

T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* as a Place
of Intercultural Exchanges

T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* as a Place
of Intercultural Exchanges:
A Translation Perspective

By

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P U B L I S H I N G

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To my son, Iustinian, with infinite love.

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PREFACE

In every culture, translation phenomena present patterns of evolution which mirror the trajectories of their contacts with the Other. The results of such phenomena are mutually advantageous. For the source literature or author, it ensures the survival in time of the work to be translated, as well as geographically wider coverage. For the target culture, translation enriches the local resources and preserves a constructive vigilance, since it is always a challenge – to the limits of the target language, to the translator's skills and to readers' interpreting abilities. This doubly beneficial status is achieved when, as Paul Ricoeur argues, "the pleasure of dwelling in the other's language is balanced by the pleasure of receiving the foreign word at home, in one's welcoming house" (2006, 10).

The translation of a major piece of literature is always a cultural event. On the one hand, it demonstrates the maturity of the target language to accommodate any new, possibly revolutionary ideas from the source text. On the other hand, it introduces target readers to a representative item of universally acknowledged literary achievements. The focus of this work is T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* which I approach from a translation perspective. My analysis envisages not only the Romanian versions of the source text, but also a consideration of the poem as a work of translation in itself.

There are few names in the literary history of Europe and America to have left such an enduring trace as T.S. Eliot. His work – poetry, criticism, drama – has influenced whole generations and its echoes still reverberate in twenty-first century letters. One of the most influential personalities in an entire century of literature, Eliot's reform imposed new alternatives on the interpreting and writing of poetry. Although reforms might usually imply a break away from past experience, Eliot's poetic revolution relies precisely on the relation between past and present, which are conceived as inextricably linked. To Eliot's way of thinking, the two time coordinates are so intimately related that past can only be kept alive by the present, which, in turn, can only survive if perfectly aware of its legacy.

In criticism, Eliot was hardly paralleled by any other of the writers of his generation with respect to their impact upon the development of literature. His critical programme made extensive use of concepts such as tradition, the objective correlative, and the theory of impersonality of

poetry. Furthermore, his activity as a literary editor with Faber & Faber helped him influence the literary tastes of the English speaking readership for a considerable period.

One aspect of Eliot's multilateral interests that makes him particularly appealing to our contemporary public is his concern with culture and cultural exchanges. His vision suggests that the key to the survival and development of human civilisation is a respectful revival of past experience, combined with the awareness of the need for intercultural communication. Eliot's aim was to reunite minds worldwide to work together for the breaking of provincialism in thinking and acting. Given the current European agenda which aims to create a unified continent, Eliot's struggle for the cultural unity of Europe seems to be more meaningful than ever.

Together with James Joyce's *Ulysses* and Ezra Pound's *Cantos*, *The Waste Land* has been widely acknowledged as one of the masterpieces of modernism. The poem proposes a multitude of meanings refracted from the plethora of poetic voices. They encouraged the reading of the poem in various keys. At the socio-cultural level, the poem reveals the despair which characterised the generation after World War I. Yet, it is also an expression of the poet's personal problems.

This study approaches *The Waste Land* from a translation perspective. Since the poem itself provides such a wide array of possible interpretations, translation as I apply it is more than mere linguistic transfer. *The Waste Land* in itself can be read as a master work of translation, in which the poet melts immensely rich historic and literary references and carries meaning across time and space in order to recreate a unity of which these fragments are essential parts. The poem can be seen as an act of translation and I propose a new interpretation which considers it a topos of cultural reconciliation and dialogue.

A significant part of this work is also dedicated to the analysis of *The Waste Land* and its various Romanian translations. Eliot's poem entered Romanian culture quite early due to the effort of poet and translator Ion Pillat, who published *Țara pustie* in 1933 in the literary journal *Azi*. Four other translations were carried out at distinct moments: Aurel Covaci published his version in 1970, Mircea Ivănescu published his in 1982, Alex Moldovan signed his translation of *The Waste Land* in 2004 and Șerban Dragoș Ionescu published his in 2009. In addition, there are also partial translations. Namely, Ștefan Augustin Doinaș and Toma Pavel translated Part V, "What the Thunder Said" in 1965, and A.E. Baconsky rendered into Romanian Part I, "Burial of the Dead", and Part IV, "Death by Water", which he published in his *Panorama poeziei universale*

contemporane (1972). To my knowledge, this work is the first to include all these Romanian texts in a comparative study.

The methodological approach of my study follows the principles of Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS), which prove particularly useful in the analysis of the source text and its target productions. I also put them into practice in the presentation of Romanian translation policies as well as in the chapter which deals with the translation of cultural elements in *The Waste Land*. The reasons I favoured this branch of Translation Studies may appear in a clearer light if I present DTS in comparison with other orientations in the field, such as the linguistic, pragmatic or functionalist approaches.

After World War II, with new advances in linguistics, the study of translation benefited from the interest of linguists and scientists from neighbouring disciplines. Translation preoccupations needed a more systematic organisation, which led to the awareness that this area required a scientific approach. As such, the focal point of translation research was the linguistic aspect involved in the translation exchange, ignoring the broader context in which translations were produced. Research in the field made use of the concept of the translation unit, which was confined, however, to the word and sentence level.

Those theoreticians whose names are linked to the linguistic approach made a significant contribution to the evolution of translation studies. Among the first to attempt a systematisation of the newly designed science of translation were J.P. Vinay and J. Darbelnet, in their *Stylistique comparée du français et de l'anglais* (1958). It is more of a textbook which relies on stylistic comparison between the source and its target productions. According to the authors, their book was aimed at students in the process of learning a foreign language, professional translators and linguistic scientists.

Another linguist who carried out research in the field giving prominence to linguistic over literary aspects is J.C. Catford. In 1965, he published *A Linguistic Theory of Translation: An Essay in Applied Linguistics*. In the preface, Catford explains that his objective is to study what translation is. In his study, Catford presents translation as a replacement of source text items with linguistically equivalent target text elements. His linguistic approach presents the drawback of considering translation from a rather static perspective. At the same time, favouring grammatical considerations, his theory tends to overlook the fact that translation is a complex cultural manifestation.

Eugene Nida's name is also linked to the linguistic approach, although he differs from theorists like Catford. Whereas strictly linguistic

considerations of translation implied that there is one valid translation to a given text, Nida advances the idea of a multitude of possibly correct target versions.

The concept of “equivalence”, which has generated a heated debate in time with respect to meaning and scope, was also approached by Nida. He believed that there are two types of equivalence. Dynamic equivalence, which he prefers in the case of Bible translation, aims to generate in the target reader the same reaction as the original obtained in the source recipient. Formal equivalence focuses on the form and content of the message to be translated, displaying a higher concern with accuracy and the preservation of original formulation as much as possible, as indicated by Shuttleworth and Cowie (1997, 61).

The pragmatic turn in translation studies was not a complete break away from previous linguistic considerations, but the result of further development in the field. At the beginning of the seventies, the tenets of generative and structuralist grammar as applied to the study of translation were beginning to prove unsatisfactory for a more comprehensive approach. Therefore, J.L. Austin’s work, *How to Do Things with Words* (1962), with its new perspective on language, manifested a considerable appeal to translation theorists. Austin’s speech act theory (later to be further developed by John Searle) emphasised that, in using language,

people do not just talk or write to each other, but rather they perform actions, they do things usually in contexts that combine linguistic and nonlinguistic elements, part of the context in which they communicate consisting of knowledge, beliefs and assumptions of all concerned. (Hickey 1998, 3)

Therefore, pragmatics does not consider a rigid definition of language, but the manner in which it is used, as well as the contents and the participants in its production. In the field of translation, pragmatics tries to explain the procedure, process and product from the point of view of what is (potentially) done by the original author in or by the text, what is (potentially) done in the translation as a response to the original, and how and why it is done in that way, in that context (Hickey 1998, 6).

The pragmatic turn in translation studies came to broaden the perspective expressed by linguistic concerns. The perception of language as one of the main components of the surrounding world also led to an interdisciplinary approach to translation, which thus benefited from insights from psychology, sociology and anthropology.

The eighties brought a change of paradigm in translation studies. One of the main orientations which imposed itself in the field was the

functionalist approach, whose initiator was Hans Vermeer. His ideas laid the foundation of the "Skopos theory".

In the book Vermeer wrote with Katharina Reiss in 1984, *Foundation of a General Theory of Translation*, he provided a full account of this new theory of translation. Its central concept is *skopos* (Greek word for purpose), which rejects the previously dominant idea that the target text is an equivalent variant of the source one. In exchange, it proposes as main factors which influence the translation decisions, the function fulfilled by the translation in the receiving culture and the expected response of target users. In Vermeer's model, culture acquires a major position, constituting the general background of language. Consequently, the translator's proficiency should not only be linguistic, but also cultural.

Relying on professional practice, the adepts of the functionalist school suggest that translation realisation depends to a considerable degree on the function the text is assigned to in the target culture, which may be different than in the source culture. Since prominence is given to the needs of the target culture, the source text is dethroned in favour of the target text, with all the linguistic and extra-linguistic considerations which determine the latter's production. This marginal position granted to the source text is in fact one of the novelties of the functionalist approach. Furthermore, it distinguishes itself from previous approaches in that it views the function of the translated text as possibly differing from the function of the original. At the same time, this functionalist orientation changes the role of the reader, who grows in importance since the target readers' communicative needs influence and set the purpose of the translated text. The main fault found with this approach was that it had a lower degree of applicability with respect to literary translations.

The issue of literary translation was in exchange given significant consideration by the scholars of "The Manipulation School" later to develop into Descriptive Translation Studies. The drive behind this approach was a reaction against previous prescriptive and linguistic considerations of the translation process and products. Rising against the purpose of equivalence manifested by traditional linguistic schools, the scholars who were later gathered under the label of The Manipulation School advanced the idea that from the point of view of the target literature, all translations imply a degree of manipulation of the source text for a certain purpose (Hermans 1995, 11). The above-mentioned label was attached to the scholars who collectively published the volume *The Manipulation of Literature: Studies in Literary Translation* (1985).

The volume gathered representatives of two distinct groups, namely the "Translation Studies group" (that included researchers of the Low

Countries such as James Holmes, Andre Lefevere and José Lambert) and the Israeli “Polysystem group” (whose representatives are Itamar Even-Zohar and Gideon Toury). Although the two directions developed separately, the conditions under which they emerged bear a number of similarities. One of these conditions refers to the similar social and historical trends of evolution. Flemish and Dutch researchers had maintained contact with German and Czech circles, whereas the Israeli group entertained literary and linguistic exchanges with German, Russian and Anglo-American researchers. At the same time, the two countries shared the same perspective of translation: their respective literatures were highly influenced by major literatures through translations, the Dutch by the German, French and Anglo-American, and the Israeli by the German, Russian and Anglo-American. Therefore, both cultures depended on translation for commercial and political reasons (Gentzler 1993, 105-106).

Therefore, their similarities led to the merging of the Polysystem Theory and Translation Studies into what became Descriptive Translation Studies. They proposed a shift in the translation perspective, seeking to detect translation behaviour and relations as they are, to describe and formulate laws and norms which lead to a specific behaviour. The common ground of the two orientations is best described in Theo Hermans’s *Introduction* to their collective volume, which also emphasises the novelty brought about by this group of scholars:

What they have in common is, briefly, a view of literature as a complex and dynamic system; a conviction that there should be a continual interplay between theoretical models and practical case studies; an approach to literary translation which is descriptive, target-oriented, functional and systemic; and an interest in the norms and constraints that govern the production and reception of translations, in the relation between translation and other types of text processing, and in the place and role of translations both within a given literature and in the interaction between literatures. (10-11)

I will further focus on the work of the Tel Aviv group with their Polysystem Theory, since this study develops along the theoretical lines opened by these researchers. The Tel Aviv School contributed significantly to the principles of DTS, mainly through the works of Itamar Even-Zohar and Gideon Toury. As Edwin Gentzler argues,

The Israeli contribution abandons attempts at prescription, incorporates descriptions of multiple translation processes and analyzes the various historical products. Instead of basing itself on deep-structured grammatic/thematic types of linguistic features which have similar

functions, 'modern' translation theory incorporates the idea of systemic change which undermines such static, mechanistic concepts. (1993, 109)

Even-Zohar introduced the notion of "polysystem" as the background against which to consider translations. In fact, his polysystem theory, deeply influenced by Czech structuralism and Russian formalism, was initially designed to apply to literary theory. It relies on the assumption that literature is a complex of systems, which occupy various hierarchical positions. The literary system is very dynamic due to the fact that its various components are involved in an on-going struggle to maintain or reach a central position. At the same time, the literary polysystem is itself conceived as merely one element of the larger system called culture (which also comprises economic, social and scientific systems). Therefore, the logical conclusion is that the analysis of any such systems may not ignore the existence of others with which it actively interacts. No system may be studied in isolation – this is one of the main tenets of the Polysystem Theory, which also applies to translation.

In his article "The position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem", Even-Zohar (1990) touches upon the position held by translations within a given literary system. According to the Israeli theoretician, translations are not merely the constituent components of a literature, but one of its most active ones. He specifies the situations when translated literature holds a central or a peripheral position within a literature, as well as a dynamic relation between source and target literary systems, which influence the socio-literary role played by translations in the target culture. In Even-Zohar's theory, a definition of translation cannot be attempted in the absence of a diachronic consideration of the issue and the context of translation production.

In fact, the "time" coordinate is one of the main aspects which set Descriptive Translation Studies apart from traditional, text-oriented translation approaches. DTS theorists emphasise the idea that the role of translations has to take into account both the synchronic and the diachronic axes. Translations are not isolated facts in a culture; they are not frozen moments in the literary development of a nation. The various social and economic factors dominant at a given moment in the target system condition the decision-making process in this field. Therefore, the study of translated texts has to give consideration to the evolution of the target readers' perception and the norms governing the translation process.

The concept of norms was introduced by Gideon Toury. Relying on the assumption that translations are an integral part of a larger social-literary-historical context, Toury's concern was to detect the rules and norms that govern the process of translation. Earlier translation theories advanced the

idea that the translated text impacted the rules and conventions of a given target culture. DTS theorists argue quite the opposite, that the norms and conventions of the target system influence the translator's aesthetic assumptions and, as such, his translation decisions. As an essential component of the social weave, norms have to be observed in translation as well since they create products which are to be used within a certain norm-driven community:

Norms are the key concept and focal point in any attempt to account for the social relevance of activities, because their existence and the wide range of situations they apply to (with the conformity this implies) are the main factors ensuring the establishment and retention of social order. This holds for cultures, too, or for any of the systems constituting them, which are, after all, social institutions ipso facto. (Toury 1995, 55)

Translators' observance of or inobservance with the norms predominant in the receiving culture hint at a potential bipolar approach of the translation process either towards adequacy or towards acceptability. In Toury's opinion, translation is always in between the above-mentioned poles. This happens because translation can never be fully adequate, since the norms to which it conforms generate inevitable shifts from the structure of the source text. At the same time, it can never be fully acceptable, since it always introduces new ideas, structures and forms in the target system which are not familiar to the receiving culture.

In this study I also make use of considerations enounced by Andre Lefevere, one of the leading names of Translation Studies. Towards the end of the eighties and the beginning of the nineties, with the mutations and transformations which took place all over Europe, a new consideration of translation activity was envisaged (Snell-Hornby 2006, 69). It was already widely agreed that translation does not occur in a void and that cultural norms and conventions impact significantly upon translation decisions. With the role assigned to culture in this activity, the previous units of translation, the word and the sentence, were replaced by the new translation unit, i.e. culture. Culture became the focal point of interest in studies centring on translation. Therefore, the translators' range of expertise had to expand accordingly: "Since languages express cultures, translators should be bicultural, not bilingual" (Bassnett and Lefevere 1990, 11).

Andre Lefevere and Susan Bassnett, who proposed this new translation unit, tackle translation from a perspective which, however present in translation approaches until then, had a rather marginal position: the ideology and manipulation involved in any translation activity. They did

not use ideology in the political sense, but as a mixture of conventions and rules which govern everyday life. In order to comply with the mainstream ideology (of the central power, of various dominant groups) of the target culture, a certain degree of manipulation of the target text is inevitable. According to Lefevere, translation “is never innocent. There is always a context in which the translation takes place, always a history from where a text emerges and into which a text is transposed” (ibid.).

Given the very important role played by translations in a culture and the various constraints (ideological, aesthetic or linguistic) operating upon them, translators are made aware of the power of language in revealing or obscuring meaning and content. As rewriters of the source text, translators have to be conscious of their role in guiding the target text in one direction or another, of the power they have to manipulate the texts in their hands (Vidal Claramonte 1998, 58).

The principles of Descriptive Translation Studies and a number of Lefevere's observations are used in order to help build the structure of the six chapters of this study. The historical perspective of descriptivist scholars governs my diachronic analysis of the source text in the target system. The comparison of the source poem to its target productions aims to detect the translation norms existing in Romanian culture at the moment of their production. Moreover, I analyse the various target versions of the original poem within the framework of Romanian literature, the position they hold in the target literary system, and their relations with other components of this system.

CHAPTER ONE

PERSPECTIVE ON THE TRANSLATION PHENOMENON IN 20TH CENTURY ROMANIA

The Position of Translated Literature within the Romanian Literary System

The presence of a particular author and of his work in a given culture through translation is an event that transcends time and space barriers. Each retranslation reveals changing needs arising in the target culture for a new interpretation of the source text. Each new impersonation of a source text in a target literature witnesses a different decoding of the text in compliance with the target cultural and linguistic customs at a given moment. At the same time, it reveals the evolution of a system and its maturity to enter in resonance with universal values without which it cannot exist.

The role played by translations in a particular culture, especially in a small, not to say minor culture as the Romanian one is, seems to be two-fold. On the one hand, translations exploit the resources of the national language, instilling a heightened awareness of the linguistic, stylistic and expressive potential of the target system. On the other hand, they ensure a permanent contact with the Others, who are located outside the frontiers of a target culture, natives of other languages who belong to foreign spaces accessed by the large target masses mainly through various acts of translation.

The function of translation in a culture varies in time depending on a multitude of factors among which are the requirements of the political system dominant at a given moment, the commercial and economic considerations of publishing houses, and the literary tastes and customs of the target readership.

The position of translations in a literature also registers fluctuations, at times occupying a central place, at other times a peripheral one. The function held by translations in a literary system is highly dependent upon their position within the said literature. In his essay "The Position of

Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem” (1990), translation theorist Itamar Even-Zohar points out that translated literature can occupy a central or a peripheral position within a given system.

According to Even-Zohar, translations have a central role mainly in three cases: when a literature is young and in need of models; when a literature is peripheral or weak; and when a literature undergoes a moment of crisis or experiences a period of literary vacuum. In these situations, translation has a major effect upon the receiving system, introducing new principles and elements and even helping create a poetic language or new forms and strategies of composition.

When translations hold a marginal position, they play no significant role in the shaping of the said literature and they fully adhere to the norms and conventions already existing in the target literature. In such situations, translations may reveal a certain domesticating orientation, their main purpose being that of complying with the system receiving them.

The same considerations regarding the positioning in a given literary system apply to translated literatures. They are given lower or higher consideration, depending on the international prestige they hold at a particular moment in history and the relation they have with the literatures of the importing cultures, which select them as translation sources.

Romanian literature had a somewhat delayed start if compared to European literatures of tradition. It could even be deemed a young literature in the context of the “European macro-polysystem” (Even-Zohar 1990, 50). Consequently, the translation process contributed to a significant extent to the configuration of Romanian literature, which was also highly influenced by internal political and even geographic issues. The contact with universal values via translations has been a constant concern of Romanian writers, critics and institutions, both at the theoretical and at the practical level.

Depending on the moment of their production, translations have been assigned didactic, informative or entertainment functions. At certain points during communist rule, they even represented manifestations of political resistance and forms of cultural survival.

Going hand in hand with the development of Romanian literature, they held at times a central position, when they provided models for literary composition (such as was the case with the translation of symbolist poetry at the turn of the twentieth century) or gave the impetus for the development of a poetic language which was latent, but unused in literature. At other times, they were relegated to a marginal role, that of merely supporting the dominant poetics and artistic forms of expression at a particular moment in history.

The presence of Eliot's poetry on Romanian ground reveals the influence the poet still exerts upon twenty-first century letters and the immense potential for interpretation encapsulated in his work. In order to be able to accurately set the reception and impact of Eliot's poetry in Romanian translation, there is need for a proper contextualisation, which offers an overview of the translation activity in Romania and of social, geographic, political and literary considerations. The external literary influences that impacted Romanian literature may also assist us in determining the position occupied by Anglo-American literature as a source for translation.

Therefore, given the fact that "the translation of a significant work is never a mere accident in a given culture" (Ionescu 1981, 15), I will try to outline the general axes along which the translation activity was carried out in Romanian literature in the twentieth century. The main purpose of this endeavour is to create a translation background against which to further consider the Romanian versions of Eliot's work.

Romanian Translations in the First Half of the Century

In the evolution of any culture, translations hold a special place as a system of reference whereby the said culture aligns with universal values and ideas. Translations are also a useful barometer of the web of connections and relations a given culture maintains with other peoples, both synchronically and diachronically, not only at the literary level, but also from political and social standpoints.

The translation policy (who, how and what to select for translation) mirrors, besides the individual tastes and preferences of the persons who carry out this activity, a certain orientation of the tastes of the general public, as well as the ideology dominant at a particular moment in time.

The Romanian cultural system makes no exception. A minor culture as compared to the great nations of Europe, it has always manifested an extraordinary openness towards and appetite for familiarisation with what was foreign. The social weave of the country may have encouraged this preoccupation with alterity. The numerous influences that have operated on Romanian culture (Latin, Greek, German, Hungarian, Turkish, Bulgarian and Russian) melted into a synthesis which makes Romania unique among the countries surrounding it.

The attitude towards the Other took on a special dimension during the communist regime. In its isolationist politics, the Communist Party denounced every foreign influence as harmful and unhealthy. Given the fact that such a position was imposed on Romanians by force, the

condition of being a Westerner became of vital importance in the minds of common people, reaching almost mythical proportions. The free world encapsulated everything that Romanians were banned from having or being, a sort of forbidden fruit. Nevertheless, they had access to this fruit through translations, obviously when and to the extent to which they were allowed by the regime.

In the modern history of the country, the first significant contact with the foreign world was through French culture. At the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, generations of Romanian intellectuals perfected their education in Paris, which was also the source of inspiration for almost any social, administrative or cultural endeavours. The élite would read French literature in the original and even other foreign authors in French translations.

The translation patterns followed to a significant extent the map of contacts maintained by Romanians with other cultures. The beginning of the century was dominated by French models' influence. The symbolists, the surrealists, the first wave of modernists – all took their models from the French, with few exceptions.

The other major influence was German, especially in the Western part of the country. Here there was a strong community of Germans, *Sachsen und Schwaben*, who settled in Transylvania in the twelfth century. They preserved their identity by speaking their language and practising the Protestant or Catholic faith, as opposed to most Romanians, who were Orthodox. These communities have always maintained contact with their homeland. Furthermore, between 1868 and 1918, Transylvania was part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Thus the Romanian population had been exposed to German culture and language for a significant period.

The German-oriented formation of intellectuals from Transylvania set them apart from those in the South. Towards the turn of the twentieth century, many young people living in Transylvania would attend University courses in Germany, animated by admiration of the rigour and order of the German spirit (Boia 2007, 215).

In fact, the German influence was a constant in Romanian culture during the nineteenth century. Celebrated writers of the nineteenth century, among whom playwright Ion Luca Caragiale and poet Mihai Eminescu, or of the twentieth century, such as poet Lucian Blaga, studied in Germany. The works of Eminescu and Blaga, for instance, bear significant marks of German philosophy and literature.

As for the United Kingdom, geographic distance was the main reason why it was only later truly discovered by Romanians in the twentieth century. In the interwar period, Romanians began to manifest a certain

interest in British culture precisely due to its political and economic prestige. This interest was supported by the organization of cultural events and foreign language courses (Sebastian 1939, 692), which encouraged an opening of the wider public towards the values of the English speaking world.

However, at the beginning of the century, hardly any Romanians spoke English and this low interest in the language was also visible in the choice of English works selected for translation.

Romanian historian Lucian Boia (2007, 219-22) shows that until World War I, there was not even one professor at the University of Bucharest to have graduated university in England. Boia drew together some statistics on Romanian translations of works belonging to several European countries in the period 1859-1918. English works constitute a very low proportion (277 titles of poetry against 1726 from French literature). Shakespeare was the only author who had a noticeable presence with respect to coverage and number of translated titles, followed by Mark Twain and Edgar Allan Poe.

The imbalance between English and French titles indicates that Anglo-American literature did not count among the literary preferences of Romanian readership. French still held the leading position as a source for translation and was not threatened in this position by English as a potential rival. Furthermore, the selection of translated authors may also reveal a certain orientation of the target readers' literary tastes.

Shakespeare was probably translated due to the prestige of his work both in his country of origin and in France, which was the main cultural barometer considered in Romania. On the other hand there were Edgar Allan Poe and Mark Twain, whose selection indicates a preference of the target readership for books of adventure and mystery.

Literary critic Mircea Scarlat (1984, 273-4) shows that at the turn of the century, poetry translation was particularly important because it changed old concepts on poetry. Romantics began to be replaced by Symbolists as preferred sources of translation. Also, most of the promoters of the change of literary paradigm, as is the case with Alexandru Macedonski, were translators of poetry as well. These translations were particularly useful since, besides suggesting to Romanian poets a new alternative for making poetry, they also instilled confidence in the capacity of Romanian to express new modes of sensibility.

The interwar period was very rich with respect to the translation phenomenon, which coexisted on the Romanian literary scene with impressive achievements of original works. The constant interest of the

public in the literary phenomenon was supported by the favourable overall social and economic context.

For Romania, the interwar years were one of the most flourishing periods in its modern history. After the First World War, the State assumed a very active role in the economic recovery of the country. Thus, a number of reforms were successfully carried through in a wide range of fields. Financial and agricultural reforms helped relaunch the Romanian economy. Likewise, reforms in education, law and religious administrative organisation ensured a democratic background that encouraged political and religious equality for all minorities living in the country.

Cultural life fully benefited from this favourable context. The cultural exchanges with the rest of Europe entailed an appreciation and opening towards all forms of artistic manifestation. In fact, this is proven by the various aesthetic directions which coexisted in the epoch: traditionalists (represented by poets such as Vasile Voiculescu and Nichifor Crainic), modernists (Lucian Blaga, Ion Pillat, Tudor Arghezi, Ion Barbu) and avant-garde poets (Ion Vinea, Ilarie Voronca). The public was extremely diverse and its reading preferences and habits varied accordingly.

The distinct categories of readers, with their demand for a wide range of literary manifestations, impacted also the translation practice, which did not follow a very unitary pattern. On the one hand there were translators who carried out this activity as a response to the increasing demand for foreign literature (basically represented by the production of novels) and who were mainly driven by economic motives. On the other hand, there were great poets of the period such as Ion Pillat (who translated from French, German, English and Italian), Ion Vinea (who translated from English) and Tudor Arghezi (who translated from French and Russian). Besides the general purpose of familiarising Romanian readership with foreign poetry, their translation endeavours were directed at exploiting the expressive resources of Romanian and proving that it was a good vehicle for the conveyance of universal thought.

Mass literature was basically guided by commercial grounds, which paid little consideration to the rights of original texts and writers. Professor Rodica Dimitriu argues that the high demand for translated books, mainly novels, had the direct consequence that both publishing houses and translators were interested first and foremost in having as large a number of translations as possible. Consequently, most translations had a foreignising orientation, which was not necessarily the translator's choice, but "the result of an inefficient mastery of the English code, of an incapacity to grasp the figurative and idiomatic levels" (2000, 183).

In an article on Anglo-American texts selected for Romanian translation in the first half of the twentieth century, Virgil Nemoianu (1973, 148) claims that in the thirties, mass consumption novels (penned by authors such as Louis Bromfield, Lloyd Douglas, Margaret Mitchell) were preferred sources for translation. He argues that the grounds for an orientation towards such sources are not to be found in the lack of a selection system or in the doubtful literary tastes of the Romanian readership. The cause of these preferences was, according to Nemoianu, the absence of a solid and rigorous academic and critical tradition that could have acted as a valuable factor in influencing the selection criteria in the field.

Romanian writer Mihail Sebastian also complains about the selection criteria, which, being dictated by the public and not by critics, encouraged the exploitation of English literature, mainly novels, which were thus handled like “merchandise, with no artistic standards, no literary goals, no critical scruples” (1939, 694). The lack of a set of norms that would guide both the selection process and the translation procedures entailed that the treatment of a specific foreign literature, in this case English, disadvantaged, in many cases, the said literature.

Besides the doubtful quality of Romanian versions, the purely commercially driven translation activity also led to the creation of an incoherent translation agenda. This presented a fragmented and, as such, incomplete picture of the translated literature, that ignored not only a logical hierarchy of values, the implicit relations between certain works/authors, but also the specific features of the translated authors.

The first half of the century revealed a heterogeneous approach to the translation phenomenon. Translators belonged to two different categories, with distinct agendas and approaches to the source text-target text relation. On the one hand there was an anonymous group of translators (their names were hardly ever mentioned on book covers), driven by exclusively extraliterary motives. Most of them were translators of novels and short stories and paid little, if any, respect to the source text. The obvious results were texts that observed few linguistic or expressive standards.

On the other hand, most of the writers of the period were also translators. Their translation work reveals a clear preference for poetry and manifests aesthetic and didactic purposes. Due to their translations, through a unique process of influence, appropriation and adaptation, Romanian literature entered into resonance with European literary trends.

The Post-War Period

A change of cultural paradigm came with the instauration of the communist regime. From the fifties, the West was no longer the focus of interest as a viable source of inspiration and influence. This shift was, of course, not due to a sudden whim of Romanian intellectuals, but to the fact that the regime imposed an almost exclusive orientation towards the Soviets, who also enforced dogmatic ideological models for a “new” Romanian lifestyle.

The period after World War II reshaped translation activity. In the fifties, under communist ideological pressures, the Soviet Union became the epitome of universal values for Romanians. Translations from Russian covered all fields, from literature to titles of popular science. Although the areas of translation were under the monopoly of Soviet culture, both contemporary and classic, other literatures were also well represented in translation, though obviously to a significantly lesser degree and with very effective censorship mechanisms operating upon them.

Patronage, to use Lefevere’s concept (1992, 15-7), became the most decisive factor influencing translation activity. The Belgian researcher argues that there are five major forces which strongly impact a literary system (and implicitly translations as one of the main components of such a system): patronage, poetics, ideology, universe of discourse and language.

Over the centuries, patronage has been exerted by royal courts, religious bodies, groups of persons, publishers and even the media. Patrons’ actions were mainly directed at regulating the literary system so as to make it accommodate the ideology dominant in a society at a given moment in time. In order to reach their goals, they resorted to institutions (censorship bureaus, academies, various publications, etc.) meant to ensure that artistic manifestations were compliant with the patrons’ ideology.

In Romania, patronage was represented by the Communist Party. In the fifties, the communist regime was in the process of strengthening its position on the national scene and used every power lever possible to impose its ideology. The censorship bureau imposed very strict canons with respect to translation sources and strategies.

The Party was well aware of the power literature exerts upon people’s minds and actions, so they did not neglect this field with such a huge subversive potential. By strictly regulating the “who” and the “how” of translation activity (the same restrictive “standards” also applied to the production of original creations), the Party made sure that it developed according to the principles imposed by the power in command.

Awareness of the central power with respect to the important role of this activity is witnessed in the organisation of the translator's professional status. During the fifties, translation represented a means of survival for numerous writers who were not allowed to publish original works. For others, it was also a means of resisting the system, as in Lucian Blaga's case.

The immediate effect of these ideological restrictions was a decrease in original productions. Romanian classics were already censored to a significant degree. This absence of original creations determined that state-owned publishing houses initiate what turned out to be a very active translation campaign, which, this time, went beyond mere financial considerations, in contrast to what had happened in the interwar period. Thus, the place of original titles was taken by translations, which came to hold a central position in the literary system of the epoch.

As Gelu Ionescu argues (1981, 33), from the cultural point of view, the war had isolated Romania from the rest of the continent. Therefore, the "cultural policy" initiated by publishing houses was aimed at satisfying an increasing book demand that could not be satisfied by Romanian literature. Books were cheap and readers were eager to re-establish the contact with European literature which had been interrupted by the war.

As already specified above, Soviet literature was well represented. But the fifties were also a period when the great names of the world's classics found their expression in Romanian, more often than not with exceptional results. The classics were preferred over contemporary literature (largely under-represented) due to obvious ideological considerations.

Another visible area of progress as compared to the interwar period was the number of translated pages per volume, which hints at a maturity of reading habits. Until the fifties, readers had preferred volumes of 30 to 120 pages, containing one or two short stories or one play in translation. Beginning with the fifties, the public was provided with considerably more consistent volumes which ensured a more detailed familiarisation with a certain foreign author.

The Liberalisation Period

In the sixties, the relative liberalisation of the general atmosphere in Romania triggered a change in the translation paradigm. Whereas in the previous decades no contemporary works of world literature were rendered into Romanian, now they were making their way into libraries and bookshops.

Foreign influences from French and German through direct contact and from English through translation, together with the inspiration rooted in the national poetry of the thirties, fused in original works of poetry, the most dynamic and active of the literary genres of the time. Russian was relegated to a second level, other literatures attracting readers' attention. Among them, a special place was held by English literature. This opening up towards the Anglo-American space was to continue in the seventies, another rich period for translation activity.

At the beginning of the sixties, a crucial moment was the setting up of two important publishing institutions, the main agenda of which was the dissemination of world literature in Romania: *Editura pentru Literatură Universală*, later to become *Editura Univers*, and the magazine *Secolul XX*. There were also other publishing houses which printed important collections of world literature such as *Editura Minerva* with "Biblioteca pentru toți", *Editura Albatros* and *Cartea Românească*.

The loosening of ideological straps entailed dynamic translation activity which doubled the national production of original works. It was a period when the greats of classic world literature who had not been translated before found their expression in Romanian: Dante, Shakespeare, Molière, Tolstoy and Gogol. The selection clearly indicates a temporal distance between the translated names and the moment of translation production. This was obviously due to the fact that the works of such authors, precisely thanks to their distance from the present, represented less of a threat to the communist ideology.

Many of the poets who made their debut in the epoch also tried their hand at translation, often with remarkable results. They continued this activity long after the liberalisation period of the sixties ended. This is the case with Ștefan Augustin Doinaș (1922-1992). He translated from German and French. His *Faust* is still a landmark in Romanian translations of Goethe. Augustin Doinaș was also a very active critic of translation, mainly through his articles in *Secolul XX*, in which he emphasised the importance of translations for Romanian literature and raised awareness with respect to the various issues involved in the translation process (selection of the works/authors, strategies and techniques, and reception-related aspects).

Another poet of this generation who showed sustained activity in the field was Marin Sorescu. He translated over 120 poets from all over the world, most of whom he met at various international conferences and workshops. His first translation was from Russian and his first volume of translated verse was from Boris Pasternak. In collaboration with other translators, he rendered into Romanian poets who wrote in Spanish