti i segnali in ingresso. Donna. E arrivano i segnali? Uomo. Si avvicinano sempre più. Donna. Questo sarà il tuo capolavoro? (84)

The exchange above, in which Old Man starts quarrelling with Woman, is a good example of a literal translation. The translation gives back the emotional crescendo of their discussion because it reproduces exactly the words and the repetitions of the original ("You are wrong, you know / Ti sbagli lo sai […] Why do you think […] why do you think […] / Perché pensi […] Perché pensi[…]".

In frame 2, when Woman narrates her dream about Cordelia, the translator adds two notes reporting Shakespeare's words referring to the "howls" and the "nevers". This paratextual mean helps to facilitate the comprehension of the references in Carr's text, which might not be known to the Italian reader/audience. It must also be highlighted that these references are crucial both for *King Lear* and for *The Cordelia Dream* when they resurface in frame 4.

Woman. I dreamt of the four howls in King Lear […] Man. […] It is four howls, isn't it? Woman. Yes. Four. Man. Not five? Woman. There is five nevers. Four howls. (244)	Donna. Ho sognato le quattro urla di Re Lear[4] […] Uomo. […] sono quattro le urla giusto? Donna. Sì. Quattro. Uomo. Non cinque? Donna. I mai[5] sono cinque. Le urla sono quattro.

Soon after this exchange, Woman accuses the Old Man of being unappreciative of her and her work as composer:

You call writing to newspapers leaving me alone? Interviews! Photographs of you! Smiling! Your sordid jealousies spewed over my life, my children, my husband, my home! You call screaming at me in public leaving me alone! Your purple-faced obscenities, your paranoid speeches at my concerts, bullying and shrivelling me to a quaking ghost. You haven't left me alone! I've been hiding! You haven't been able to find me. Given one chance you'll annihilate me again. (245)	Scrivere ai giornali lo chiami lasciarmi in pace? Interviste! Fotografie di te che sorridi! L'invidia sordida che hai vomitato sulla mia vita, sui miei figli, su mio marito, sulla mia casa! Urlarmi dietro in pubblico tu lo chiami lasciarmi in pace? Le oscenità che urlavi con la faccia paonazza, i discorsi paranoici che hai fatto ai miei concerti, maltrattandomi e riducendomi un fantasma tremante. Tu non mi hai lasciata in pace! Sono io che mi sono nascosta! Tu non sei stato in grado di trovarmi! Se ne avessi l'occasione mi annienteresti ancora. (87)

This is one of the fiercest criticisms that Woman addresses to Old Man and the whole passage is highly emphatic. This emphasis, which is the predominant tone of Woman's speech, is rendered in the TT slightly differently through the strategy of compensation, in which a ST stylistic effect is introduced in another place with respect to the TT. In fact, in the ST "you call", "you call" "I've been" are all in thematic position, "lo chiami", "tu lo chiami", "Sono io che […]" have instead been postponed in TT.

After Woman's emphatic speech, there is an exchange between Woman and Old Man in which he is harsh and brutal towards her. In this case, maybe to compensate the previous emphasis, the translator translated the ST literally, except for the use of the term "spiel" – which means "a speech, especially one that is long and spoken quickly and is intended to persuade the person listening about something"[6] which in the TT is given detail not formulated in the ST.

[4] "Urla! Urla! Urla! Urla! Urlate! Oh, uomini di pietra siete!" (Shakespeare 1994, *Re Lear*, *I capolavori*, a cura di Giorgio Melchiori, trad. it. Cesare Vico Lodovici, vol. II, atto V, scena III, 385, N.d.T.).

[5] "Me l'hanno strangolata la mia povera pazzerella! No, no, no, vita! Perché dovrebbe avere vita un cavallo un cane un topo e tu, esanime, spenta? E non tornerai più, mai, mai, mai, mai, mai più" (*ibidem*, 387, N.d.T.).

[6] Cf. Cambridge Dictionary, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/spiel> (05/2025).

Man. I am an old man who shouldn't have opened the door to you. Woman. Don't give me that helpless old man spiel. You're a vicious piece of work. Man. I don't want you dead. I just want you to go silent. Leave me the field for a while. I don't have much longer. Woman. You want me alive and silent? What is that but a sentimental form of murder? Why not have the courage to nail the lid on? Man. All I know is, for me to flourish you must be quiet. I would give anything for you to be quiet. (246)	Uomo. Io sono un vecchio che non avrebbe dovuto aprirti la porta. Donna. Non cercare di farmi credere che sei un vecchio indifeso. Tu sei un bell'esemplare di malvagità. Uomo. Non ti voglio morta. Voglio solo che scivoli nel silenzio. Lasciami il campo per un po'. Non mi resta molto. Donna. Mi vuoi viva e muta? Non è una forma sentimentale di omicidio? Perché non hai il coraggio di inchiodarmi nella bara? Uomo. Io so solo che per crescere ho bisogno che tu te ne stia zitta. Darei qualsiasi cosa per farti stare zitta. (88)

Strictly connected to the previous exchange there is another salient moment in the play which clarifies the opposite view that Old Man and Woman have of what art should be. Woman's answer to Old Man is at the root of their fierce competition and the TT reproduces the cognitive-emotional perspective of this frame. The TT is literal with the only exception of the use of linguistic amplification – an addition of more linguistic element – in "Plagiarism and cunning disguise / Plagio astuto" which the reader/audience however cannot misunderstand the meaning of the original ST. Old Man thinks that art is a prerogative of the genius, that the artist is genius and reckless, whereas Woman for him is instead only a charlatan who plagiarises from everybody else. This is what she replies to him:

Woman. That's what art is. Plagiarism and cunning disguise, a snapping up of unconsidered trifles. And coursing through it all, good faith, begging from above and underneath the throb of creation, that you are the first to do this, the last to do this, that you will surely die if you don't put something down. Right now! This minute! You think is loose living, bad behaviour and the jottings of your hangover soul. It isn't. Artists are the most disciplined people on the planet. And I hope some day to call me myself one. (251)	Donna. L'arte è questo. Plagio astuto, un furto di inezie sottovalutate. E attraversare tutto questo in volata, in buona fede, implorando di sopra e di sotto il pulsare della creazione, che tu sia il primo a fare questo, che tu sia l'ultimo a fare quest'altro, che morirai sicuramente se non butti giù qualcosa. Adesso! Proprio ora! Tu pensi che basti vivere allo sbando, comportarsi male e lasciare che la tua anima sbronza butti giù degli appunti. Non è così. Gli artisti sono le persone più disciplinate della terra. E spero di potermi definire tale un giorno. (92)

In frame 3 only two translation strategies have been used and most of the TT is a literal translation. This might be due to two reasons: the first is to render the Old Man's deranged state of mind as in the ST; the second is that, although in darker tones, the confrontation between Old Man and Woman seems to be a re-enactment of the previous one in frame 2. All the insults directed at Woman are also translated literally and even if some "quotations" from *King Lear* are not easy to retrieve, nonetheless they retain their function as insults for the TT reader/audience.

Woman. Who is the dog-hearted one? Man. The dog-hearted one that lives under the piano. You're not the vicious ingrate, are you? The vicious snake-eyed ingrate? Woman. I think maybe I am. Man. Then I'll get some twine and stich your lips. I'll crucify your feet with wooden pegs. Oh my mother, my mother. Forgive me, my dear, all the long day I have been fighting off my mother […] She flies around the room with her broomstick, her grey hair spinning. She tries to haul me onto the broomstick and I spatter her to the wall. She's asleep now. Even witches have to sleep. Did you know that? (255)	Donna. Chi è quella col cuore di cane? Uomo. Quella col cuore di cane che vive sotto il pianoforte. Non sei l'ingrata maligna, vero? L'ingrata maligna dagli occhi di serpente? Donna. Mi sa che forse sono io. Uomo. Allora prendo dello spago e ti cucio le labbra. Ti crocifiggo i piedi con dei paletti di legno. Oh madre mia, madre mia. Perdonami cara, è tutto il giorno che combatto con mia madre […] Vola per la stanza sul suo manico di scopa, coi capelli grigi che vorticano. Cerca di trascinarmi sul suo manico di scopa e io la faccio schizzare contro il muro. Adesso dorme. Anche le streghe devono dormire. Lo sapevi? (96)

The two linguistic strategies that have been used are an example of linguistic amplification, in which other linguistic elements than those found in the ST are added, and an example of transposition, where there is a change of grammatical category, specifically a noun that becomes an adverb.

Woman. I just came to see you… I miss you. Man. Miss me. Well, miss me and be gone […]. (259)	Donna. Sono solo venuta a trovarti…mi manchi. Uomo. Ti manco. Beh, allora vorrà dire che ti mancherò, vattene via […]. (99)

Man. Every time I turn on the radio they're playing you. You know why? Woman. Because I'm good? Man. Because you are easy, because you have a facility for jingles I could write in my sleep and often do and toss in the bin first thing in the morning […]. (266)	Uomo. Ogni volta che accendo la radio trasmettono te. Sai perché? Donna. Perché sono brava? Uomo. Perché sei semplice, perché componi senza sforzo motivetti che io potrei scrivere mentre dormo, cosa che spesso faccio, per poi gettarli nel cestino appena mi alzo la mattina […]. (105)

In frame 4, as we have seen, there is a complete change in perspective because Woman is dead. This happens quite unexpectedly both for the ST and TT reader/audience. Central to this frame is the fact that Old Man has not written anything in his diary for the day of Woman's suicide, but instead he only made some comments on Act III and Act V of *King Lear*. The reference to *King Lear* is a variation of the first time that the "four howl" and the "five nevers" were mentioned at the beginning of the play and is easily understandable both for the ST and TT readers/audience. It is also clear that the Old Man has changed his view on Act V, as he first says "[t]he brazen genius of it. The four and the five. The proximity. It shouldn't work. It's wizardry. Lear is impossible" (Carr 2009, 244); while he now claims that "the great four howls at the end of act V or the five nevers […] were written for me" (275). The cognitive emotional impact does not change for the TT reader/audience. However, in the TT the translator anticipates the reference to *King Lear* more explicitly adding a note to Old Man's response just before he reads his diary:

Woman. So do I … And how will you die? Man. I will die bravely, as a bridegroom. (274)	Donna. Anch'io… e tu come morirai? Uomo. Morirò valorosamente come uno sposo.[7]

The strategy of transposition has also been used in Old Man's comments on *King Lear*, where "howling and nevering" function as nouns but are translated with two finite verbs, i.e., "urlavo e recitavo quei mai". This choice implies greater clarity in the TT:

Man. […] What a sublime act, act three is. When I was a boy the master used to stand me on the chair to declaim, yes, declaim *Lear*. […] Or the great four howls at the end of act five or the five nevers. Those lines were written for me. I would howl and never with a passion I could not have possessed but somehow seemed to possess me, howling and nevering for what was, for what had never been and for what has yet to be […]. (275)	Uomo. […] Che atto sublime il terzo atto Quando ero bambino il maestro mi metteva in piedi su una sedia a declamare, sì, a declamare *Re Lear*. […] Oppure quelle quattro urla meravigliose alla fine del quinto atto. Quelle battute erano scritte per me. Urlavo e recitavo quei mai con una passione che non poteva appartenermi, ma che in qualche modo mi possedeva, urlavo e recitavo quei mai per ciò che fu, per ciò che non era mai stato e per ciò che ancora deve essere […]. (113)

Frame 5, more than the other frames, is translated literally. The reason may be that the translation wants to render clear the last shift in the interpretation of the relationship between father and daughter and invite the reader/audience of the TT to have no doubt on how both of them will be judged, that they will not be forgiven for their respective lives. Those around them, who believe themselves wise and true, are in fact real savages.

Man. That is your parting gift? Woman. I was hauled before them, and you know what they told me? That the way I have lived unforgiveable, and I will reckon they will tell you the same. Be afraid, they are savage here. The indisputable savagery of the wise and the true. *She lays her hands on his hands*. This is my gift. Close your eyes and play. This is what eternity sounds like. (278)	Uomo. È questo il tuo dono di addio? Donna. Mi hanno trascinata davanti a loro, e sai cosa mi hanno detto? Che il modo in cui ho vissuto è imperdonabile e penso proprio che a te diranno lo stesso. Abbi paura, sono feroci qui. La ferocia incontestabile dei saggi e dei giusti. (*Poggia le mani su quelle di lui*) Ecco il mio dono. Chiudi gli occhi e suona. È così che suona l'eternità. (115)

The detailed comparison between the ST and the TT for the five frames of *The Cordelia Dream* seem to confirm that the Italian translation has been composed with careful reference to the semantic and pragmatic sense of the original ("re-framing") and that the Italian version renders the cognitive and emotional perspective of the Italian reader/audience in a way that is coincident with that of the original ("de-framing").

It is interesting to note, however, that there are some intertextual frames of reference, some pre-texts that were mentioned when the play was performed in Italy. In the presenta-

[7] William Shakespeare, *King Lear*, Act IV Scene VI: 'I will die bravely as a bridegroom' (111) (N.d.T.).

tion to the reading at Teatro Belli, in the words of Valerio Binasco, director and actor of the reading, the father-daughter relationship, which in Carr's play becomes almost archetypical thanks to the reference to *King Lear*, moves to the background. The two characters, Man and Woman, are portrayed in more realistic terms and recall the characters of Ingmar Bergman's films. Dialogue, in fact, prevails and Man and Woman are presented more as victims than perpetrators. According to Binasco, Carr in this play uses the typical frame of folktales and her protagonist, Woman, resembles a Little Red Riding Hood, who, like many women in Jacques Prévert's poetry, knocks at her father's door waiting to be devoured. Woman is pleading for acceptance and the whole play revolves around the idea of nothingness that condemns both father and daughter. Thus, the intertextual relations to the original dramatic context is marginalised in translation. The new properties attributed to *The Cordelia Dream* in the Italian reading derive instead from other cultural references, creating different intertextual relations (Randaccio 2022, 62).

4. Conclusions

In this paper I have tried to analyse the play *The Cordelia Dream* by the Irish playwright Marina Carr and its Italian translation, according to the notion of "frame" and "framing". After a brief introduction to these notions and how they have been applied from the 1970s onwards, I analysed *The Cordelia Dream* as a series of interrelated macro-constructs and cognitive world-view, including overlapping and shifting mental representations. From these frames I moved to more specific textual frames. It must be recalled that *The Cordelia Dream* is considered as a contemporary reworking of William Shakespeare's *King Lear* and, therefore, my analysis, moving from one frame to another, followed the conceptual activation process. These frames, in fact, activate a process that partly revise the 'acquired knowledge' underlying Carr's play, i.e., the father-daughter relationship, the reading of *King Lear* and the concept of artistic competition. To do so, I investigated in detail each frame in relation to the 'prior text or pretext', i.e., *King Lear*, which is linked in various degrees to *The Cordelia Dream*. Though the translation of frames is controversial, I applied frame analysis to the process of translation, and I ascribed the translation to Wendland's categories of "re-framing" and "de-framing". I also highlighted which were the translational strategies used for each frame and commented on them.

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