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## ETHNOCENTRIC TENDENCIES IN THE ROMANIAN TRANSLATIONS OF *MACBETH*

### Abstract

Starting from Venuti's binary classification of translations into *ethnocentric* and *foreignizing* this paper focuses on the factors that trigger ethnocentric attitudes in the translation of the play *Macbeth* in Romanian. Counterbalancing the extremely neologist tendencies at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, exemplified in Ștefan Băjescu's translation, most of the 20<sup>th</sup> century translators prove an inclination towards the use of local, ethnic elements, that should revive the national culture and language, the integrity of which was threatened by foreign elements. Ion Vinea's translation, that was the canonical Romanian version for more than half a century, is analysed in the paper as the representative of the ethnocentric camp. Apart from the spontaneous reactions that are generally ruled by the laws of language change, other factors that lead to the fostering of ethnocentric views are the communist regime's constrictive ideology and, at the micro level, the translator's own linguistic and cultural perception.

Keywords: Macbeth, translation, ethnocentric, Romanian Communism

In my research I analysed the language of the Romanian versions of the play *Macbeth* against the social, cultural and political backgrounds, in order to understand the impact of extralinguistic reality on the lexical choices of the translators. If, as Edward Sapir puts it, "language is a guide to social reality" (in Mandelbaum, 1985:162), when read and analysed chronologically, the Romanian translations of the tragedy *Macbeth* may serve as linguistic guides to some major social, political and cultural changes in 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century Romania. The translation history of the play covers a time span of 160 years, period of critical importance for the Romanian language. Significant historical events contained in this time frame, such as the merger of the two historical principalities of Wallachia and Moldova in 1859 and the unification of Greater Romania in 1918, had a huge impact on the Romanian language and also on the emergent linguistic community.

Forty years before the publication of the first translation of the play *Macbeth* in Romanian, in 1813, the German theologian and philosopher Friederich Schleiermacher delivered, to the Royal Academy of Science in Berlin, a lecture entitled "On the different methods of Translating", in which he clearly formulated two translation principles: "Either the translator leaves the author in peace, as much as possible, and moves the reader toward him. Or he leaves the reader in peace, and moves the author toward him" (cited in Lefevere, 1992:149). Almost two hundred years later, Lawrence Venuti,

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translator and translation theorist, reformulates Schleiermacher’s theory, claiming that translators should “choose between a domesticating method, an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target language cultural values, bringing the author back home, and a foreignizing method, an ethnoveiant pressure on those values to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad” (Venuti, 1995:20).

A cursory lexical analysis according to the translation theories above mentioned sent the existing translations of the play<sup>1</sup> in two imbalanced groups, the two 19<sup>th</sup> century translations qualifying as foreignizing texts<sup>2</sup>, inviting the reader into a cosmopolitan linguistic space, whereas the five 20<sup>th</sup> century translations entered the ethnocentric camp. The 21<sup>st</sup> century translations make distinct cases that should be discussed separately. In the present article I will focus mainly on Băjescu’s and Vinea’s translations.

<p><b>A.</b> The raven himself is hoarse That croaks the fatal entrance of Duncan Under my battlements. Come, you spirits That tend on mortal thoughts, <i>unsex me here</i>, And fill me from the crown to the toe, top-ful Of direst cruelty (I.5:37-42).</p>	<p><b>A.</b> Oui, pleine de douceur et de charme serait la voix de corbeau même<sup>3</sup>, qui par ses croassements m’annoncerait l’entrée fatale de Duncan sous les lambris de mon château. Venez tous, esprits infernaux, qui inspirez les pensées homicides; <i>dépouillez-moi de mon sexe</i> en cet instant et remplissez-moi toute entière, tête et coeur, d’une cruauté pure et sans mélange de pitié. (H. Meyer, 1836)</p>	<p><b>A.</b> Da, plină de dulceață și de grație ar fi vocea chiar a corbului, care prin croncănirea sa mi-ar anunța fatala intrare a lui Duncan sub luxosul acoperământ al castelului meu. – Veniți cu toate, spirite infernale, care inspirați cugetele omucide, [Come you all, infernal spirits that inspire homicidal cogitations] veniți, <i>ridicați-mi sexul în acest moment</i>, și umpleți-mi tot, capul și inima, d’o cruzime adevărată și fără cea mai mică caritate. (Ș. Băjescu, 1850)</p>	<p><b>A.</b> Mai să-și dea duhul de țipat și corbul Vestind morțiu intrarea lui Duncan, Pe poarta mea, sub zidurile astea. Veniți strigoi care-ndemnați la crimă [Come, ghosts that inspire murder], <i>Luați-mi feminitatea</i>, umpleți-mă Din cap până-n picioare de cruzime (H. Gârbea, 2014)</p>
<p><b>B.</b> When now I think you can behold such sights And <b>keep the natural ruby of your cheeks</b>, When mine is blanched with fear (III.5:114-116)</p>	<p><b>B.</b> ...lorsque je songe que vous pouvez contempler pareils objets et <b>conserver le même incarnat sur vos joues</b>, tandis que les mienne sont toutes pâles de frayor. (H. Meyer, 1836)</p>	<p><b>B.</b> ...când cuget că o să puteți contempla niște assemine obiecte și <b>a vă conserva carmeni incarnatului vostru</b>, când eu și sunt palid de frică [...when I cogitate that you will be able to contemplate some such objects and to preserve the carmines of your incarnadine when I am pale with fear] (Ș. Băjescu, 1850)</p>	<p><b>B.</b> ...când văd că tu te uiți La lucruri de-astea și <b>obrajii ți-s Îmbujorați</b> când eu sunt alb de frică. [...When I see that you look/At such things and <b>your cheeks are/Rosy</b> when I am white with fear ] (H. Gârbea, 2014)</p>

<sup>1</sup> The Romanian translators of the play, in chronological order, are: 1850 - Ștefan Băjescu (prose translation in Cyrillic alphabet), 1864, 1886 – P. P. Carp, 1912 – Const. A Ștefănescu (prose translation), 1922 – Adolphe Stern, 1925 – Mihail Dragomirescu, 1936 – Vasile Demetrius (prose translation), 1945 – Dragoș Protopopescu (translation in manuscript), 1945- Ion Sava (stage translation), 1957 – Ion Vinea, 2000 – D. A. Lăzărescu, 2014 – Horia Gârbea; with the exception of the 3 prose translations mentioned, all the other translations are in verse.

<sup>2</sup> Some researchers may consider Carp’s text should enter the ethnocentric camp, as it contains a plethora of regional terms, strictly specific to Moldova, the former Romanian pricipality. It is true that, being a Germanophil, as most of the intellectuals that formed the cultural group *Junimea*, Carp does not follow the analytical, French model and, as a consequence, the number of unadapted words/phrases is rather small, as compared to Băjescu’s text. Nonetheless, Carp was blamed for the use of barbarisms by both his contemporaries and the following generations, therefore, for the present stage of my research, I will include him in Băjescu s camp.

<sup>3</sup> The printing in my copy of Meyer’s book is not very clear, so in the case of *même, tête, château, pâle*, I used the modern ortography.

Băjescu's translation, published in 1850 in the transitional Cyrillic alphabet with numerous Latin elements, undoubtedly reflects the Latinist tendency of the age and the tremendous influence of the French intermediary text. Once the Romanians acknowledged the Latin roots of their language, the French culture became a natural and perpetual source of inspiration and it provided a model that embodied the Romanians' hopes for the fulfillment of their own cultural and linguistic aspirations. Most of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century translators use French texts, if not as their intermediary sources, at least as *tertium comparationis*.

The translator was overwhelmed by the source text that he translated with literal fidelity, sometimes simply borrowing French terms that he only slightly adapted, morphologically, to the Romanian language. The French source text was a subject of controversy along the years and, in *Dicționarul literaturii române de la origini până la 1900* [The Dictionary of Romanian Literature from its Origins to 1900], the information given is erroneous, the authors claiming Băjescu translated Duci's text when in fact, Băjescu used Horace Meyer's edition of Leturneur's translation. The two editions are only different in what concerns some upgrading that Meyer performed in Leturneur's text, such as the replacement of some verb forms or the change of the symbol & with *et* "and". Another difference is the use of endnotes in Meyer's (and Băjescu's text), as compared to Letourneur's text, where footnotes are employed. Meyer respects Letourneur's rewriting of the scenes, for instance fragment A in the table below is in act one, scene five, in Shakespeare's text, while in Meyer's and Băjescu's texts is in scene 8.

Although, for the specialised reader, the language of the translation can exert some kind of fascination, the process of reading is tedious, a rather awkward characteristic for a text that seems to have been used as a stage script for Halepliu's actors between 1850-1852. When compared with the most recent translation, Băjescu's text sounds artificial and pretentious and many of the words he used (that were finally adapted to Romanian) are still in dictionaries of neologisms. Băjescu's translation is the result of a huge effort to rethink the Romanian standard language according to the tendencies of the time. We can't ignore the translator's attempt to enrich the language by the use of a large number of neologisms of which some made it through to present day Romanian, although, excessively used, they would give speech an unnatural resonance even today, as the examples clearly show. More than that, as shown by the translation of the verb *unsex*, the uncritical employment of the French paraphrase may get comic effects, as *ridicați-mi sexul* can have various meanings: "remove my sex", "elevate my sex", "pick up my sex" and it is far from getting the dramatic tension in Shakespeare's play. In the French text, *dépouillez-moi de mon sexe* means „dispossess me of my sex/strip off my sex” and the translator must have probably thought of portraying it as an action of shedding a skin, or removing a piece of clothing. Unfortunately, faithful as he is to the source text, the translator obscures the original meanings of the play. In contrast, in spite of the obvious difficulty of the passage, Horia Gârbea's wonderful translation of the same verb *luați-mi feminitatea* (take away my femininity), thoroughly respects the meaning of the word, defined in the *World English Dictionary*, as „literary chiefly to deprive (a person) of the attributes of his or her sex, esp. to make a woman more callous” and paves the way to modern critical interpretations of Lady Macbeth's character.

In text B, in the table above, Băjescu completely misunderstands the French text. *Incarnat* is a French adjective used for "bright red" that the Romanian translator mistakes for a noun related to the noun *carne* "flesh" and he uses it as an equivalent for *joue* "cheek". In order to cover the translation for "the natural ruby", he then uses the word *carmeni*, probably an awkward plural form of the noun *carmin*, of French extraction, that is still in use in Romania today and has the meaning of "bright red". By comparison, Gârbea's translation, *obrajii ți-s îmbujorați* [your cheeks are rosy], makes use of a usual Romanian collocation, the rosy colour of the cheeks being frequently associated with the colour of the peony, *bujor*, hence the verb *a îmbujora* "(especially used for the face) to turn into the colour of the peony".

The back translations of the fragments in bold or italics in both A and B show that the language employed by Băjescu is artificial and strange, loaded with neologisms that will sound strange in every day speech and even more so on stage. *Veniți strigoi care-ndemnați la crimă* [Come, ghosts that inspire murder] in Gârbea's text may not sound as poetical as Shakespeare meant it, but it is certainly more easily understood and pronounced than *Veniți cu toate, spirite infernale, care inspirați cugetele omucide* [Come you all, infernal spirits that inspire homicidal cogitations]. The

adjective *omucid* “homicidal”, for instance, is still a neologism and it is rarely used; the noun form, *omucidere* “homicide” is mainly restricted to legal use.

As one can see, most of the words in the list below have an English counterpart of French extraction but in Romanian, those who survived, have either different forms, or different meanings:

*orage/ tempeste* “tempests”, *oragios* “tempestuous”, *confiență* “confidence”, *dignitate* “dignity”, *chestiune* “question”, *companion*, *nuvellă* “piece of news”, *caritate* “charity”, *consiliu* “counsel”, *audacie* “audacity”, *uvragiu* “work”, *objet*, *abundantă* “abundance”, *present* “gift”, *veritate* “truth”, *tapagiu* “noise”, *culpabil* “guilty”, *guerră* “war”, *megere* “wicked women, shrews”, *omage* “homage”, *precipițiu* “precipice”, *parolă* “word”, *convivi* “guests”, *langagiu* “language”, *circonstanță* “circumstance”, *kambellani* “chamberlains”, *consînge* “blood relative”, *a se fatiga* “to fatigue oneself” *a se fini* “to end”, *a curona* “to crown”, *a confia* “to confide”, *a mepriza* “to despise”, *a divina* “to divine/foretell”.

The translator’s innovative work is, however, not to be minimised and overlooked. As it was among the first translators of Shakespeare’s work in Romanian, Băjescu had a hard time managing his relationship with the French text. On top of that, the cultural and linguistic environment of the age fostered such foreignizing attitudes that were more and more pregnantly found in national literature. An interesting phenomenon occurs in the witches’ lines, which Băjescu translates in rhyming verse, where the constriction of form no longer allows for the indiscriminate borrowing of French words. The language is much more similar to the one we speak today and even younger generations might take pleasure in the musicality of the fragments:

Broscoi care, într’al lunei spațiu iute trecător/ Adormit și zi și noapte suppt o piatră înghețată./ Te ai umflat încet cu’ncetul d’un venin prăpăditor/mergi și intră tu’nainte în căldarea fermecată (Băjescu, 1850:85).

Să’ndoim, să’ndoim îngrijirea și lucrarea/Să lăsăm să arză focul și să fiarbă și căldarea (*ibidem*).

Să punem să se recească într’un sânge de maimuță/Și atunci al nostru farmec e’ntărit de aghiuză (Băjescu, 1850:86).

The contemporary reader’s objections to Băjescu’s text only reduplicate the negative reactions of the 19<sup>th</sup> century reader to non-translated texts, especially poetry, as the massive import of neological words from both French and Italian resulted in an unconciliatory breach between written texts and spoken language. Some intellectuals who, up to that moment, had embraced what we would call today Eurocentric attitudes that integrated ideas of progress, linguistic innovation and concepts of alterity, began to underline the detrimental external influences, as a consequence of their perpetual concern with ethnic hybridity and linguistic degeneration.<sup>4</sup> When speaking of emergent nation states, historian Eric Hobsbawm underlines the fact that “ethnicity and language became the central, increasingly the decisive or even the only criteria of potential nationhood” (Hobsbawm, 2000: 102). Consequently, Romanian intellectuals started to focus on the awakening of the national consciousness among both uneducated and educated strata and on the creation of a standardized language, comprehensible to all, an important desiderate made even more stringent after the merger of the two historical principalities of Wallachia and Moldova.

Analysing the roots of nationalism, Professor A. D. Smith enumerates the three antinomies that are generally proposed by researchers of nations: traditional (genetic) vs. constructed, old vs. modern and cultural vs. political, and comments upon the debate generated around the last two: “By the early twentieth century, the lines of division between the ‘objectivists’ who stressed the role of culture, and more especially language, in the definition and formation of nations, and the ‘subjectivists’ for whom nations are formed by popular will and political action, were well entrenched in European historiography” (Smith, 2003:170). In Romania, the two approaches to nation and nationalism seem to have manifested simultaneously in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, or they simply succeeded one

<sup>4</sup> see Titu Maiorescu, *O cercetare critică asupra poeziei române de la 1867* [A Critical Approach to the Romanian Poetry in 1867], or Nicolae Iorga, *Lupta pentru limba românească* [The Fight for the Romanian Language], in 1906.

after the other at a very rapid pace. The ones who admitted the superiority and the historical existence of the French culture wanted to find genealogical connections to it and, if possible, transfer it on Romanian ground. This could very easily be accomplished through language, and Ștefan Băjescu's translation is just one of the countless examples of such texts, many of them non-translated. At the same time, Romanians felt that, being an emergent nation, they needed a language that would speak to/for them all. As Smith remarks, "language and linguistic politics were the main factors in creating national consciousness in modern European new nations" (*idem*: 173).

Therefore, the highly innovative cultural movements that had shattered the Romanian language in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century were slowly replaced by a populist nationalism that preached for the reinstatement of the previously marginal, rural and regional linguistic elements that would have allegedly helped create an autochthonous and authentically Romanian model. All this cultural unrest is amply reflected in all 20<sup>th</sup> century translations of the play *Macbeth*, beginning with Constantin Ștefănescu's prose translation in 1912 and ending with Ion Vinea's text, the canonical Romanian version for more than fifty years. In contrast with the foreignizing, innovative texts of the previous century, the 20<sup>th</sup> century translations include a plethora of old and regional terms, mirroring the non-translated literature that celebrated the uniqueness of the national character. In his work *Sămănătorism, Poporanism, Criticism*, Mihail Dragomirescu, one of the translators of the play who, among other things, was a literary theorist, claimed that the *cultural stage* in the history of the Romanian spirit that covered the period between 1920 and 1930 "se distinge printr-o mișcare culturală și printr-un *avânt spre lumină* fără precedent în atmosfera vieții noastre publice; prin afirmarea prereminenței noastre artistice și literare, atât în țară cât și în streinătate[...] printr-o năzuință necunoscută până acum spre creațiune originală și literară, liberă de cătușele streinătății, în toate direcțiile"<sup>5</sup>(Dragomirescu, 1934:10). The need for Romanians' artistic preeminence *inside* the country has to do with the change in demographic distribution and the phenomenon of ethnic dilution that resulted from the unification of Greater Romania. As historian Lucian Boia remarks: "presiunea străinilor, din afară sau din interior, reală până la un punct, dar hiperbolizată în imaginarul național, a generat complexul de cetate asediată, foarte tipic pentru mentalitatea românească a ultimelor două secole. Istoria românilor este înțeleasă într-o manieră strict conflictuală, ca o luptă continuă purtată pentru supraviețuire etnică și statală"<sup>6</sup>(Boia, 1997: 255).

A good example of such conflictual energies is the case of Adolph Stern, another translator of the play, viewed both as an external and as an internal foreigner, frequently criticised not only for his ethnocentric, localizing tendencies but also for his supposedly innate incapacity to properly understand and use the Romanian language, due to his Jewish descent.<sup>7</sup> One of the stringent priorities of the Romanian intellectuals was to become more visible in the cultural and urban life of the country, hence the breach between the peasants and the educated elite that covered all life aspects, including language. As a consequence, writers and translators started using regional and more archaic terms, in order to bridge this gap that was disruptive of Romanian unity. If we look at this small selection of words of Turkish and Slavic origin, that populated the texts of the 20th century translations, it is no longer possible to relate them to English as we did with the words in the previous list:

*taman*, adv. <Turkish *tamam*, "especially, exactly" *barem* adv. < Serbian or Bulgarian, *barem*, "at least" *șart*, n. < Turkish *șart* "tradition, usage, rule, convention, " *bogdaproste* int./n. < Bulgarian *bog da prosti* "May God forgive the dead" *mendre* "whims, caprices" plural noun of unknown extraction; *a-și face mendrele* (literally, "to do one's whims"), *har* n. < old Slavic *chari*, "(divine)grace,

<sup>5</sup> "distinguishes from other periods by a cultural movement and by an impetus towards light that are unprecedented in the environment of our public life; by the assertion of our artistic and literary preeminence, both in our country and abroad, through a sense of purpose, unknown to us until now, towards an original literary creation, freed from the handcuffs of foreign elements, in all directions."(my translation, italics in original).

<sup>6</sup> "the pressure of the foreigners, from outside and from within, real up to a point but hyperbolized by the national imaginary, generated the complex of „citadel under siege”, so typical for the Romanian. mentality of the past two centuries. The history of Romanians is understood in a strictly conflictual manner, as an ongoing struggle for ethnic and statal survival"(my translation)

<sup>7</sup> I dealt with Stern's case in a previous article, *Ethnic Bias in the Reception of Adolph Stern's Translations of Hamlet and Macbeth*, published in *Messages, Sages and Ages*, Volume 2, No. 1, 2015, 38-46.

talent”*nur* n. < Turkish *nur* “sex appeal” *opincă* n. < Bulgarian *opinka*, “peasant leather footwear fixed by the ankle with laces wound over textile ankle wraps” *bahorniță* (< Serbian. *bahornica*) regional form for “hag”; *ostrov* (< Old Slavic *ostrovŭ*) “island”; *pristav* (< O. Slavic *pristavŭ*) “messenger” *cobitor* (< Serbian. *Kobiti*; Bulgarian *kobja*) “of ill omen”; *hâd* (< Ukrainian *hyd*) “ugly”; *a vecui* (< O.Slavic *věkü*) “to live (with somebody)”; *pricznică* (<Slavic *prokažati*) “deadly”; *coleașă*(<Serbian *kulijez*, Bulgarian *.kulijaša*) “polenta”; *nădejdi*( <O.Slavic *nadežda*) “hopes”; *horbotă* (pol. *forbot*) “regional term for *lace*”; *triște*(< O. Slavic *.sŭrenšta, srešta*) “fate”; *crușit* (< Ukrainian *krušyty*) “red with blood”; *izvod* (sl. *izvodŭ*) “list, file”; *hal* (<Turkish *hal*) “bad state”, *șaică* (<Turkish *șaiika*) *olăcar* (< Turkish *ulak+ar*).

The same programmatic stance seems to control Ion Vinea’s approach to the Romanian Language. Vinea was a poet of the avant-garde and a promoter of modernist values. Although a prolific writer, he was criticised by his contemporaries for the rather moderate spirit displayed in his work, in stark contrast to the audacity he generally showed in the theoretical manifestos published in the literary journals of the time. The lexical choices in translation, published in 1957, reflect, on the one hand, the anti-neologist tendencies of his time and, on the other hand, the poet-translator’s own agenda of reintegration of local values in the individual and general poetic sensitivity. His critical beliefs are prefigured by a cultural manifesto that he published in the journal “Punct” [Fullstop], in the thirties, whence we reproduce a fragment: “Metrou, metronom, mecanic, constructiv: nickel, express, radium, telefon, T.F.F., cablu, ascensor, termometru, bitum, calcul, integral, vermouth, viteză, pașaport, radiator; arc voltaic, pneumatic, motor, alcool, turbină etc.<sup>8</sup> – l’opinion courante est que rien qu’en employant un vocabulaire de contremaître d’usine, en guise de paroles en liberté, on devient pour cela, poète moderne...C’est une révolution de lexicque. C’est une conception de garçon-coiffeur autodidacte. A quand la révolution de la sensibilité,- la vraie?” (Vinea, cited in Morar, 2003:41). Vinea speaks against the burdening avalanche of neologisms that invaded the Romanian language, at the expense of older terms that, already at home in the natural production of language, were much more appropriate for artistic use. However, as compared, for instance, with Dragomirescu’s translation, published thirty years before, in Vinea’s text, regional and archaic terms have a low frequency. Faithful to his creed, Vinea proves even more moderate in the use of neologisms and their list is restricted to the following: *paricid* “parricid”, *sperjur* “perjury” and *tiran* “tyrant”.

<p><b>Let us rather Hold fast the mortal sword: and like good men Bestride our down-fall birthdom:</b>each new morn, New widows howl, new orphans cry, new sorrows Strike heaven on the face, that it resounds <i>As if it felt with Scotland, and yelled out Like syllable of dolour.</i> (IV.3, 2-8)</p>	<p>Mai bine Să tragem <i>spada morții</i> ca ostași[Let us rather pull out the <i>death sword</i> as <i>soldiers</i>],/ Să punem iar în șa căzuta patrie [Let us put back in the saddle the fallen fatherland]/ Căci zi de zi noi văduve și- orfani/Bocesc și gem, și alte suferinți/Dau palme cerului, stărnind ecou/Ce <i>pare-a plânge</i> Scoția și-ai <b>îngâna /Suspinele de dor.</b> [<i>that seems to mourn Scotland and to echo her longing sighs</i>] (Aurel Vasilescu, 1962)</p>	<p>Mai bine, Să tragem <i>cruntul paloș vitejește</i> [Let us rather bravely pull out the ferocious broadsword ],/Străbunul nostru drept să-l apărăm, [our ancestral right to defend]/Că zi cu zi, și-alt geamăt de vădană./ Și-alt plâns de-orfan, și alte suferințe/Lovesc în față cerul ce răsună/<i>Și-ngână parcă însuși glasul țării./Urlându-și vaietele de durere.</i> [<i>and seems to echo the very voice of the country/Howling her cries of pain</i>] (I. Vinea, 1957)</p>
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Romanian scholars who analysed Shakespeare in translation have underlined the way in which the communist regime had confiscated Shakespeare’s work for ideological purposes, imposing the use of a large number of Slavic words, to show solidarity with the communist Soviet Union, and

<sup>8</sup> “Subway, metronome, mechanic, constructive: nickel, express, radium, telephone, wireless telegraphy, cable, elevator, thermomiter, bitumen, calculus, integral, vermouth, speed, passport, radiator; voltaic arc, pneumatic, engine, alcohol, turbine engine, etc[...].” (my translation)

eradicating any religious hint. Despite the fact that Vinea's translation was diachronically the first to be published after the installation of the communist regime, there is no lexical evidence in the text to prove such an attempt in the case his translation of *Macbeth*. Not only had Vinea preserved the religious vocabulary, but there were no fragments in the text I could possibly link to the communist ideology. It was a poet, translating another poet, rather than a playwright, but beautifully, up to the level of alliteration. "Great tyranny, lay though thy basis sure", Macduff says in act four, and Vinea translates *Te-ntemeiază trainic, tiranie*.

However, the play *Macbeth* was not altogether free from the hinges of ideological coercion. In Virgil Petrovici's study on Ion Sava's *Macbeth cu măști* [*Macbeth with masks*], I have come across a fragment from Aurel Vasilescu's translation for Mihai Berechet's stage production in 1962.

In his memoirs entitled *Nouă caiete albastre* (Nine Blue Notebooks) Mihai Berechet remembers that Zaharia Stancu, who was then the director of The National Theatre, had made the staging of *Macbeth* contingent on Aurel Vasilescu's translation, which he had commissioned and paid with good money (Berechet, 1983:2013). If we compare Vasilescu's fragment with Vinea's version, we can see that Vinea sets Shakespeare's play in an idealised, potentially medieval period, marked by acts of chivalric bravery, whereas Vasilescu, using a communist cliché, points to a more recent past, the presence of the soldiers alluding to an implied enemy threatening to the fatherland that will inflame the communist imagination and discourse through the entire communist period. The translation of *good men* by *ostași* [soldiers] reflects the already established perception of those belonging to the coercive structures in the state as important, necessary and superior.

One might incline to believe that, being more difficult to stage, given the heavy political load the play carried, it was less exposed to censorship than other plays, but the minute it threatened to leave the shelf and to enter the public space, its meanings had to be subsumed to the ideological needs of the age. Historian Lucian Boia asserts that the period around 1960 can be considered the brightest period of the communist regime (Boia, 2016:98). The need for the restoring of Romanian tradition and cultural values called for the inclusion, in the system, of the intellectuals who, up until then, had been reluctant to the communist ideology and had paid for it in the communist prisons. Released from prison, they had the opportunity to publish their writings, contributing to the cultural evolution of the country and serving the best interests of the regime. Vinea, for instance, says Berechet, was among the initial choices for the translation of the play, as he had been "recently rehabilitated" (Berechet, 1983:212). The fact that Vasilescu undertranslates "syllable of dolour" with *suspine de dor* [longing sighs] completely depletes the Romanian text of any potential allusion at or connection with the political realities in Romania. This is not a translation mistake, as Berechet underlines the translator's complete involvement in the process of translation, his obsessive concern with minute details such as the number of syllables that had to match the one in the original text (Berechet, 213). Vasilescu may have understood that there was no way out and he was ready to compromise. As Boia remarks, they were giving up saying all they were thinking because they could, at least, say part of it: "Libertatea, așa îndiguită cum era, părea un câștig extraordinar față de atmosfera de plumb a anilor 50. Iar dreptul de a afirma răspicat credința în valorile naționale apărea, în contrast cu detestabilul antinaționalism de până mai ieri, ca o prețioasă expresie de libertate (devenită repede, ce e drept, o obligație)"<sup>9</sup>(Boia, 2016:100).

What I find even more interesting, is the way in which the anecdotal that surrounds the Scottish play was also localised. In *Lady Macbeth in America*, Gay Smith speaks of Anderson and Olivier *Macbeth* production in 1937 that "had its share of bad luck traditionally associated with the play" (Smith, 2010:160). In *Shakespeare's Ghost Writers. Literature as Uncanny Causality*, Marjorie B. Garber also enumerates a number of gloomy stories that derived from some misfortunes that scarred the English stage history of the play (Garber, 2004:90). In the same Nine Blue Notebooks, director Mihai Berechet recorded similar events that marked the Romanian stage history of *Macbeth*: Sava's performance was only staged 21 times, time lapse in which he got an illness that led to his premature death, Nini Ciulei, Liviu Ciulei's sister, died during rehearsals for the same performance.

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<sup>9</sup> "Freedom, dyked as it was, seemed an extraordinary gain when compared to the leaden atmosphere of the fifties. And the right to clearly assert one's faith in the national values appeared, in contrast with the recent detestable antinaționalism, as a precious expression of freedom (that quickly turned, it is true, into an obligation)" (my translation).

During his own staging of the play, an extra died of food poisoning, Al. Alexandru Vrancea, playing Banquo, was announced of his mother's death and an extra of her husband's death while they were on stage, and exactly on premiere night, the urn containing the ashes of Tony Gheorghiu, the creator of the decor and costumes for the play, was brought back into the country from Sweden (Berechet, 2015). The need to culturally engulf Shakespeare's text goes beyond page and stage level, feeding on the Romanian's appetite for superstition.

To conclude, the ethnocentric tendencies in the Romanian translations of *Macbeth* are triggered by three factors. First and most important of all is the populist nationalist discourse and the anti-neologist movements that emerged at the end of the 19th century and continued through the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The second is the attempt of the communist discourse to confiscate the already formulated national discourse, which, slightly altered, could serve the regime's ideological needs. Fortunately, in the case *Macbeth*, this is restricted to Vasilescu's text and according to Berechet it didn't even make it to the stage as the director altered the translation. The last factor derives from the stylistic needs of the translator who found the cold neological terms inappropriate for the translation of so lyrical a text. A good example in this respect is Horia Gârbea's latest translation of the play, where rare or obsolete words, such as *hâd*, much blamed by Botez in Stern's text<sup>10</sup>, are used with ease, proving that the Romanian language is mature enough to accommodate meanings rendered in all linguistic registers. Anthony Pym, translator and translation theorist, says that the "the main reasons for linguistic deviance must surely be the personal identity of the translator" (Pym, 1996:175).

The translation of the play should represent what Anthony Pym, called the middle term, the individual energy generally neglected by abstract theories, which means to reconcile the conflicting and mutually exclusive attitudes promoted by Lawrence Venuti's reductionist binarism (*idem*), revealing the "joyful and necessary interaction of personalities"<sup>11</sup>(in Stanley Wells's words) between the author and his interpreter/translator.

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<sup>10</sup> See my article in *Messages, Sages and Ages*, Vol 2, No.1, 2015.

<sup>11</sup> From Stanley Wells's speech in the plenary session of the conference *Shakespeare în România, Shakespeare în lume* [Shakespeare in Romania, Shakespeare in the World], Bucharest, April 2016.



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