

Fryer, Louise and Cavallo, Amelia (2022). *Integrated Access in Live Performance*. Abingdon/New York: Routledge, pp. 199, £34.99 (paperback). ISBN 9780367190729.

In their book *Integrated Access in Live Performance*, co-authors Louise Fryer and Amelia Cavallo delve into the topic of accessibility and put forward an innovative proposal for access provision in live productions, such as plays, dance performances, or the circus. Although there have been studies published on accessibility in the performing arts over the past two decades (e.g. Mateo 2007; SV Flys 2013; Fryer 2016; Iturregui Gallardo and Permuy Hércules de Solás 2019; Espasa Borrás 2020; Hermosa-Ramírez 2020; and Zárate 2021), there still seems to be scarce work devoted to the area, especially when compared with the growth experienced by the body of research into audiovisual accessibility (e.g. the ADLAB (2011–2014) and ADLAB PRO (2016–2019) projects on audio description for the blind and partially sighted (AD); the EASIT (2018) project on the creation of easy-to-understand text; the ILSA (2017–2020) project on interlingual live subtitling for access; Romero-Fresco's (2019) book on accessible filmmaking; Greco and Jankowska's (2019) special issue of the *Journal of Audiovisual Translation* on quality in media accessibility; and the conference series *Media for All* (2005–present) which focuses primarily on the topic of accessibility in audiovisual translation (AVT)). The book under review is therefore a relevant and important contribution to the Translation Studies field and especially to accessibility studies therein. By drawing on insights from academia, the industry, and users, the authors address this underexplored research area from a wide range of angles, which makes for an illuminating discussion that will be of use to scholars and students, industry practitioners in both the worlds of performance and translation, and indeed and most importantly to users of the proposed modes of access themselves.

The volume is structured in eleven chapters, prefaced by an introduction to the project, "The *Is It Working?* Inquiry," which the authors were commissioned to carry out in 2018 by Extant: "the UK's leading professional performing arts company of visually impaired artists and theatre practitioners," which produces touring productions and delivers training throughout the UK and internationally (Cavallo and Fryer 2018: 1). Their qualitative, exploratory approach was applied to their two chosen research instruments as the basis for their investigation into integrated access in live performance: interviews and a focus group, both conducted in the United Kingdom, where Extant and the authors are based. The pool of informants was composed of a dynamic variety of users and members of companies who had experienced integrated access from a provision and/or consumption perspective. Apart from obtaining data for the purposes of the study commissioned by Extant, the interviews and focus group offer a model that could be iterated in the future, and in different countries for comparison.

Chapters 1 and 2 proceed to explain notions that constitute the foundations of the authors' understanding of access, providing the reader with a clear conceptual framework. Chapter 1 first explains the social model of disability, and clarifies the crucial concepts of *access*, *diversity* and *inclusion*, as well as their interrelations, since, for example, in favouring inclusion access also creates a space for diversity among audiences. This chapter also includes an overview of traditional access services used in live performance, which are categorised according to the disabilities they often relate to: audio description complemented by audio introductions, pre-show touch tours, workshops, and large print or braille programmes; sign language interpreting; captioning or subtitling for people who are D/deaf or hard-of-hearing (SDH); surtitling; relaxed performances; and dementia-friendly performances. Remarks are made on their level of visibility and their (lack of) compliance with the aforementioned social model of disability. The authors also identify the distance between traditional access and the notion of universal design.

In Chapter 2, the authors outline a social model of accessibility that reorganises access services according to the barriers that it aims to remove in order for information from different sources to be accessibly conveyed to target audiences. The sources in question are visual, aural, and linguistic, and the overlaps between these are also contemplated. Authors in AVT (see, for instance, Gottlieb 1998/2001, Zabalbeascoa 2001, and Chaume 2004) have traditionally conceptualised audiovisual texts as having visual and acoustic channels alone, with verbal and non-verbal codes present within each channel, so it is interesting that Fryer and Cavallo consider it appropriate to unpack audiovisual texts differently for the purposes of understanding accessibility. They use the terms "seen sounds", "heard images" and "overlap" in language and sound or image, which could be considered terminologically tautological and obscure vis-à-vis the existing "visual channel" and "non-verbal codes", for example. The chapter then proceeds to deal with legislation and guidelines issued at global, European and national levels, with the latter concerning the contexts of the United Kingdom and the United States. It then ends with indications of benefits observed by service providers in complying with obligations, but also certain drawbacks incurred by the legislation.

Chapters 3 and 4 examine traditional access modes. Chapter 3 addresses the workflow of traditional audio description for live performance and assesses disadvantages of the technology used for this mode of traditional access as well as for captioning. After outlining the range of possibilities that sound — both verbal and non-verbal — opens up for audio description, Chapter 4 reports on the results of the interviews, by analysing users' comments on the extent to which they were satisfied with the following features of the AD: content, accuracy, density, vocal delivery, ocularcentrism, and technical dimensions. In addition to audiences' views, the perspectives of creative teams are also taken into consideration regarding aspects such as collaboration, responsibility for access, and expertise. The informants' answers are organised around these themes, and selected direct quotations reflect multiple voices that enrich the discussion.

The remaining chapters of the volume look at integrated access and its novel traits. Chapter 5 explains that it is characterised by involving the access professional from the beginning of the production and being available for everybody in the audience — thus solving problems of traditional access mentioned in the previous chapter. It is worth underlining the usefulness of the ideas shared in both this and the preceding chapter about the variety of ways in which access can be provided, including via non-verbal resources, such as sound and touch.

Chapter 6 examines “accessible filmmaking” (Romero-Fresco 2019) and how it could be implemented for live performances. Cinema and live performance share certain traits, although a difference pointed out that has an impact on this approach is spontaneity. An interesting point of convergence suggested between integrated access in cinema and in live performance is the participation of an accessibility director from the initial stages of a production, which is already practised in some contexts. Another element in this chapter that we have deemed of particular usefulness for readers is the inclusion of tables that summarise the steps for integrated access in film as well as in live performance. It is clear on reading this chapter that links made between these interrelated industries — and indeed areas of research in Translation Studies — could yield significant benefits for access users, practitioners, and scholars alike.

Chapter 7 delves into the ways in which integrated access and aesthetics might be interwoven with one another, and speculates on the impact this connection might have on aspects such as audience comprehension and engagement. It seems aesthetics can also positively impact the creation process of the audio description, such as by AD creators utilising the screenplay and other extratextual content encompassing aesthetic elements in what Szarkowska (2013) has termed “Auteur AD” and which Fryer and Cavallo acknowledge and advocate in Chapter 6. Another interesting point in Chapter 7 is that the authors underline that integrated access is not unidirectional; rather, it makes no disability-based distinctions vis-à-vis the profiles of providers and receivers of access. Indeed, they mention the moral and political implications of offering open and visible integrated access.

Noteworthy in Chapter 8 are the useful suggestions provided for the evaluation of access services. The authors argue that it is essential to pay attention to different stakeholders, ranging from members of the audience to different agents involved in the production of the performance and management of the venue. A helpful method of measurement is also proposed by the authors, which draws on scales across different categories, such as inclusivity or collaboration, and underlines the importance of planning how to improve access based on the data collected and scores therein. The chapter ends on an encouraging note, warding off fear of failure when facing the evaluation of access, and emphasising instead the importance of

experimentation in order to make progress and, ultimately, enhance practices so as to achieve better access.

On the vein of exploring strategies for access provision that fall within the parameters of universal design, Chapter 9 reports on five illustrative case studies in which the authors participated. Remarkably, after describing the process and solutions for integrated access in each of the productions in question, a critical account of the experiences is included, identifying aspects that worked well and others that could be improved upon, and thus favouring collaborative learning about and towards beneficial strategies in integrated access.

Chapter 10 offers practical guidance for readers interested in the application of integrated access, and highlights the importance of identifying the motivation for providing a given type of access and then planning for access from a broad perspective that bears in mind not only the performance itself but also aspects such as information about it (i.e. advertising, purchase of tickets, programmes, etc.) and the financial dimension. The final section of this chapter, entitled *Summary of recommendations*, is concise and informative, and would undoubtedly guide the provision of new, more, or better access, and serve users well.

Finally, Chapter 11 presents the conclusions, underlining vital points made throughout the book that clearly convey key messages, such as the need for constant reflection on access, the advantages of access for diverse disabled and non-disabled audiences, the levels and degrees of access integration, the different viewpoints that may be offered through integrated access, the proposed re-categorisation of access services, and the implications of technical issues.

In their book dedicated to the performing arts and access therein, Fryer and Cavallo share the stage, giving a voice to many stakeholders of accessible productions, leading to an inspiring discussion, remarkable in its breadth and depth, and which deals with topics highly relevant to this specialist area. In our view, the book promotes visibility and collaboration not only in access provision but also for research into accessibility in live performance, by setting an example of critically analysing one's own work and communicating findings in a holistic and transparent manner. We have considered the following elements in the book to be content of particular use and interest to a wide readership: the informative account of conceptual and legislative frameworks; the analysis of current practices; the links established between access for live performance and audiovisual accessibility; and the constant and inspiring search for development. This is a long-awaited book in the Translation Studies discipline and a highly interesting and informative contribution to the research and practice areas of the performing arts.

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