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(MIS)REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST:
OTILIA CAZIMIR AS AN AUTHOR-TRANSLATOR

Abstract

Although her name has for a long time been synonymous with children's poetry mainly, Otilia Cazimir (1894-1967) was also a most influential journalist and an eminently successful (copy)editor. An accomplished polytranslator, she translated into Romanian over 50 volumes mainly from Russian, French and English along her 55 years of literary activity. Oftentimes, she worked on drafts made by other translators from German or Chinese, which she edited and refined. She derived her own practico-theory from her long-lived career in translation, massively preoccupied with the *congeniality* (in Venuti's 1995 terms) between translators and the authors the works of whom they translate. Based on a corpus of translations from French (Maupassant's novel *Une vie*) and from English (Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Lost World*), ours is an eclectic paper, combining the biographic and sociologic perspectives (translator's habitus, translator's voice, Mona Baker's 2000 forensic stylistics etc.) with the traditional comparative analysis and a touch of archival research in order to account for this Romanian writer who is (mis)remembered as a children's author only, in spite of the fact that she viewed and practised translation as much more than a mere exercise in style.

Keywords: authorship, literary translation, stylist, (mis)remembering, archival view / research

Introduction

Historically, writers were most reasonably among the first to undertake translation. In most cultures there are glorious examples of authors translating other authors' works and the Romanian culture is no exception. On the contrary, it owes a lot to those men of letters whose groundbreaking work as translators (notably in the latter half of the 19th century and most of the 20th) effectively and spectacularly revived their national language and literature.

Given their substantial overlap, writing and translating have always been found mutually beneficial, irrespective of whether translation is a hobby, a refuge, a springboard for creative / personal writing, or a necessity for the (aspiring) writer. Our case in point, namely Otilia Cazimir, is noteworthy for the fact that she practically lived off translations. Better known as an author of children's poetry, she was nevertheless a highly prolific translator as well, whose 55-year-long career cannot and should not be overlooked. Far from being a mere side activity, translation was a daily practice for her which facilitated rather than competed with her other activities: fiction-writing, journalism, copy-editing etc.

With an impressive list of translations into Romanian (over 50 volumes mainly from French, Russian and English, to which we might add her work on rough drafts made by other translators from

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German or Chinese, which she edited and refined), Otilia Cazimir seems to fit the polytranslator's profile, as touched upon by Antoine Berman in his *L'Épreuve de l'étranger* (1984).

As Otilia Cazimir's poetry is what children in Romanian kindergartens (used to) learn, it is hardly surprising that collective memory registered her as a children's author only, to the detriment of her other (professional) sides, which are no less interesting. But even if, in Proust's view, involuntary memory (triggered, as it often happens, by sensory details) is the one containing the essence of the past, an appeal to voluntary memory (or archives) is needed too, should one wish to pay homage to a multivalent personality the works of whom we might still be reading without being aware of it. While memory has been defined as "a preservative capacity that stores discrete representations of particular past events" (Robins, 2016: 432), it is still culturally relevant to be reminded of aspects that are either ignored or misremembered. In contrast to the archival view of memory, commonly adopted by traditional causal theorists, Kourken Michaelian (2016) proposes a taxonomy of memory errors based on three criteria: the accuracy of the memory representation, the reliability of the memory process, and the internality (with respect to the remembering subject) of that process. He then distinguishes between *successful remembering* (which occurs when both the retention condition and the accuracy condition are met), *misremembering* (which occurs when the retention condition is met but the accuracy condition is not), and *confabulation* (which occurs when neither condition is met). If we were to extrapolate this definition of *misremembering* in terms of reliability rather than retention, should Otilia Cazimir be selectively and discriminatorily associated with her "lesser" works out of the scantiness of information regarding her many-sided contribution to Romanian literature (whether translated or not), then the present paper cannot but be a first (be it small) step towards her rehabilitation as an important author-translator, not solely as a (minor) author.

Inspired by Jean Delisle's famous *Portraits de traducteurs / traductrices* (1999 / 2002), Mona Baker's *forensic stylistics* (2000), and a range of other Socio-Translation Studies tools (*e.g.* translator's habitus, translator's voice, (para)textual agency etc.), our attempt at sketching a translator's portrait is based on a corpus of translations from French (Maupassant's novel *Une vie*) and from English (Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Lost World*) which will be analysed with a view to identifying Otilia Cazimir's idiostyle. The biographic and sociologic perspectives will be combined with text analysis because, if Chesterman, in his *Translator Studies* (2009: 15), prioritizes the translators over text ("texts are secondary, the translators themselves are primary"), we deem it important to analyse both. Focusing on a paragraph, a sentence or even a word is often a miniature example of how a translator deals with the remainder of the text(s); a bird's-eye view of a given translated text or, if possible, of all the texts produced by a translator, is also a great indicator of his / her linguistic behaviour. This said, both micro-level and macro-level analysis are used in establishing this translator's profile.

In the corpus analysis, we adopt a comparative approach that reads the original text and the translated text alongside one another, as well as an archival approach by paying attention to edition changes in the texts when possible. Back-translations are usually provided between brackets.

The Context

Before delving into the details of Cazimir's activity as a translator, we need to acknowledge the historical, political and cultural context she lived and worked in, a context which involved a lot of transformations and tribulations as the country changed from a kingdom to Greater Romania (union with Bukowina, 1918-1940) and then to Socialism and Communism.

When Cazimir was in the prime of her career, it was still very common for translations to be undertaken by creative writers, by literary authors. While many authors might have been perfectly bilingual (see Henriette Yvonne Stahl, for instance, in French and Romanian) or even multilingual, it is highly implausible that all the writers who translated from quite a few different linguacultures should or could in effect have been proficient in all those languages (*e.g.* Lucian Blaga, who translated texts mainly from German and English, but also from poetry from Polynesia, Oceania, Africa; Petre Solomon – from English, French, German, Dutch, Russian; Maria Banuş – from English, German, Spanish, Russian etc.).

It should also be noted that many authors who undertook literary translation in the mid-twentieth century translated *nolens volens* and *perforce* from Russian (with “Russian” to be understood, particularly in the 1950^s and 1960^s, as Soviet literature). Using intermediate versions, stylizing or copy-editing raw versions provided by other (often anonymous) translators, being subject to censorship as authors and having to resort to translations for a living, acting as ghost-writers for other translators (see Ion Vinea, ghost-writing for Petru Dumitriu), ultimately using translation as a form of resistance to the oppression of the political regimes – were not unheard-of in Cazimir’s time; if anything, they made up the very picture of ‘normality’.

Bio-Bibliographical Glimpses

Otilia Cazimir (pen name of Alexandra Gavrilesco), was born on February 12, 1894, in Cotu Vameşului – Horia, a small village near Roman city (the county of Neamţ, Romania). Her pseudonym was put together by her two literary mentors, in memory of some girls they had once loved: critic Garabet Ibrăileanu suggested *Cazimir*, and writer Mihail Sadoveanu came up with *Otilia*. Out of respect for her patrons, Cazimir complied with a name she actually resented in private. Towards the end of her life, she revealed what lay behind this strong dislike: she associated *Otilia* with a former deskmate she never got along with, a girl she described as “stupid, fat, and covered with spots” (Cazimir, q. in Vacariu, 1996: 17, translation mine¹).

For better or for worse, she did live up to this name which brought along a fatidic sound symbolism: the Slavic *Cazimir* looks like a good name for a translator from Russian, whereas *Otilia*’s etymological resonance (Gr. “acute hearing”) is very much in tune with rhymes and rhythms and other kinds of sonorities she dealt with as a writer and translator. The name, in any case, readily caught up and children learning and reciting her poems have always found it easy to remember, if only for the euphonic quality given by redundant vowels like [a] and [i].

She in fact alternatively employed other sobriquets as well, such as *Alexandra Casian* (Casian being her paternal grandfather’s name), *Ofelia*, *Magda*, *Dona Sol* – typically to sign her newspaper articles. Another assumed name was in fact an allonym, *George Topârceanu* (Topârceanu being a fellow-writer and very intimate friend). A hypocorism from her youth, *Luchi*, becomes a fully fledged character in her autobiographical novel *A murit Luchi* [Luchi has died] (1942). Nevertheless, it was *Otilia Cazimir* that she mostly used as a writer and translator and that she officially adopted in the 1950^s.

The youngest of five children born to Gheorghe Gavrilesco, a schoolmaster, and Ecaterina Petrovici-Gavrilesco, she spent her early childhood in the countryside, and then, in 1898, the family moved to Iaşi, the largest city in north-eastern Romania. Here she received her primary and secondary schooling and even attended the Faculty of Letters and Philosophy, but she never got a degree.

Her literary debut took place in 1912, with a four-stanza poem entitled *Noapte* [night] she published in *Viaţa Românească*, a leading literary magazine issued by the Writers’ Union of Romania, to which she would remain fiercely loyal. However, her poems and short prose appeared, along time, in a variety of other literary magazines as well, such as *Însemnări ieşene*, *Lumea*, *Lumea literară şi artistică*, *Lupta*, *Cuvântul liber*, *Viaţa*, *Iaşul literar*, *Flacăra Iaşului*, *Gazeta literară*, *Luceafărul*, *Tribuna*, *România liberă*, *Însemnări literare*, *Bilete de papagal*, *Adevărul literar*, *Revista fundaţiilor regale* etc. Only later, in 1923, did she publish her first volume: a collection of poetry entitled *Lumini şi umbre* [lights and shadows]. This edition of *Viaţa Românească*’s publishing house was very successful, as were other subsequent volumes like *Fluturi de noapte* [night-butterflies] (1926), *Licurici* [fireflies] (1930), *Cântec de comoară* [treasure song] (1931) and *Albumul cu poze* [the photo album] (1967), which all deal with the half-domestic, half-cosmic world she imagined. As a writer, she is particularly lyrical, with a “cerebral and allegorical” (Wilson, 1991: 230) poetic vein, highly redolent of fables. After 1944, her poems occasionally accommodated the dogmatic clichés of the Communist regime. Nevertheless, her most emblematic poetry was labelled “typically feminine” by critic Eugen Lovinescu and, generally speaking, as “graceful but minor” (Sasu, 2006: 289). Her fiction on the other hand (*Din întuneric* [out of the darkness], 1928; *Grădina cu amintiri* [the garden of memories], 1929;

¹ Unattributed or back-translations used along the paper are my own.

În târgușorul dintre vii... [in the borough among vines], 1939) is remarkable for the flawless portraits, if somewhat in the style of Saint-Exupéry and Colette.

For the contemporary reader, she is a classic of children's literature for three volumes notably – *Jucării* [Toys] (1938), *A murit Luchi* [Luchi has died] (1942) and *Baba Iarna intră-n sat* [old Winter comes into the village] (1954) – which were translated into Russian and Hungarian during her lifetime.

Besides being a productive writer, she was also otherwise active on the cultural and social scene. Between 1937 and 1947, she was inspector general of the theatres of Moldavia, Bukovina and Bessarabia. Together with Mihail Sadoveanu and George Topârceanu, she wrote textbooks and other didactic resources. She was one of the members of the first committee of the Writers' Union, along with Sadoveanu, Zaharia Stancu, Mihai Beniuc, Geo Dumitrescu etc.

In recognition of her professional merits, she received several awards, among which the Romanian Academy Prize (1927), the Femina Prize (1927), the National Literature Prize (1937), the Romanian Writers' Society Prize (1942), the Medal for Labour valour (1949), the first-class Labour Order (1964) etc.

Otilia Cazimir died on June 8, 1967, in Iași.

A Translator's Œuvre: From Biography to Habitus, from Practice to Theory

Femeia în Japonia / La femme au Japon [women in Japan] is the title of the first translation published by Otilia Cazimir in a journal called *Lumea* in 1922. A year later, she signed with the initials *Al. C.* [Alexandra Casian] another translation, *Prin Sicilia* [through Sicily], in the journal *Lumea literară și artistică*. From 1946 on, she worked as a full-time translator for Cartea Rusă [the Russian book], an important publishing house at the time, one of the main instruments of Soviet propaganda.

In her 55 years of literary activity, Otilia Cazimir translated a lot of texts, mainly from Russian, French and English, though she was not multilingual in the conventional sense. The amazing breadth of her work, over 50 volumes and another 50 fragmentary texts in the periodicals of the time, speaks for itself. The following table presents her translations from Russian or Soviet literature; the authors' names and the titles follow the Romanian editions; all the books except *Puișorii în cușcă* (1949) were published in Bucharest:

Author	Romanian Title	Year	Collaborative Translation
M. Bulatov	<i>Gâște călătoare</i>	1948	Eugen Vinea
K. D. Ușinski	<i>Baba iarna face pozne</i>	1948	-
A. I. Kuprin	<i>Sulamita</i>	1948	-
Maxim Gorki	<i>Întreprinderile Artamonov</i>	1949	Mihail Baras
Lev Kassil	<i>Sub semnul lui Marte</i>	1949	Xenia Stroe
S. Marșak	<i>Puișorii în cușcă</i>	1949	Andrei Ivanovski
Vera Panova	<i>Tovarăși de drum</i>	1949	-
Mihail Bubennov	<i>Mesteacăn alb, I-II</i>	1949-1954	Eugen Vinea
M. Auezov	<i>Abai: roman-epopee</i>	1950	Andrei Ivanovski
K. A. Fedin	<i>O vară neobișnuită</i>	1950	Tatiana Berindei
	<i>Primele bucurii</i>	1951	
	<i>Sanatoriul Arktur</i>	1964	Izabella Dumbravă
Galina Nikolaeva	<i>Secerișul</i>	1951	Nicolae Gumă
	<i>Povestea Nastei Kovșova</i>	1955	
Mihail Slonimski	<i>Inginerii</i>	1951	St. Siclodi
Valentin Kataev	<i>Pentru puterea sovietelor</i>	1954	Nicolae Gumă
	<i>Livada din stepă</i>	1959	Nicolae Gumă
A. N. Tolstoi	<i>Calvarul</i>	1954	Gh. C. Stere
A. P. Gaidar	<i>Opere, I-III</i>	1955	Nicolae Gumă

	<i>Timur și băieții lui</i>	1955	
	<i>Poveste despre secretul militar: Despre Malciș-Kabalciș și cuvîntul său de onoare</i>	1956	
	<i>Ceașca albastră</i>	1956	
	<i>Ciuk și Ghek</i>	1956	
	<i>Școala</i>	1960	
	<i>Piatra cea fierbinte</i>	1961	
	<i>Comandantul cetății de zăpadă</i>	1973	
Serghei Mihalkov	<i>Unchiul Stiopa</i>	1956	-
M. Postupalskaia	<i>Aur curat</i>	1956	Nicolae Gumă
Leonid Leonov	<i>Lăcustele</i>	1957	Nicolae Gumă
A.P. Cehov	<i>Opere VI, VII, XII</i>	1957-1963	Nicolae Gumă
V. G. Korolenko	<i>Povestea unui contemporan</i>	1958	Nicolae Gumă
E. Voynich	<i>Tăunul</i>	1961, 1962	-
R. Nemcova	<i>Vărtelnița de aur</i>	1967	Livia Storescu and Traian Ionescu-Nișcov

Table 1. Translations from Russian or Soviet Literature

The table also shows that Cazimir, in keeping with her secondary, professional habitus², was supported in her Herculean work by collaborators, who were either experts in Russian or prominent Slavic languages researchers, like Traian Ionescu-Nișcov, for instance. She was accordingly familiar with the splendour and misery of collaborative translation, even though this sort of partnership might not have been the same as we see it today. It is not entirely clear whether she always provided direct translations from Russian or she sometimes worked on intermediate drafts, as she apparently did in dealing with some German and Chinese texts (*cf.* Dima, 2010: 168).

In itself, a hidden form of collaboration, stylising involved a co-translator operating incognito, who provided a draft or literal version of the original text (especially in case of “exotic”, inaccessible languages), leaving the author-translator to work on the literarity of the translated text, on a (slightly less slippery) ground (*i.e.* that of intralingual translation). What Cazimir used to do in this case was to “bend” the respective drafts into a proper, literary shape. Her task involved reviewing, correcting, rephrasing, improving accuracy and readability of the manuscript and, last but not least, ensuring its fitness for its (often propagandistic) purpose.

While all this is much more than what a proofreader (and perhaps more than what a copy-editor) would do, it is not translating *per se*; however, being, after all, like translation, a constrained form writing, this was yet another opportunity for her to showcase her writing skills. Irrespective of being a first-hand translator or not, she reportedly was a foolproof partner for the publishing houses she worked with. The editors of Cartea Românească, for example, praised her know-how, earnestness and commitment³.

Otilia Cazimir was also noted for her translations from French. Among these, a piece by J. H. Rosny (*Prăbușirea* [the fall], 1926), an entire series by J. F. Merlet (17 works in less than four years⁴),

² We refer here specifically to *translatorial habitus*, which recycles age-old *habitus* (as intimated by Aristotle, Aquinas, Panofsky, Bourdieu etc.) and reinterprets it as a habit-forming force derived from and shaped by history / society / family / education / profession, which accounts for virtually any given translator’s decisions / choices / idiosyncrasies / even automatisms / ultimately style. Gouanvic above all echoes Simeoni (1998) in his delineation of two pragmatic types of *habitus* which converge to generate *translatorial habitus*: a *primary habitus* (which is shaped in school, via second-language acquisition) and a *specific, professional habitus* (which is formed at the intersection of two cultures, either via direct contact with a foreigner or by immersion) (Gouanvic, 2007: 186).

³ As suggested by George Sanda in his monograph, the editors were deeply thankful for Cazimir’s ability to meet deadlines (14 works in two years), for the quality of her work and the deep reverence for the literary text (Sanda, 1984: 113).

⁴ We provide the Romanian titles only, for the sake of economy: *Spovedania* (1929); *Indiana* (1929); *Chinezul* (1929); *Clopotul rechinelor* (1929); *Cea din urmă scrisoare* (1929); *Cinste de ocaș* (1929); *Nevinovatul* (1929);

and, most remarkably, Guy de Maupassant's novel *Une vie* / (Romanian title) *O viață* (1961), which was subsequently reprinted quite a few times. What is more, she also translated three plays for the National Theatre, three of which in French (Jean Giraudoux's *Ondine* / *Undina*, Charles de Peyret-Chappuis's *Frénésie* / *Frenezie*, Gaston Baty's *Dulcinée* / *Dulcineea*) and one in English (George Bernard Shaw's *Saint Joan* / *Sfânta Ioana*). She also signed the 1958 Romanian version of Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Lost World* / *O lume dispărută*.

As she led a very modest and private life, very little is known or recorded about her infancy and schooldays to account for her background. Nevertheless, her autobiographical novel *A murit Luchi* (1942) and the few interviews she gave towards the end of her life show us something about her language-learning experience and her perspective on various translation issues. Having teacher-parents, living and studying in as important a cultural city as Iași, must have shaped up her primary habitus; she was, by all appearances, a studious young girl, eager to discover and grow fond of language(s).

Alexandra (Luchi) Gavrilescu first tried her hand at translating during her highschool years; already with a good command of French, she translated both from and into this language she felt close to. All the experiments (writing poetry in French and then translating it into Romanian; writing poetry in Romanian and then translating it into French), however, were doomed to failure, as she confessed later on (Sanda, 1984: 111). She gave up all those "hybrid trials" in "the language of Voltaire", which she regarded as a terrible sin against her native language, and remorsefully went back to Romanian as the only language to write in and translate into. From that moment on, writing and translating became two sides of the same coin, two inseparable ventures she had to reconcile but also dissociate, as the case may be. That is why, when a reviewer criticised the fact that one of her translations (Galina Nikolaeva's *Secerișul*) sounded too similar to her own poetry, she got really defensive, upset (cf. Dima, 2010: 172). She readily explained that she rediscovered herself in those writings and felt more comfortable when translating these works rather than others, but that she would never mistake translating for one's own creative writing. The reverse was instead true: from time to time, she did allow herself to get inspired by the texts she translated so as to create new, original pieces of writing. Such is the case, for instance, of Ushinsky's⁵ volume she translated as *Baba Iarna face pozne*, which was a starting point for Cazimir's *Baba Iarna intră-n sat*. However, the cornerstone of her implicit poetics of translation was the sanctity of the (equally implicit) contract between translation and original. Transposing the voice and ideas of the *other*, not one's own, was, to her, the translator's paramount duty (Sanda, 1984: 115). It was, therefore, a matter of principle to never violate this contract. On the contrary, she was always on her guard against contaminating her translator's style with her own creative mannerisms, and always dismissive of that type of translators who let themselves be carried away by their talent as writers at the expense of the author's voice, and end up producing what Lance Hewson calls *ontological translations* (Hewson, 2013: 23, note 1).

On the other hand, as seen in the Nikolaeva incident related above, it was equally important to her to feel at ease with the author or the texts to be translated. And even if she very rarely chose what to translate, she was always deeply concerned about the issue of congeniality⁶, willing to find affinities with the author and the message. Translating Chekhov (four volumes out of 15, and regretting not having translated them all) and Maupassant, her favourite authors, must have been a great challenge but at the same time a major source of pride and satisfaction.

Key among Otilia Cazimir's personal theories was her belief that translation should be an artist's prerogative only and that it should always follow the original text, not an intermediate version. A long-range translator must be, according to her, not only highly proficient in both the source language and the target language, but also rigorous, thorough, diligent, patient, and willing to properly

Luntrașul (1930); *Evadatul* (1930); *Să ierți, să uiți... Amintiri din Guyana* (1930), *Nimeni nu mărturisește* (1930); *Ura* (1931); *Pe mare* (1931); *Chouga-baby* (1931); *O seară la Demerară* (1932); *Un poet persecutat* (1932); *Mantaua și cârjele* (1933).

⁵ Konstantin Dmitrievich Ushinsky (1824-1871) was a Russian teacher and writer, credited as the founder of scientific pedagogy in Russia.

⁶ Cf. "The translator works better when he and the author are *simpatico*, [...] not just 'agreeable' or 'congenial', meanings which this Italian word is often used to signify, but also 'possessing an underlying sympathy.' The translator should not merely get along with the author, not merely find him likeable; there should also be an identity between them." (Venuti, 2008: 273)

convey the author's message and voice, even when, or especially when they clash with the translator's own views. Other than that, she summed up her "recipe" for a good translation in a single word, namely (hard) *work* (Nanu, q. in Dima, 2010: 171).

She often rose against the unjust editorial policy which relegates the translator to the back-seat of literary fame by writing his / her name in very small letters on the title page or by omitting it altogether. However, in spite of such vexations and in spite of the fact that she could very rarely choose the texts to be translated, she never gave up this modest, often belittled, job.

Along time, having built up a substantial capital of experience in translation and an important symbolic capital as a writer / translator, she was asked to revise, stylise or correct translations seen as "bad". Goethe's *Faustus*, translated by I. V. Soricu, is a famous work in this regard. Cazimir took hold of the text and, after a comparative analysis of other available Romanian and French versions of the text, and with support from a German native speaker, she produced, according to V. I. Popa (q. in Dima, 2010: 175) a faithful yet creative Romanian *Faustus*. Françoise Wuilmart (in Banoun *et al.*, 2019: 206) believes that an author-translator needs to be an established writer in order to be believable as a translator. Otilia Cazimir's credibility as a translator, however, did not rely entirely on the symbolic capital she had managed to garner beforehand. By translating with "missionary devotion" – to use one of Judith Wordsworth's phrases (Wordsworth, 2007: 124) – she managed to achieve a kind of fame (if not fortune) comparable (if not superior) to the one her original writings gained her.

An invaluable tool which greatly enriched her writing skills, translation was a practice which finally paid off in a number of ways. Furthermore, it added a new dimension to Otilia Cazimir's duality: she was not only a children's author and an author for the large public, but also a translator addressing both types of target. That is why, in order to account for her peculiarities in translation, we selected her version of Maupassant's *Une vie* (a translation from French which addresses the large public) and a version of Arthur Conan Doyle's *The Lost World* (a translation from English meant for schoolchildren).

Translator of Maupassant

Maupassant's renown may lie primarily in his over 300 short-stories which first appeared in various periodical publications and were then assembled into books but we must not overlook the fact that he also authored six novels: *Une vie* (1883), *Bel-Ami* (1885), *Pierre et Jean* (1887), *Mont-Oriol* (1887), *Fort comme la mort* (1889), *Notre cœur* (1890). From the point of view of its reception in the Romanian culture, *Bel-Ami* is without any doubt the most visible of Maupassant's novels, closely followed by *Une vie*, the market success of which was ensured, at some point, by Otilia Cazimir.

The Romanian version of *Une vie*, given by Cazimir in 1961, has been reprinted a lot ever since. For the present comparative analysis, we will be using a Romanian edition from 2012, thus proving that Cazimir's is a canonical text which stands the test of time. Although the editors chose to relegate this 2012 version to the *Romanul de dragoste* [romance] series, which considerably downplays the complexity of the novel, the fact that Cazimir's 50-year old translation was chosen over others, more recent, must mean more than a cold calculation of profit-making on their part. Our own macro-level investigation of the target text led to the conclusion that Cazimir's version of *Une vie* is definitely worth reprinting, if only for the relatively modern language it uses, for its readability but at the same time its deference to the foreign text. The microanalysis, too, brought to light many gratifying aspects along with some minor inaccuracies.

Unquestionably Flaubertian novel (as compared to *Bel-Ami*, which is, instead, influenced by Balzac), *Une vie* resumes many of Maupassant's favourite topics, such as Normandy, women victims, paternity, death, destruction, all with a touch of Schopenhauerian philosophy. As for the potential difficulties it presents for the translator, they all arise out of the "false simplicity" (Loison, 2008: 27) of Maupassant's style, of the fact that he was always searching for the right word – *le mot juste* – fully convinced that there was only one way things could be properly expressed.

The extremely terse title which, according to Henry Mitterand, should be taken as an antiphrasis, is preserved by the Romanian translator in all its baffling simplicity and fuzziness. Due to

the indefinite determiner and the absence of any modifier⁷, *O viață* [literally, a life] suggests, just like *Une vie*, that Jeanne, the protagonist, had an ordinary life, and only to a lesser extent, something remarkable. *L'humble vérité* [the humble truth], however, the first title given by Maupassant and which was later used as a subtitle, is inexplicably obliterated and placed as the title of the book's first chapter: *Umilul adevăr*.

By and large, it is standard French that Maupassant uses in this novel, except when he wants to illustrate the speech of the local people, and even then he is careful not to overload the text with too many diastratic and diatopic details. In Cazimir's translation, the vernacular aspect, as thin as it may be, is partially neutralised, the translator only occasionally resorting to colloquial expressions like "a nu sufla o vorbă" [not breathing a word] or to a deficient or elliptic syntax.

Concerning cultural references, the relative uniformity of approach is readily apparent, especially since it is also reflected in the paratext. The proper names are generally transferred, whether they are anthroponyms (Jeanne, Simon-Jacques Le Perthuis des Vauds, Léopold-Hervé-Joseph-Germer de Varneville, Adélaïde, Gilberte, Rosalie, Julien, Hortense, Paulet etc.) or toponyms (Sacré-Coeur, Peuples, Riboudet, Yport etc.). Hypocorisms such as *père Simon*, *père Lastique* are translated in a uniform and predictable fashion by "moș" [father / old man], which is within reach and bears the same positive connotations. *Petite mère* [literally, little mother], which all along the novel designates Baroness Adélaïde Le Perthuis des Vauds, the main character's mother, is rendered by "măicuța", which, just like the French term, plays upon the ambiguity *mother / nun*.

In order to explain the origin of *Poulet*, a nickname given to Jeanne's son, Paul, the translator uses a footnote:

Sa mère l'appelait Paulet par câlinerie, il ne pouvait articuler ce mot et le prononçait *Poulet*, ce qui éveillait des rires interminables. Le surnom de Poulet lui resta. On ne le désignait plus autrement. (Maupassant, 1948: 347)

Ca să-l alinte, Jeanne îi zicea Paulet. Dar neputând articula cuvântul, el își zicea *Poulet**, stârnind în jur râsete nesfârșite. Și Paul rămase Poulet. Nimeni nu-i mai spunea altfel. (Maupassant, 2012: 242)

[To caress him, Jeanne would call him Paulet. But, not being able to repeat the word, he made them all laugh by pronouncing it *Poulet*. The nickname *Poulet* clung to him, and henceforth he was never called anything else.]

*Ca substantiv comun, "pui de găină" (în limba franceză, în original). (n. tr.)

[Translator's note: As a common noun, "chicken" (in French, in original) (emphasis mine)]

Likewise, the translator's paratext clarifies the meaning of *crotte*, an unflattering sobriquet this time, as seen in the following excerpt:

La fille des Couillard venait d'avoir un enfant et le mariage allait avoir lieu. La servante des Martin, une orpheline, était *grosse*; une petite voisine âgée de quinze ans était *grosse*; une veuve, une pauvre femme boiteuse et sordide, qu'on appelait "*la Crotte*" tant sa saleté paraissait horrible, était *grosse*. (Maupassant, 1948: 265)

Fata fermierilor Couillard născuse deunăzi un copil și în curând aveau să facă nunta. Servitoarea Martinilor, o orfană, era *însărcinată*. O vecină, fată de cincisprezece ani, era *însărcinată*. O văduvă, o nenorocită șchioapă și scârboasă, căreia i se zicea "*la Crotte*"* de murdară ce era, avea să nască și ea. (Maupassant, 2012: 188)

*Ca substantiv comun, înseamnă "balegă", "noroi". [Translator's note: As a common noun, it means "dung", "filth".] (my italics)

The adjective *grosse* [pregnant; literally, big or fat] set in italics above highlights another significant aspect of the fragment, namely the epistrophe which builds up a dramatic crescendo. The text is not only a revealing account of the protagonist's feelings towards the staggering number of premarital pregnancies in her community, it also contains a peculiar form of social satire. Cazimir only goes so far as to keep two out of three occurrences of *grosse*; what is more, she renders it by

⁷ Some English versions are, by contrast, entitled *A Woman's Life*.

“însărcinată” [expecting, pregnant], a softer, more modern and more neutral term than the pejorative and archaic *grosse*. Other synonyms, like “grea”, “gravidă”, even the slightly vulgar “groasă” or the offensive “borțoasă”, which all share the same semantic features (physicality: being heavy with child; derogatoriness) might have better expressed Jeanne’s growing aversion to sexual (im)morality; however, this would not be consistent with the translator’s individual profile of linguistic habits. Strong words are generally avoided or mitigated, even when they are vital, as in a pivotal scene like the one with the clergyman ruthlessly killing a dog-bitch with an umbrella while she was delivering her litter of puppies (chapter X). Offensive terminology is definitely not among Cazimir’s “preferred or recurring patterns of linguistic behaviour” (Baker, 2000: 245).

Regrettably, another sobriquet, *Croquerat* [from *croquer*, meaning “crunch”, and *rat*, “rat”], a cat’s name which contains a pun upon words worth explaining, if not translating, is simply another transfer among others, without any additional information. In the same way, in the absence of a footnote, it is entirely incumbent upon a competent reader to unravel the confusion made at Jeanne’s wedding by one of the characters, the Abbé Picot, between *Cana* (a biblical reference) and *Ganache* (with its various meanings: gastronomic – the basic chocolate sauce; anatomic – the jaw of quadrupeds; a stock character – the old fool, the dolt etc.), on the one hand, or another, more probable, confusion between *Ganache* and *Gamache* (after *Les Noces de Gamache / Camacho’s Wedding*, a ballet-pantomime in two acts by Louis Milon, freely adopted from Cervantes’s *Don Quixotte*).

As a general rule, Otilia Cazimir handles Maupassant’s nuances, irony and implicitness quite skillfully. As members of their own personal *intercultures* (Pym, 1995), translators are always half-way between the source- and the target-language / text / culture, without ever having a fixed point. Cazimir, too, vacillates between the two poles and manages to maintain a reasonable balance. At times she may appear to be willing to stick to the foreign text at all costs, but very often she recedes from it, in an attempt to please her readers. Very meticulous in many respects, she nevertheless sometimes dismisses Maupassant’s major stylistic trademarks, such as, for instance, the prevalent indefinite pronoun *on*. In a crucial scene of the novel, for example, which depicts the Count de Fourville rolling into a chasm the hut in which his wife and her lover had taken refuge, there is a series of *on* placed in an anaphoric asyndeton which enhances the sense of absence, of an ill-defined mass, of anonymity, desolation, distance, confusion: *On accourut; on souleva les débris; on aperçut deux corps*. (Maupassant, 1948: 337-338) Cazimir’s solution, *Oamenii alergară în grabă, dădură la o parte sfărâmurile și găsiră sub ele două trupuri*. (Maupassant, 2012: 234-235) [The people ran in a hurry (sic!), picked up the debris and found two corpses underneath.] is disappointing, in that, although she, too, uses syntactic parallelism, she also destroys both the rhythm and the impersonality of the original text. The episode under discussion remains, in spite of this, quite interesting in terms of the vocabulary used (words of Turkish origin, like “ghiulea” [cannon ball], of Latin origin, like “rîpă” [ravine] etc.) and for its dark, rich sonority (e.g. sibilant consonants like [s], [z] and the profusion of sombre vowels like [ə]).

We can see Otilia Cazimir at her best in the descriptions of nature which, with Maupassant, are usually highly charged emotionally: never a matter of decoration, in this novel above all, nature is an all-important character. The following excerpt shows Cazimir’s art of translation in that while it seems to offer a literal version of the foreign text, it actually creates not only a remarkable hypotyposis but also one of the most mellifluous texts in Romanian literature, based solely on an ingenious (ab)use of consonant [r] and, again, of vowel [ə]:

În tihna aceea fără soare, se răspândeau toate miremele pământului. O tufă de iasomie, agățată în jurul ferestrelor de jos, își revărsa neîntrerupt răsuflarea ei pătrunzătoare, la care se adăuga parfumul ușor al frunzelor abia desfăcute. Treceau unde domoale de vânt, aducând gust tare de aer sărat și de sudoare văcoasă, de la ierburile de mare. (Maupassant, 2012: 19)

Translator of Arthur Conan Doyle

In 1958, Editura Tineretului from Bucharest [publishing house for the youth] issued a Romanian version of Arthur Conan Doyle’s sci-fi novel *The Lost World* (1912), with Otilia Cazimir and Rodica Nenciulescu as translators. In 1966, the very same publishing house launched *Aventurile profesorului*

Challenger (*The Collected Adventures of Professor Challenger*), which contained *The Lost World* as well as four other volumes in the *Challenger* series, with Otilia Cazimir, Rodica Nenciulescu and Al. Ștefănescu Medeleni as translators. *The Lost World*, rendered in Romanian by *O lume dispărută* [a vanished world], has been reissued many times since, both by itself and as part of the *Challenger* series, especially after the fall of Communism (1989); however, from 1966 on, Otilia Cazimir has been the only translator mentioned, even though the subsequent versions do not contain significant changes, as compared to the 1958 or the 1966 text.

The book's rather lengthy subtitle (though in keeping with the fashion of the time of its creation) is likewise left out from some of the re-releases in Romanian and, truth be told, in English too (including the 1912 editio princeps we will be using for our comparative analysis). In the Romanian 1985 version, examined at length for the present study, we must note the quasi-literal rendition of the sub-title, with only two minor deviations: the omission of *recent* and the use of capital letters (*being an account of the recent amazing adventures of Prof. George E. Challenger, Lord John Roxton, Prof. Summerlee, and Mr. E. D. Malone of the Daily Gazette / Cuprinzînd relatarea uimitoarelor aventuri ale profesorului GEORGE E. CHALLENGER, Lord JOHN ROXTON, profesor SUMMERLEE și E. D. MALONE de la Daily Gazette*).

We also deem it necessary to emphasize that the 1985 Romanian version is included in a fashionable children's collection at the time, namely *Biblioteca pentru toți copiii* [literally, library for all the children] and that, as pointed out by Radu Constantinescu in the Preface, the original novel did not explicitly target the young audience, but as it often happens, it quickly became a classic of children's literature. The fact that *The Lost World* might not have been intended for children, but its translation into Romanian is, comes along with an expectation of finding in it simplifications, explicitations, euphemisations, omissions, a tendency towards domestication – all in the name of an intrinsically informative, entertaining, educational quality any translation for children is supposed to be endowed with. Or, Otilia Cazimir being a children's author, it is all the more interesting to discover her as a translator for children as well.

A minor adjustment can be seen in the title: *O lume dispărută* [a vanished world] uses the indefinite pronoun instead of the definite (*The Lost World*) and the reference to extinction instead of loss is more vague but at the same time less dramatic: on the whole, the Romanian title points simply to a universe among other possible worlds which is by some accident gone. The same propensity to smooth things out is observable if we look at the Contents: the 16 chapters have titles which most of the time resume or recover some characters' lines to be found inside the chapter. However, in the Romanian version, the titles are made plain, and the punctuation is simplified. Thus, *He is a perfectly impossible man!*, a line uttered by Mrs. Challenger to sum up her husband's indomitable nature and which serves as a title for the third chapter, is translated as *Un om imposibil* [an impossible man]. *It's just the very biggest thing in the world* (chapter IV) becomes *Lucrul cel mai important din lume* [the most important thing in the world]. *Question!* (chapter V) becomes *Controversă* [Controversy]. *It was dreadful in the forest* (chapter XII) becomes *Pădurea groazei* [the forest of terror]. *Those were the real conquests* (chapter XIV) becomes *Adevăratele cuceriri* [the real conquests]. Finally, *A procession! A procession!* (chapter XVI) becomes *O manifestație* [a manifestation].

With regard to the proper names, one can hardly speak of domestication as the anthroponyms, just like the toponyms, are listed without any change, with two exceptions we cannot find a viable explanation for: *George Edward Challenger* is spelt as follows in the Romanian version: *George Eduard Challenger*, and the titles of nobility are not followed by enclitic articles (e.g. it is always *Lord Roxton* instead of *Lordul Roxton*).

The characters generally use standard English, so this aspect is hardly problematic, with the possible exception of a few "corrupted" forms, meant either to convey a given accent, such as character McArdle's Scottish dialect (*descreptive*, *meesion*, *rideeculous*, *seempathy*, *supposeetion*) or Lord Roxton's diastratic idiosyncrasies (*young fella'*, *somethin'*, *livin'*, *gettin'*). Both of them are dealt with in a similar fashion in the Romanian text, namely by inserting here and there some colloquial terms, especially as forms of address: "tinere" [young man], "băiețașule" [little man] etc. The derogatory nicknames abundantly used by the characters for one another are either censored or neutralised to some extent: *infernal scribblers*, for instance, turns into "cabotin" [overacting inferior performer] – a rather formal term for a pre-teen book; *infernal bully* becomes, in translation, "fanfaron" [braggart]; *creeping vermin* is "lepră" [rascal]; *swine* – "măgari" [ass]; *roaring, raging*

bully is paraphrased as “un scandalagiu, care nu știe decât să zbiere ca un turbat” [a squabbler who does nothing but scream all day like a maniac].

The Romanian text also omits, as expected, all references to Masonry, the Bible and military conflicts (taboo subjects in Communist Romania and also hardly suitable for children’s literature):

...[he] bounced off out of the room to dress for a *Masonic* meeting... – “a fugit să se îmbrace în vederea unei ședințe.” [he ran off to get dress for a meeting].

It was a rude, raw, primeval version of the Jews in Babylon or the Israelites in Egypt. At night we could hear from amid the trees the long-drawn cry, as some primitive Ezekiel mourned for fallen greatness and recalled the departed glories of Ape Town. [entirely omitted from the Romanian version]

A correspondentship in the next great war might be within my reach. [entirely omitted from the Romanian version]

Additionally, any vulgar allusion is either euphemised or altogether left out: the tricolon *comradship [...] perfectly frank, perfectly kindly, and perfectly unsexual* is rendered as “perfect sinceră, perfect cordială – complet lipsită de preocuparea diferenței de sex” [perfectly honest, perfectly cordial, – completely disinterested in gender differences]; *where the real sex feeling begins* – “acolo unde începe atracția” (p. 12) [where the attraction begins]; *he is [...] the butt of the students* – “nu e combătut de savanți” [he is not challenged by other scholars] etc.

Doyle’s novel is suffused with specialised terminology accounted for by the translator in numerous footnotes, especially in the case of exotic botanical or zoological terms (e.g. *manioc, gingko, armadillos*) or Latin terms (e.g. *in extenso*), but not French terms, for some reason (e.g. *mêlée* is translated by “învălmășeală” [disarray]). There is no exact counterpart for *rookery*, but the translator very creatively manages to disguise this drawback:

The place was a *rookery* of pterodactyls. (Doyle, 1912: 167, italics mine)

Locul (...) servea fără îndoială drept loc de întâlnire a pterodactililor. (Doyle, 1985: 116)

[the lace undoubtedly served as a meeting place for the pterodactyls]

Further into the text, we also come across Doyle’s irony and humour; the characters’ reciprocal mockery is wonderfully delivered, highlighting the subtleties of the target language. One such example occurs in a dialogue in which Challenger and Summerlee compete over the reptilian or ornithological origin of a bird they have just seen: when Challenger assumes it must be a pterodactyl, Summerlee bursts into derisive laughter: “A pter-fiddlestick! [...] It was a stork, if ever I saw one.” Cazimir’s solution for *pter-fiddlestick*, “ptero-iluzie” [ptero-delusion], is very ingenious, albeit slightly flatter than the original.

By Way of Conclusion

Our research leads to the conclusion that, irrespective of the language she translated from (Russian, French, English, German etc.) or of the type of text she translated (fiction, drama, propaganda literature, children’s literature etc.), Otilia Cazimir’s approach to translation was always very earnest, always in search of balance (with the source, the target language and culture, the reader, the regime, the paratext etc.). A supporter of translation as co-authoriality (*i.e.* a product of an author, but also of a translator), she nevertheless knew her place as an agent in this deferred cooperation and that is why she translated without ostentation, with modesty and even humility, her moderation sometimes verging on over-cautiousness. In spite of her double duality (an author and translator for children, an author and translator for the large public), she left to posterity a uniform, consonant oeuvre and image. If choice is central to any philosophy of style, then Otilia Cazimir’s choices in translation (not of what to translate but of how to translate), at the micro- as well as macro-level, show that translation was, to her, not only an excellent exercise in style but also an extremely responsible act. She should, therefore, be remembered as not simply a children’s author, but an author, and not simply a translator, but rather a translator whose work surpasses her original writings (in both quantity and quality).

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