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TESIS DOCTORAL

**T.S. ELIOT'S *THE WASTE LAND* AS A PLACE OF
INTERCULTURAL EXCHANGES – A TRANSLATION
PERSPECTIVE**

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Introduction

In every culture, translation phenomena present patterns of evolution which mirror the trajectory of its contacts with the Other. The results of such phenomena are mutually advantageous. For the target literature or author, it ensures the survival in time of the work to be translated, as well as wider space 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 benefiting 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"¹.

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 the new, possibly revolutionizing ideas of the source text. On the other hand, it introduces target readers with a representative item of universally acknowledged literary achievements. The focus of this thesis is T.S. Eliot's *The Waste Land* which I approach from a translation perspective. My analysis will envisage 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 did. His work — poetry, criticism, drama — has influenced whole generations and its echoes still reverberate in twenty first century letters. One of the most influential

¹ Paul Ricoeur. *On Translation*. London & New York: Routledge, 2006, 10.

personalities in an entire century of literature, Eliot's reform imposed new alternatives to interpreting and writing 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 being inextricably linked. In Eliot's frame of mind, 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 the impact upon the development of literature. His critical program made extensive use of concepts such as tradition, the objective correlative, the theory of impersonality of poetry and tradition. 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 contemporary public is his concern with culture and cultural exchanges. This is precisely the reason why I chose Eliot's *The Waste Land* as the subject of my thesis — the fact that his vision suggests that the key to the survival and development of human civilization is a respectful revival of past experience, combined with an awareness of the need for intercultural communication. Eliot's aim was to reunite the 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 characterized the generation after World War I. Yet, it is also the expression of the poet's personal problems. In this study I approach *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 the 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. In my view, the poem is an act of translation and I propose a new interpretation which considers it the topos of cultural reconciliation and dialogue.

A significant part of this thesis is also dedicated to the analysis of *The Waste Land* and its various Romanian translations. Eliot's poem entered the 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*, Issue no. 3. Four other translations were carried out at distinct moments: Aurel Covaci published

his version in 1970², Mircea Ivănescu published his in 1982³, Alex Moldovan signed the translation of *The Waste Land* in 2004⁴ and the latest translation was made in 2009 by Șerban Dragoș Popescu⁵. In addition, there are also partial translations. Thus, Ștefan Augustin Doinaș and Toma Pavel translated Part V, “What the Thunder Said”⁶, which was published in *Secolul XX*, Issue 1, 1965. 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*⁷(1972). To my knowledge, this thesis is the first to include all Romanian texts in a comparative study.

The methodological approach of my thesis 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 the Romanian translation policies as well as in the chapter which deals with the translation of the cultural elements in *The Waste Land*. The reasons why 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.

² *Țara pustie* in T.S. Eliot. *Cele mai frumoase poezii*. București: Editura Albatros, 1970. Translated by Aurel Covaci.

³ *Tărâmul pustiit* in *Poezie americană modernă și contemporană*. Cluj Napoca: Editura Dacia, 1986. Translated by Mircea Ivănescu.

⁴ *The Waste Land*. Pitești: Editura Paralela 45, 2004. Translated by Alex Moldovan.

⁵ *Tărâmul pustiirii* in *România literară*. July 24, 2009. Translated by Șerban Dragoș Popescu.

⁶ “Ce a spus tunetul” in *Secolul XX*, Issue 1, 1965. Translated by Ștefan Augustin Doinaș and Toma Pavel.

⁷ *Panorama poeziei universale contemporane*. București: Editura Albatros, 1972. Translated by A.E. Baconsky.

After World War II, with the new advances in linguistics, the studies of translation benefited from the interest of linguists and scientists from neighbouring disciplines. Translation preoccupations needed a more systematic organization, 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 translation unit, which was confined, however, to the word and sentence level.

The 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 systematization of the newly designed science of translation were J.P. Vinay and J. Darbelnet, in their *Stylistique comparée du français et de l'anglais*⁸ (1958). It is more of a textbook which relies on the 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 linguistics 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*

⁸ J.P. Vinay and J. Darbelnet. *Stylistique comparée du français et de l'anglais*. Paris: Didier, 1958.

*Linguistics*⁹. 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 by linguistically equivalent target text elements. His linguistic approach presents the drawback of considering translation from a rather static perspective. At the same time, favouring grammar 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 its meaning and scope, was also approached by Nida. He believed that there are two types of equivalence. Dynamic equivalence, which he prefers in 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 possible¹⁰.

The pragmatic turn in translation studies was not a complete break away from the previous linguistic considerations, but the result of further development in the field. At the beginning of the seventies, the tenets of

⁹ J.C. Catford. *A Linguistic Theory of Translation: An Essay in Applied Linguistics*. London: OUP, 1965.

¹⁰ Mark Shuttleworth & Moira Cowie. *Dictionary of Translation Studies*. Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing, 1997, 61.

generative and structuralist grammar 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 (to be later 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 concerned¹¹.

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 to 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, how and why it is done in that way, in that context¹².

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 of translation, which thus benefited from insights from psychology, sociology or anthropology.

¹¹ Leo Hickey. "Introduction" in Leo Hickey (Ed.). *The Pragmatics of Translation*. Clevedon & Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters Ltd., 1998, 3.

¹² Leo Hickey. "Introduction", 6.

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*¹³, 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 the 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 is highly dependant upon 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

¹³ Katharina Reiss and Hans J. Vermeer. *Grundlegung einer allgemeinen Translationstheorie*. Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1984.

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 purpose¹⁴. The above-mentioned label was attached to the scholars who collectively published the volume *The Manipulation of Literature. Studies in Literary Translation* (1985)¹⁵.

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

¹⁴ Theo Hermans. "Introduction. Translation Studies and a New Paradigm" in Theo Hermans (Ed.). *The Manipulation of Literature. Studies in Literary Translation*. London & Sydney: Croom Helm, 1985, 11.

¹⁵ Theo Hermans (Ed.). *The Manipulation of Literature. Studies in Literary Translation*. London & Sydney: Croom Helm, 1985.

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 trend of evolution. Flemish and Dutch researchers had maintained contact with German and Czech circles, whereas the Israeli had 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 were dependant upon translation for commercial and political reasons¹⁶.

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

¹⁶ Edwin Gentzler. *Contemporary Translation Theories*. London & New York: Routledge, 1993, 105-106.

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 literatures¹⁷.

I will further focus on the work of the Tel Aviv group with their Polysystem theory, since this thesis 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 concepts¹⁸.

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 ongoing struggle to maintain or reach a central position. At the

¹⁷ Theo Hermans. “Introduction”, 10-11.

¹⁸ Edwin Gentzler. “Contemporary Translation Theories”, 109.

same time, the literary polysystem is itself conceived as merely one element of the larger system called culture (which also comprises economic, social, 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”¹⁹, Even-Zohar 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 one. 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 can not be attempted at 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. Theorists of DTS emphasise the idea that the role of translations has to take into account both the synchronic and the diachronic axis. 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

¹⁹ Itamar Even-Zohar. “The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem” in Itamar Even-Zohar, *Polysystem Studies*. Special Issue of *Poetics Today*, 11:1, 1990.

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 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 facto²⁰.

Translators' observance or inobservance with the norms predominant in the receiving culture hints at a potential bipolar approach of the translation process, either towards adequacy or towards acceptability. In Toury's opinion,

²⁰ Gideon Toury. *Descriptive Translation Studies and Beyond*. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1995, 55.

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 will also exploit a number 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 the translation activity was envisaged²¹. It was already widely agreed that translation does not occur in a void and that cultural norms and conventions impacted significantly 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, namely 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"²².

Andre Lefevere and Susan Bassnett, who proposed this new translation unit, tackle translation from a perspective which, however present in translation

²¹ Mary Snell-Hornby. *The Turns of Translation Studies*. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2006, 69.

²² Susan Bassnett & Andre Lefevere. "Introduction: Proust's Grandmother and the Thousand and One Nights: The 'Cultural Turn' in Translation Studies" in Susan Bassnett & Andre Lefevere (Eds). *Translation, History and Culture*. London & New York: Pinter, 1990, 11.

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 main ideology (of the central power, of various dominant groups) in 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”²³.

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 hands²⁴.

The principles of Descriptive Translation Studies and a number of Lefevere’s observations will help me build the structure of the six chapters of my thesis. I employed the historical perspective of the descriptivist scholars in 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 the Romanian culture at the moment of their production. Moreover,

²³ Susan Bassnett & Andre Lefevere. “Introduction”, 11.

²⁴ M. Carmen-África Vidal Claramonte. *El futuro de la traducción. Últimas teorías, nuevas aplicaciones*. Valencia: Institució Alfons el Magnànim, 1998, 58.

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 1 sketches the panorama of the Romanian translation activity in the twentieth century. Emphasis is placed on the position held by translations in the modern history of the Romanian culture and on the historic, political and economic conditions that dictated the role assigned to them throughout the twentieth century. The insight into the main external influences, French and German, operating in Romanian literature will help clarify the somewhat marginal position occupied by the British literature as a selected source for translation during certain periods. These general observations will be used as background information for the analysis of the reception and translation of Eliot's work in Romania.

Drawing upon Itamar Even-Zohar's perception of literature as a polysystem made of several sub-systems of which translation is one of the most relevant, Chapter 2 will outline an overview of Romanian literature in the twentieth century. A contextualization of the target literary system is necessary in order to highlight the moments in which Eliot's poem entered the Romanian scene through translation. I will also specify the main literary trends which create the background for the encounter with the British literature as

represented by Eliot. Based on these general observations, I will carry out an analysis of studies and articles which make the reception of Eliot's work in Romania.

Chapter 3 will make a contextualization of T.S. Eliot's life and work in the British culture. The position held by the author of the translated text in his own culture, the relevance of his work in the evolution of his literary system and its reception and echoes at the international level may clarify why translators considered his work an important option for translation. Thus, in this chapter I sketch the main lines of Eliot's trajectory, tracing his evolution as a poet and critic. Considering that he was an American transplanted to European soil, I will highlight his poetic manifestations which indicate him as a traveller between two worlds, the American and the European, in search of an identity which always bore the marks of a mixture of cultures. In the general overview of his work, particular emphasis will be placed upon his central poem, *The Waste Land*. The subchapters dedicated to the poem will envisage the general personal background which led to the writing of the text, the influences which operated upon the poet's creative sensibility, a number of stylistic and structural considerations, as well as the reception of *The Waste Land* at the moment of its publication.

Chapter 4 approaches Eliot, the translated poet, as translator. First I draw the general context of the modernist discourse on translation, which proposes a reevaluation of the translation strategies and position in the Anglo-American literature. Then I analyse how Eliot understood to use translation in

his work. I will demonstrate that his preoccupation with this activity is visible at various levels. He resorted to the notion of cultural exchange as the core of his definition of culture. The activity he carried out as a literary editor also proves his practical use of translations. Furthermore, I will indicate the manner in which Eliot employs translation as a structural element in his poetic work. As a translator, he only worked on St. John-Perse's *Anabase*. I will rely on Eliot's English text in the attempt to detect how he applied his concept of translation in his version.

Chapter 5 focuses on a comparative study of the source text and its Romanian translations. I will begin the discussion on the source text and the target versions by presenting a number of observations regarding the translatability of poetry, as well as Andre Lefevere and James Holmes's translation strategies. The translators' activity will also be analysed, since their general background is an extra-textual factor of great relevance, particularly if we bear in mind that the five translations of Eliot's poem were not necessarily expressions of the overall Romanian translation policy, but they revealed more the translators' personal agenda. Drawing on Gideon Toury's polarity acceptability (prominence given to the target system with its rules and conventions) — adequacy (orientation towards the source system), I will try to detect the degree to which the Romanian translators managed to strike a balance between the two extremes or if they visibly favoured one or the other.

Since the focus of this chapter will be the Romanian productions of *The Waste Land*, I will deal with the issue of whether the translators complied with

or ran counter the prevailing Romanian linguistic and literary norms. This observance or inobservance with such rules will be inferred from the comparative analysis at various levels (vocabulary, register, graphic level). I will also point out a number of cases of mistranslation which may be regarded as deviations from the source text, with the main consequence of distorting the message of the poem.

Chapter 6 centres exclusively on the source text. The analysis aims to demonstrate that *The Waste Land* can be interpreted as a massive work of translation in itself. Therefore, I make use of Andre Lefevere's concept of "rewriting"²⁵ which I apply to the poem, highlighting the main purpose of a rewrite: that of resuming and shedding new light upon previous literary works, which is precisely what Eliot manages to do in his poem. Given the fact that *The Waste Land* is a topos of cultural exchanges, with various inter-systemic relations and transfers of meaning, George Steiner's notion of "partial transformation"²⁶ will also be used to account for the manner in which the poet uses the linguistic and literary material extracted from numerous literary works and periods to enlarge upon and alter original meanings.

This chapter revolves around the idea of translation as transfer (between semiotic systems, transfer of past meaning into new one, recontextualization of intertextual allusions). Consequently, I insist upon both intralinguistic (different layers of register) and interlinguistic (quotations left in the original)

²⁵ Andre Lefevere. *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*. London & New York: Routledge, 1992.

²⁶ George Steiner. *After Babel*. Oxford & New York: Oxford University Press, 1998.

transfers and their relevance in transmitting the message of the poem. Relying on Roman Jakobson's typology of translation categories, I analyse the instances of intersemiotic translation, since *The Waste Land* transposes into words musical elements (borrowed from jazz or Wagner) and plastic works (Bosch or cubist painting). The impressive amount of cultural material present in the poem automatically triggers a concern with respect to the presuppositions inferred from readers. Therefore, I will focus on the types of presuppositions involved in deciphering the text. This chapter equally aims to detect the mechanisms by means of which Eliot translates the works of Dante, Shakespeare, the French symbolists, as well as Christian and Buddhist principles into material that suit the purpose of the poem, that attempts to recreate the human history of ideas.

Apart from the above-mentioned chapters, this thesis also contains a list with Eliot's works translated into Romanian (poetry, drama, critical essays) in chronological order.

Chapter 1

Perspective on the Translation Phenomenon in Twentieth 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 the requirements of the political system dominant at a given moment, the commercial and economic considerations of publishing houses or 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, 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”²⁷, 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 applies to translated literatures. They are given lower or higher

²⁷ Itamar Even-Zohar. “The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem”, 46-49.

consideration, depending on the international prestige they hold at a particular moment in history and the relation they have with the importing literatures, which select them as translation sources.

Romanian letters 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”²⁸. Consequently, the translation process contributed to a significant extent to the configuration of the 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, institutions, both at theoretical and at practical level.

Depending on the moment of their production, translations have been assigned didactic, informative or entertaining functions. At certain points during the Communist rule, they represented even 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 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

²⁸ Itamar Even-Zohar. “The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem”, 50.

were relegated to a marginal role, that of merely supporting the dominant poetics and the artistic forms of expression in 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 contextualization, which offers an overview of the translation activity in Romania and of the 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"²⁹, in what follows we 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.

²⁹ Gelu Ionescu. *Orizontul traducerii*. București: Editura Univers, 1981, 15.

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 literary level, but also from political and social standpoints.

The translation policy (who, how and what to select for translation) mirrors, besides individual tastes and preferences of 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 opening towards and appetite for familiarization with what was foreign. The social weave of the country may have encouraged this preoccupation with alterity. The numerous influences that operated on the Romanian culture (Latin, Greek, German, Hungarian, Turkish, Bulgarian or Russian) melted into a synthesis which makes Romania unique among the countries surrounding it.

The attitude towards the Other took 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 status of belonging to the Western world became of vital importance in the mind of the common people, reaching almost mythical proportions. The free world encapsulated everything that Romanians were banned to have or to be, 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 what was foreign was represented by the 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 the French modelling 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. In this part of the country there was and still is 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 spirit³⁰.

In fact, the German influence has been a constant in the Romanian culture beginning with the nineteenth century. Celebrated writers of the nineteenth century, among which playwright Ion Luca Caragiale or 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, the 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 the British culture precisely due to its political and economic prestige. This interest was supported by the organization of cultural events and foreign

³⁰ Lucian Boia. *România, țară de frontieră a Europei*. București: Humanitas, 2007, 215.

courses³¹, which encouraged an opening of the large public towards the values of the English speaking world.

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

Romanian historian Lucian Boia shows that until World War I, there was not even one professor at the University in Bucharest to have graduated university in England. Boia drew some statistics of Romanian translations of works belonging to several European countries in the period 1859-1918. English works hold a very low percentage (277 titles of poetry against 1726 from the 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 Poe³².

The imbalance between English and French titles indicates that Anglo-American literature did not count among the literary preferences of the Romanian readership. French was still holding the leading position as a source for translation and was not even threatened in this position by the English one 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

³¹ Mihail Sebastian. "Notă despre literatura engleză în România" in *Revista Fundațiilor Regale*, N.6, 1939, 692.

³² Lucian Boia. *România*, 219-222.

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 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 of Alexandru Macedonski, were translators of poetry as well³³. These translations were particularly useful since, besides suggesting Romanian poets a new alternative for making poetry, they also instilled a certain confidence in the possibilities of Romanian to express new modes of sensibility.

The interwar period was very rich with respect to the translation phenomenon, which completed the Romanian literary scene together 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 represented one of the most flourishing periods in its modern history. After the 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. The financial and agricultural reforms helped the relaunching of the Romanian economy.

³³ Mircea Scarlat. *Istoria poeziei române*, Vol. II. București: Editura Minerva, 1984, 273-274.

Likewise, reforms in education, laws and religious administrative organization ensured a democratic background which encouraged political and religious equality for all minorities living in the country.

The cultural life fully benefited from this favourable context. The cultural exchanges with the rest of the Europe entailed an appreciation and opening towards all forms of artistic manifestations. In fact, this is proven by the various aesthetic directions which coexisted in the epoch: the traditionalists (represented by poets such as Vasile Voiculescu or Nichifor Crainic), the modernists (Lucian Blaga, Ion Pillat, Tudor Arghezi, Ion Barbu) and the 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 reasons. 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) or Tudor Arghezi (who translated from French and Russian). Besides the general purpose of familiarizing the Romanian readership with universal poetry, their translation endeavours were directed at exploiting the expressive resources of Romanian

and at proving that it was a good vehicle for the transmission 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 foreignizing 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"³⁴.

In an article on the Anglo-American texts selected for Romanian translation in the first half of the twentieth century, Professor Virgil Nemoianu claims that in the thirties, consumption novels (signed 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 were due, according to Nemoianu, to 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 field³⁵.

³⁴ Rodica Dimitriu. "Translation Policies in Communist and Pre-Communist Romania" in *Across Languages and Cultures*. Budapest: Akademiai Kiado, No. 2, 2000, 183.

³⁵ Virgil Nemoianu. "Curba receptării" in *Secolul XX*, No.1, 1973, 148.

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”³⁶. The lack of a set of norms that would guide both the selection process and the translation procedures made that the treatment of a specific foreign literature, in this case English, was, in many cases, a disfavour to the said literature.

Besides the doubtful quality of the Romanian versions, the purely commercial urges behind the translation activity also led to the creation of an incoherent translation agenda. This presented a fragmented and, as so, incomplete picture of the translated literature, that ignored 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 of the source text-target text relation. On the one hand there was an anonymous group of translators (their name was hardly ever mentioned on book covers), driven by exclusively extraliterary reasons. They were, most of them, 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.

³⁶ Mihail Sebastian. “Notă despre literatura engleză”, 694.

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

The Post-War Period

A change of the cultural paradigm came with the instauration of the communist regime. Beginning with 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 some 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 the 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 popularized science. Although the areas of translation were under the monopole of the Soviet culture, both contemporary and classic, other literatures were as well represented in translation, obviously to a significantly lower degree and with very effective censorship mechanisms operating upon them.

Patronage, to use Lefevere's³⁷ concept, became the most decisive factor which influenced the 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 progress of strengthening its position on the national scene and used every power levers possible to impose its ideology. The main institution that operated at the artistic level was the censorship bureau, which 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 the translation activity (the same restrictive "standards" also applied to the

³⁷ Andre Lefevere. *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of the Literary Fame*, 15-17.

production of original creations), the Party made sure that it developed along the principles imposed by the power in command.

The awareness of the central power with respect to the important role of this activity is witnessed in the set up of the professional status of the translator. 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 was Lucian Blaga's case.

The ideological restrictions had as immediate effect a decrease of original productions. Furthermore, Romanian classics were already censored to a significant degree. This void of original creations determined state publishing houses to initiate what turned out to be a very active translation campaign, which, this time, went beyond mere financial considerations, as opposed to what 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 argues³⁸, from the cultural point of view, the war had somewhat 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, contact that had been interrupted by the war.

³⁸ Gelu Ionescu. *Orizontul traducerii*, 33.

As already specified above, the 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 underrepresented) due to obvious ideological considerations.

Another visible 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 familiarization with a certain foreign author.

The Liberalization Period

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

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 a second plan, other literatures attracting readers' attention. Among them, a

special place was held by English literature. This opening towards the Anglo-American space was to continue in the seventies, another rich period for the translation activity.

At the beginning of the sixties, a crucial moment was the set up of two important publishing institutions, the main agenda of which was the dissemination of universal literature in Romania: *Editura pentru Literatură Universală* (World Literature Publishing House), later to become Editura Univers, and the magazine *Secolul XX*. There were also other publishing houses which printed important collections of universal literature such as *Editura Minerva* with “Biblioteca pentru toți” (Everybody’s Library), *Editura Albatros* or *Cartea Românească*.

The loosening of the ideological straps entailed a dynamic translation activity which doubled the national production of original works. It was a period when the classics of the world literature who had not been translated before found their expression in Romanian: Dante, Shakespeare, Molière, Tolstoy or Gogol. The selection clearly indicates a temporal distance between the translated names and the moment of the 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 liberalization period of the sixties ended. It is the case of Ștefan

Augustin Doinaş (1922-1992). He translated from English, German and French. His *Faust* is still a landmark in Romanian translations from Goethe. Augustin Doinaş was also a very active critic of translation, mainly through his articles in *Secolul XX*, in which he emphasised the importance of translations for the Romanian literature and raised awareness with respect to the various issues involved in the translation process (selection of the works/authors, strategies and techniques, reception-related aspects).

Another poet of this generation who had a 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 (Homero Aridjis, Octavio Paz), German (Günter Grass, Wieland Schmidt), French (Alain Bosquet, Jean Breton), English (Seamus Heaney, Ted Hughes, Philip Larkin) and Serbian (Mark Dizdar, Slavko Mihalic).

His translation agenda favoured those poets whose work was different from his own. The purpose of his endeavour was to present to Romanian readers a “concrete mirror of live poetry as is written today in the world”³⁹. To Sorescu, translation was a great joy and he performed this activity with the same enthusiasm with which children play their favourite game – this is the comparison he used to indicate the pleasure of translation. He confessed that he

³⁹ Marin Sorescu. *Opere*. Vol. VII. Bucureşti: Univers Enciclopedic, 2007, 1558.

strived to follow the source text to the smallest detail, from content to punctuation. His relentless activity in the field was one of the constant coordinates of his life and, to quote him, “I consider this experience important and [...] the pleasure was all mine”⁴⁰.

There were writers (poets or critics) who were completely forbidden the right to publish anything under their own names. Therefore, they signed their translations with pseudonyms. Another possibility to publish translations when the translator was under this form of ban was to sign it with the name of the person in the publishing house who was in charge with stylistic harmonisation.

Translations in the Last Two Decades of the Communist Rule

The seventies continued the activity of the previous epoch. The Romanian versions of significant titles of literature, linguistics, sociology or history contributed to the synchronisation with the intellectual movements in Europe and paved the way for postmodernism that literally exploded in the nineties. This form of contact between the Romanian culture and the literatures of the world was consistently supported by the activity of important publishing houses of the time: *Univers*, *Minerva*, with the collection “Biblioteca petru toți”(Everybody’s Library), *Meridiane* and *Albatros* with the collection “Cele mai frumoase poezii” (The most beautiful poems). This list would be incomplete without the already mentioned journal *Secolul XX*.

⁴⁰ Marin Sorescu. *Opere*, 1559.

As Andrei Brezianu, one of its leading voices, put it, “*Secolul XX* strived to be an instrument of cultural synthesis”⁴¹. A number of foreign authors were introduced to Romanians for the first time in the pages of this magazine (Joyce, Virginia Woolf, Bulgakov, Borges or Faulkner). Translated fragments from works signed by authors such as those mentioned above introduced them to the Romanian readership and represented a preamble to their publication in volume. At the same time, the magazine manifested a constant concern with theoretical aspects of translation. Consequently, it hosted comments of and translations from major works in the field belonging to George Steiner, Jiri Levy or Ortega y Gasset.

At the beginning of the eighties, more precisely in 1981, therefore after a decade of intensive translation activity, the Writers’ Union, which had set up a special division of translation, organized the first *National Conference of Translation and World Literature*. The papers which were delivered by celebrated names in the translation field and which are gathered in the conference volume represent a valuable document which testifies the status of the translation activity.

It was the end of a period which had proven to be extremely fertile in translations, and the translators’ speeches hint at the various problems they had to cope with in their activity. In a way, the general nature of such problems could entitle us to consider this conference as some sort of X-ray of the entire translation activity during the Communist period.

⁴¹ Andrei Brezianu. Paper published in *Viața Românească*. Special Issue. Stenograma lucrărilor *Colocviului național de traduceri și literatură universală*, 1981, 35.

In 1981, the year of the conference, the chairman of the translation division was Aurel Covaci. In his speech, he tackled the issue of the policy imposed in selecting the works to translate. Whereas, as he claimed, classic literature raised no problems since it had already imposed its value (and therefore did not represent any threat to the then regime), the situation was more complicated with contemporary works.

As Covaci put it, translators were asked to select from the world literature only those titles which did not make the apology of crime, did not encourage racism or any other form of brutality. The idea was to translate only “essential works” (without specifying the criteria which set them as “essential”) for the literature of a certain nation which, furthermore, were supposed to be accessible to the average reader from all points of view⁴².

In the same line of thought, Romul Munteanu specified that the translation agendas drawn up in Romania followed a certain cultural strategy, which was set by the traditions of the people, its literary taste and the degree of synchronisation with the ideas and trends in the world. This literary pattern of which translations were an integral part was to consider as wide a readership as possible, with its various literary interests and preoccupations.

In his speech, Munteanu presented some statistics. According to the figures, in 1974, considered the best year in translation, the 350 translated titles accounted for 11.5% of the whole literary production of the country. He

⁴² Aurel Covaci. Paper published in *Viața Românească*. Special Issue. Stenograma lucrărilor *Colocviului național de traduceri și literatură universală*, 1981, 9.

pointed to the dramatic decrease of this figure, since in 1979 the titles of foreign works in Romanian translation counted as many as 186 titles⁴³.

The marginal status of the translator in an epoch when the Romanian literary production consisted to a significant extent of translated works was also one of the participants' main concerns. Translator names were hardly ever mentioned in literary dictionaries and encyclopaedias. They were also ignored by literary critics, who totally overlooked the arduous work translators performed in making the world literature known to Romanian readers.

This neglect from the critics' part was reflected in translation criticism. Apart from isolated articles in magazines such as *Secolul XX*, *România literară* or *Contemporanul*, translations were hardly ever approached from the viewpoint of their criticism, reviews or reception. Moreover, most of the articles which did centre on translations envisaged certain considerations on the foreign author and the work under discussion and were not pertinent analyses of the process and result of the translation.

Given the size of the translation phenomenon, there were some who voiced the concern that the translated literature might threaten the existence of the national literature. Ștefan Augustin Doinaș denounced the isolationist orientation of such ungrounded concerns. He emphasised the beneficial role translations had played and were (are) still playing in the national literary system: they are an effective tool of intercultural exchange, they represent a

⁴³ Romul Munteanu. Paper published in *Viața Românească* Special Issue. Stenograma lucrărilor *Colocviului național de traduceri și literatură universală*, 1981, 59.

source of financial revenues, they stimulate original productions and are, at the same time, an effective educational means for the readers.

He also tackled the issue that was taboo at the time, namely the problem of censorship, which applied in an indiscriminating manner to the translation field as well. He deplored the regrettable amputation of foreign works (he provided the example of Heine in Romanian version), which were deprived of fragments “that present socialism from a rather dark perspective”⁴⁴. Instead, he proposed the strategy adopted by East Germans, which was a solution of compromise. Texts were to be printed in full and abridged texts for the young were to be made available. Complete editions were to be accompanied by critical remarks on fragments that could have represented potential ideological threats.

After 1989, the year of the anti-communist revolution, the situation of translations went through a period of confusion. The newly acquired freedom expressed in the set up of a significant number of publishing houses, eager to satisfy the tastes of a population that had broken the chains of almost sixty years of oppression, censorship and restrictions. Consequently, in term of translations, book stores were invaded by best-sellers and literary genres such as science-fiction or detective stories. The situation has gradually normalized, to reach the current state, when translations try and even manage to keep pace with what is happening in the world literature.

⁴⁴ Ștefan Augustin Doinaș. Paper published in *Viața Românească*. Special Issue. Stenograma lucrărilor *Colocviului național de traduceri și literatură universală*, 1981, 59.

Chapter 2

Overview of Modernist Romanian Literature

Traditionalist Movements

After World War I, the enlarged economic, political and social context reflected Romania's desire to become integrated in the European framework, to align it with the European trends of the time. The favourable, from so many points of view, general atmosphere triggered the further evolution of the literary system, which was synchronised with the dominant European trend of the twenties and the thirties, i.e. modernism. In fact, Romanian literature witnessed two periods of modernism: the former in the interwar period and the later in the sixties, as a reevaluation of the interwar movement⁸⁹.

During the first four decades of the twentieth century, Romanian literature witnessed a special period of creative effervescence. Traditionalist movements (such as *poporanism* and *sămănătorism*) coexisted with manifestations of extreme modernism (surrealism, constructivism, futurism), which sublimated in the great poetry of modernist nature signed by names such as George Bacovia, Lucian Blaga, Ion Barbu, Tudor Arghezi and Ion Pillat.

The turn of the century was under the sign of two directions which spread along different axes. One direction, represented by *sămănătorism* and *poporanism*, continued historical and literary ideas of the previous century and endured well until the interwar period. These trends manifested particularly in prose, literary criticism, journalism and history.

⁸⁹ Mircea Cărtărescu. *Postmodernismul românesc*. București: Humanitas, 1999, 72.

Sămănătorism was a literary and historical trend developed at the beginning of the twentieth century around the journal *Sămănătorul*. The initiator of the movement was historian Nicolae Iorga (1871-1940). The tenets of this literary group were the return to the past, resistance to any transformations, which materialized in an opposition to everything that was new, a genuine cult for the patriarchal countryside and the creation of a secure area that would protect the village from anything that was external to it.

Poporanism coagulated around the literary journal *Viața românească*, which was managed for a considerable period by literary critic Garabet Ibrăileanu (1871-1936). It expressed the idea that Romanians had to contribute to universal culture with their own traditions and artistic productions and not by merely imitating foreign models. The duty of the élite was to educate the peasantry. In fact, in this point *poporanism* strongly disagrees with the *sămănătorist* program. Whereas the latter only envisaged the beautiful and tranquil life in the countryside, the former considered the village universe as it was, devoid of any idyllic representations of reality. Leaving aside the inherent differences, what these two movements shared was a strong attachment to tradition, which they considered as the main drive behind any actions of Romanian intellectuals, in all fields of activity.

Symbolism

At the other pole of these traditionalist movements was symbolism, a literary trend borrowed from the French, which imposed a new orientation, mainly in poetry, with new modes of expression and sources of inspiration. The manner in which the Romanian literary system appropriated symbolism is typical for the way in which it also handled other imported literary trends with which the Romanian literature came into contact. When transferred to Romanian soil, almost all literary trends that made a career in Europe had a distinct evolution than in the countries in which they had originated (France, Germany, Italy), refusing to be, in Romanian interpretation, mimetic expressions of the artistic activities in the above-mentioned countries.

This situation was mainly due to the fact that the Romanian social context imposed an assimilation of foreign trends in compliance with the specificity of the Romanian culture. So it is that various European artistic movements were adopted and transformed so as to suit the needs and expectations of Romanian writers and of the public.

As is well-known, symbolism originated in France in the revolution against Romanticism and the Parnassians. In Romania, symbolism maintained its revolutionary nature, but it was not directed against the above-mentioned movements. It was more an attempt to move away from the idyllic verse of *sămănătorist* poetry, which in fact it did not wholly reject, but merely took to another level.

Although symbolist poetry was a manifesto against traditional obsolete conventions, it was first and foremost a reaction against non poetry and non art in general. Trying to detach itself from the poetry of the past which glorified nature and blissful life in the countryside, symbolism brought a new orientation to Romanian poetry. It moved the accent from the concern with versification to preoccupations which focused on the lyrical aspects of poetry.

Moreover, the themes of the poetic material were also expanded to encompass a more in-depth representation of human emotions⁹⁰, as well as aspects of life which had hardly ever been present in poetry until then, as is the case of city life. As opposed to traditional poetry, symbolism brought to the fore the theme of urban life. Avoiding the rural space, symbolist poets drew their attention towards the city, with its parks and monuments and the feelings associated with life in the bustle of urban existence⁹¹.

Therefore, symbolism was appropriated and developed in Romanian literature in compliance with the social realities and the spiritual climate of the domestic literary scene. Romanian society was going through a number of transformations that were shaking the order of things people had been accustomed to for generations.

The general social background was characterized by the emergence of a new social order — the working class. There were also numerous riots of the peasantry, rising against the inequalities and oppression that were increasingly

⁹⁰ Ion Mihaș. *Symbolism, modernism, avangardism*. București: Editura Didactică și Pedagogică, 1976, 34.

⁹¹ Iulian Boldea. *Symbolism, modernism, tradiționalism, avangardă*. Brașov: Editura Aula, 2002, 8.

difficult to cope with. The socialist doctrine was beginning to attract more and more followers. Consequently, the symbolist poetry voiced a feeling of resistance to such an unstable society on the brink of disintegration. Hence the attitude of subtle rebellion against the new order of things and the desire to escape in imaginary and exotic spaces characteristic of symbolist poetry.

The promoter of the symbolist movement was Alexandru Macedonski (1854-1920), who was among the first Romanian poets to plead for the rejuvenation of poetry. He was the first to acknowledge that the poetry of the future was to be dominated by images and music and that the logic of poetry relied on the existence of absurd experiences and not on the logic of ordinary language⁹².

It was only natural that the new poetry preached by Macedonski encountered a strong resistance from the dominant traditionalist canon. Nevertheless, persistent in his endeavour to imprint a new direction to Romanian poetry, Macedonski founded in 1880 the magazine *Literatorul*. The magazine opened new avenues to poetic manifestations, trying to also emphasize the non Latin component of the language and literature; at the same time, it proved to be a very effective tool in disseminating symbolist ideas in Romania. Due to Macedonki's efforts, symbolism became a literary trend in its own right after 1900, when the best known symbolist poets produced their works.

⁹² Nicolae Manolescu. *Istoria critică a literaturii române*. Pitești: Editura Paralela 45, 2008, 531.

The social environment and the distinct manners in which symbolist poets reacted to it, as well as the individual structure of each and every one of them divided Romanian symbolism in two categories. On the one hand there was a poetry dominated by the desire to escape in picturesque places and which was written by poets who manifested at times a slight tendency towards the frivolous aspects of everyday life. They were attracted by the exoticism of the Orient, dreaming of solar experiences away from tough everyday realities.

On the other hand, there was a poetry which bears marks of melancholy, depression, resistance to the social structures which impeded the manifestation of enthusiasm and creative impetus. It is an atmosphere of closed horizons, with endless rains, dirty bars and small shops, which infuse the poetic ego with a profound sense of spleen and desperation.

Reputed literary critic and historian Tudor Vianu (1897-1964) divided symbolists in two groups, the main criterion being geographic. According to Vianu, one group contains poets from Muntenia, the southern part of Romania, whose verse is exuberant, exotic, manifesting at times neurotic tendencies (e.g. Ion Minulescu); the other group is made of representatives of Moldova, the northern part of the country, whose poetry is imbued with an air of meditation and nostalgia, their verse revealing introvert personalities (e.g. George Bacovia)⁹³.

The two orientations of Romanian symbolism are represented by Ion Minulescu and George Bacovia. Minulescu (1881-1944) imposed the figure of

⁹³ Tudor Vianu. *Scritori români din secolul XX*. București: Editura Minerva, 1979, 154.

the urban poet, both through his poetic themes and the feelings he cultivates and which he borrowed from his French masters: Verlaine, Laforgue and Corbière. His early poetry could be read as a manifesto of symbolism, due to the use of the main techniques of the movement: the symbol, the *vers libre*, the suggestion and the principle of correspondence⁹⁴.

A forefather of intertextuality to be extensively used later by modernists and postmodernists, Minulescu employed in his poems extensive quotations from his masters, most of them maintained in French. The poetic atmosphere of his verse is imbued with nostalgia of exotic places, the desire to wander far away, to places loaded with historic value which at times hint at the promise of bizarre experiences⁹⁵.

The other voice of Romanian symbolism, at the opposite pole of poetic inspiration and manifestation, is George Bacovia (1881-1957). One of the precursors of Romanian modernism (his poetry, together with the works of Lucian Blaga, Ion Barbu and Tudor Arghezi, was to be later recovered by the generation after World War II as a significant inspirational landmark), Bacovia cultivated a poetry where the insalubrious and gloomy atmosphere of small provincial towns manifests itself fully. Minulescu's solar escapes are counterbalanced by Bacovia's rainy melancholy, verging on madness, and the obsession of death. Bacovia was, like Eliot, the poet of urban spaces, and he expressed in his poems the confusion and fears of an entire generation, which is what Eliot also did in his *The Waste Land*.

⁹⁴ Tudor Vianu. *Scritori români*, 61-62.

⁹⁵ Ion Mihuț. *Symbolism, modernism*, 24.

Depicted in lines which express a genuine feeling of solitude and desperation, the sordid neighbourhoods which are the background of his poems, full of diseases, misery and cold, suggest a profound chiasm between man and the hostile social environment which dehumanises him. Bacovia's poetry is thus a clear break away from the luminous and idyllic patriarchal poetry of the traditional trend dominant before symbolism planted its root in Romanian literature. Here is a fragment of his best known poem, "Lacustră" (Lacustrine), published in his 1916 volume, *Plumb* (Lead):

So many nights I've heard the rain,
I've heard the matter cry in vain...
I'm lonely and my putrid brain
Takes me to lacustrine dwellings.

It seems I sleep on soggy floorboards,
A wave will slap me in my shack,
I shudder in my sleep, and reckon
I didn't pull the drawbridge back⁹⁶.

Another name closely related to the symbolist poetry and who is worth mentioning is Ștefan Petică (1877-1904). He was always well-informed with respect to the poetic novelties in Europe, being among the first Romanian poets who, in a literature of French orientation as Romanian was at the time, introduced Romanian readers to the poetry of the Pre-Raphaelite poets, with their cult of pure poetry. Their poetry and ideas also preoccupied English modernists such as Eliot.

⁹⁶ Translated by Cristina Hanganu-Bresch. Posted on <http://www.fantasypieces.net>

Macedonski and the other symbolist poets opened new avenues to the development of Romanian poetry. The symbolist movement represents a landmark in the further evolution of poetic creation. Without fully rejecting the poetry of the past, these poets disseminated the awareness of the need to operate a thorough change in the poetic content and means of expression.

Consequently, modernism, which was to dominate the Romanian poetry for decades, made an entry on the literary scene with the help of symbolism. The immediate and closest emanation of symbolism was to be expressionism, alongside which symbolist poetry developed some extreme forms of modernism such as futurism or surrealism.

Symbolism left its marks upon Anglo-American modernism as well. T.S. Eliot in particular had a special relation with the French symbolist poetry. In 1908, during his second year as a Harvard undergraduate, Eliot came into contact with the works of Baudelaire. He had found thus a mirror of his own anguish, of his own preoccupation with grim urban landscapes. The spleen that crossed the French poet's work like a red filament was nothing but the acknowledgment of the world's absurdity and lack of meaning, a universe inhabited by people whose life was only a continual pay for the original sin.

Later on, in an essay where he talked about another great influence on his creative sensibility, "What Dante Means to Me", Eliot would confess his indebtedness to French poetry, especially to Laforgue and Baudelaire:

From Baudelaire I learned first, a precedent for the poetical possibilities, never developed by any poet writing in my own language, of the sordid aspects of the modern metropolis, of the possibility of fusion between the sordidly realistic and the

phantasmagoric, the possibility of the juxtaposition of the matter-of-fact and the fantastic. From him, as from Laforgue, I learned that the sort of material that I had, the sort of experience that an adolescent had had, in an industrial city in America, could be the material for poetry; and that the source of new poetry might be found in what had been regarded hitherto as the impossible, the sterile, the intractably unpoetic⁹⁷.

It is a heritage visible in Eliot's entire poetic work and to which Eliot paid supreme homage in *The Waste Land*. Baudelaire's *spleen* touched another profound chord in the young poet, who, in his essay "Baudelaire", quoted him as the echo of his own perception of the world: "La vraie civilisation n'est pas dans le gaz, ni dans la vapeur, ni dans les tables tournantes. Elle est dans la diminution des traces du péché originel"⁹⁸.

While browsing the books at the University library, Eliot came across Arthur Symon's *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*, an anthology of Parnassian French poets, among which Jules Laforgue, Paul Verlaine and Arthur Rimbaud. Years later, Eliot declared that without these great poets, he would not have been able to write verse at all. When Eliot came across this anthology, the American letters were still influenced by the writings of the Victorian poets. Therefore, the encounter with the symbolists came as a breath of fresh air. Especially for the young poet in search of a new idiom to express himself, these poets represented an obsolete alternative. In this respect, he held that

The one Victorian poet whom our contemporary can study with much profit is Browning. Otherwise, almost all of the

⁹⁷ T.S. Eliot. *To Criticize the Critic*. London: Faber and Faber, 1978, 126.

⁹⁸ T.S. Eliot. "Baudelaire" in *Selected Essays*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1950, 381.

interesting developments in poetry are due to Frenchmen: Baudelaire, Gautier, Mallarmé, Laforgue, Corbière, Rimbaud⁹⁹.

However, the greatest impact on Eliot at the time came from Laforgue, one of the inventors of *vers libre*. The atmosphere of his blank verse encouraged Eliot to speak freely maybe for the first time in his life and he perfected the technique in “Portrait of a Lady” and “The Love Song of Alfred Prufrock”. Later, he acknowledged the importance of his encounter with Laforgue: “Of Jules Laforgue, for instance, I can say that he was the first to teach me how to speak, to teach me the poetic possibilities of my own idiom of speech”¹⁰⁰.

Not only did Laforgue appeal to him due to the tone and technique used, but he also impressed the young poet through the subject matter of his poems. He spoke of the artificiality of everyday existence, he had a sharp intelligence and he manifested a sort of scepticism and ironic detachment from the expression of personal emotions. The poetic language of the French symbolist was defined by a rejection of romantic sensibility and a manifestation of the lyrical “I” by means of the free verse and the interior monologue.

Furthermore, Eliot discovered in Laforgue the same disposition of hiding behind a variety of social masks. The poems of the period, among which “Spleen”, “Suite clownesque” or “Conversation galante” display a typical Laforguan lunar landscape and an entire range of marionettes and clowns

⁹⁹ T.S. Eliot. *Inventions of a March Hare. Poems 1909-1917*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1996, 403.

¹⁰⁰ T.S. Eliot. *To Criticize the Critic*, 126.

taken after the Frenchman's pierrots. They represent personae of a man who felt somehow like an outcast because of his social alienation¹⁰¹. Laforguian detachment found an echo in Eliot's attitude to the world, and his personal emotions and impressions were translated, after the French model, into dialogues between various facets of the self¹⁰².

If Eliot's poems before reading Laforgue were expressions of conventional themes in the style of the Victorians with accents of Romantic lyric, after the encounter with the Frenchman a transformation of his poetic expression. In fact, in 1910 he started a notebook which he titled *Complete Poems of T.S. Eliot*, where he wrote only the poems he created in the vein inspired by Laforgue¹⁰³.

Eliot even came to adopt the attitude of the French poet, cultivating a dandyism which he perfected during his year in Paris. In "Suite clownesque", he hints at one of his dearest personae: "First born child of the absolute / Neat, complete, / In the quintessential flannel suit". Although in more mature years Eliot became aware of the flaws in his master's art ("sentimentalism, absorption in himself, lack of balance"¹⁰⁴ — with which he did not identify), all his life he expressed his indebtedness to the model of Laforgue who had directed the course of his creative powers at a time when he most needed it.

¹⁰¹ Lyndall Gordon. *T.S. Eliot. An Imperfect Life*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000, 43.

¹⁰² The similarities between the two poets expand beyond literary preoccupations. Like Eliot, Laforgue was an exile, transplanted to Paris from Uruguay. He also kept a strict separation between his personal life and his work and, as Eliot was to discover, they both married in London, at St. Barnabas's Church.

¹⁰³ Peter Ackroyd. *T.S. Eliot. A Life*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1984, 21.

¹⁰⁴ T.S. Eliot. *Inventions of a March Hare*, 403.

Expressionism

The symbolist initiative proved to be extremely innovative in Romanian letters. At the same time, a number of poets attracted by the mystery of the cosmic and the ecstatic found a certain appeal in expressionist aesthetics. Expressionism also manifested itself as a return to local specificity, focusing on local traditions and myths, ancient beliefs and the exploration of an archaic spiritualised background. As was the case with symbolism, expressionism developed in Romania alongside the main social and historic coordinates of the epoch, being thus more than a mere transplantation of German expressionist principles.

In Romanian literature, expressionism did not materialize as a literary movement in itself. One could not talk of expressionist writers — poets or playwrights, but only of expressionist tendencies and influences visible in certain works. In the case of some writers such as Lucian Blaga, Aron Cotruș, Mihai Săulescu, such tendencies are dominant, whereas they are merely visible in others, for instance Tudor Arghezi and Adrian Maniu.

As already mentioned before, at the beginning of the twentieth century the numerous changes within the national borders resulted in a general feeling of disintegration both at an individual and a collective level. However slowly industrialisation was making its way on the Romanian territory, its mechanisms were strong enough to create an abyss between the emergent capitalist structures and the existing patriarchal patterns of existence.

The main result was a clash between two distinct worlds, the city and the village, each with its own set of values which were, more often than not, quite incongruent. The deep rural layer of the Romanian society triggered a serious questioning of the validity of new values purported by urban civilization¹⁰⁵.

Even among the intellectuals living in the city, the reactions to technical progress were ambivalent. On the one hand, there was hope in an evolution that could be brought about by the use of new machinery and devices. This trend was supported by one of the leading literary magazines of the time, *Contimporanul*, which was set up in 1922 by Ion Vinea.

On the other hand, Romanian intellectuals expressed some sort of mistrust, even fear that technical progress would cause chaos and thus shatter the foundations of the newly acquired political stability. This orientation was supported by the literary journal *Gândirea*, which favoured the crystallization of the conservative attitude. *Gândirea* was founded in 1921, in Cluj, by Romanian prose writer Cezar Petrescu. The following year it moved to Bucharest, where Nichifor Crainic became its manager and theorist. It imposed itself as one of the most important publications of the interwar period. *Gândirism*, the orientation which emanated from the program of the journal, defined itself as a spiritualised traditionalism with religious foundations. Taking their inspiration from Spengler, supporters of *gândirism* had the

¹⁰⁵ Ovidiu Crohmăniceanu. *Literatura română și expresionismul*. București: Editura Universală, 2002, 269.

tendency to represent modern Romanian history as a battle between the rural spirituality and city lifestyle borrowed from the West¹⁰⁶.

The historic and social context of the time therefore paved the way for an orientation towards the expressionist movement, the main tenet of which as an awareness of a profound crisis at all levels. Expressionism imposed itself before the break of World War I, first in the plastic arts from which it spread to literature. The works which bear expressionist marks relegate tradition to a second plane and witness a vivid interest in urban life, industrial development and technological progress. In this light, poetry reflects the feelings of the contemporary man generated by the reshaping of the external environment under the urge of modernisation. Thus, “pathos, ecstasy but also the irony, the fantastic and the grotesque make the atmosphere of the expressionist sensitivity”¹⁰⁷.

The tragic nature of human existence and the feeling that culture failed to provide some form of stability in the general atmosphere of chaos lead to contradictory feelings. Romanian poet and translator Ștefan Augustin Doinaș claims that in expressionism the human being is divided between opposing attitudes which take the form of antagonistic doublets: despair-elation, mercy-cynicism, cruelty-generosity, innocence-sin¹⁰⁸.

¹⁰⁶ Ovidiu Crohmălniceanu. *Literatura română între cele două războaie mondiale*. Vol II. București: Editura Universală, 2003, 79.

¹⁰⁷ Nicolae Balotă. “Expresionismul” in *Euphorion*. București: Cartea Românească, 1999, 356.

¹⁰⁸ Ștefan Augustin Doinaș. “Atitudini expresioniste în poezia românească” in *Secolul XX*, No. 11-12, 1969, 198.

The Great Modernists: Lucian Blaga, Ion Barbu, Tudor Arghezi, Ion Pillat

Interwar modernism was an exceptional achievement, given the particular features of the Romanian cultural environment — a somewhat small culture, marginal as compared to great European power centres and which was still in an early stage of its general evolution¹⁰⁹. It gave Romanian literature great names such as Lucian Blaga, Ion Barbu or Ion Pillat, whose achievements are comparable with those of internationally acknowledged representatives of modernism such as Eliot, Valéry, D.H. Lawrence or Proust. They contributed to a significant extent to the imposition of the interwar period as one of the most fertile interval in Romanian poetry.

In this period, modernism coexisted with traditionalist movements such as *poporanism*, *sămănătorism* and the orthodox traditionalism professed by the journal *Gândirea*. The main supporter of modernism was critic Eugen Lovinescu (1881-1943), who drew the theoretical coordinates of the movement. Synchronism¹¹⁰, which is justified by the need of the Romanian literature to align with the other European literatures, is among Lovinescu's main cultural theories.

¹⁰⁹ Ion Bogdan Lefter. *Recapitularea modernității. Pentru o nouă istorie a literaturii române*. Pitești: Editura Paralela 45, 2000, 10.

¹¹⁰ Eugen Lovinescu. *Istoria literaturii române contemporane*. Vol. II, București: Editura Minerva, 1981, 10.

Another of Lovinescu's theories refers to the principle of differentiation¹¹¹, which creates a new approach to writing literature, different from the one of the past. He admits that any literary generation is closely linked to the previous ones and this is precisely the ground which ensures the continuity of a culture. But he also asserts that writers of a given moment have to differentiate themselves from the previous generations through their own understanding of what literature is and how it is written and through their effort of synchronising their literary creations with the European literatures.

As can be noticed, the spokesman of modernism includes tradition as one of the components of literary creation. However, he does not grant it the major place assigned to it by the traditionalist movements, which at times see tradition as being in sheer contrast with evolution.

As demonstrated by the works of its representative poets, which fuse tradition and innovation as the main strategy for the rejuvenation of literature, Romanian and Anglo-American modernism share the same preoccupation for a dialogue with the past. With Eliot, tradition is seen as the cultural heritage of the entire humankind, not only of England. It is conferred an essential role in the evolution of literature. In Romanian literature, modernism, although also inspired by the past artistic achievements of Europe (for instance, the Latin and Greek Antiquity as reflected in some of Ion Pillat's poems or archaic beliefs echoed in Lucian Blaga's work or the French symbolists in George Bacovia's

¹¹¹ Eugen Lovinescu. *Istoria literaturii române contemporane*, 11.

poetry), draws more upon its own roots, upon its own myths, legends and ancient beliefs which it reevaluates from the modern perspective.

It is very difficult to operate a clear cut distinction between Romanian traditionalist and modernist poetry in the interwar period. Since most poets of the epoch used as sources of inspiration both the past history of the country and the artistic and social realities of their time, there are hardly any poets who can be considered strictly modernist or strictly traditionalist and whose works do not bear marks of both orientations.

Lucian Blaga

The poet whose work bears visible expressionist influences, especially in the early stage of his poetic career, was Lucian Blaga (1895-1961), who was born in Transylvania. Although the main impact upon Romanian letters at the time came from the French, German expressionism appealed especially to Transylvanian writers like Blaga.

Myths play a special part in Blaga's poetry; they are means to translate life into images. He achieved this by narrating them as fairy tales reduced to their main metaphoric connotations. Blaga's verse is very original in the manner in which he blends folk imagery, magical practices and archaic beliefs, creating thus a very personal mythico-religious philosophic system. The following lines are from the poem *Eu nu strivesc corola de minuni a lumii* (I do

not trample over world's corolla of wonders) published in the volume *Poemele luminii* (Poems of Light, 1916):

I do not trample over world's corolla of wonders
and I don't kill
in thinking the mysteries I find
along my path
in flowers, eyes, on lips or graves.

The light of others
smothers the miracle of the unknown that's hidden
in depths of darkness
but I,
with my light, I grow world's mystery —
and just as with its light, the white moon
does not suppress, but tremulous
increases evermore the mystery of night
I too enrich the dark horizon
with ample shivering of sacred magic
and what's not understood
turns more bewildering
in front of me —
because I love it all
flowers, eyes, and lips and graves¹¹².

His concern with mythical structures and the workings of the primitive mind reminds us Eliot's own preoccupations in the field. Furthermore, like Eliot, Blaga was deeply concerned with philosophy and, more particularly, the philosophy of culture, as is proven by his books, among which *Trilogia cunoașterii* (The Trilogy of Knowledge, 1943) and *Trilogia culturii* (The Trilogy of Culture, 1944) are probably the most representative.

With respect to the influences operating upon the Romanian literature, Blaga distinguished two types: French- and German-oriented. The former is

¹¹² Translated by Lori Tiron-Pandit. Posted on <http://loritironpandit.com>

represented by what he called modelling influences, particularly provided by the French culture. “The French culture dictates ‘Be like me’ to any foreigner approaching it”¹¹³. This happens not because of a self-assumed feeling of superiority, but because it creates forms of expression meant to have general human validity.

The latter type is, according to Blaga, “catalytic”. It emanates from the German culture, which has a contrary direction to the French. The German disposition is prone to giving prominence to the individual and the particular, encouraging extreme manifestations and experiences verging on excesses. “The influence of the German spirit upon other nations had [...] less the character of a model to imitate, but the character of an appeal to the nature and the own ethnic spirit of those nations”¹¹⁴.

The influence of German expressionism upon Blaga’s works is visible in his philosophic poetry, in the mixture of folk and cultural elements. His expressionism is easy to grasp in the representation of pagan Romanian mysteries (Zamolxes, the ancient Dacian god, or Meșterul Manole, a legendary figure specific to the Balkan area), superstitions and ancient beliefs present in his plays, where the unconscious is also assigned a significant role¹¹⁵.

In the twenties and the thirties Blaga imposed himself as an authoritative literary personality through his poems, drama, essays or philosophic writings. After 1946, the Communist Party censored his entire

¹¹³ Lucian Blaga. *Trilogia culturii*. București: Editura pentru Literatură Universală, 1969, 242.

¹¹⁴ Lucian Blaga. *Trilogia culturii*, 243.

¹¹⁵ Nicolae Manolescu. “Poezia între cele două războaie mondiale” in Zoe Dumitrescu Bușulenga (Ed.). *Istoria literaturii române. Studii*. București: Editura Academiei, 1979, 227.

original work, since he had refused to write any propaganda texts. His preoccupations with mysticism and the universe of the human spirit, as well as the affinity with German philosophy made him even more suspect to governmental authorities.

During the entire period when he was not allowed to publish his work, he conducted a sustained activity of translation which he conceived as a means to resist the emerging Communist structures. At the same time, he considered translation as an important element of culture, which shaped and enriched the Romanian literature. He was so convinced of the formative role of translation, that in 1956 when the Communist regime proposed him to publish poetry again, he rejected the proposal in favour of more translation work¹¹⁶.

In 1957, Blaga translated *Faust*, which is even today one of the most successful Romanian versions of Goethe's poem. The same year, Blaga published an article, "Cum am tradus pe *Faust*"¹¹⁷ (How I Translated *Faust*). The article is extremely valuable, since the poet-translator expressed there his opinions on translation in general and on this translation in particular. He emphasized the significance of this activity for Romanian literature, claiming that a literature can only be complete through assimilation of universal literatures.

He also discussed in detail the role of linguistic norms and criteria for translation selection, which he considered significant tools of control,

¹¹⁶ Sean Cotter. "Translated Eliot: Lucian Blaga's Strategy for Cultural Survival and the Soviet Colonization of Romania" in Elisabeth Däuner & Shyamal Bagchee (Eds.). *The International Reception of T.S. Eliot*. London: Continuum, 2007, 60.

¹¹⁷ Lucian Blaga. "Cum am tradus pe *Faust*" in *Steaua*. No. 5, 1957, 85-90.

protecting the translator from the temptation of incurring into linguistic or expressive excesses. But most important of all, Blaga argued that any translation is in fact a reflection of the translator's own perspective on poetry: "A poetic translation, valid in itself and by itself, is, in all its objective and subjective conditions, a *re-creation* and not a literary transposition from one language into another"¹¹⁸.

Blaga also translated poetry from British literature, among which two poems signed by Eliot, *Sweeney among the Nightingales* and *Journey of the Magi*. His versions of Eliot's poems were in fact his interpretation of the source poems. Furthermore, some of his textual interventions were dictated by the political context. Without his manipulation of the source text, it would have been impossible to publish a poem with a religious theme such as *Journey of the Magi*. Blaga's version was finally a surprising form of resistance. The poems were published posthumously in 1970, in the volume *Din lirica engleză* (Selection from the British poetry), which also contains poems signed by William Blake, John Keats or William Butler Yeats.

¹¹⁸ Lucian Blaga. "Cum am tradus pe *Faust*", 88.

Ion Barbu

From the perspective of poetry deemed as a sublimation of inner experiences, the works of Ion Barbu (1895-1961) appear as the most representative of the period. A mathematician by formation, internationally acknowledged as the inventor of “Barbilian spaces”, Barbu is the main representative of hermetic poetry in Romania.

Although he reproached traditionalism some sort of timidity, he also criticised the avant-garde, which he accused of confusion and of noisy publicity, features which he considered incompatible with poetry. In fact, he even rejected the idea of being considered a modernist¹¹⁹.

Literary critic Tudor Vianu¹²⁰ distinguished three trends in Barbu’s poetic development. In the so-called Parnassian period, imagery was dominated by themes and motifs of ancient Greece. But unlike the poets of the Parnassus, Barbu’s symbols can be decoded by resorting basically to the world of science. In fact, the novelty produced by his first poems was due to the scientific mechanisms which operated there and which represented genuine reading keys.

The second influence is represented by the Balkan-Oriental direction, which was in fact a return to the non-Latin fund of the Romanian people, a direction also assumed by Blaga at a certain moment in his literary career.

¹¹⁹ Nicolae Balotă. *Arte poetice ale secolului XX*. București: Editura Minerva, 1976, 72.

¹²⁰ Tudor Vianu. *Scriitori români*, 90-117.

The third trend is that of hermetism. Barbu exemplified in his poetry the ideal of pure poetry, under the inspiration of Mallarmé, who was to have a bearing on Eliot, too. Barbu declared that poetry had become to him an extension of geometry¹²¹. The vocabulary of this period testifies the powerful influence of geometry, mechanics and astronomy over his poetic imagination. The volume *Joc secund* (Counter Play, 1930) encapsulates an entire poetic experience in hermetic key. Thus, formulations are highly synthetic, images are disconnected, there is a clear orientation towards rare or mathematical words and even a tendency to give words other meanings than they would normally bear.

It is obvious that with Barbu's poetry, with the hermetism of his poetic expression, the relation between the poet and the reader changes. The latter is forced to shake off his passive reading habits; if he wishes to grasp the meaning or at least part of the meaning of such a hermetic poetry, he has to participate creatively and actively in decoding the poetic material.

Tudor Arghezi

An influential personality, Tudor Arghezi (1880-1967) dominated the first half of the twentieth century with his poetry, essays and articles. An active collaborator of various magazines (*Viața socială*, *Facla*, *Viața românească*), he was himself founder of a few others (*Seara*, *Cronice*). With *Bilete de papagal*

¹²¹ Dinu Pillat. *Ion Barbu*. București: Editura Tineretului, 1969, 80.

he launched a new literary genre, the tablet. In his articles, Arghezi treated issues of both literary and social relevance.

Arghezi's poetry imposed itself as innovative in many ways. His religious poems introduce a new mystic approach, different from the one expressed in traditional religious poetry. He also wrote poems in which he tackled the universe of childhood, where everything is presented at a miniature scale; it is a world populated by elements and beings surrounding a familiar home, depicted with extraordinary sensitivity.

The greatest achievement of Arghezi's poetry is that of challenging the poetic resource of language. Right from its publication, his volume *Flori de mucigai* (Mould Flowers, 1931) was considered a Romanian response to Baudelaire's *Fleurs du mal*. Arghezi developed in these lines an entire theory on the manifestation of ugliness and its right of being represented in poetry. The urban environment, which had already been depicted by the symbolists before Arghezi, is inhabited here by the sordid world of thieves and criminals, who use an argotic language.

The poet enlarged the lexical spectrum of poetry so as to encompass words that were not considered appropriate for poetic expression, creating thus a new type of beauty out of "pus, moulds and mud". It is a shocking aesthetics, the aim of which was to support the right of all lexical items to be present in poetry.

Like Eliot, Arghezi wrote a poetry of the sordid, in the desire to transform poetry into a vehicle which presents all facets of reality. Attracted by

urban life, which includes the problems of the urban community, like the Anglo-American poet, in his poetry Arghezi expressed a constant concern with social issues, which accounts for his witty satires.

Arghezi's literary efforts did not confine themselves to the creation of his own verse and novels. Between 1948 and 1953, the Communist authorities imposed upon him a forced retreat from public life, since they believed his work to be charged with decadent ideals. During the above-mentioned period, he performed a sustained translation activity, rendering into Romanian the works of Russian and French writers such as Gogol, Anatol France and la Fontaine. While he was under strong interdiction to publish his own works, the Communist regime offered him a solution of compromise which involved the writing of propaganda. Arghezi finally succumb to this pressure and published two volumes of poetry, *1907* and *Cântare omului* (Ode to Man)¹²² which gained him the right to continue the work he had started before the interdiction.

Ion Pillat

In the panorama of Romanian letters, Ion Pillat (1881-1945), the first of T.S. Eliot's translators into Romanian, plays a special role, as a personality who fuses in an original manner directions which seem difficult to reconcile. He was a genuine European spirit, at the same time deeply concerned with his native country's values and traditions. He was a promoter of synchronism, that

¹²² Gheorghe Grigurcu. *Poezie română contemporană*. Vol. I. Iași: Editura Revistei Convorbiri literare, 2000, 596.

is the synchronisation of Romanian reality with the European cultural and technological progress, but also a supporter of traditionalism; he pleaded for modernism but found deep comfort in the rigours of classicism.

All these eclectic preoccupations make it difficult to attach Pillat to just one literary movement. His poetry can be included in distinct categories. He may be considered a traditionalist, but also a symbolist or a neoclassic, depending on the sources of his poetic inspiration; what is certain is that he is a bridge between modernism and the preceding generations.

The evolution of his poetic work witnesses on the one hand a subtle search for identity. On the other hand, his poems reflect the affinities he had with certain artists, writers or painters, at a particular moment of his life. The itinerary of his work mirrors his cultural experiences and literary encounters, which create a unitary whole.

Pillat's first volumes of poems such as *Visări păgâne* (Pagan Musings, 1912) or *Grădina între ziduri* (The Enclosed Garden, 1919), have a detached tone, revealing the poet's propensity for the diversity of European spaces, which took the form of exotic wanderings. A second period of his creation, visible in volumes such as *Pe Argeș în sus* (Up the Argeș River, 1923), *Satul meu* (My Village, 1925), *Biserica de altădată* (The Old Church, 1926), is under the sign of traditional inspiration. His orientation towards the past is not an abstract praise of tradition in general, but as manifest in the past of a particular family, his family. His so-called traditionalist poems evoke the villages where he spent his childhood. They depict images of people and places where he lived

happy moments. In close connection with this theme is the motif of time. The element of nature completes the triad (tradition, time, nature) of his poetry of traditionalist orientation.

The last volumes he published, among which the most poetically accomplished are *Scutul Minervei* (Minerva's Shield, 1934), *Caetul verde* (The Green Notebook, 1937), witness a return to Oriental motifs and Greek mythology. The inspiration came from his direct voyages to Spain, Italy and Greece. These volumes are the most eclectic of all, resuming themes and motifs of his previous poetry, but presented in a new light. From this period there is one volume which is particularly worth mentioning, namely *Poeme într-un vers* (Poems in a line, 1935), a poetic experiment which attaches his name to modernist poetry. He considered that these poems were different from the Persian Rubbayat, the Japanese haiku or the Greek epigram, since they presented poetry reduced to its very essence¹²³.

Pillat's numerous trips abroad and his interest in European poetic experiments find their expression in the impressive amount of foreign literature he translated. His interest in the modernist poetry was unparalleled in the epoch. The selection of the works he translated covers two axes. One of them contains poets akin to his spiritual structure such as Pierre Ronsard, Jean Moréas, Francis Jammes, Wolfgang von Goethe or Stefan George.

But he also approached through translation the works of great names of modernist poetry such as T.S. Eliot, St. John-Perse or Georg Trakl, so distinct

¹²³ Nicolae Manolescu. *Istoria critică*, 656.

from his own sensitivity and poetic personality. By means of this translation agenda, he revealed his intention of introducing the less known forms of European poetry to the Romanian readership. In 1933 he translated Eliot's *The Waste Land*, which he considered among the four or five masterpieces of European poetry of the century. As literary critic Mircea Martin argues, "through *Anabasis* and *The Waste Land*, Pillat became the national promoter of a highly valuable and modern literature, which threw bridges to the past over the avant-garde, which, however, it did not ignore"¹²⁴.

In a note to his version of Perse's *Anabase*, Pillat provided a number of clarifications on his translation strategies, which could as well be applied to his translation of Eliot's poem:

I tried to be, first of all, faithful to the translated work, maintaining, as much as possible, not only the meaning and intentions of the poem, not only its rhythm and movement, but also the tone and texture of the original. I also tried, which was even more difficult, but essential, to create in Romanian an equivalent poetic style that could preserve the autochthonous flavour¹²⁵.

These are precisely the results he achieved in the Romanian version of *The Waste Land*.

The poet's concern with the synchronisation of Romanian letters with European literary movements is also manifest in his assiduous correspondence with literary personalities such as St. John Perse, Paul Valéry, Rainer Maria Rilke, Paul Claudel or Jules Romains. His literary preferences, visible in his

¹²⁴ Mircea Martin. "Tradiția modernității și modernitatea tradiției" in Ion Pillat. *Opere*. Vol. IV. București: Editura du Style, 2004, 11.

¹²⁵ Pillat quoted in Ovidiu Papadima. *Ion Pillat*. București: Editura Albatros, 1974, 34.

selection for translation or in his literary essays, *Portrete lirice* (Lyrical portraits, 1936), indicate not only the concept Pillat had on poetry and his support of the artistic movements of the time. They also witness the preoccupation of Romanian letters in the interwar period with reaching a point of convergence between the European spirit and the local forms of expression.

In the overall panorama of interwar Romanian translations, Pillat was a somewhat atypical figure. With respect to translation selection criteria, Even-Zohar states that a culture/language is selected for translation due to its economic and political prestige¹²⁶. This is certainly true for the Romanian and French cultures in between wars. In Romania, the literary taste was dictated by what was fashionable in Paris¹²⁷. The translation activity as a professional occupation was at its beginnings and, as such, was subordinated to external considerations, mainly of economic nature. Private publishing houses were mostly interested in literature that would sell quickly, the obvious consequence being at times ignorance of any aesthetic criteria.

Among literary genres, poetry was hardly ever translated, since it did not suit the tastes of the masses. In terms of possible influences through translation, interwar writers, like most readers of the élite, extracted literary information from original works, which belonged mostly to the French culture or, if not, through translations into French, therefore in a mediated manner¹²⁸.

¹²⁶ Itamar Even-Zohar. "Laws of Literary Interference" in *Polysystem Studies*. Special Issue of *Poetics Today*, 11:1, 1990, 66.

¹²⁷ Rodica Dimitriu. "Translation Policies in Communist and Pre-Communist Romania", 181.

¹²⁸ Gelu Ionescu. *Orizontul traducerii*, 17.

In this general context, dominated by literary influences of the French, Pillat's selection for translation of a text belonging to the Anglo-American culture and which was, furthermore, a text of poetry, demonstrates the translator's concern with opening new perspectives to Romanian letters and, implicitly, Romanian readers. He was deeply aware that in order to enlarge their horizon, Romanian letters had to look for models beyond the already used paths of France or Germany. The purpose was to encompass literary experiences that moved away from the all too well-known patterns of literary behaviour. Thus, he claimed that "Romanian poetry, which imitates so easily everything that literary fashion brings from Paris, Rome and Berlin, would better look to the success of American poetry as to a model to follow"¹²⁹. Critic Petru Comarnescu argues that by 1946, nobody had strived and succeeded more than Pillat in introducing American poets in Romania.

At the time Pillat was performing his translation, the Romanian literary system did not have a translation policy proper. The élite could read in the original and the masses had at their disposal many novels, the main criterion for the translation of which was that they were easily accessible and therefore could sell well.

Before 1945, translations were hardly ever accompanied by prefaces, presentations of the author's life and works that could have enlarged the literary knowledge of readers and raise the standards of their literary tastes. But Pillat was a professional translator, fully aware of his role as mediator between

¹²⁹ Pillat quoted in Petru Comarnescu. "Ion Pillat și cunoașterea poeziei anglo-americane la noi" in *Ion Pillat. Mărturii despre om și poet*. București: Editura Publicom, 1946, 280.

the two cultures connected through translation. He tried to impose the great names of world literature signing critical essays on their work. Given the fact that one of the functions of his translations was to revitalize Romanian letters and educate Romanian readers, it was expected that a didactic purpose would guide his translation strategies.

For translations to fulfil their function, they had to be accessible to as large a readership as possible. It was also obvious that a work such as Eliot's *The Waste Land* was not an easy read for a target readership with an average level of information on Anglo-American literature. That is why Pillat accompanied his translation with general data on the poet, even warning his readers that they should not expect to decode the text right from the outset.

Although the main translation direction of the time was towards foreignization, Pillat's orientation was clearly domesticating, trying to bring the text as close as possible to the readers. One could say that Pillat's version is an eloquent example of a successful translation of cultural capital. In this light, Lefevere's words could easily be applied to Pillat's translation of Eliot's poem, since the poet-translator strived to render "the cultural capital of another civilization in a way that preserves at least part of their own nature, without producing translations that are so low on the entertainment factor that they appeal only to those who read for professional reasons"¹³⁰. This goal can be achieved, as Pillat partly demonstrated, by accompanying the translation with paratextual elements that might help readers decipher the text more easily.

¹³⁰ Andre Lefevere. *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*, 11.

Even if from the viewpoint of modern readership, already familiar with Eliot's works, his poetry requires a certain cultural background. We should bear in mind the fact that Pillat's translation was the first encounter of Eliot with his potential Romanian readers. Pillat's version managed to strike a balance between the innovation that the poem was supposed to present in the Romanian literature and the conservatism that was still characterising the literary tastes of the Romanian readers of that period.

From Dada to Surrealism, Integralism and Picto-poetry

Romanian avant-garde lacked homogeneity and was a mixture of various literary trends among which dadaism, surrealism, hermetism or constructivism. Synchronised with the literary movement of Europe, mostly through direct contact, Romanian literature was prepared, ever since before World War I, to adopt and apply the experiments that revolutionised the artistic concepts and forms of manifestation of the epoch.

Given the extended period of Romanian avant-garde, it is generally considered that it had three main periods of manifestation. The dada movement was dominated by the figures of Tristan Tzara (1896-1963), Ion Vinea (1895-1964)¹³¹ and the magazines *Contimporanul*, *75HP* or *Punct*, which promoted mostly constructivism and picto-poetry. Then, in the thirties, the movement was associated with the names of Sașa Pană (1902-1981), Geo Bogza (1908-

¹³¹ In his *Avangarda literară românească* (București: Editura Pontica, 2006, 34), Marin Mincu considers Vinea as the main promoter of the avant-garde.

1993) or Aurel Baranga (1913-1979), who published their poems in magazines such as *Unu*, *Urmuz* or *Integral*. In the forties it became linked to surrealism and is mainly represented by Gellu Naum (1915-2001) and Gherasim Luca (1913-1994).

The main features of the avant-garde, which can be detected to a higher or lesser extent in all three periods, envisage a linguistic revolution. Classic poetic rules were dethroned in favour of extreme prosodic freedom; predominance was given to the shock produced by bizarre lexical or verbal associations; there was a clear tendency towards hermetism and obscure structures¹³². Socially, the movement had a manifest nonconformist, anti-bourgeois orientation resulting from the crisis which followed after World War I.

The first period of the avant-garde revolves around the works of Tzara and Vinea. It is the most active and fruitful stage of the Romanian avant-garde. Tzara acquired international recognition when he founded the Dadaist movement (together with Hugo Ball, Emmy Hennings and Hans Arp, to mention only a few) in Zurich in 1916. The main tenets of Dadaism were a complete denial of values, a search for abstract, eccentric, often illogical poetic images meant to dynamite established order and discipline. These principles are exemplified in Tzara's own poetry.

A special place among the precursors of the avant-garde movement is held by Urmuz (1883-1923), considered the founder of the movement.

¹³² Ioan Mihaș. *Symbolism, modernism*, 42.

Paradoxically enough, the reformer of Romanian poetry was a writer of prose and not of poetry. His writings, which witness an acute sense of the absurd to be lately exploited by playwright Eugen Ionesco (1909-1994), are at the same time a denial of literature and a revolution which aimed to impose a distinct representation of the act of writing.

In Romanian literature, Urmuz's texts were transmitted orally ever since before World War I. The texts were gathered by the avant-guard poets, who published a volume in 1930, *Algazy & Grummer*. Had Urmuz benefited from circulation in a language of wider coverage than Romanian, he would have certainly been acknowledged as the founder of avant-garde movements in Europe. Consequently, it was natural that the Romanian poets concerned with the reformation of Romanian literature considered him the most authoritative model.

It is worth mentioning that although there are several chronologic stages in the Romanian avant-garde, their main common tendency is towards an action of synthesis of the various creative trends of the time. This is the main explanation why the magazine *Contimporanul*, one of the leading publications of the moment, had a very eclectic range of collaborators. It maintained close contact with the European contemporary literature either through collaboration with the main representatives of similar movements: Marinetti, Ludwig Kassak, André Breton, Paul Eluard, or through contacts with literary magazines such as the German *Der Strum*, the French *L'esprit nouveau* or the Italian *Cronache d'attualità*.

The idea of synthesis and continuity is emphasized in the texts published by *Integral*, another magazine which hosted avant-garde ideas. Integralism, the creative spirit emanating from the writings published in the above-mentioned magazine, was thus a reevaluation of the cultural system, taken a step further. Among the integralist models of the time, the sculptor Constantin Brâncuși (1876-1957) holds a special place, precisely due to his art which was a mixture of modernism and tradition.

To conclude, the renewal of Romanian letters under the urge of the avant-garde did not express a tendency towards sheer destruction and annihilation of already existing structures, but towards experimentalism and the rejuvenation of poetic expressive capabilities. Its influences go beyond national frontiers, through Constantin Brâncuși, in sculpture, Eugen Ionescu in theatre and Victor Brauner (1903-1966) in painting.

Post-War Literature

The Instauration of Terror

In 1944, the Communist Party seized power of Romania, a situation that was to last for half a century. It was a crucial moment in the history of the country, and the beginning of a tragedy which left enduring traces on the destiny of the Romanian people. After World War II, in the interval August 23 - September 12, 1944, Romania was occupied by the Soviet army, which

contributed significantly to the strengthening of the position of the communist regime in Romania.

Once in power, the Communist Party resorted to extreme measures to secure its social and political control. The main Communist figure of the epoch was Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej, who was leader of the Romanian Communist Party between 1945 and 1965. His Stalinist economic model relied on the liquidation of the private property, intense industrialisation and the collectivisation of agriculture.

At an institutional level, the newly installed regime sought to create repressive structures following the Soviet model. Political parties, which were an essential component of the previous democratic period, were abolished. In 1948, the Ministry of Internal Affairs was enlarged with a new division, Direcția Generală a Securității Poporului, the feared Securitate (surveillance), a structure similar to the KGB. It acted under the direct coordination of Soviet agents and represented the main instrument of repression. Following the Stalinist model, the Securitate used terror against all real or potential opponents of the regime who belonged to all social classes, peasants, workers, intellectuals, members of former political parties, priests, businessmen, military staff etc.

It was the first wave of terror, which lasted from 1948 until 1953 and whose main purpose was to give Romanian a measure of what the new power was capable of. During this entire period of oppression, the Romanian resistance organized under the form of armed groups which acted mainly in the

mountains. The Party was also confronted with a strong opposition in the countryside, where farmers strongly resisted the forced collectivisation of their land, a process which began in 1949.

The second wave of terror began in 1958 and lasted until 1962. In the period 1945-1964, the victims of the Communist regime were in the amount of 1,800,000 over a general population of 18,000,000. This second wave of terror was motivated by Gheorghiu Dej's fear of losing his position. Dej was afraid that Romanians, a nation where the Communist Party had little affiliation before 1945, might take after the Polish or Hungarian model and attempt a revolution at home¹³³. This would have been encouraged by the retreat of the Red Army from the Romanian territory.

This retreat was the result of Khrushchev's external politics. After he had intervened in force in Budapest in 1956, he wanted in fact to demonstrate to the free world that the satellite countries of the Soviet Union are independent. Besides, retreat from Romania was not a risky movement for the Soviet Union, since the country had no frontier with the West and was surrounded by countries guarded by the Soviet army.

After the revolutions in Poland and Hungary in 1965, the Communist regime became aware of the potentially dangerous role the intellectuals as opinion leaders¹³⁴. Consequently, the Communist authorities proceeded to a major remapping of the cultural life. Literature, like history, became a tool of

¹³³ Stelian Tănase. *Elite și Societate: Guvernarea Gheorghe Gheorghiu Dej 1948-1956*. București: Humanitas, 1998, 126.

¹³⁴ Stelian Tănase. *Elite și Societate*, 140.

ideological propaganda and was subject to a number of radical transformations under the form of restrictions and limitations of all sorts. The purpose was to make it accommodate the ideology of the newly installed power.

The canon imposed was the literature dictated by Moscow, the fundamental coordinates of which were the works of Marx, Engel, Lenin and Stalin¹³⁵. Every past or present work or art, writer or artist who did not comply with the newly imposed ideology of the Communist Party was deemed harmful, and, as such, had to be removed either from social life or from libraries or museums.

Therefore, as soon as 1946, the Ministry of Information issued the first list with works that were already forbidden. Among them, in indiscriminating manner, there were textbooks, religious works, but also numerous novels and volumes of poetry. While this list contained some 2000 titles, by the end of 1948 it counted as many as 8438. Books in foreign languages were banned regardless of their content¹³⁶.

Censorship was therefore very alert, acting as a highly effective tool of oppression. Its role was to eliminate any possible work, not only from literature, but from all arts, that could have questioned the legitimacy of the governing regime. It also forbade works of the past that could have allowed some sort of comparison whereby the Communist ideology could have been questioned. Even great writers of the nineteenth century, as is the case of Mihai

¹³⁵ Eugen Negrici. *Iluziile literaturii române*. București: Cartea Românească, 2008, 141.

¹³⁶ Alex Ștefănescu. *Istoria literaturii române contemporane*. București: Editura Mașina de scris, 2005, 24.

Eminescu (1850-1889), considered the national poet par excellence, were censored for a considerable period of time.

Consequently, between the end of the war and 1964, under the pressure of censorship constraints and having as model Soviet proletarian works, Romanian literature went through a period that could be described as a creative void. Once socialist realism became the dogma, literature followed a path which excluded any personal opinions, beliefs or aesthetics that ran counter the Party ideology.

In poetry, individualism and the expression of intimate, personal feelings were eliminated, being replaced by ideological poetry, a form of rhetoric manipulation which praised Communist achievements and the supremacy of the working class. Artistic works revolved around Communist virtues and the glorification of the new man; in a nutshell, literary and artistic works depicted “a brave new world” inhabited by unconvincing positive heroes. Such a literature could be expressed best through literary genres such as the hymn or the ode.

The result of the strict censorship active throughout the Communist regime generated two kinds of literature. On the one hand, there was the realist-socialist literature, fully compliant with the poetics imposed by the censorship bodies and which was characterized by very low literary standards and values. On the other hand, there was a literature more or less tolerated by the central system, which, although not totally free, had found means to

express, in a hidden manner, critics addressed to the realities of the time — a form of resistance literature.

The Brief Liberalization of the Sixties

After 1964, the literary panorama underwent a significant modification triggered by the changes at the political level. Desirous of creating opportunities of commercial and political exchanges with the Western world, Nicolae Ceaușescu (1918-1989), who followed Dej in 1965 as leader of the Communist Party, launched a temporary and propagandistic liberalization. In his attempt at demonstrating to the West that he envisaged a democratic opening, he proceeded to a selective release of the impressive number of political prisoners and to a relative loosening of ideological straps.

The main results were a relative access to Western cultures unprecedented since the beginning of the Communist regime, a situation which considerably assisted the evolution of Romanian literature. The literature of the sixties brought an enormous breath of fresh air after the decade of Proletcult terror of the fifties.

Poetry was the first literary genre, and the most productive in the epoch, which fully exploited this opportunity to free itself from the censorship constraints. Poets sought to establish a bridge over the Proletcult era and to go back to the interwar period, trying to take their inspiration from the forms of the first wave of modernist poetry.

In this respect, the poetry of the sixties was what Manolescu calls a “modernist remake”, tapping into the themes and means of expression imposed by the great names of interwar poetry such as Lucian Blaga, Ion Barbu or Tudor Arghezi, who were now republished and “rehabilitated”.

This second wave of modernism, separated by the previous one by a thirty years’ time span, hints at a synchronisation with the literature of the West. The Anglo-American literature, which was already drawing towards postmodernism, took its inspiration from the works of modernist writers such as William Butler Yeats, T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound.

Ana Blandiana (b. 1942) and Ileana Mălăncioiu (b. 1940) are two of the representative names in the poetry of the period. Like Eliot, Mălăncioiu wrote poetry with mythical and Biblical echoes. Blandiana’s poems manifest a concern with a mythico-magical universe and she projects her personal and intimate confession in the universal. As a mature poet, she creates a poetry of silence, which suggests that the word is incapable of expressing the ineffable. Eliot’s own historical sense and his concern with the past find an echo in Blandiana’s poems, which were also deeply influenced by another American poetess, Emily Dickinson.

A poet who imposed a poetry that was significantly distinct from that of his generation was Marin Sorescu (1936-1996). Sorescu confronted openly the reality of his time. The parodist dimension which describes his entire poetry imposed, a decade before the poetry of the eighties, the procedure of intertextuality which he seemed to have borrowed from Pound and Eliot. His

poems are inhabited by a wide range of characters taken from mythology, Romanian and international literature, characters that he treats with a seeming lack of reverence, in an attempt at taking them closer to the reader.

Despite the many and passionate controversies surrounding the man and his work, Nichita Stănescu (1933-1983) is still considered by most critics as one of the leading voices of his generation. Nichita Stănescu's poetry is deeply modernist and manifests a gift for linguistic inventions. He was the creator of metalinguistic poetry, which explores and exploits the main dimension of poetry at phonetic, syntactic or semantic levels. In Nichita's poetry there seems to be no poetic conventions; at the same time, poetry can assume a generous number of poetic forms, from song-poems such as elegies, carols or haikus to dialogue, monologue or the didactic and philosophic discourse¹³⁷.

What makes the generation of the sixties so important in the history of Romanian literature is the main feature shared by most writers of the epoch, regardless of their literary techniques and procedures, namely that they made no political compromise. Although they produced their works on the background of the Communist regime, they refused to align with the main direction imposed by the central power, preserving their moral integrity and verticality, both in their works and in their personal lives.

The fragile atmosphere of liberalization and the relative access to the culture of the Western world were to reach an end in 1971. Aware of the

¹³⁷ Ștefania Mincu. "Momentul Nichita Stănescu" in Nichita Stănescu . *Poezii*. București: Editura Albatros, 1987, xxviii.

possible detrimental consequences of such liberalization, Ceaușescu launched an ideological counter strike. It was a reiteration of the situation before the sixties, only this time, it was pushed to the extreme. Inspired by his 1971 voyages to China and Korea, Ceaușescu launches a document called the “July theses” whereby he inaugurates the cultural revolution after the Maoist model. Economically, this translated into a strict centralized control over Romanian institutions and investment. The dictator’s megalomaniac industrial projects lead to externally uncompetitive performance. The lack of a market economy, which was the direct consequence of the implementation of a Marxist-oriented vision on economy, led to an increase of Romania’s external debts. In order to be able and pay them, Ceaușescu imposed strict limits to imports and a drastic reduction of consumption at domestic level.

As a result, the situation was turning from bad to worse as all life compartments were seriously affected. Everyday life was a continuous struggle for survival, from the shortage of food to the permanent interruptions of electric power and heating supplies. At the same time, all cultural manifestations were supervised by censorship, which was slowly beginning to regain the power it enjoyed ten years before. Again, lists were drafted and books signed by Romanian and foreign authors were withdrawn from libraries and book stores.

For other ten years, no exceptional literary achievements were noted to match those registered by the generation of the sixties. However, the nationalist Communist dictatorship imposed by Ceaușescu, with all its isolationist

coordinates, failed to annihilate the Romanian culture, which managed to endure and prevail ideological strictures.

The Advent of a New Paradigm: Postmodernism

In the last decade of the Communist regime, a series of poets and novelists were looking for new literary patterns. Although not fully unitary, the generation of the eighties or the “generation in jeans” as it was to be called, was beginning to impose a trend that had already conquered American and European letters — postmodernism. The poets belonged mainly to University student circles such as “Junimea”, “Cercul de luni” or circles supported by magazines such as *Amfiteatru*, *Dialog* or *Opinia studentească*.

“Cercul de luni” gathered a series of poets and critics who managed to articulate the new poetics with the help of theoretical concepts¹³⁸. The collective volumes published by a number of poets within the circle, *Desant '83*, *Aer cu diamante* (Diamond air) have the value of real poetic manifestoes.

The difference between the generation of the eighties and the poets of the sixties can also be explained by the modification of the social and economic backgrounds. Due to the massive activity of translation in the sixties and the seventies, in the eighties young intellectuals already had access to a significant number of foreign works, poetry, novels and critical titles. Thus, they were more or less synchronised with what was happening in the West. By

¹³⁸ Eugen Simion. *Scriitori români de azi*. Vol. IV. București: Cartea Românească, 1989, 467.

the eighties, French had been dethroned by English, which became the fashionable language all over Europe, not only in Romania.

Moreover, most of the young generation of writers had graduated schools of letters or philosophy. Their inspiration was mainly extracted from the literature of the free world, especially British and American. This would be one of the reasons why they did not turn for models to the poets of the sixties. Furthermore, a generation conflict can also be detected in the young writers' statements of detachment from their widely praised predecessors.

Therefore, by 1980 the context had already changed. The new wave of writers believed that Romanian literature needed a new way of writing and understanding literature. This is not to say that the poets of the eighties fully discarded the models of modernist poetry. But whereas in the sixties the dominating names of the interwar period had been Blaga and Barbu, in the eighties, the models were Sașa Pană, Urmuz, but also Tudor Arghezi and George Bacovia.

Whereas modernist poetics is concerned with issues of identity and myth, postmodernism mainly rejects the impersonality of art, turning to immediate reality, which triggers an emphasis on oral forms, on the language of the street, in an attempt to recover all aspects of reality¹³⁹.

In his work, *Romanian Postmodernism*, Mircea Cărtărescu gives the following definition to postmodernist poetry in Romania:

The standard poem of the eighties tends to be either long, narrative or agglutinating, oral in nature and marked as such

¹³⁹ Eugen Simion. *Scriitori români de azi*, 472-3.

through special, aggressive rhetorical effects (specific to the Beat generation), but also ironic and self-ironic [...], manifesting extraordinary prosodic and lexical dexterity (Romanian non modernist tradition), and finally, impregnated with savant cultural allusions inserted through metatextual and self-referential techniques¹⁴⁰.

In the same study, the critic lists the main features of postmodernism. When describing fragmentation as a postmodern principle, he resorts to Eliot's *The Waste Land* in order to exemplify the diversity and complexity of the modern world and the inevitable impossibility to present a unitary vision. From this perspective, he places Eliot among the precursors of postmodernist poetics.

Mircea Cărtărescu is in fact one of the main Romanian voices of postmodernism in the eighties, his name being equally known as that of a poet, novelist and critic. His poetry is referential for his entire generation, highly intertextual in the vein of Pound and Eliot, whom, in his *Diary*, he mentions among the main influences that impacted his poetry. Besides the intertextual technique which he used successfully following the example of his masters, some of the lines in his first volume of verse, *Faruri, vitrine, fotografii* (Headlights, windows, photos, 1980) render an imagery close to that of Eliot's *The Waste Land*.

Together with the poets of the sixties, the generation of the eighties represented two crucial moments in post-war Romanian poetry. The former, a second stage of modernism, was a resurrection of poetry after a parenthesis of void in which they re-established a continuity. Due to the recuperation of the

¹⁴⁰ Mircea Cărtărescu. *Postmodernismul românesc*, 54.

great interwar poetry, the period was an opportunity to embrace a new form of modernity.

The postmodernist generation introduced a “change in literary paradigm”¹⁴¹. It was a new, fresh and surprising alternative to poetry writing. Unlike the French and the German influences that impacted poetry until the eighties, Romanian postmodernists used extensively a perspective borrowed from American and British spaces, which provided an almost endless possibility to interpret the surrounding world.

After the anti-communist revolution which took place in 1989, things changed significantly at all levels of Romanian society, which entailed a change in the consideration of literature. Seriously threatened by other means of information that were now circulating freely (newspapers, free radio and television), literature was relegated to a second plane. Immediately after the revolution, publishing houses focused on re-publishing titles that had been censored or forbidden. As for original literature, most of it was nonfictional, materialized in the form of memoirs, diaries, signed both by exiles and by those who, although still living in Romania, had not published them for religious or political reasons¹⁴².

Romanian literary critic Alex Ștefănescu explains as follows the situation of Romanian literature after the revolution. Books with political themes stopped using allusive techniques, as they did in Communism, resorting this time to direct explanations and manifestations. Erotic literature embraced

¹⁴¹ Nicole Manolescu. *Istoria critică*, 1303.

¹⁴² Alex Ștefănescu. *Istoria literaturii române contemporane*, 2004.

“aggressive forms”, to use the critic’s own words, as a backlash of the Puritan confinement imposed by the Communist regime. Religious titles were also printed in considerable coverage, which was understandable given the strict censorship applied to the field literature in the previous period.

The Reception of T.S. Eliot’s Work in Romania

The reception of an author in a given culture may be measured against all types of rewritings, among which translation is just one form. Rewritings, among which Andre Lefevere lists literary histories, references works, anthologies, criticism and editions¹⁴³, help impose the image of the author beyond the boundaries of his own culture. Ion Pillat was the first to familiarize the Romanian readership with Eliot’s poetry, performing his translations as early as 1933. Shortly after the publication of his version, the first signs of the poet’s reception in Romania began to appear, although not related to the translation itself.

Thus, in 1936 and 1937 respectively, Professor Dragoş Protopopescu signed two articles in *Revista Fundațiilor Regale* which centred on Eliot. Protopopescu was specialist in Shakespeare and a passionate translator of poetry. Some of the names of modern English literature entered the Romanian literary system due to his mediation, such as Oscar Wilde, Arthur Symonds or Yeats. In “Lirism englez contemporan”, Protopopescu calls Eliot “the second

¹⁴³ Andre Lefevere. *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*, 8.

master of British poetry”¹⁴⁴, as influential a personality as Gerard Manley Hopkins, and introduces him to Romanian readers by emphasising the multicultural dimension of his work.

In 1936, when Protopopescu published this article, he specified that, at that moment, *The Waste Land* was the most frequently imitated and the favourite source of critical analysis in Anglo-American letters. He highlighted the main coordinates of the poem: the juxtaposition of planes, the rich intertextual web, the metaphor of the European universe after World War I. At the same time, he specified that one of the most significant features of Eliot’s poetry is synaesthesia, whereby the poet combines various senses and endows the poem “not only with meaning and sound, but also with colour and weight”¹⁴⁵.

In the article written in 1937, “Criza inteligenței”¹⁴⁶, Protopopescu argued that there were two major orientations in the literary movements of British letters: cosmopolitanism and humanism. As the main publication of humanism he names the literary journal edited by T.S. Eliot, *The Criterion*, whose main feature is, according to the Romanian critic, a return to the rigours of classicism. He also specified that the intellectual group associated with *The Criterion* disagreed with Bergsonian ideas, Romanticism, atheism and

¹⁴⁴ Dragoș Protopopescu. “Lirism englez contemporan” in *Revista Fundațiilor Regale*, No. 12, 1936, 694.

¹⁴⁵ Dragoș Protopopescu. “Lirism englez contemporan”, 695.

¹⁴⁶ Dragoș Protopopescu. “Criza inteligenței” in *Revista Fundațiilor Regale*, No. 4, 1937.

agnosticism¹⁴⁷. Concerned with presenting the complex creative personality of Eliot, Protopopescu summarizes his achievements as follows:

Poet of subtleties and anxieties, as manifest in *Burnt Norton*, *Ecclesiastes*, *Ezekiel*, but especially *The Waste Land*; literary critic of rich and polyglot formation, as disciplined as he is rigorous; innovative essay writer as in the latest *Essays Ancient and Modern*; playwright of mystical-religious nature as in the recent *Murder in the Cathedral* (Omor în catedrală) — relying on Thomas A'Becket's murder in the Canterbury Cathedral — , T.S. Eliot is in the British literature, like Chesterton [...], but especially like many of today's French poets, the example of a conversion¹⁴⁸.

Although Protopopescu mentions Eliot and his manifold activities, the focus of his article is in fact to provide a commentary on the opinions of John Middleton-Murray, whom the Romanian critic presents as the spokesman of the intellectual orientation opposed to that of the *Criterion* group. Eliot's work entered thus the Romanian literary scene mediated by two influential personalities in their fields, Ion Pillat as the figure of the accomplished translator and Protopopescu as a specialist in British studies, whose authoritative voices imposed the image of the Anglo-American poet in Romania.

After 1940 and way until mid sixties, Romania was practically culturally cut off from the rest of the continent. The first main cause was World War II and the second one was the advent of the Communist regime, which forced itself upon the political scene by terror and oppression. Consequently, literary exchanges were also subjected to the conditions dictated by the

¹⁴⁷ Dragoş Protopopescu. "Criza inteligenței", 200.

¹⁴⁸ Dragoş Protopopescu. "Criza inteligenței", 199.

political context. Although during the fifties translations were performed at an incredibly alert pace, the regime was highly restrictive with respect to the entry of contemporary literary works on the Romanian literary market.

Due to the political events which occurred in the sixties, Eliot's reception in Romania changed significantly. Although his name was already familiar to Romanian intellectuals around 1948 when he received the Nobel Prize, the political context did not particularly encourage new translations of his work¹⁴⁹. Beginning with 1965, the year of the poet's death, an increased number of his poems appeared in translation in various literary magazines. The first were published in *Secolul XX*, such as, for instance, *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* and *Marina* translated by Ștefan Augustin Doinaș and Toma Pavel in Issue no. 1 of 1965 or *Little Gidding* translated by Sorin Mărculescu in Issue no. 6 of 1967.

In 1965, *Secolul XX* dedicated to Eliot a significant part of Issue no. 1, on which occasion it published *Prufrock*, *Preludes*, *Marina* and Part V of *The Waste Land*, "What the Thunder Said". The translations are signed by Toma Pavel, Augustin Doinaș and Virgil Nemoianu, who were also very active in the field of literary and translation criticism. The poems completed the general presentation of the English poet, which included an article signed by Virgil Nemoianu and Toma Pavel. The article outlines the different stages of Eliot's poetic career, as well as a number of observations on his critical method.

¹⁴⁹ Ana Olos. *Blaga și Eliot. Două fețe ale veacului*. Baia Mare: Editura Universității de Nord, 2000, 8.

The *Four Quartets* were published for the first time in the same magazine, but separately, each one in a different issue. They were gathered in a volume in 1971¹⁵⁰. The translator, Sorin Mărculescu, a poet himself, also signs the introduction, which was necessary given the fact that the *Quartets* appeared in a volume for the first time. Mărculescu introduces the *Quartets* to the Romanian readers as Eliot's maturity work. The translator makes available a detailed presentation of the poem's structure, as well as a number of general indications which he considers necessary for a better decoding of the text: "first, the meaning of the titles, then the deciphering of a number of allusions and the indication of the most significant motifs, as Eliot himself did when talking about *East Coker* to a reporter"¹⁵¹.

Mărculescu also provides a list with the bibliographic references on Eliot's work which he consulted, among which F.O. Matthiessen's *The Achievement of T.S. Eliot* and Staffan Bergsten's *Time and Eternity. A Study in the Structure and Symbolism of T.S. Eliot's Four Quartets*. It was also Mărculescu who produced in 1971 the translation of one of Eliot's plays, namely *Murder in the Cathedral*.

As for Eliot's critical works, they were published in volume in 1966, at *Editura pentru Literatură Universală*, the main agenda of which was to introduce Romanians to significant titles of the world literature. The selection of essays, the translation and the foreword were signed by Virgil Nemoianu,

¹⁵⁰ T.S. Eliot. *Patru Cvartete*. București: Editura Univers, 1971. Translated by Sorin Mărculescu.

¹⁵¹ Sorin Mărculescu. "Notă introductivă" in T.S. Eliot. *Patru Cvartete*. București: Editura Univers, 1971, 9.

professor of English literature. The volume entitled *Eseuri literare*¹⁵² (Literary Essays) did not contain works signed only by Eliot, but also by Pater and Chesterton.

In the note to this edition, Nemoianu explained that he opted for these three essay writers in order to illustrate the evolution of the British aesthetic essay. With respect to Eliot's work, the translated titles are: "Tradition and the Individual Talent", "The Function of Criticism", "The Frontiers of Criticism", "The Music of Poetry", "What is a Classic?", "What is Minor Poetry?", "The Social Function of Poetry". As can be noted, the translator selected essays from various periods, which focus on the main coordinates of his critical thinking: tradition, minor poetry, the social function of poetry, the limits of criticism.

As regards the translation strategies, Professor Nemoianu states that both in the case of Eliot and Chesterton, he maintained the impression of spoken language, since most of them had originally been lectures delivered on various occasions.

In 1972, the essay "What Dante Means to Me" appeared in translation in the magazine *Luceafărul* under the signature of Andrei Ion Deleanu. The next translations from Eliot's essays appeared in a volume in 1974, *Eseuri*. The translation was signed by Romanian philosopher and literary critic Petru Creția.

Besides the numerous Ph.D. theses that centre on Eliot's work, the poet has maintained alive the interest of Romanian critics and writers such as

¹⁵² T.S. Eliot. *Eseuri literare*. București: Editura pentru Literatură, 1966.

Nicolae Balotă, Lidia Vianu, Ștefan Stoenescu or Marin Sorescu¹⁵³. All of them are important professors, critics and writers in Romanian culture. Their essays and articles focus both on Eliot's poetry and on his critical essays.

In his 1969 article, "Însemnări despre T.S. Eliot", A.E. Baconsky¹⁵⁴, one of Eliot's translators into Romanian, introduces him to Romanian readers as one of the most influential personalities of twentieth century letters. At the core of Eliot's biography sketched by Baconsky lies his Europeanism, his "nostalgia for the ancient cultures of Western Europe"¹⁵⁵ which drew him towards the Old Continent and enchanted him to remain here for the rest of his life.

Baconsky roughly divides Eliot's poetic trajectory into three main periods: *The Waste Land*, *Ash-Wednesday* and *The Four Quartets*. These three stages have in common the recurrence of a major topic in the Eliotian work, poetry, drama and essays alike, namely "man's relation to time in all its hypostases, to time's mechanisms, to its avatars, to its great cycles which interact and condition each other"¹⁵⁶.

Following the European dimension of Eliot's work, Baconsky interprets *The Waste Land* as the parable of Europe after World War I. He points that Eliot does not present a metahistoric waste land, but a moment suspended in

¹⁵³ Marin Sorescu, "Unghiuri drepte și unghiuri ascuțite în poezie" (1969); Ștefan Stoenescu, "Dincolo de classicism și romantism – descrieri orientative în câmpul criticii eliotiene" (1974); Nicolae Balotă, "Critical Eliot și ideea de ordine" (1976); Lidia Vianu, *T.S. Eliot: An Author for All Seasons* (1997).

¹⁵⁴ A.E. Baconsky. "Însemnări despre T.S. Eliot" in *Meridiane: pagini despre literatura universală contemporană*. București: Editura pentru Literatură, 1969.

¹⁵⁵ A.E. Baconsky. "Însemnări despre T.S. Eliot", 239.

¹⁵⁶ A.E. Baconsky. "Însemnări despre T.S. Eliot", 240.

the flow of time. The Romanian poet rightly grasps that the confusion and despair of the modern world is counter balanced by Eliot's Christian vision which materializes in the tendency to propose the immutable value of humankind as a solution to the spiritual crisis depicted in the poem.

Baconsky highlights Eliot's preoccupation with the European tradition. Tackling the issue of tradition as conceived by Eliot, Baconsky specifies that tradition is not seen as the opposite of innovation and that Eliot does not propose poets to opt for one or the other of the two concepts.

Baconsky diverges from Eliot with respect to the dissociation between artistic emotion and the creator's biographic data:

We cannot agree with Eliot when he dissociates the intensity of artistic feeling with its natural biographic support: "Impressions and experiences which are important for the man may take no place in the poetry, and those which become important in the poetry may play quite a negligible part in the man, the personality". The absence of such relations would be, of course, difficult to conceive and the literary history provides us with generous arguments to the contrary¹⁵⁷.

To support his statement, Baconsky resorts to examples from the world literature such as the works of Ungaretti, Esenin or Mayakovski, and claims that great literary achievements were artistic representations of important moments in the life of their creators, whether it was participation in social actions or intimate experiences which left enduring traces upon the poet and implicitly upon his work (Ovid's *Elegies* or du Bellay's *Regrets*). Baconsky reads Eliot here in a reductionist manner. Eliot does not claim that a poet nor

¹⁵⁷ A.E. Baconsky. "Însemnări despre T.S. Eliot", 247.

poetry are devoid of emotions and feelings; his whole theory of the impersonality of poetry was in fact a reaction against the critical method of Victorian thinkers, who issued their judgments based on subjective impressions. Eliot's emphasis on objectivity was in fact a concern with creating a new poetic language, which renders emotions accurately¹⁵⁸.

Although opposing some of Eliot's ideas, the Romanian poet acknowledges Eliot's high degree of intuition and his very professional and responsible approach to the act of writing.

In his book, *Teoria sferelor de influență*, Marin Sorescu dedicated Chapter VI, "Unghiuri drepte și unghiuri ascuțite în poezie"¹⁵⁹, to Eliot's *The Waste Land*. Sorescu's approach is, as always in his essays, a serious poetry game. Like a child, he disassembles the pieces which make the poem and analyses them with enthusiasm and curiosity. But the jocular and seemingly disrespectful manner of considering the pieces hides meanings which invite profound meditation.

Sorescu addresses his readers directly, which creates a sense of familiarity right from the outset. This is how he introduces them to *The Waste Land*:

Imagine an island inhabited by savages who, strangely enough, share our modern customs (they play chess!) and have their mouth full of quotations from Dante, Sappho and chanson singers from less honourable streets of London. [...] This is more or less Eliot's *Waste Land*. A reconstruction of a city after

¹⁵⁸ Viorica Pâtea. "Principios filosóficos y artísticos en la obra de T.S. Eliot" in Luisa Paz Rodríguez (Ed.). *El pensamiento de los poetas*, 2009, 103-140.

¹⁵⁹ Marin Sorescu. "Unghiuri drepte și unghiuri ascuțite în poezie" in *Teoria sferelor de influență*. București: Editura Mihai Eminescu, 1969.

a terrible earthquake, when pieces of houses and destinies, placed one next to another, don't click, don't fit anymore; but they are, however, interesting¹⁶⁰.

He grasps in a few sentences the main coordinates of the poem — location, characters, the intertextual allusions, the atmosphere of chaos and despair.

Methodically, Sorescu presents Eliot's sources. Besides the numerous quotations from poets of various epochs, he mentions that references to science, history and anthropology books are also to be found in the poem. Sorescu hints at the readers' difficulty in deciphering the literary allusions embedded in the poem: "What an erudite is this bookworm, T.S. Eliot! He writes things which are so twisted, that you have to browse through seven library shelves to track down the source of a line"¹⁶¹. However, Sorescu's interest is not to pursue the "goose chase" of Eliot's previous exegetes. He is more interested in following the interplay of extremes — the accumulation of pressure and its release, the superposition of everyday life and myth, of sensuality and asceticism.

In fact, Sorescu sees *The Waste Land* as a combination of peaks and valleys, which accumulate and transmit information at various levels. He notes that the same juxtapositions of climax and anticlimax are visible at paragraph and word level. Thus, for instance, he interprets Part I, "Burial of the Dead", which is, in his opinion, more like the ending of the poem rather than its beginning, as an explosion of tension which is possible due to a series of superposed scenes taken from contemporary and ancient life.

¹⁶⁰ Marin Sorescu. "Unghiuri drepte", 63.

¹⁶¹ Marin Sorescu. "Unghiuri drepte", 69.

This procedure of superposing plans and shifting perspectives reaches its climax in part V, “What the Thunder Said”, which, according to Sorescu, is the most hallucinating section of the poem. The surrealist effects are created by the flow of associations which are constantly changing every two or three lines. In Sorescu’s opinion, these juxtapositions prove Eliot’s poetic craft:

By superposing the air of ancient wrinkled legends onto everyday events, the solemnity of magical formulas onto ordinary chat, by going even further and mixing times, “blurring” them, confounding the planes, T.S. Eliot presents us with high art¹⁶².

Eliot’s greatest achievement in *The Waste Land*, circumscribed to his vision of history, is that of raising awareness to the flexibility of time which makes possible the dialogue between epochs and spaces.

In a circular movement, the study ends where it began: “What means this strange poem? What *land*? And why *waste*?” In fact, Sorescu suggests that, despite any decoding efforts, the poem still eludes interpretation, still elicits answers.

One is sad looking at the waste in this configuration. [...] But one cannot stop loving the poet who, by describing all these skeptic and bored people, takes very seriously what are in fact common rain rituals¹⁶³.

This willingly prosaic language and the seemingly irreverent manner of looking at the poem hide the awareness of its elusive nature, which might determine readers who do not dig deeper for its hidden meanings, to stop at the

¹⁶² Marin Sorescu. “Unghiuri drepte”, 75.

¹⁶³ Marin Sorescu. “Unghiuri drepte”, 83.

surface and be happy only with what the poem seems to be saying. The choice, Sorescu implies, always belongs to the reader.

In his essays, “Critical Eliot și ideea de ordine”, published in the volume *Euphorion*,¹⁶⁴ Nicolae Balotă focuses on the interconnection between the poet and the critic. Placing Eliot in the line of Poe, Baudelaire and Coleridge, Balotă includes Eliot’s thinking in the category of what he calls “fermentative criticism”, which involves a double axis: creative and critical. “Fermentative criticism” is specific to those minds who are concerned both with artistic creation and with reflections on the creative act. The coexistence of creation and criticism in the same personality often imposes a reevaluation of existing aesthetic canons: “through his critical activity, the poet clarifies the axes of his own poetic vision and proposes such axes as aesthetic formulas and norms of common sense”¹⁶⁵.

Balotă emphasizes the idea of discipline which crosses Eliot’s work at two levels. One level refers to the effacement of the individual ego which, in Eliot’s work, took the form of an impersonal poetic manifestation. Balotă himself confesses being a proponent of Eliot’s concept of the separation between “the man who suffers and the mind which creates”¹⁶⁶ when he claims: “We believe, with Eliot, that the more visible and perfect the separation within

¹⁶⁴ Nicolae Balotă. “Critical Eliot și ideea de ordine” in *Euphorion*. București: Cartea Românească, 1999.

¹⁶⁵ Nicolae Balotă. “Critical Eliot și ideea de ordine”, 594.

¹⁶⁶ T.S.Eliot. “Tradition and the Individual Talent” in *Selected Essays*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1950, 8.

the same person between the man who suffers and the man who creates, the more accomplished the artist”¹⁶⁷.

The Romanian critic considers this sense of discipline as being ethical rather than aesthetic, since creation is a responsible act, with a double allegiance: to tradition as expression of the past and to the contemporary recipients of the work of art. This double subordination determines the artist/poet to renounce his own emotions so as to answer higher needs and values. And this can only be achieved through self-annihilation and the acceptance of order.

On the other hand, Balotă mentions Eliot’s application of the concept of order to his notion of culture. In Eliotian thinking, culture, like literature, is an organic whole in which the composing elements are subject to a given order which is flexible enough to accommodate the old and the new. Balotă concludes that despite the possible reactions against Eliot, his authority as a poet and critic has been unparalleled by any other personality in Anglo-American letters.

In his article published in 1972, “După simbolism: modernism și tradiție în poetica lui Ezra Pound și a lui T.S. Eliot”¹⁶⁸, Matei Călinescu analyses the concept of tradition as conceived by two reformers of Anglo-American letters, Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot. Inspired in their anti-romantic stand by the symbolist poetics, they founded a “new classicism” which

¹⁶⁷ Nicolae Balotă. ”Critical Eliot și idea de ordine”, 604.

¹⁶⁸ Matei Călinescu. “După simbolism: modernism și tradiție în poetica lui Ezra Pound și a lui T.S. Eliot” in *Conceptul modern de poezie*. București: Editura Eminescu, 1972.

contained visible anti-didactic, anti-rhetorical and anti-romantic marks, moving the emphasis from the creator to the creation.

Matei Călinescu analyses Eliot's "Tradition and the Individual Talent", one of the essays in which he presents his historical perspective, at the core of which lies his notion of tradition. Based on Eliot's observation on the interdependence of past and present, the Romanian critic formulates a distinction between the circular and the linear characteristics of historic time. He inscribes Eliot's tradition theory in the circular time, "in which anteriority and posteriority are purely relative, and as such, they are irrelevant criteria"¹⁶⁹. Their relative nature makes possible the simultaneous existence of past and present experiences.

Călinescu relates Eliot's notion of tradition to his theory of the impersonality of poetry, which places emphasis upon the work to the detriment of its author. In order to access the past, the poet has to renounce his ego. The ability to operate a distinction between biographic and artistic emotions assists the poet in creating a work which is purified of any personal feelings.

Another issue touched upon by Călinescu is Eliot's preoccupation with the enlargement of poetic frontiers. This is noticeable in the resurrection of the poetic drama which Eliot performed through his plays. At the same time, it is also visible in his comments on the dramatic poetry of Ben Jonson or Christopher Marlowe.

¹⁶⁹ Matei Călinescu. "După simbolism", 165.

The critical reception of T.S. Eliot in Romania addresses all aspects of his work: poetry, drama and criticism. Eliot's drama is the least represented both in translation and as regards critical considerations¹⁷⁰. In exchange, his poetic work entered the Romanian culture quite early in the twentieth century due to the translation efforts of visionary poets fully aware of the role he held.

Although not massively translated into Romanian throughout the century, Eliot's poems were a constant presence in literary magazines and anthologies from the sixties well until 2009. The critical reception of his poems is visible particularly in the translators' prefaces or articles, which provide both biographic information and brief critical analyses on the said poem in translation. It is the case of Ion Pillat's article "Thomas Stearns Eliot"¹⁷¹ or Sorin Marculescu's introduction¹⁷² to the *Four Quartets*. Due to Ion Pillat, *The Waste Land*, together with *Marina* and *Animula*, were the first poems to enjoy a Romanian translation in 1933¹⁷³. Because of its complexity, *The Waste Land*, a genuine challenge for translation, benefits from only five translations so far. In exchange, as can be noted from the list with his poems into Romanian, *Marina* has been favoured for translation¹⁷⁴.

¹⁷⁰ See Pia Brînzeu's article "Întoarcerea la ritual" in *Idei în dialog*. March Issue. 2009.

¹⁷¹ Ion Pillat. "Thomas Stearns Eliot" in *Azi*. No. 3, 1933.

¹⁷² Sorin Mărculescu. "Notă introductivă" in T.S. Eliot. *Patru Cvartete*. București: Editura Univers, 1971.

¹⁷³ Ion Pillat published *Animula* and *Marina* in *Azi*. No. 2, 1933 and *The Waste Land* in *Azi*. No. 3, 1933.

¹⁷⁴ The first translation of *Marina* was signed by Ion Pillat and was published in *Azi*. No. 2, 1933. The subsequent Romanian versions of this poem appeared as follows: in *Secolul XX*, No. 1, 1965, translated by Ștefan Augustin Doinaș & Virgil Nemoianu; in A.E. Baconsky. *Panorama poeziei universale contemporane*, București: Editura Albatros, 1972; in *Luceafărul*, No. 37 (531), 1972, translated by Vasile Nicolescu; in Mircea Ivănescu. *Poezie americană modernă și contemporană*. Cluj Napoca: Editura Dacia, 1986.

The Romanian studies focusing on Eliot's work indicate the commentators' preference for his critical activity. Most articles aim at familiarizing the Romanian readers with the basic concepts of Eliotian thinking: the notion of tradition, his historical perspective, his theory of the impersonality of poetry, since they were crucial in the concept of twentieth century poetry and culture.

The file which the journal *Idei în dialog* dedicated to the Anglo-American poet and critic in 2009 is not a singular event centring on Eliot's work. A new translation of *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats* also appeared in 2009 (the previous version dates back from 1996). *The Possum's Book* was printed in July in several countries in the world, in translation, to celebrate the seventieth anniversary since the book was first printed as well as the eighteenth celebration of the Faber and Faber publishing house. The book was published in Romanian with the original colour drawings of Axel Scheffler.

The Romanian edition was reviewed in the newspaper *Evenimentul zilei* by Doinel Tronaru¹⁷⁵. In his article, "Pisicile poznașe, de pe Broadway în librăriile românești", Tronaru touches upon the context which generated the birth of the poems, as well as the occasion which led to their 2009 publication in translation. Unfortunately, no review focusing on the translation itself was published in any magazine.

For 2010, Humanitas, one of the most prestigious publishing houses in Romania, is currently preparing a new bilingual volume with a selection of

¹⁷⁵ Doinel Tronaru. "Pisicile poznașe, de pe Broadway în librăriile românești" in *Evenimentul zilei*. Available at <http://www.evz.ro/articole/> [06.08.09].

Eliot's verse. It is a long-expected volume, given the fact that at present no volume of Eliot's works is available in book stores.

Chapter 3

T.S. Eliot's Life and Works

Beginnings

There are few names in the literary history of both America and Europe who exerted such a prolonged influence upon their own generation and the following ones as Eliot did. A poet who favoured intercultural dialogues, Eliot is as alive as ever in the minds of readers and critics at the beginning of the twenty first century. The general international context dominated by enriching cultural exchanges is a very good contemporary framework for the work of the poet.

Heir of two distinct traditions, American and British, he assumed, both in his work and in his social actions, the role of negotiator between cultures, fusing national experiences into a work with universal echoes. This chapter intends to present some aspects of the poet's life and work, with emphasis on his personal quest of a universally valid identity, fully aware of the double legacy he had. This continual search is presented here as reflected in his poetry, criticism and drama and in his social involvement.

The figure of T. S. Eliot dominated the European and American literary scene for over half a century, during which he witnessed and influenced surprising changes and innovations in the field. The work of the poet is tightly interwoven with his life; they both bear the same shades of mystery and elusiveness which are the result of deliberate choice, as well as the mark of a personality which rejects self-exposure. Eliot's destiny presents the trajectory of a life which closes the time and space adventure of his English ancestors.

Born in America, naturalised and finally buried in Europe, he never abandoned the feeling of living in between worlds, sometimes a foreigner to either, other times rooted in both. He was a traveller between two spaces not only from the geographic point of view. His dilemmas expanded to the religious field, where he constantly fought with the reminiscences of his parents' Unitarian faith while embracing Anglo-Catholicism, or to the lifelong hesitancy as to which is best to be given prominence to, reason or emotions.

His actions indicate that he might have felt a stranger to his own family, whose religion he rejected and from whose ties he tried to break when he decided to remain in Europe. He totally assumed this self-imposed emotional and physical exile, like Pound, Joyce, James or Conrad. Except that in his particular case, the status of being an exile was a family heritage.

In the seventeenth century, his ancestor, Andrew Eliot from East Coker in Somersetshire, left for America in search of a better life. Almost three centuries later, on September 26, 1888, one of his already Americanized descendants, Thomas Stearns Eliot, was born in St. Louis, Missouri. He was the youngest in a family with seven children, out of which three were girls. Consequently, the feminine presence was to play an important part in his life as a child and to exert a significant influence upon his adult life.

One of the prominent figures that populated his childhood was his mother, Charlotte Champe Eliot, a woman with great artistic and social ambitions. She wrote devotional poems which were published in local newspapers and carried out sustained activities in the field of social work.

Spotting at an early age the literary talent of her son, she encouraged young Tom to follow the path of poetry. She also helped him get acquainted with the family history, instilling in him the sense of belonging, of roots. In his turn, Tom was very much attached to his mother and maintained an active correspondence with her until her death.

The religious principles of the family dictated their social involvement. The Eliots belonged to the upper middle class of the American society and were outstanding pillars of the community; like any family with a rich tradition, they even had a family motto: *Tace et fac*. Eliot's grandfather, William Greenleaf Eliot, had been actively involved in the life of the community; among other things, he was the founder of the local Washington University. He had died a year before Eliot was born, but his spirit still dominated and dictated the life of the family. The beneficiary of a legacy with very rigid principles, Eliot later stated that "our moral judgments, our decisions between duty and self-indulgence, were taken as if, like Moses, he had brought down the tables of the Law, any deviation from which would be sinful"¹⁷⁶.

Therefore, the family was driven by a profound sense of duty and social responsibility which derived from their Unitarian faith¹⁷⁷. Unitarianism rejects

¹⁷⁶ T.S. Eliot quoted in Russell Kirk. *Eliot and His Age*. Illinois: Sherwood Sugden, 1984, 24.

¹⁷⁷ The Unitarian sect originated as a reaction against the view of God as Trinity and believed in His single personality. This is the main reason why, from the orthodox perspective, the sect is deemed a heresy. Its main religious tenets are basically Puritan, as it denies the idea of damnation and predestination, and heaven and hell are granted much less importance than the worldly space inhabited by Unitarian believers. Therefore, the Unitarian faith founded its principles on the ideas related to good works, moral obligations within the community, self-sacrifice to the general good of the said community, respect for authority and institutions of authority. Later on, after abandoning the faith of his ancestors, Eliot never ceased to describe

the doctrine of Incarnation and places man as the measure of all things. Man, the reflection of God, was considered good by nature. The aristocracy of the spirit was placed at a social level; thus the upper classes, to which the Eliots belonged, were the best of all possible ones¹⁷⁸. Obligations of a spiritual order are replaced by the responsibility towards one's fellow citizens. It was this faith which preached reverence for authority and abandonment of the personal self which left an enduring effect upon young Tom and which he would later reject by embracing Anglo-Catholicism.

When Eliot was still a young boy, the family used to take yearly trips to Gloucester, Massachusetts, where they would spend the entire summer. These constant travels between the cosmopolitan world of St. Louis and the tranquil Gloucester landscape dominated Eliot's childhood. It was one of the starting points in his lifelong quest for roots.

In a letter to Herbert Read dated 1928, he confessed:

I want to write an essay about the point of view of an American who wasn't an American, because he was born in the South and went to school in New England as a small boy with a nigger drawl, but who wasn't a southerner in the South because his people were northerners in a border state and looked down on all Virginians, and who so was never anything anywhere and who therefore felt himself to be more a Frenchman than an American and more an Englishman than a Frenchman and yet felt that the U.S.A. up to a hundred years ago was a family extension¹⁷⁹.

Unitarianism a heresy and to believe that, although he had been baptised in the Unitarian Church, he had not been raised in the Christian communion.

¹⁷⁸ John J. Soldo. "The American Foreground of T.S. Eliot" in *New England Quarterly*, 45:3 (September), 1972, 364.

¹⁷⁹ Herbert Read. "T.S.E. – A Memoir" in Allen Tate (Ed.). *T.S. Eliot: The Man and His Work*. New York: Delacorte Press, 1966, 15.

The mixture of European and American cultures that Eliot was heir to operated like a mechanism which triggered a sense of dislocation, of a constant search for stability and answers.

Although he enjoyed the family stays by the seashore, the landscape that left a permanent mark on his poetic sensibility was urban. He was never very close to nature and remained the city poet par excellence, like Baudelaire or Laforgue whom he admired so. St. Louis provided him with the material for inspiration at a very early age. Nevertheless, this is not the main cityscape of Eliot's poetry, since he had the tendency to generalize, expanding particular experiences to larger scales. In his verse, a city is the representative of all cities (which is also the case with London in *The Waste Land*).

The family decided to educate young Eliot locally, at Smith Academy, the preparatory school for Washington University. He was quite a bookish child; since he was not allowed to involve in physical activities because of his frail health condition, he turned to books for solace. Thus, he came to exploit his literary talent at a very early age. He set up a magazine, *Fireside*, where his readers were told they would find "Fiction, Gossip, Theatre, Jokes and all Interesting". He also contributed to the school magazine, *Smith Academy Record*, where, in his last year spent there (1905), he published two poems, "A Fable for Feasters" and "A Lyric", as well as some short stories, among which "The Man Who Was King" and "A Tale of a Whale".

Around the same period, being a fervent reader, he came across the works of the Romantic poets Byron and Shelley and the Victorian Swinburne

and Rosetti, who made an impact upon the boy's mind and inspired him to write verse in their vein. But this period of happy bliss was to draw to an end in 1905, when his parents decided to send him to the Milton Academy where he was to prepare for Harvard.

The Harvard Period (1906-1914)

Eliot's departure for Harvard marked the beginning of a completely new chapter in his life. The period he spent there, between 1906 and 1914, is of extreme significance, since it represented a defining stage in his intellectual and religious development. His main preoccupations which lasted a lifetime, whether literary, philosophical or religious, were contoured during this period.

He began to question the faith inherited from his family, he came into contact with different ideas and thinking systems that imprinted a dualistic pattern of thought on the young poet's mind. Until the end of his days, he was torn between religious faith and scepticism, intellect and emotions, personal preoccupations and social obligation. It was a very fruitful period, with extensive readings in a wide range of fields, from anthropology and psychology to Christian mysticism and Indian philosophy.

The years Eliot spent at Harvard as a student coincided with what was considered to be "the Golden Age" of American philosophy. The Harvard President was Charles Eliot, who also belonged to the influential Eliot family. At Harvard, he was the initiator of an educational revolution materialized in the

introduction of the elective system. As a result, students could choose the courses they wanted to attend. Eliot totally disagreed with such a system which, in his opinion, lacked the rigour necessary for studying. As a matter of fact, he was also displeased with the overall atmosphere at Harvard, where he saw his fellow colleagues as lazy and undisciplined¹⁸⁰.

Even if Eliot took part in social events, he dedicated most of his time to study and poetry. His first published poems appeared in the *Harvard Advocate*, whose board he joined in 1909. The poems of this period are mainly concerned with the passage of time, isolation and lonely wanderings. In 1910, while on holidays, he wrote down his poems in a notebook under the title “Complete Poems of T.S. Eliot. Inventions of a March Hare”.

It was also during this period that he first encountered Dante; one of his best friends, Conrad Aiken, stated that he was always carrying with him one of the Italian’s books. Discovering the Italian poet represented a milestone in his intellectual development and poetic becoming and he considered Dante’s poetry as “the most persistent and deepest influence upon [his] own verse”¹⁸¹.

During his entire life, Eliot fought against provincialism both of time and of space. It is one of the reasons why he constantly looked to models of distant times and distinct places such as Virgil, the Metaphysical Poets, Pascal, Buddha and even the mind of archaic cultures. In this respect, he saw Dante as “the least provincial” of poets. The universal message of his work and the

¹⁸⁰ Peter Ackroyd, *T.S. Eliot: A Life*, 31.

¹⁸¹ T. S. Eliot. *Christianity and Culture. The Idea of a Christian Society and Notes towards the Definition of Culture*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1977, 125.

clarity of expression make him, in Eliot's eyes, the epitome of the European poet.

Without ignoring the Italian poet's nationalistic concerns (Dante was, after all, the promoter of linguistic development in thirteenth century Italy), Eliot considered Dante the citizen of Europe par excellence: "Dante, none the less an Italian and a patriot, is first a European"¹⁸². This was one of Eliot's own aspiration, that of becoming the citizen of a united Europe, in which the tradition of the past meets the achievements of the present. Furthermore, Dante was also the purveyor of principles such as order and discipline, both rooted in the Christian faith, which, for Eliot, represented the cure for the spiritual crisis of modern civilizations.

As a student, Eliot's preoccupations extended to various fields. His courses included ancient and modern literature, history, ancient and modern philosophy. He also studied anthropology with the same application with which he approached the study of literature. The period between 1865 and 1914 featured an extraordinary success of anthropology and marked its establishment as an academic discipline. Anthropological ideas and methods attracted writers who were mainly drawn either to presenting the schism between the modern and the primitive intellect or to detecting the features of the savage in the modern man.

The papers Eliot wrote during this period indicate his familiarization with the works of anthropologists such as Émile Durkheim or Lucien Lévi-

¹⁸² T.S. Eliot. "Dante" in *Selected Essays*, New York: Harcourt Brace, 1950, 201.

Bruhl. They mainly focus upon the relationship between the primitive and the modern mind and the issue of the losses incurred by the modern man in the process of becoming civilized¹⁸³. These studies provided him with materials for a comparison between distinct cultures, relevant from a religious and creative point of view. But, most important of all, they offered him an insight into the various worlds of the Other, which, however distant in time, space or perception of the world and reality, presented themselves as equally valid as compared to the data of “civilized” Western communities.

Eliot maintained for a long time this fascination with the archaic mind especially in its role of myth maker, as may be noticed in *The Waste Land*. Even later, in his essays, he persisted in believing that that the poet was in fact the receptacle and the valid voice of the inherited primitive imaginary: “The authors who have done field work in Madagascar apply the theories of Lévi-Bruhl: the pre-logical mentality persists in the civilized man, but becomes available only to or through the poet”¹⁸⁴.

In parallel with studies of anthropology, he took classes of psychology as well. His interests were basically centred on aspects related to mysticism, its manifestations and potential scientific explanations. In this respect, his notes indicate extensive readings of hagiographic writings, textbooks on

¹⁸³ Marc Manganaro. “Dissociation in *Dead Land*: the Primitive Mind in the Early Poetry of T.S. Eliot” in *Journal of Modern Literature*, 13:1 (March), 1986, 97-98.

¹⁸⁴ T.S. Eliot. “Introduction” in *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*. London: Faber and Faber, 1987, 182.

contemplation and meditation with particular emphasis upon the works of St. John of the Cross¹⁸⁵.

Eliot's fascination with the connection between mystical phenomena, sanity or hysteria as manifestations of pathology is reflected in his poetic creations of the period. They explore the effects of a split personality (visible in "The Love Song of Alfred Prufrock", with echoes in *The Waste Land*), the uncertainty related to the existence of a superior reality beyond immediate experience, "an unresolved tension between self-consciousness, the self observing itself, which results in psychic disintegration and a moment of silence, of mystic intuition which may suggest the void"¹⁸⁶.

Such preoccupations with psychology, anthropology or mysticism were not a passing stage and his entire work, either critical or poetic, bears the signs of these youth readings which left enduring traces.

His guides through the mazes of so varied intellectual fields were professors whose names had gone far beyond Harvard boundaries, William James, George Santayana, Josiah Royce, Bertrand Russell, Charles Lanman or Irvin Babbitt. Among them, those who exerted a particular influence upon young Eliot were Santayana and Babbitt, who, even if of different formation and divergent opinions, made a strong and lasting impression on the poet. Santayana, with whom Eliot studied "Ideals of Society, Religion, Art and Science and their Historical Development", seems to have shaped Eliot's

¹⁸⁵ Cleo McNelly Kearns. *T.S. Eliot and the Indic Tradition: A Study in Poetry and Belief*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987, 84.

¹⁸⁶ Manju Jain. *T.S. Eliot and American Philosophy: The Harvard Years*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992, 182.

opinion about the relationship between poetry and philosophy. Later, he criticised Santayana because, although a philosopher, he granted more importance to poetical philosophy rather than philosophical poetry¹⁸⁷.

The relation he set with Babbitt, with whom Eliot maintained correspondence until the master's death, had a significant consequence not only upon the formation of his own set of ideas, but also upon important decisions in study and life. Babbitt imparted classes of French literary criticism; this way, Eliot became acquainted with the works of Baudelaire, of the French moralists and with the main opposing trends of thought in France represented by Charles Maurras, on the one hand, and Henri Bergson, on the other.

Babbitt was a fervent opponent of the liberal mind and, as such, he opposed the elective system instituted at Harvard, in which he coincided with Santayana. What he favoured was a sense of authority which he stated having found in the classics. The classical spirit was defined by a sense of discipline, proportion and order, which set a unified set of standards for the values of human civilization. Consequently, he considered classicism as strongly opposed to romanticism, with its stress on individualism and sensations and its lack of order. He held Rousseau guilty for the introduction of relativism in history, which contradicted the idea of a single standard of taste as suggested by the classics and advanced the possibility of a plurality of standards, depending on the social and time context.

¹⁸⁷Manju Jain. *T.S. Eliot and American Philosophy*, 97.

Eliot's own sense of order and discipline found an echo in the principles preached by Babbitt. But Babbitt had also a major role in directing his disciple towards the study of Indian philosophy. He himself interested in Indianism, Babbitt was one of the persons who mediated the introduction of Eastern philosophy in American letters. His work, *Buddha and the Occident*, published in 1936, witnessed his lifelong preoccupations with early Buddhism and Confucianism¹⁸⁸.

Thus introduced to Indic philosophy, Eliot enrolled in classes of Indian culture and Sanskrit. The two great names of Oriental studies at Harvard were Charles Lanman and James Woods, to whom the introduction of courses of Indian philosophy at Harvard was due. Eliot attended the classes of both professors and became familiarised with classical texts of Indian wisdom, including the *Baghavad Gita* and the Pali canon. During his course with Lanman, while he was trying to decipher *Brihadarabyaka Upanishad* in Sanskrit, he came across the Fable of the Thunder, which he would later use in *The Waste Land*.

Buddhism mainly appealed to Eliot due to its insistence on the idea that life in general and human desire in particular can not be detached from the notion of pain. He maintained his preoccupation with Buddhist teachings all his life, even after his conversion to Catholicism, and the *Four Quartets*, as well as his plays, are imbued with the spirit, images and figures inspired by the Upanishads.

¹⁸⁸ Cleo McNelly Kearns. *T.S. Eliot and Indic Tradition*, 140-143.

As a result of his endeavours to approach the Indian philosophical system, Eliot became aware, as he acknowledged later, that one could appropriate thoroughly a different culture only if giving up one's own culture and traditions:

A good half of the effort of understanding what the Indian philosophers were after – and their subtleties make most of the European philosophers look like schoolboys – lay in trying to erase from my mind all the categories and kinds of distinction common to European philosophy from the times of the Greeks. My previous and concomitant study of European philosophy was hardly better than an obstacle. And I came to the conclusion – seeing also that the “influence” of Brahmin and Buddhist thought upon Europe, as in Schopenhauer, Hartmann and Deussen, had largely been through romantic misunderstanding – that my only hope of really penetrating to the heart of that mystery would lie in forgetting how to think and feel like an American or a European: which, for practical as well as sentimental reasons, I did not wish to do¹⁸⁹.

Because of the marked difference between Eastern and Western civilizations, the attempt at translating one culture using as mediating tools the values and standards of another would be an almost impossible task. A superficial approach of such a task would damage the identity of both cultures involved in the process and would have a negative consequence upon their interaction.

¹⁸⁹ T.S. Eliot. *After Strange Gods*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1934, 43.

A Parisian Experience: 1910-1911

In 1910, encouraged by Babbitt and excited at the idea of the cultural effervescence he was expecting to meet in Europe, Eliot went to Paris. It was one of the happiest years of his life, a year spent in intense cultural and social experiences. This was the first time he was visiting the Old Continent and had high expectations as regards the time he was to spend there. The exchange of ideas across distinct cultures was one of Eliot's preoccupations. So it is that Paris was the place where he came into contact with the European culture on its own territory.

In Paris he became friends with Alain Fournier, who introduced Eliot to the works of Dostoevsky. He also met Jules Verdenal, a medical student with literary preoccupations. The friendship of the two also involved an exchange of letters until the early death of Verdenal, in 1915, at Dardanelle. Eliot dedicated to him the first volume of verse published in England, *Prufrock and Other Observations*. It was probably Verdenal, an admirer of Charles Maurras, who provided Eliot with some of his works¹⁹⁰.

Eliot was already familiar with the ideology of Maurras from the lectures of Babbitt. Maurras was the promoter of a movement called *L'Action Française* that was dedicated to principles of nationalism, the Catholic Church and anti-Semitism. During his classes, Babbitt had expressed his admiration for Maurras, for his rebellion against romanticism and his devotion to monarchy.

¹⁹⁰ Peter Ackroyd. *T.S. Eliot: A Life*, 42-43.

In one issue of *Nouvelle Revue Française*, whose editor, Jacques Rivière, Eliot had met through Alain Fournier, Maurras was described as “classique, catholique, monarchique”. This probably inspired Eliot when he later declared that he was “classicist in literature, royalist in politics and anglo-catholic in religion”.

During the first two months of his stay in Paris, he also attended the lectures of Bergson. He was holding courses at Collège de France and enjoyed extraordinary celebrity, which was partly due to the recent publication of his *Évolution créatrice* (1907). For Bergson, reality was a process of continuous change, an expression of pure time — *durée réelle*. Consequently, he assigned memory a crucial role in consciousness and the perception of reality. Although he was against the Darwinian evolutionary theory, he provided the concept of a vital impetus¹⁹¹, *élan vital*, for his hypothesis regarding the evolution of organisms, since he claimed that this vital power was the engine behind the creating forces of the universe.

It was one of the issues on which Eliot did not agree with him. His brief conversion to Bergsonism did not last for too long and, to this optimistic view on the ceaseless progress of the universe, Eliot opposed the idea of a world revolving “devoid of meaning and depleted of vitality”¹⁹². Although Eliot soon lost the initial fascination with Bergson’s ideas, he admitted that when he was

¹⁹¹ Bergson’s ideas were strongly opposed by Eliot’s master, Babbitt, who had coined the term *frein vital*, who was supposed to control impulses through discipline.

¹⁹²Manju Jain. *T.S. Eliot and American Philosophy*, 57.

writing “The Love Song of Alfred J. Prufrock” he was still Bergsonian in inspiration.

Paris had made such an impression upon Eliot, that he entertained some thoughts of settling in France and turning to write in French. Although the European experience had been fruitful and inspiring (in the period 1910-1911 he finished the two significant poems of his early period, “The Love Song of Alfred J. Prufrock” and “Portrait of a Lady”), he had to return to America. His family had for him the ambition of becoming professor of philosophy at Harvard. That is why he went back to Harvard in the fall of 1911, when he took up courses of philosophy. However, he was nostalgic about his European escape; thus, he subscribed to *Nouvelle Revue Française* and started to behave more and more like a real European dandy.

Coming Back to Europe

In 1914, Eliot received a Sheldon Travelling Fellowship that enabled him to return to Europe. When leaving Harvard his intentions were not to settle in Europe. But the decisions he was going to make on European soil were quite to the contrary and presented a certain surprise especially since they were coming from a man apparently at peace with the life that seemed to have been prepared for him in America.

When he reached Europe, he went first to Germany, to Marburg, where he was supposed to take part in a philosophy summer program. But because of

the war, he was forced to head to London after only two weeks. From the correspondence he maintained especially with Conrad Aiken and Eleanor Hinkley, one may infer that he quite enjoyed Germany and the Germans, especially Marburg and the food. This could not be said about London, where he arrived the same year, in August. Although he disliked it at first, he gradually came to enjoy the atmosphere of big city and its cosmopolitan air¹⁹³.

An exile himself, Eliot found the company of other foreigners very pleasing and comforting. There were not many friends he could rely on, hardly one or two, but this situation was compensated for by a sense of belonging to a larger community of “aliens”: “Here I am in Shady Bloosmbury, the noisiest place in the world, a neighbourhood at present given to artists, musicians, backwriters, Americans, Russians, French, Belgians, Italians, Spaniards and Japanese”¹⁹⁴.

Due to the rich mixture of nationalities with which he came into contact, Eliot was beginning to feel more comfortable with his status of exile. That is probably why he began to develop a timid fondness for the City: “I like London better than before; it is foreign, but hospitable, or rather tolerant, and

¹⁹³ It is only natural that for someone who was to become the poet of the cityscape, urban agglomeration proved not to be tiresome; on the contrary, he found the city rustle much more appealing than the calm atmosphere of small towns. From this perspective, the Oxford experience was not a very stimulating one. The peace and tranquillity he found there gave him the impression of not being alive at all. However, it presented some advantages; it was “exceedingly comfortable and delightful” and very foreign, which was probably the feature that most appealed to him. The education system was different from what he was accustomed to at Harvard and this in a good way: “I have begun to entertain the highest respect for English methods of teaching in addition to the disapproval of our own which I had acquired through experience” (*L*, 65). Nevertheless, too much tranquillity failed to provide the poet with creative stimuli; the monotony and boredom of the place was not at all intellectually stimulating.

¹⁹⁴T.S. Eliot. *The Letters of T.S. Eliot*. Vol. I. Ed. Valerie Eliot. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1988, 56.

perhaps does not demand to be understood as does Paris¹⁹⁵. In the letters of this period, the word “foreign” appears to have a relatively high frequency, which is not surprising at all given the fact that he was a young American so many miles away from home. Nevertheless, he used the term with certain affection, devoid of any sign of frustration.

He was discovering the Other with a little patience and thirst for the new. Even though, back in 1910, Paris had exerted a powerful fascination over him, the decisions he made and the external circumstances were in favour of his staying in England. He had mixed feelings about the people there; one might even sense some bewilderment with respect to the differences between two peoples which, after all, shared the same language: “I feel that I don’t understand the English very well”, he confessed to Eleanor, complaining about conventionalism of the English. The same year, he added in another letter: “On the one hand, I like the English very much [...] I should always, I think, be aware of a certain sense of confinement in England, and repression”¹⁹⁶.

Such mixed feelings toward what was to become his adoptive country reflect in certain ways his inner dilemmas. The people he encountered there, the atmosphere of intellectual emulation made it difficult for him to make the important decisions that forced upon him: to remain in Europe to the detriment of America, to abandon philosophy in favour of poetry. Given the fact that he was not particularly fond of England, that he felt “repressed” there, one might legitimately wonder why he finally decided to adopt it as his “new” country.

¹⁹⁵ T.S. Eliot. *Letters*, 55.

¹⁹⁶ T.S. Eliot. *Letters*, 61.

He did not opt for France, where he felt more at home than in England. Although in 1910 he had thought of moving to France, probably after more mature consideration he realized that in fact England was better suited for him.

England contained the perfect balance between difference and similarity; it was imbued with European spirit, so much different from the American one, but, due to the common language, it was not a complete break away from the poet's native land. What remains certain is that he felt he could develop and express himself to the fullest of his potential only as an exile. If things were not very clearly set in his mind at the time, the statement he made later on, in 1931, is the distilled expression of the feelings he might have had back in 1914: "The American intellectual of today has almost no chance of continuous development upon his own soil... He must be an expatriate"¹⁹⁷.

The same consideration might have driven Ezra Pound to leave America for England. The two poets made this radical decision of leaving their home land at a time when America could no longer provide what they were searching for: a sense of order rooted in solid and stable cultural values. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the massive wave of immigrants coming to the United States somehow modified the concept of "American identity". Strangers in their own country, for people like Pound or Eliot it was not a great challenge to try and fit in a completely new environment. So it is that they turned to Europe, where the civilization of the Old Continent could offer them the stability and meaning they needed.

¹⁹⁷ Eliot quoted in Doris Eder. *Three Writers in Exile: Pound, Eliot & Joyce*. New York: Whitston, 1984, 110.

Thus, it is no accident that the two manifested a profound concern with history, with the attempt of resurrecting the past and making it alive again for the present. Due to this awareness of the cultural legacy of the present, they were set on transforming and “making it new”. Because, after all, one of the reasons one voluntarily imposes exile upon oneself is to start anew, to leave behind too trodden a path and to set on a new and hopefully more meaningful journey.

This common background is probably the reason why the two had much more in common than they might have believed. When he met Pound in 1914, Eliot had already read some of his poems which he considered “well-meaning, but touchingly incompetent”¹⁹⁸. Not the same could be said about Pound’s reaction to the verse of his younger fellow American.

Pound, who had embarked on the adventure to change the face of the artistic scene in Great Britain, was immediately drawn to Eliot’s poetry, so new and unlike everything that was written in English. In a letter, he expressed his enthusiasm for this young poet, in whom he admired the fact that “he has actually trained himself *and* modernized himself *on his own*”¹⁹⁹. After reading “The Love Song of Alfred Prufrock”, he did his best to see that it was published in *Poetry*.

It was the beginning of a friendship and a fruitful collaboration which lasted a lifetime. The launching of young Eliot on the London literary scene owed a good deal to Pound. In 1915, most of his best verse written by then

¹⁹⁸ T.S. Eliot. *Letters*, 59.

¹⁹⁹ Ezra Pound. *The Letters of Ezra Pound 1907-1941*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1950, 47.

appeared in published form: “Preludes” and “Rhapsody on a Windy Night“ in Wyndham Lewis’s magazine, *Blast*, “Portrait of a Lady” in *Others*, and five other poems in *Catholic Anthology*, a volume coordinated by Pound.

As a matter of fact, he was trying to adjust in his social life as well. “I must learn to talk English”, he held in a letter. The acclimatisation process had to be initiated at an essential level for a poet: language. He was adopting the English ways in both attitude and attire. Due to his reserved and cool temperament, it was not too difficult for him to adopt the English style. “From the first he fitted naturally into English clothes and English clubs, into English habits generally. In fact, if anything gave him away, it was an Englishness that was a shade too correct to be natural”²⁰⁰. He had finally found the culture which allowed him to be himself without feeling different, like an outcast.

In 1915 Eliot met Vivienne Haywood, whom he married the same year. The reasons behind this decision were known to Eliot alone. This marriage was to change his life radically, not necessarily for the better, and to leave its marks on his poetry as well. By marrying Vivienne he was creating yet another bond that tied him to Europe, but it was something his family never totally agreed with.

Eliot found in Vivienne what he lacked: vivacity, dynamism and spontaneity. But soon he was to discover that her health condition was more than problematic and demanded much care and attention. She had a poor physical condition and complained about colitis, palpitations, bronchitis,

²⁰⁰ Herbert Read. “T.S.E. – A Memoir”, 15.

insomnia. “Vivienne’s nerves are the most famously bad nerves in literature”²⁰¹ and, according to speculations, they were immortalized in *The Waste Land*. It was to be a very unhappy marriage, which drained Eliot of spiritual energy and physical resources.

The same year, he sailed to America to meet his parents and confront them about his decisions. As could be expected, they were extremely displeased, especially with his marriage, and made him promise that he would not abandon his dissertation, which, indeed, he did not. It was the last time he saw his father; he was to set foot on American soil again only seventeen years later. Back in Europe, with a wife and new responsibilities, he had to consider seriously taking a career that would be financially rewarding. Therefore, he took a job as teacher at High Wycombe Grammar School. Since the remuneration could hardly help the Eliots make ends meet, he had to take up other additional activities that would supplement the family income.

Therefore, he started to impart night classes at Oxford University and to write book reviews for various publications. He found this latter activity quite pleasant, as opposed to teaching, which was mentally and physically more demanding than he expected. Despite the strenuous work he was performing at an incredible pace, he managed to finish his dissertation in 1916. The dissertation title was “Experience and the Objects of Knowledge in the Philosophy of F. H. Bradley”. The impact of Bradleyan philosophy on Eliot’s work was to be one of the most enduring and profound. The paper was largely

²⁰¹ John J. Soldo. “The American Foreground of T.S. Eliot”, 112.

praised by his teachers. Yet, because of the war, Eliot never managed to defend it, to the dissatisfaction of his parents.

The financial and personal problems he had to cope with acted as a sort of blockage upon his creative resources. Although he was crossing a period of literary sterility, his critical reviews and the poems he had already published imposed him as one of the most original and serious voices on the London literary scene. In one of Bertrand Russell's letters to James Woods, he announced to his American fellow the success Eliot was enjoying in England: "He has now, among all the younger literary men, a very considerable reputation for his poetry. All sorts of cultivated people who have never met him think his work in that line the best work done by any young man"²⁰². Russell hailed Eliot's decision to remain in Europe as a very inspired one and admitted that the European intellectual atmosphere was more favourable to poetry than the American one.

The native talent Eliot made proof of in his work was doubled by an extraordinary ambition to become one of the most competent voices in literary critical assessment. In this he compared himself to Henry James, another American expatriate, whom he held in high esteem. In a letter addressed to his mother, he claimed that "I really think that I have more influence on English letters than any other American has ever had, unless it be Henry

²⁰² T.S. Eliot. *Letters*, 133.

James”²⁰³. Gradually, Eliot became the main authority in literary tastes and criticism.

In 1917 things were beginning to improve financially for him. He was offered a position at Lloyds Bank, where he remained for the following nine years. Once again contrasts were visible in his life — he was a man of letters immersed in the realm of rigid figures. But he enjoyed his work particularly due to the order and discipline it reflected upon the creative part of his life.

The same year, a few months later after becoming a bank clerk, the volume *Prufrock and Other Observations* was published, again due to Pound’s intervention. It was also him who obtained for Eliot the job of assistant editor at the *Egoist*, where, besides book reviews, he published articles and letters which he always signed with a different name each time²⁰⁴. One may notice again his propensity for creating personae, for putting on masks behind which he could express freely, without any reserves or limitations.

With respect to poetry, the period 1916-1917 was marked by a sense of distrust in his poetic capacities. He was attracted by French poets, especially Tristan Corbière and Théophile Gautier. The model of French writers was a constant support during moments of creative difficulty. It was the case with Laforgue, who had helped him discover his own poetic voice.

This time, the poetry of Corbière and Gautier proved to be yet another valuable source to assist him in overcoming this poetic aridity. Eliot tried his

²⁰³ T.S. Eliot. *Letters*, 280.

²⁰⁴ Peter Ackroyd. *T.S. Eliot: A Life*, 83.

hand again at writing in French. He wrote four poems in French, “Dans le restaurant”, “Le directeur”, “Lune de Miel” and “Mélange adultère du tout”.

“Mélange adultère du tout” witnesses another search for identity. It is a mixture of roles, a collage of personae dictated by the various social contexts of his troubled existence²⁰⁵. “En Amérique, professeur; / En Angleterre, journaliste” — here are only two facets of his cosmopolitan self. The poem moves along several geographic axes, from Paris to Germany, Damascus and Omaha, each dictating a distinct mask. This awareness of his fragmented identity may hint at the desire to reach perfection, to acquire the status of a higher order than what a provincial identity could provide. It witnesses the rejection of an identity limited to only one space and the desire to embrace and assume a multitude of international experiences fused in one personality.

The French poems were not the only creations of the period. He wrote some poems in quatrains, the rigorous form of which seemed to have ordered his own potential and proven that he was not at the end of his poetic career. “Gerontion” is one of the most significant creations. Upon the whole, the poems of this period display a higher degree of difficulty and abstraction than his previous verse and present complex relations which involve the search for “sameness beneath difference and difference beneath sameness”²⁰⁶, one of his lifetime preoccupations.

²⁰⁵ Louis Simpson. *Three on the Tower: The Lives and Works of Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot and William Carlos Williams*. New York: William Morrow & Co. Inc, 1975, 400.

²⁰⁶ A.D. Moody. *Thomas Stearns Eliot: Poet*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980, 58.

The poems of this period reveal the fact that he was applying his critical methods to his poetry. In 1919 he published “Tradition and the Individual Talent”, a critical essay which represented a break away from traditional criticism. It purported revolutionary ideas such as the neglect of the poet’s own emotions, the depersonalization of poetry and the idea that criticism should be an endeavour of a purely intellectual order, devoid of the critic’s subjective feelings.

“Tradition and the Individual Talent” developed what Eliot called “an impersonal theory of poetry”, which mainly consisted of two aspects: tradition and poetry, or the notion of poetry as the continuation of the poetic invention of entire generations. The essay sets the basis of an Eliotian poetics, which specifies what poetry is and should do.

In this theory, tradition is tightly linked to the historical sense, which must be owned by each mature poet and which involves “a perception not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence”²⁰⁷. Therefore, the poet should translate past experience in such a way so as to emphasise its significance for the contemporary context.

Furthermore, tradition is not confined to the space of a poet’s own country, since he is the heir of an entire continental legacy – “the mind of Europe”, as Eliot calls it. The prerequisite for a poet’s becoming is familiarization with as many cultures as possible. The manner in which Eliot

²⁰⁷ T.S. Eliot. “Tradition and the Individual Talent”, 4.

handles the issue of tradition hints at a major preoccupation that is visible in his entire work, be it poetry or criticism: escape in time and in space.

“Tradition and the Individual Talent” was published in the *Egoist*, for which he continued to write, signing at the same time articles for *Athenaeum*, which ensured him a wider readership than the former. Due to his witty pieces of criticism, he attracted the attention of Bruce Richmond, editor at *Times Literary Supplement*, who hired him to write on Jacobean and Elizabethan drama, a topic he was genuinely interested in²⁰⁸. Eliot was gradually turning into an authoritative voice in the field of literary criticism, while his poetry had established him as one of the most talented poets in Great Britain. The American was re-conquering the territory of his ancestors, but, unlike them, he was to remain in England forever.

In 1920, two more poetry volumes appeared, *Ara Vos Prec* and *Poems*, containing the most significant poems he had written until then. It was also in 1920 that *The Sacred Wood* was published, his first volume of criticism, “probably the most influential volume of literary criticism published in the century”²⁰⁹. The book evidences his experience as literary journalist. It contains analyses of several English authors with the end result of extracting ideas that would guide the critic in assessing works of literature, both ancient and modern. The ultimate purpose of the volume — and the mark of its originality — was to represent a useful tool for writing both poetry and literary criticism.

²⁰⁸ Peter Ackroyd. *T.S. Eliot: A Life*, 97.

²⁰⁹ James Logenbach. “Mature poets steal: Eliot’s Allusive Practice” in A. D. Moody (Ed.). *The Cambridge Companion to T.S. Eliot*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, 119.

It relied on rigorous rules and a critical spirit rooted in tradition and the ordering of personal emotions.

As a result of his arduous critical activity and the publication of his works on both shores of the Atlantic, Eliot was enjoying celebrity both as a critic and a poet. Nevertheless, his financial and domestic situations were far from being similarly rosy. Exhausted by the numerous activities in which he was involved, in the summer of 1920 he went on a journey to Paris together with Wyndham Lewis. On this occasion he met James Joyce, who left upon him the impression of an arrogant man. Although the refuge to France did him a world of good, Eliot had to return to England, to his ordinary chores and worries. Vivienne's health was as poor as ever and soon, Eliot himself seemed to fall to pieces again. Consequently, following the doctor's orders, he took a leave from the bank and went to Switzerland, where he wrote the poem that placed him as a landmark on the map of twentieth century literature.

In 1921, Eliot made another significant acquaintance that resulted in the publication of a literary magazine. He met Lady Rothmere, who was willing to grant Eliot all the freedom in running the newspaper she was planning to finance. Very enthusiastic about the perspective, Eliot named the magazine *The Criterion* and intended to bring the first issue to light at the beginning of 1922, but it finally came out in the fall of the same year.

The magazine came to enjoy a relatively long life, from October 1922 to January 1939. Eliot could finally gather together the minds of Europe in an attempt at unifying Western cultures. The ideal of instituting an international

dialogue was now becoming real: “In starting the *Criterion*, I had the aim of bringing together the best in new thinking and new writing in its time, from all the countries of Europe that had anything to contribute to the common good”²¹⁰.

In this respect, he tried to maintain contact with other similar publications in Europe, *Nouvelle Revue Française*, *Neue Rundschau*, *Revista de Occidente* and *Il Convegno*. Such magazines, which he considered necessary in every European capital, shared the objective of allowing “the transmission of ideas and to make possible the circulation of ideas while they are still fresh”²¹¹. The circulation of ideas, which is visible in his art as well, was possible due to the publication of works belonging to such writers as Ezra Pound, Herman Hesse or Benedetto Croce, Luigi Pirandello or Paul Valéry. In the first issue of the *Criterion*, he brought his personal contribution to this cultural dialogue by publishing *The Waste Land*, this “poetic Esperanto of echoes”²¹².

²¹⁰ T.S. Eliot. “The *Criterion*” in *Selected Prose*. London: Penguin Books, 1953, 242.

²¹¹ T.S. Eliot. “The *Criterion*”, 243.

²¹² Lidia Vianu. *T.S. Eliot: An Author for All Seasons*. București: Paideia, 1997, 3.

***The Waste Land* – “The Poem of the Century”**

Extraliterary Background

The first time Eliot mentioned *The Waste Land* was in November of 1919, in a letter he addressed to John Quinn, to whom he confessed: “I hope to be able to write a poem I have in mind”. But his intentions were to materialize only later, because of various external considerations. On the one hand, almost the entire year he was occupied with preparing *The Sacred Wood* for printing. On the other hand, there was the precarious health condition of his wife, which represented a serious emotional burden for the poet who, at the time, was also in dire financial straits. Moreover, in June, the couple received the visit of Eliot’s mother, whom he had not seen for six years. As the relationships between Vivien and her mother in law were not the most cordial and, as a consequence, the atmosphere was rather tense, when the mother went back to America Eliot was in a serious condition of physical and spiritual fatigue.

Since the bank gave him a three months’ leave, in October, together with Vivien, he set for Margate, where he resumed the work on the poem he had already started. From Margate, in November, he went to a clinic in Lausanne, not before passing through Paris, where he left his wife with the Pounds. He took advantage of his visit to Pound and left him the manuscript of what he had managed to write. While in the clinic in Lausanne, he wrote the final part of the poem, “What the Thunder Said”.

The publication of the poem was a rather difficult process, which foretold the poem's slow, but long-lasting success. The printing of *The Waste Land* represented a crucial moment not only for the author himself, but also for the emerging artistic movement which counted Eliot among its main spokespersons. The poem imposed modernism as a powerful literary trend in the eyes of the wide public, and one of reasons for such success was the publicity, the attention media paid to it and even the controversies it raised among critics and readers alike.

It was an event that acquired almost mythical proportions, as the poem witnessed the difficult emergence of modernism and the struggle it had with the critical establishment of the time²¹³. Pound himself, Eliot's mentor while writing *The Waste Land*, acknowledged the crucial significance it had for the movement in the imposition of which he, too, played an instrumental role: "Eliot's *Waste Land* is I think the justification of the "movement", of our modern experiment since 1900"²¹⁴.

In 1922, the poem was printed simultaneously in two journals: in England, on October 16, in the *Criterion*, the magazine for which Eliot himself was in charge, and in the United States, around October 20, in the *Dial*. It was published a third time in December, in America, as a book which contained for the first time line numbers and Eliot's own notes. The company that dealt with the publication was Boni and Liveright. In 1923 the poem was published a

²¹³ Lawrence Rainey. *The Annotated Waste Land with Eliot's Contemporary Prose*. Yale University Press, 2005, 72.

²¹⁴ Ezra Pound. *Letters*, 180.

fourth time, also in book format, with the author's notes, this time in Great Britain, at Hogarth, the publishing house owned by Leonard and Virginia Woolf.

As was the case with the printing of many of Eliot's previous works, in this particular situation it was who else but Pound who played the role of mediator between the author and the potential publishing houses interested in printing the poem. He was the impresario not only for Eliot, but for many other artists representing the modernist movement.

The publicity Pound carried out around Eliot's poem initiated a real competition among editors as to its publishing. In his negotiations with the *The Dial* or Liveright, Pound's ambitions went beyond the publication of a single work. His intention was to gather under the same editorial roof the main representatives of the modernist movement, Eliot, Joyce, himself, even Yeats, in an attempt to impose the perception of modernism as a collective voice, easily identifiable and distinctive in the literary landscape of the time. Based on Pound's appreciations of the poem, editors realized that in buying *The Waste Land*, they purchased not necessarily a particular poem, but the product of a trend which promised to acquire a prominent position on the literary scene, with the obvious consequence of attracting media attention and increased credit for the said publishing establishment.

The story behind *The Waste Land* was meant to have complicated unfolding even years after it was launched for the wide public. This time it is about its manuscript. In October, the same year of the poem's publication, Eliot

sent the manuscript to John Quinn as a token of gratitude for the continuous support Eliot received from him. Quinn was a real Maecenas of modern artists, who took active part in the diffusion of their works. He had a significant role in the publication of *The Waste Land* on the American shore of the Atlantic. The manuscript was thought to be lost when, in 1924, after Quinn's death, it was nowhere to be found and no mention appeared in his will either. The manuscript showed again only in 1968, as part of the Berg Collection in the New York Public Library. During his lifetime, Eliot ignored what happened to the manuscript, as he had no intention of publishing it. In 1972, six years after the poet's death, his wife, Valerie Eliot, published it in facsimile, with notes, transcripts and an introduction signed by her.

What Eliot sent Quinn was a collection of manuscript first drafts, together with the author's observations, Pound's annotations and certain comments of Vivien Eliot, but without the poem's notes. It contained as well drafts of unpublished poems dating before the creation of *The Waste Land* and which he had intended to publish as a sort of appendix²¹⁵.

The facsimile Valerie Eliot published revealed new insights in the making of the poem. The drafts of the first four parts indicate that even if in the notes Eliot claimed that "the plan and a good deal of the incidental symbolism"

²¹⁵ The poems Eliot created with a view to representing an appendix to *The Waste Land* were "Song for the Opherion", "Exequy", "Elegy", but Pound advised him against it. Other poems included in the manuscript collection of documents had been written during his Harvard period: "The Death of Saint Narcissus", "After the turning", "Come in under the shadows", "The Death of the Duchess", "I am the Resurrection", "So through the evening", "Those are the pearls", which revolved around Eliot's fascination with mysticism and thus announced the mystic note dominant in the last part of *The Waste Land*, "What the Thunder Said".

were influenced by Jessie Weston's book on the Holy Grail and Frazer's *The Golden Bough*, the original intention and development of the poem contained little, if any, mythical references²¹⁶. What appears obvious from the manuscript is that the intention of imbuing the poem with a mythical tone became clear while Eliot was writing the last part.

As in the first drafts of the poem the presence of Augustan poets is visible not only in the content but also in the literary forms and genres adopted, and Virgil, mediated by John Dryden's translation, populates the poem with his characters, Kenner advances the idea that Eliot's initial intention was to create a modern *Aeneid*, with

the hero crossing seas to pursue his destiny, detained by one woman and prophesied by another, and encountering visions of the past and future, all culminated in a city both founded and yet to be founded, unreal and oppressively real, the Rome through whose past Dryden saw London's future²¹⁷.

Pound's Contribution

Pound had imposed himself as one of the main figures of modernism and the creator of new poetic strategies. So it is that until the publication of *The Waste Land* manuscript, there were critical voices who implied that the poem's fragmented nature was largely due to Pound's interference. But the facsimile revealed that it was Eliot's intention to write a poem defined by a structural

²¹⁶ Hugh Kenner. "The Urban Apocalypse" in Walton Litz (Ed.). *Eliot in His Time: Essays on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Waste Land*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973, 43.

²¹⁷ Hugh Kenner. "The Urban Apocalypse", 40.

juxtaposition of styles, with an intricate set of allusions and quotations, with episodes following one after another with a discontinuous narrative thread.

The part Pound played in Eliot's life went beyond professional borders. During the entire period Eliot wrote the various parts of *The Waste Land*, he was going through moments of deep despair and exhaustion. They were basically due to the poor condition of his health and to the strain of trying to fulfil his professional and domestic obligations. Vivien's dependency on him from all points of view represented a factor of stress that added to his already weakened state of mind. In such moments, the support and encouragement he received from his friend gave him the strength to continue his creative activity and Pound's enthusiastic belief in his poetic genius represented enough a stimulus not to abandon his ambitious project.

In 1925, Eliot provided the poem with a dedication addressed to Pound, borrowing from Dante the words he employed to honour one of the leading figures of troubadour poetry, Daniel Arnaut. Thus, if Arnaut was deemed the best craftsman of the medieval period, Pound was given the rank of *il miglior fabbro* of modern times. Eliot's intention was to express his gratitude for the active role Pound played in the development of *The Waste Land* and "to honour the technical mastery and critical ability manifest in his own work, which had also done so much to turn *The Waste Land* from a jumble of good and bad passages into a poem"²¹⁸. In all modesty, Pound, in his turn, only

²¹⁸ Eliot quoted in Helen Gardner. "The Waste Land: Paris 1922" in Walton Litz (Ed.). *Eliot and His Time*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973, 77.

mentioned his contribution in two letters he sent to Eliot, in which he called himself the *sage-homme* who assisted the birth of the poem:

These are the poems of Eliot
By the Uranian Muse begot;
A Man their Mother was,
A Muse their Sire.

How did the printed Infancies result
From Nuptials thus doubly difficult?
If you must ends enquire
Know diligent Reader
That on each occasion
Ezra performed the caesarean Operation.²¹⁹

It was not the only time he referred to the modifications he performed in medical terms, as his basic contributions consisted in cuts, and not additions²²⁰. The only words he suggested were “demotic” and “demobbed”. His objections were never directed at the content proper of the poem, but rather at issues related to structure, rhythm or the right word choice (in which case he always left Eliot the decision of ignoring or adopting his suggestions). As a result, he made his presence visible mainly in suppressing lines which he considered shallow or not sufficiently expressive or parts he saw as incompatible with the overall plan of the poem.

One of Eliot’s favourite literary techniques was parody and he made extensive use of it in the first drafts of the poem. Therefore, there were parodies of Pope and eighteenth century narrative poems, of Jacobean dramatists and nineteenth century blank verse. But Pound realized that they did

²¹⁹ Ezra Pound. *Letters*, 170.

²²⁰ The other person to whom Eliot showed the drafts and whose advice he requested was his wife, Vivien. She suggested words and even provided two lines for the poem.

not fit the general tone of the poem, which was too serious to match such passages charged with irony, and so he advised the author as to their deletion²²¹.

In the first stage, Eliot thought of using as preface to *The Waste Land* his previously published “Gerontion”. As Pound advised him against it, he resorted to an epigraph taken from Conrad, but again he met with resistance from his friend, who believed that Conrad was not “weighty enough”. As a result, the author chose Petronius over Conrad, with an episode dealing with the Sybil’s death²²².

Furthermore, in the letters Pound addressed to Eliot in January 1921, he was extremely vehement as to the deletion of the poems the latter intended to insert as appendix to *The Waste Land*, “Song”, “Dirge” and “Exequy”, which Pound placed in the category of “superfluties” of which he wanted to clear the poem. His suggestion was that even if Eliot would cut “‘em altogether”, “the poem would run from ‘April...’ to ‘shantih’ without a break”²²³.

The main modifications carried out by Pound affected basically the parts entitled “Death by Water” and “The Fire Sermon”. In the former, suppressing lines which he considered incompatible with the remaining of the poem, Pound preserved only the episode of “Phlebas”. He also cut fifty lines from “The Burial of the Dead”.

²²¹ Helen Gardner. “*The Waste Land*”, 93.

²²² Viorica Pâtea. “Introducción” in T.S. Eliot, *La tierra baldía*. Viorica Pâtea (Ed.). Madrid: Cátedra Letras Universales, 2005, 68.

²²³ Helen Gardner. “*The Waste Land*”, 93.

Eliot was known for his habit of submitting his works to friends for criticism. But this situation of a poet who submitted his poems to another fellow poet and who accepted without any scepticism and reserve the comments and suggestions he received, is not very common in the literary history. This was also possible due to the fact that the two artists shared the same opinion that poetry is a craft that could not be properly performed without order, discipline and hard work. Furthermore, the collaboration between the two poets and the result of their collective judgment is a telling example of the critical principle advocated by Eliot, according to which the creative mind needs to be doubled by critical spirit: “the larger part of the labour of an author in composing his work is critical labour; the labour of sifting, combining, constructing, expunging, correcting, testing”²²⁴. In his code of critical reasoning, the highest expression of criticism is its blending with the creative activity.

The Notes

The poem appeared with notes in the first edition as a book published by Boni and Liveright (1922). The notes have given rise to many controversies, since they are extremely evasive and provoke many questions as to Eliot’s choice of explaining certain references and omitting others. Other debates

²²⁴ T.S. Eliot. “The Function of Criticism” in *Selected Essays*. London: Harcourt Brace, 1950, 18.

focus on the genesis and objective of the notes, because the author himself provided various accounts at various moments, his attitude towards the entire set of references and sources being quite ambiguous.

In the essay “The Frontiers of Criticism”, he claimed that he chose to attach these notes in order to eliminate any potential charges with plagiarism that critics had directed against him with respect to some of his earlier poems. He also stated that another reason was to enlarge the number of pages, because, without the notes, the poem was too short to be printed in book format. As the result was “an exposition of bogus scholarship” which tended to drive away the attention from the poetic reality towards the notes, he considered the alternative of removing them, but they had already become a component part of the poem and even “have had almost greater popularity than the poem itself”²²⁵. Therefore, his regret was that the notes might have given birth to a “wild goose chase after Tarot cards and the Holy Grail”, encouraging thus a real competition for studying the bibliographical sources and the literary influences of *The Waste Land* to the detriment of the poetic matter itself.

Right from the beginning, Eliot reveals which were the sources of inspiration for the poem:

Not only the title, but the plan and a good deal of the incidental symbolism of the poem were suggested by Miss Jessie L. Weston’s book on the Grail legend: *From Ritual to Romance* (Cambridge). [...] To another book of anthropology I am indebted in general, one which has influenced our generation profoundly; I mean *The Golden Bough*²²⁶.

²²⁵ T.S. Eliot. *The Sacred Wood. Essays on Poetry and Criticism*. London: Faber and Faber, 1997, 26.

²²⁶ T.S. Eliot. *The Waste Land*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1997, 27.

The notes point at certain bibliographical references while omitting others. Some only mention the author alluded to in the poem, other display extensive quotations, all in the original, or hint at further readings. Like the poem itself, they are a collage of languages, which require readers to put to practice their linguistic knowledge. Some notes are informative, while others are jocular and even ironic in tone. The overall plan of inserting and omitting such references may suggest a challenge he devised for the readers to interpret them as they deem fit for the general context of the poem.

Methods and Sources of Inspiration

Literary Techniques

The year 1922 represented a landmark in the history of the modernist movement. It marked, among others, the publication of Joyce's *Ulysses* and Eliot's *The Waste Land*²²⁷. The context in which they were launched for the wide public and the innovative techniques they employed granted them the status of documents of paramount importance for the emerging artistic trend.

Eliot himself was deeply moved by Joyce's novel, which exerted a significant influence on the design of the overall ideological framework of his own poem. In 1923, in the essay "*Ulysses, Order and Myth*", Eliot praised the novel as being "the most important expression which the present age has

²²⁷ In the same year, books by Forster, Huxley, Stein, Conrad, Lawrence, Woolf or Fitzgerald appeared, with an impressive display of talent and new approaches to literature which broke down "the walls of the Victorian citadel" (Stanley Sultan. *Eliot, Joyce and Company*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987, 129).

found”, the most appropriate manifestation of the artistic mind and an innovation at the same time, a step ahead from the traditional form of the novel, whose last representatives Eliot saw in Flaubert and James. Eliot called this new method, whose initiator he identified in Yeats, the mythical method²²⁸.

The use of myths was a strategy that enabled the artist to connect the present and the past as a continuum. This could be achieved by means of “controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history”. In certain respects, Eliot’s long poem achieved in poetry what *Ulysses* did for prose, imposing the same manipulation of the mythical network of connections to the detriment of the narrative structures and sequences, the same resort to allusions in order to subjectify the point of view and present the discontinuous perceptions of consciousness.

Eliot’s poem uses mythical references reinterpreted from the perspective of contemporary history. It does not follow a certain narrative structure, but displays an array of myths and beliefs which stand for cultures distant both spatially and temporally. Thus, the poet’s intention is to reconcile seemingly distinct concepts and mind frames by resorting to archetypal structures.

²²⁸ This distinction between the narrative and the mythical methods may be seen within the context of levels of experience and perspectives. While the narrative method imposes the separation of subject and object, the mythical method stresses the union between the two concepts, the prevalence of emotions which have as ultimate expression a God-like perspective represented by Tiresias in *The Waste Land* and by the archetype of the Homeric hero in *Ulysses* (Denis Donoghue. *Words Alone. The Poet T.S. Eliot*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2000, 124).

In the attempt to connect moments of past history and the disconnected universe of the present, Eliot makes extensive use of literary allusions, the sources of which mark a trail from Antiquity up to the latest artistic works. Allusions are not a strategy used for the first time by modernist writers, but they supply a different functional value to this method. In earlier works, allusions were meant to enrich an already coherent and complete literary action or discourse.

But since modernist works lack such coherence, authors use allusions precisely to connect discontinuous passages and to give continuity to fragmented bits of discourse. In Eliot's case, allusions to myths belonging to major groups of civilization, to classic works of art of high culture and to specific items representative of the popular culture perform more than the mere technical role of helping the poem advance. All the sets of myths and the other examples of the creative human mind are put to work to create the complete image of human civilization in its various stages: Hebraic, Greek, mediaeval, renaissance and modern²²⁹.

Another method by means of which Eliot manages to bring together and give coherence to "a broken heap of images" is collage, a technique frequently encountered among modernists. By means of such a method with cubist effects, the poet gathers and superposes various languages, cultures, temporal and geographic spaces, with the intention of annulling the mimetic representation of reality.

²²⁹ Stanley Sultan. *Eliot, Joyce and Company*, 156-157.

In the same manner that cubist painters juxtapose several scenes on canvas, Eliot juxtaposes distinct perspectives of the same object or situation, stressing the idea of the limitation of a single viewpoint and suggesting the need of moving from one perspective to another, for the goal of assimilating each and every one of them and all together at the same time. Thus, the female protagonist of the poem is a portrait in the vein of Picasso's *Demoiselle d'Avignon*, and has bits of Cleopatra, a treacherous Madame Sosostris, an indifferent typist, a pub chatter-box, an innocent hyacinth girl and other little fragments dispersed throughout the text.

In *The Waste Land*, this technique is tightly linked to the aesthetics of fragmentation and juxtaposition which imposed the text as a difficult reading from the moment it first came into contact with its readers and critics. In fact, it was one of the main critical issues debated upon. The poem advances without a seemingly clear direction and with an apparent lack of logic by means of various fragments and passages. No narrative story which seems to take form reaches its end and the passage from one scene to another is so abrupt that no connection could be set between them, were it not for the subtle network of mythical and legendary references which may be detected in the various episodes²³⁰.

This dialogue between periods and so many distinct literary genres of the past reflects in a way the poem's search for a form. What the text maintains

²³⁰ The references are sometimes so cryptic, that the poet's notes in the end are more than welcome to indicate their origin and significance. It is the case, for instance, of allusions to dead gods which appear in three of the five parts and which would not be noticed without Eliot's guidance.

from all these is “the memory of lost forms”²³¹, forms of the past that no longer meet the needs of the present. The entire collage of genres and styles is the epitome of a search for an appropriate form, the end result proving to be, as Kenner indicates, “a form with no form and a genre with no name”²³².

The rich “disorganization of the poem”²³³, which is due to this juxtaposition of points of view, of distinct voices and distinct perspectives, this set of multiple consciences paradoxically supply the unity of the poem. Eliot himself provides the key to the poem’s unity indicating Tiresias in the notes as the higher rank point of view which blends all the other characters’ consciences:

Tiresias, although a mere spectator and not indeed a “character” is yet the most important personage in the poem, uniting all the rest. Just as the one-eyed merchant, seller of currants, melts into the Phoenician Sailor, and the latter is not wholly distinct from Ferdinand prince of Naples, so all the women are one woman and the two sexes meet in Tiresias. What Tiresias *sees*, in fact, is the substance of the poem²³⁴.

Tiresias is the seer suspended between two temporally defined worlds, representing a binary perspective both of a transcendent order, out of space and time, due to his mythical status, and of a worldly dimension represented by the almost faceless characters who inhabit the modern space²³⁵.

²³¹ Dennis Donoghue. *Words Alone*, 117.

²³² Hugh Kenner. “The Urban Apocalypse”, 47.

²³³ F.R. Leavis. “The Significance of the Modern Waste Land” in Michael North (Ed.). *The Waste Land: A Norton Critical Edition*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000, 173.

²³⁴ *The Waste Land*, 30-31.

²³⁵ Joseph Bentley & Jewel Spears Brooker. *Reading the Waste Land: Modernism and the Limits of Interpretation*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1990, 53-54.

This technique of superimposed identities allows for the disintegration of the traditional concept of character. “Personages”, to use Eliot’s own term, appear only to hold a momentary role. They are faceless, nameless many of them, with no clear idea of their own identity. Without knowing it, they fulfil destinies which are present in mythical legends and their very identification with such figures of the past provides them with a more or less unified identity.

As the poem advances, they increasingly take the shape of an “I” with multiple identities, which combines the vague experiences of the others in a unifying ego²³⁶. These multiple parts played by the same protagonist with the illusion of standing for various other characters were one of the reasons why the poem was called a “monodrama”²³⁷. The split conscience, already announced in “Prufrock”, stands for the subjectivity of perspectives that annuls the rigid and deceiving idea of a sole valid interpretation of reality and experience.

²³⁶ The earlier version of *The Waste Land*, echoing in a way the polyphonic structure of the poem and indicating the author’s preference for the allusive method, was called *He Do the Police in Different Voices*, a quotation from Dickens’s *Our Mutual Friend* (Peter Ackroyd. *T.S. Eliot: A Life*, 110).

²³⁷ Robert Langbaum. “New Modes of Characterization in *The Waste Land*” in Walton Litz (Ed.). *Eliot in His Time: Essays on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the Waste Land*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973, 106.

The Mythical Framework

As he confessed in his notes, the two books to which Eliot was indebted for the plan and structure of the poem are Jessie Weston's *From Ritual to Romance* and James Frazer's *The Golden Bough*. He claimed that these two books, especially Frazer's, had a profound influence upon his generation. Anthropology was just making its entrance on the academic scene and, together with Eliot, many other artists of the same generation showed an active interest in modern accounts of the primitive and the archaic.

In her book, Weston applied the methods of compared anthropology to comment upon various versions of the legend of the Grail²³⁸. The author advances the idea according to which the legends are Christened versions of pagan rituals and beliefs. The search for this precious cup is the topic of numerous medieval stories, legends and poems which are quite various.

The legends focus on the basic idea of a god whose sacrifice is meant to restore the fertility of the land he is ruling. Thus, the Fisher King is associated with the knight in search of the Grail, but also with Vedic gods of the rain, especially Indra, and with the Greek god Adonis²³⁹.

References to such gods are present in the entire poem, the main coordinates of which are based on the quest for gods belonging to various rites,

²³⁸ The extent to which *The Waste Land* is indebted to Weston's book is one of the main issues debated upon by the critics, for, especially after the manuscript of the poem was published, it became obvious that Eliot read the book some time after having written certain sections of the poem. The references to characters and events in the legend of the Holy Grail seem to have been added after the completion of the poem.

²³⁹ Viorica Pâtea. "Introducción", 78-79.

whose sacrifice could entail a revival of the modern world dying under the curse of spiritual draught. Two of the five parts of *The Waste Land* have titles which are directly linked to vegetation cults, i.e. “The Burial of the Dead” and “Death by Water”. The archaic gods appear under various forms in all the parts of the poem²⁴⁰.

The figures appearing in the legends of the Holy Grail are also found in the natural cults studied by James Frazer. He was one of the most widely-known anthropologists of his time and his approach of the primitive myths captured the attention of many artists at the beginning of the twentieth century. The work he carried out was mainly documentary, comprising no field study and the conclusions he presented were based on a parallel between ancient texts and modern practices.

The Golden Bough had been published first in 1890 in a twelve-volume edition, to which Eliot had access. The year 1922, when *The Waste Land* was published, was also the year the abridged variant of this huge folklore encyclopaedia was released on the market. What particularly drew Eliot’s attention were references to ancient rituals dealing with an old king whose sacrificial death would potentially restore the lost fertility of the land.

When Eliot states in the notes that he was inspired by Frazer’s book for the plan of *The Waste Land*, he probably had in mind the comparative method and the technique of gathering several perspectives on the same object.

²⁴⁰ Viorica Pâtea. “Introducción”, 81.

However, his admiration for Frazer was not unlimited. He disapproved of his positivism which led him to believe unconditionally in the power of science and to be a partisan of the development cycle from magic to religion and then to science. Eliot had always adopted a critical position as to religious and mythical issues analysed from sociological or empirical points of view, so it comes as no surprise that he did not agree with Frazer's idea according to which religion was nothing but a set of superstitious explanations the primitive men gave to natural phenomena²⁴¹.

The Reception of *The Waste Land*

In 1922, when it was published, *The Waste Land* represented a new start for the Anglo-American poetry and one of the most representative manifestoes of modernism, recognized as such by one of the main promoters of the new artistic trend, Ezra Pound. The impressions left by the poem on his contemporary readers and critics were so powerful, that by the thirties it was already considered the poem of the century. In fact, the effects of *The Waste Land* on the literary evolution of twentieth century were enduring enough so as to keep alive the interest of the critics for the entire century and beyond, and its complexity has allowed for new and surprising interpretations.

Although not all the reviews which focused on *The Waste Land* were favourable, almost all of them recognized its importance in Anglo-American

²⁴¹ Viorica Pâtea. "Introducción", 80-81.

letters. The comments focused basically on the fragmentary character of the poem as its distinguishable feature and for a number of years, criticism of *The Waste Land* was centred on issues of structure and the poem's alleged lack of unity. The first review appeared as an anonymous article in *Times Literary Supplement* and presented *The Waste Land* as "a collection of flashes" which stood for the poet's own perspective of modern life²⁴².

Among the first reactions to the poem, particularly significant are those signed by Conrad Aiken, Burton Rascoe, Edmund Wilson or Gilbert Seldes²⁴³. Aiken's comments, while indicating *The Waste Land* as "one of the most moving and original poems of our time" touched upon the aspects that support his claim. He considered the poem as one of the few that made use of the allusive method in poetry, but criticized the manner in which Eliot inserted the allusive matter in the poem, "unabsorbed" and of little help for the readers to understand the poem. In this line, the structure was seen as a series of feelings "violently juxtaposed" which created the overall impression of a "kaleidoscopic confusion". However, he did not fail to admit that the greatest achievement consisted in these very juxtapositions and abrupt passages.

Approaching the idea of structure, Rascoe found the poem "faulty structurally". If Aiken considered the notes a means to impose unity on the various poems and fragments that make *The Waste Land*, Rascoe expected

²⁴² Michael North (Ed.). *The Waste Land: A Norton Critical Edition*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000, 137.

²⁴³ C. Aiken – "An Anatomy of Melancholy" (1923), B. Rascoe – "A Bookman's Day Book" (1922), E. Wilson – "The Poetry of Drouth" (1922), G. Seldes – "T.S. Eliot" (1922), I. A. Richards - "The Poetry of T. S. Eliot" (1926) reproduced in *The Waste Land: A Norton Critical Edition*. Michael Norton (Ed.). New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2000.

from these notes, which he called “copious” (the characterization is probably the result of the fact that he considered them both “mock and serious”) to clarify not only the subject matter, but also the plan and structure of this “statement of ideas”.

Although the main faulty point Wilson found in *The Waste Land* is, again, its “lack of structural unity” and the fact that the verse is sometimes “much too scrappy”, he considered it one of the most successful creations in blank verse in contemporary literature. The main coordinate of the article was the supposition according to which the poem’s core value resided in its rendering of an “emotional experience”, relegating a peripheral plan to the sources, especially the legend of the Grail: “It is not necessary to know anything about the Grail Legend or any but the most obvious of Mr. Eliot’s allusions to feel the force of the intense emotion which the poem is intended to convey”.

As for Seldes, despite the fact that he saw the poem at first sight as “remarkable disconnected and confused”, he expressed his belief that a closer look would reveal the unity of the poem and the manner in which “each thing falls into place”.

In his article published in 1926, “The Poetry of T.S. Eliot”, I.A. Richards launched for the first time the comparison between the poem structure and a musical technique. He thus called the main method of the poem a “music of ideas”. At the same time, he interpreted the superposed levels of ideas as a sign of the fragmentation of the modern mind, as the epitome of the

meaningless modern existence, “a clearer, fuller realisation of their plight, the plight of a whole generation”.

The same interpretation of the poem as expressing the spiritual condition of a generation had already been expressed by Rascoe (“[...] it gives voice to the universal despair or resignation arising from the spiritual and economic consequences of the war”) or by Wilson (“And sometimes we feel that he is speaking not only for a personal distress, but for the starvation of a whole civilization. [...] It is our whole world of strained nerves and shattered institutions”). Later on, Eliot rejected such interpretations which made him the spokesperson of a generation and claimed that “to me it was only the relief of a personal and wholly insignificant grouse against life; it is just a piece of rhythmical grumbling”²⁴⁴.

Beginning with the thirties, the critical debate drove away from the discussion around the unity and structure of the poem. For a few decades, the stress was laid on the content matter and the cultural interpretation of the poem. Critics such as O. Matthiesen (1935), Cleanth Brooks (1937), Elizabeth Drew (1950) or Grover Smith (1950)²⁴⁵ searched for the poem’s unity in the sources which shared in common references to the Grail legends and vegetation myths²⁴⁶. For a period, the poem’s allusions and sources became the main field

²⁴⁴ Eliot quoted in Michael North. *The Waste Land*, 112.

²⁴⁵ In the fifties, Smith published an encyclopaedia with all of Eliot’s sources. The public’s reaction to it was twofold: on the one hand, the study was useful for understanding many of Eliot’s poems and plays, but, on the other hand, there was a feeling of frustration at the overwhelming display of erudition which was required on readers’ part.

²⁴⁶ Viorica Pâtea. “Introducción”, 55.

of interest, with focus on the cultural perspectives supplied by the interplay of references pertaining to distinct cultures.

The year Valerie Eliot published Eliot's facsimile of *The Waste Land*, 1971, represented another turn in the critics' approach to the poem. The analyses revealed an interest in grasping insights into Eliot's personal life to account for various interpretations of the poem.

When access to the first drafts became available to the public, it gave birth to an entire wave of biographic interpretations. There were critics who advanced the idea that *The Waste Land* was the expressions of the mystic experiences Eliot went through in 1914. Ronald Bush interpreted the poem as a blend between the poetic imagination and expressions of personal mischief: "[...] the subterranean voice of the poem has much to do with Eliot's theory of poetry as with his breakdown"²⁴⁷.

After The Waste Land

The writing of *The Waste Land* must have drained Eliot of all forces, because what followed was another period of creative aridity. Writing was not an easy task for him; he often claimed his discontent with respect to the products of his imagination and on more than one occasion he expressed his fear that he has come to the end of his poetic career. To this contributed his

²⁴⁷ Ronald Bush. *T.S. Eliot: A Study in Character and Style*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1984, 69.

work with the *Criterion*, for which he received no remuneration, since the policy of Lloyds Bank did not allow it.

Nevertheless, he was developing a new poetic plan, which was supposed to differ to a great extent from what he had achieved in *The Waste Land* — a poetic drama which he intended to entitle *Sweeney Agonistes*. But because the work on the drama was advancing rather slowly, he started to work on a series of short poems later gathered as a sequence, *The Hollow Men*. It is a poetry of dissociation, inhabited by various personae who are aware of the spiritual aridity of their environment, but who are incapable of changing this situation. The poems were published in 1925 in the volume *Poems 1901-1925*. It was also the year when he left Lloyds Bank for the editorial Faber & Gwyer (later Faber & Faber).

The Hollow Men marked the beginning of a blank poetic period which lasted until 1927. During all this time, since the prospect of writing poetry again seemed rather bleak, he directed his attention towards more academic preoccupations. He started by accepting the invitation to give the Clark Lectures at Cambridge. The title of the lectures was “The Metaphysical Poets of the Seventeenth Century” and they added to his increasing reputation as an important name on the academic scene as well.

Eliot was dominating the London literary universe as a poet, critic and editor. The adoptive land was recognizing his merits and accepting him as one of the natives. Eliot’s actions in 1927 tightened his ties to the country of his forefathers. In June, he was received in the Church of England during a very

discreet ceremony. The same year, he became a naturalized British citizen. It was a blow to his family, who had educated him in the Unitarian faith, as well as to his country, where he believed he could not find the professional fulfilment he was hoping for. In spite of such radical decisions, which were the result of many years of deliberations, he did not reject America. As he held in more mature years, he considered it a real advantage to experience what two distinct cultures had to offer: "It is a privilege to live in two cultures and I am grateful for it. Each is more interesting because of the contrast with the other. I believe I have the best of both possible worlds"²⁴⁸. All his life he remained an American building a European identity, with mixed feelings of love and reserve for both cultures, assuming the position of mediator between similarities and differences, conciliating extremes, creating a sense of the universality of the human spirit, beyond physical barriers, and familiarisation with the richness of local variations.

Eliot's conversion to Anglo-Catholicism did not come as a surprise for those who had followed his poetry and criticism closely. But although his consecration took place in 1927, he publicly admitted it in 1928, when he acknowledged in the preface of his volume of essays, *For Lancelot Andrews*, that he was "classicist in literature, royalist in politics and anglo-catholic in religion". The Ariel pomes, written after his conversion, between 1927 and 1930, witness the tribulations of a soul that has slowly found its way, but which is still waiting for the moment of ultimate illumination. The four poems of the

²⁴⁸ Eliot quoted in Doris Eder. *Three Writers in Exile*, 72.

sequence, “Journey of the Magi”, “A Song for Simeon”, “Animula” and “Marina” display an “unconscious conviction of sin, experience of agony and awareness of death juxtaposed to the theme of spiritual quest and renunciation”²⁴⁹.

The Ariel poems paved the way for *Ash-Wednesday*, which appeared in 1930. The poem contains the specifically Eliotian allusive method, but this time, references send almost entirely to religious texts and Dante, especially his *Vita Nova*. In the same line as his earlier poems, *Ash-Wednesday* hints at the dichotomy between the spirit and the flesh, the attempt at rejecting earthly desires and reaching a higher spiritual accomplishment, where the poet could enjoy the experience of grace. It is a “fusion of the divine and the human”²⁵⁰, ensured by two feminine presences, Virgin Mary and another woman, her earthly adulteress. In one of his essays on Dante, Eliot held that *Vita Nova* was a blend of biographic elements and allegories²⁵¹. It was mostly what he achieved in *Ash-Wednesday*, where he presented his profound religious feelings under the guise of images and references to authoritative religious texts.

For some good years after the publication of *Ash-Wednesday*, and except for two poems he published in 1931 which were gathered under the title “Coriolan”, Eliot was engaged less in writing poetry and more in delivering lectures and planning to write drama. In 1932 he set for America after a long

²⁴⁹ Narsingh Srivastava. *The Poetry of T.S. Eliot. A Study in Poetic Sensibility*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers, 1991, 59.

²⁵⁰ Grover Smith. *T.S. Eliot's Poetry and Plays*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974, 136.

²⁵¹ T.S. Eliot. “Dante”, 232.

absence. He was invited as lecturer at Harvard, but between 1932 and 1933 he visited several other American universities, among which UCLA, University of Southern California and even Milton Academy, his former school. The results of these lectures were two books of essays, *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* (1933) and *After Strange Gods* (1934). The temporary absence from England was a real burden, but it helped him put an end to his unhappy marriage.

With respect to the volume *After Strange Gods: A Primer of Modern Heresy*, although he was content with it at the time it was published, he rejected it later and never gave permission for its being reprinted. It was a series of addresses rather vehement in tone, by means of which he intended to introduce a new set of moral values in the vocabulary of critical debate. Among other things, he rejected the antagonist relationships between classicism and romanticism, replacing them with the notions of “orthodoxy” and “heresy”. It was also in this book of essays that he deplored the presence of “free-thinking Jews”, claiming that they were “undesirable” in large numbers²⁵². It is the all too often quoted statement that would bring about an entire wave of accusations as to his being anti-Semitic²⁵³.

²⁵² T.S. Eliot. *After Strange Gods*, 18.

²⁵³ Although he had to face various accusations, the most frequent one refers to his alleged anti-Semitism. As a matter of fact, the statement in *After Strange Gods* and a line in “Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar” (“The Jew is underneath the lot”) are the only printed references to his seeming dislike of the Jews. Another observation seems in place: he had numerous friends among the Jews who never complained about his attitude towards them; besides, he declared at a certain point that he had been attracted by the traditions of Sephardism, due to their rigour and sense of order (Peter Ackroyd. *T.S. Eliot: A Life*, 303-304).

T.S. Eliot – the Playwright

From the very beginning of his career as a poet, Eliot manifested interest for the dramatic art. His first attempts at writing drama concretised in two pieces dating back to 1926 and 1927 respectively, “Fragment of a Prologue” and “Fragment of an Agon”, reunited under the title *Sweeney Agonistes*. In 1934, when he was asked to write the dialogue and verse choruses for a pageant play meant to be acted during a fund raising activity, he accepted and the result was the play *The Rock*. He did not know that he was embarking on a new type of assignment that was to represent the beginning of a completely different stage in his creative life.

Another work commissioned by the Church was *Murder in the Cathedral* (1935). It was meant to be performed at the Canterbury Festival in 1935 and had to meet requirements according to which the topic of the play was to be somehow related to the place of the festival. Eliot chose to approach an important character in the history of the said cathedral, i.e. Thomas à Becket, Archbishop of Canterbury, who was murdered at the altar by the king’s men. In writing the play, Eliot wanted to confront his contemporary audience with the continuous conflict between God’s agents and, on a symbolic level, the representatives of human authority on earth. If the versification owes something to *Everyman*, as the author himself confessed, the symbolic pattern reminds of his poems. Eliot blends Christian and pagan myths, reflecting and enriching Christian belief with pagan parallels.

The play registered immediate success both with the public and the critics and came to be known as the most accomplished of Eliot's dramatic works. As a result of this unexpected success (the play had 225 performances before being taken on a provincial run and was also broadcasted by the BBC by 1936), he received numerous offers to write religious and historical dramas. But since he rejected the idea of repeating himself, he declined such proposals²⁵⁴.

In 1939 *The Family Reunion* was staged. If *The Rock* and *Murder in the Cathedral* addressed special audiences, this next play leaves behind the mystery play mode and attempts at making fit the structures of Greek tragedy with middle-class comedy. Thus, the setting is no longer a cult establishment, but an ordinary house and the protagonist is no longer a saint or a martyr, but the member of an aristocratic family²⁵⁵. Even if producing it on the stage proved to be a rather difficult task, it was, as Eliot himself believed, the best of all his other plays with respect to the poetic quality.

If these pre-war dramas were mainly concerned with both the human and the divine universes, the three plays he produced during the last twenty years of his life witness a fading away of the poet with his metaphysical anxieties. The inspiration for these plays is basically represented by plots in the Greek dramas. In writing them, Eliot adopted the theatrical conventions required for acquiring success with the audience, giving predominance to a

²⁵⁴ Peter Ackroyd. *T.S. Eliot: A Life*, 228.

²⁵⁵ David Ward. *T.S. Eliot: Between Two Worlds*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973, 197.

more conversational style to the detriment of the poetic discourse which was the basic feat of his earlier plays.

The Cocktail Party (1949), the first in the series of his post-war plays and the one which enjoyed the widest popular success, although seems to start like a reflection on the light comedies that had been in fashion up to that moment, explores in fact darker territories and introduces the theme of alienation that was to be prevalent in postmodern literature.

In *The Confidential Clerk* (1953), poetry is less present than in all the others. The background is totally worldly; the characters solve their problems, find their own identities and establish relationships in the real world. The possible intervention of an arguably transcendental order is reduced to two characters, themselves characterized by ordinariness. Another surprising element Eliot's readers were not accustomed to finding in his work is the idea, not explicitly stated, however, that love, with its most positive value, is the nucleus around which gravitate the characters' actions and which is suggested as the engine of human relations. Like the two previous plays, this one too focuses on the process by means of which people are dissuaded from illusions about their own self and the universe they inhabit and how love can become a material presence only in the absence of illusions.

In many ways, *The Elder Statesman* (1958) represents the summary of Eliot's life philosophy. What he wants to transmit this time is that no man is rich enough to afford to modify the consequences of things which happened in the past and that no one can ever escape responsibility. It is considered one of

Eliot's most personal plays, there are no characters striving to obtain accomplishments of the highest spiritual order, the end is quiet and serene. It is as if the work reflected the peaceful period which the author has finally reached after a lifetime of strife and struggle. In such a context, his words seem to reflect exactly the nature of his last bit of creation: "The creation of a work of art, we will say the creation of a character in drama, consist in the process of transfusion of the personality or, in a deeper sense, the life, of the author into the character"²⁵⁶. And although his plays are usually relegated a second plan within the whole of his artistic oeuvre, Eliot's dramatic works have a well-established role in the context of American theatre in the first half of the twentieth century, as successful attempts at the revival of poetic drama.

Four Quartets

Despite the fact that his talent had imposed him as a respected figure in verse, criticism and drama, Eliot, who had always been a sceptical as to his creative power, doubted that he could ever go back to verse writing. But he still had more to say in poetry, as was proven by his last grand achievement, the *Four Quartets* (1936-1942).

The poem took a long time to appear in the final form, because it was composed over a long stretch of time. *Burnt Norton* appeared in *Collected Poems 1909-1935* and then as a separate pamphlet in 1941. *East Coker* was

²⁵⁶ T.S. Eliot. "Ben Jonson" in *Selected Essays*. London: Harcourt Brace, 1950, 137.

published in 1940 in the “Eastern Number” of *The New English Week*. *The Dry Salvages* (1941) and *Little Gidding* (1942) were printed in the same magazine and later on as pamphlets. The four parts were gathered in a single volume as late as 1942, in America, under the title *Four Quartets*, even if the author had initially intended to name it *Kensington Quartets*, in memory of his residence there.

The poem was attached many interpretations over time, from a mystical poem to a philosophical and even patriotic creation, as the poet himself suggested. It is a synthesis between Oriental ideas, particularly those in the *Bhagavad Gita*, and Western opinions. Synthesis is not to be understood here as a search at finding perfect identity between the two thinking systems, but, as in *The Waste Land*, a way of suggesting the parallelism of the two, which includes both similarities and divergent points²⁵⁷. The fusion of Western and Eastern ideas emphasises once more the profound preoccupation Eliot had with the issue of universality of culture and that of distinguishing features of distinct civilizations.

The first section, *Burnt Norton*, was created in 1935 out of several fragments he left out in *Murder in the Cathedral* and represents the most significant work in Eliot’s poetry between 1931 and 1939. Published for the first time as the conclusion of his volume of collected poems, it seemed in every respect, both to the readers and to the poet himself, the final expression of a literary career. The title of the poem comes from a manor in

²⁵⁷ Narsingh Srivastava. *The Poetry of T.S. Eliot*, 88-89.

Gloucestershire, which owes its name to the fact that it was built upon the ruins of another house that burnt down in the seventeenth century. It is well-known that Eliot visited the place together with his very good friend, Emily Hale. Due to the special relationship between the two, there were many speculations as to the role Emily played in the creation of the poem, assumptions with no concrete proof, as she does not appear anywhere in the poem.

The last three quartets of the poem were, according to Eliot's own words, patriotic in nature. They are different not only from the rest of his poetry, but also from *Burnt Norton* and this is due mainly to their having been written during the war, between 1939 and 1945. Even if they follow the same structure and form, they are different from the first section in what concerns the basic source of inspiration.

While he was writing "East Coker" Eliot began to nourish the idea of making a sequence of four poems that would match the principle of the four seasons and elements²⁵⁸. The war helped him give a definite shape to his idea.

It has been suggested that each of the place-names that represent the titles of the quartets might stand for Eliot's quest of a 'home'. "Burnt Norton" could indicate a home found in memories of innocence and unity. "East Coker" reminds of a long-gone past on English territory, "The Dry Salvages" brings back boyhood memories and evidence of an American past. "Little Gidding" seems to be the home the poet was longing for, providing him with a place

²⁵⁸ It has been stressed many times that each of the four quartets may be associated with one of the four elements: "Burnt Norton" with air, "East Coker" with earth, "The Dry Salvages" with water and "Little Gidding" with fire.

within a religious community, “because in Little Gidding all the most essential things – contemplation, worship, human and divine love, blend together with the most quiet and unobtrusive harmony”²⁵⁹.

The poem is a journey in time and in space and hints at the main coordinates of the poet’s lifelong concerns and dilemmas: “The end is where we start from”. And, indeed, this last poem, instead of closing a life, opens new perspectives and highlights the idea that an end, any end, is nothing but the impulse for a new beginning.

Social Concerns

T. S. Eliot’s interest in social issues was a constant part of his life. As editor of the *Criterion* he often addressed social and political topics: literature, religion, fascism, communism, humanism and the intricate relations among them. His preoccupation was directed at the possibility to create a Christian society, defined by a solid system of values, as a viable alternative to the modern civilization, whose major flaw he considered its lack of faith.

Between 1938 and 1943 he was associated with two groups of religious orientation. The Chandos Group, that gathered European thinkers, had the purpose of creating a form of Christian sociology. In 1938 another group was founded, the Moot, whose goal was to discuss political and social aspects from a Christian perspective. Here, Eliot came in close contact with the ideas of the

²⁵⁹ David Ward. *T. S. Eliot: Between Two Worlds*, 266.

Roman Catholic Christopher Dawson, the Christian pacifist John Middleton Murry and the German sociologist Karl Mannheim.

Eliot's interest in the twenties of finding people who shared the same fundamental principles finally materialized in the attendance of the meetings of these two groups. And indeed, the debates he took part in led to the formulation of ideas which were to be part of his last prose works, *The Idea of a Christian Society*²⁶⁰ (1939) and *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture* (1948).

These works indicate an evolution away from the social critic of *After Strange Gods*. While maintaining that there should be a close relation between religion and culture, he accepted the "universality of doctrine with particularity of cult and devotion"²⁶¹. He claimed that no culture can emerge and develop in the absence of religion, which he considered as the infallible answer to two of the worst *maux* that could affect humanity: "any religion [...] gives an apparent meaning to life, provides the framework for a culture, and protects the mass of humanity from boredom and despair"²⁶².

In his quest for a Christian civilisation (he pointed that the two terms, culture and civilisation, can be used interchangeably, although he warned that it is a context-dependent use), Eliot proposed the preservation of social classes

²⁶⁰ The same year he published another volume of poems, *Old Possum's Book of Practical Cats*. As early as 1936, a version of the volume had been announced by Faber and Faber as "Mr Eliot's Book of Pollicle Dogs and Jellicle Cats as Recited to Him by the Man in White Spats" and the blurb said that some of the poems had already circulated in the publishers' families for their children's delight. Written, therefore, with children in mind, the poems are a form of nonsense verse Eliot was very fond of and for which he had great understanding. In 1981 Andrew Lloyd Webber adapted the poems into the long-running musical *Cats*.

²⁶¹ T.S. Eliot. *Christianity and Culture*, 87-88.

²⁶² T.S. Eliot. *Christianity and Culture*, 106.

and the replacement of hereditary ones with selected spiritual élites. However, he acknowledged the failure of such élites to ensure a unified culture, which is not the mere sum of separate activities, but a “way of life”. As for transmitting the system of values that makes a culture, the best agent is family, the highest and most complete expression of which would be a homogeneous unit, guided by respect of traditions and of the past.

Supporting his claims on Christian principles, in *The Idea of a Christian Society* he advocated a more reasonable consideration of the consequences brought about by industrialisation and, implicitly, by progress, and expressed what should have been a generalized discontent with the means and ends of natural resource exploitation. In this respect, it would not be far fetched to see Eliot as an early advocate of the environmental cause:

We are being made aware that the organization of society on the principle of private profit, as well as public destruction, is leading both to the deformation of humanity by unregulated industrialism and to the exhaustion of natural resources [...]. In need only mention, as an instance now very much before the public eye, the results of “soil-erosion” – the exploitation of the earth, on a vast scale for two generations, for commercial profit: immediate benefits leading to dearth and desert²⁶³.

Even if in other respects his ideal society may seem Utopian, his warnings regarding the dangers of over-industrialised activities and of an existence lived under financial imperatives in the absence of any moral values are still valid.

²⁶³ T.S. Eliot. *Christianity and Culture*, 45.

His attitude towards the social issues of his time and the solutions he proposed for solving them may seem somewhat illusory from a contemporary perspective. His approach does not surprise us if one is familiar with Eliot's lifelong preoccupation with tradition and the importance he granted to past events for the modern society. His attempt to set up this new Christian society is nothing but an effort to define the realities of his time by placing them in a comparative relationship with the spiritual authorities of the past.

However Utopian his proposal might sound and despite the fact that he might at times give the impression that "he was a writer whose dialogue is with the dead more than with the living"²⁶⁴, the main tenets of his social theories are still valid today. His works are an example of the artist's social involvement and the manner in which he understood to provide his contribution, not by merely criticizing the then current state of affairs, but by coming also with a positive solution. In Eliot's case (he is not an isolated example, because his fellow writers Yeats and Pound had similar participations in the cultural and social events of their time) his alternative was spiritually defined, inspired both by Eastern and Western traditions.

²⁶⁴ Peter Dale Scott. "The Social Critic and His Discontent" in A.D. Moody (Ed.). *The Cambridge Companion to T.S. Eliot*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994, 61.

The Last Years

After World War II, Eliot enjoyed his world wide fame without giving up his usual activities. He continued work with Faber & Faber where he was now in charge with the department of poetry and theology. His life was maybe more secluded than before.

However, he did not forget his old friends. After the war, Ezra Pound had to suffer the consequences of his virulent attacks against the United States for having entered World War II. Eliot continued to support him during the entire period and contacted a number of poets who knew Pound well and who could also back him up. He intended to publish a new edition of the poet's *Cantos* in order to reinforce his social reputation. Over the years, whenever Eliot travelled to America, he would always visit his old friend and tried to convince the authorities to ease his condition.

His trips to America were by now an ordinary event. He was invited to lecture very frequently. His fame was no longer confined to literary circles. Most of his plays were great successes with the public and wherever he travelled he was greeted by a mass of fans hunting for an autograph and by dozens of press photographers.

In 1947 he was awarded honorary doctorates by Harvard, Yale and Princeton, and in 1948, while still at Princeton, he was informed that he had received the Nobel Prize for Literature. Although he was pleased about the prize, he was somewhat worried about the potential effects it would have on his

creative impetus. When congratulated by one of his friends on this occasion, he expressed his fear: “The Nobel is the ticket to one’s funeral. No one has ever done anything after he got it”²⁶⁵.

As for his personal life, the year of 1956 was to mark the discovery of what he had been longing for all his life without finding it: tranquillity brought by love. Responsible for the poet’s happiness during the last years of his life was Valerie Fletcher, who had been his secretary at Faber & Faber for eight years.

Unfortunately, his bliss was to be short-lived. His health was following a descendant course mainly because of lung complications. At the doctor’s suggestion, he intended to carry out his various activities in warmer locations and so, together with his wife, he spent the last summers of his life in the West Indies. But when nothing seemed to improve his condition, they decided to return home, where he died on January 4, 1965. His instructions were to be cremated and his ashes taken to the church in East Coker, the little village from where his ancestors had left to conquer the New World. In a symbolic gesture, he chose to rest forever in the land of his forefathers, closing a voyage that had taken centuries to come to an end.

Eliot’s impact on the twentieth century Anglo-American letters covers a wide array of aspects. As a poet, he completely transformed the modes of writing, he innovated literary techniques and methods and he revolutionized the very approach to poetry. As a critic, he challenged the traditional standards

²⁶⁵ Eliot quoted in Peter Ackroyd. *T.S. Eliot: A Life*, 290.

and introduced new axes to follow in the critical discourse. As an editor, he impacted the literary tastes of entire generations through the titles he proposed for publication at Faber & Faber. His preoccupations were not limited to literature and his social activism imposed him as a model of engaged writer, concerned not only with the problems of a local community, but of an entire civilization. He was himself a citizen of the world, with the heart split between America and Europe. But although he received appreciation and respect on both shores of the Atlantic and was well-received on both continents, he remained an alien at heart. He signed his last contribution to *The Christian Newsletter* with the pseudonym “Meteikos” (Greek for “resident alien”) which indicates that, until his last days, he remained the beneficiary of two cultures, the mediator and the catalyst at the same time of distinct, yet enriching experiences but still, finally a traveller between two worlds.

Chapter 4

T.S. Eliot and the Modernist Approach to Translation

Modernist Translation Practice

Translations, both with respect to their status of final products and to strategies of performance, reflect a given period of time, with its specific set of aesthetic standards and literary preferences. In the history of English translation, modernism proposed a revolution in the perception of this form of literary manifestation. This change of translation paradigm operated at various levels. One of them envisaged the approach to translation, which ceased to be viewed as a mere transfer of linguistic order.

Even before the set up of Translation Studies as a discipline in its own right which enlarged the perspectives on this phenomenon as inherited from previous epochs, modernist writers went beyond a consideration of translation as a marginal manifestation of a literary system. The modernists revolutionised translation methods and strategies in ways that questioned the notion of accuracy and blurred the boundaries between source and target text. Furthermore, they employed translations also as a component of their own productions, thus granting them a significant compositional role. It is the case of Pound's *Cantos* or Joyce's *Ulysses*. Besides using them as a structural element, modernists exploited translations as a means to express the aesthetic agenda of the movement.

Although the modernist translation practice does not follow the line of English translators from Dryden to their immediate precursors, the Victorians, it did not reject completely previous ways of performing translations. The

dialogue with the past, which is one of the modernist concerns, is also reflected in modernist poets' translation practice, which presents itself at times as a synthesis of Elizabethan and Victorian policies, fused with the modernist historical perspective⁴⁴¹.

In their translations, Elizabethans such as Arthur Golding or George Chapman treated the great names of ancient Rome and Greece as if they were their own contemporaries. They ignored the cultural and historical differences separating the moment of the source text production and proceeded to a domestication of the foreign text, making it fully assimilable by the English culture.

At the other extreme there is the Victorian translation policy put into practice by names such as Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Charles Swinburne or Matthew Arnold. Their respect for the source text was so great, that the main purpose of the translation was to render the remoteness of the original as accurately as possible.

Modernism imposed an update of Anglo-American translation preoccupations. Previous epochs viewed this activity as an instrument to renew and strengthen the influence of classic literature, both Latin and Greek. That is why many names of Elizabethan and Victorian translators came to be closely associated with titles of literary works of Antiquity: Chapman with the *Odyssey* or Golding with Ovid's *Metamorphoses*. In exchange, the new modernist

⁴⁴¹ Miguel Gallego Roca. *Traducción y Literatura: Los estudios literarios ante las obras traducidas*. Madrid: Ediciones Júcar, 1994, 26.

program envisaged translations as an integral part of the agenda of cultural survival. Moreover, the translators did not limit their literary interest to Antiquity, but enlarged the translation horizon both temporally and spatially. Thus, contemporary literature became a viable alternative as a translation source. This is, for instance, the example of Eliot, who translated St. John Perse's *Anabase* or William Carlos Williams who rendered into English the works of Spanish and French writers such as Pablo Neruda, Octavio Paz or Nicholas Calas⁴⁴².

At the same time, there were visible concerns with literatures outside the Western tradition and Pound's work on Chinese and Egyptian works is a relevant example in this respect. In fact, Pound's translation interests spread from Greek and Latin works to Italian and Anglo-Saxon literature, French mediaeval literature and the troubadours.

Translation appealed to modernist writers not only as an activity in itself, but also as a compositional technique. Their interest in a multitude of cultures and languages, each with its own peculiarities and way of representing reality, witnesses their wish to expand the expressive possibilities of English by infusing it with the energies of other linguistic manifestations.

The modernist discourse on translation is scattered in various articles and reviews signed by representatives of the movement. Apart from Pound, who made some remarks on translation aspects, few modernist writers

⁴⁴² Steven G. Yao. *Translation and the Languages of Modernism: Gender, Politics, Language*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, 4.

addressed the issue directly. Nevertheless, their preoccupation with the multitude of cultural manifestations, their translation activity and the multi-linguistic dimension of their works such as Joyce's *Ulysses*, Pound's *Cantos* or Eliot's *The Waste Land* demonstrate the role they assigned to translation in their attempt of cultural rejuvenation.

The creativity of the translation practice is the great innovation of modernism in the field. One could even say that the modernists reinvented translation. They no longer consider, with their predecessors, that mastery of the source language was the prerequisite for embarking on this activity. The interpretation of the original text and the role assigned to it in target system is much more important. So it is that in many cases, translators were not proficient or even familiarised with the language of the texts they were translating. It is the case of Pound's translation of Chinese poetry which he created following the notes of Ernest Fenollosa. Similarly, when he translated the Greek tragedies *King Oedipus* and *Oedipus at Colon*, William Butler Yeats had little knowledge of Greek⁴⁴³.

As a result of such an approach to the foreign language, linguistic constraints such as semantics or grammar were no longer considered and the translated texts were turned into instruments which helped create a new poetics. In this light, the line between source production and translation is blurred. Although this practice may leave room for controversy since it raises the issue of authorship, one should bear in mind that translations are in fact the

⁴⁴³ Steven Yao. *Translation and the Languages of Modernism*, 11.

expression of a certain age, with its needs and preferences, and that not one translation may be deemed the absolute and perfect target variant of an original. As products which mirror the principles governing an epoch, the creative translations of the modernists reveal precisely their preoccupation with innovation.

Ezra Pound was the central figure of modernism who most revolutionised the conception of translation. In his Introduction to Pound's *Literary Essays*, Eliot claims that his friend was responsible "for a revolution of taste and practice"⁴⁴⁴, a statement which could easily apply to Pound's translation approach as well. Pound's observations on the practice and criticism of translation are scattered in his essays, among which we could mention "How to Read" (1929), "Cavalcanti" (1934), "Translators of Greek: Early Translators of Homer" (1920). His acknowledgment of the great role played by translation in the rejuvenation of English letters becomes visible if one were to consider the following statement: "English literature lives on translation, it is fed by translation; every new exuberance, every new heave is stimulated by translation; every allegedly great age is an age of translation"⁴⁴⁵.

In his activity, he endowed translation and creation with the same status. His approach envisaged translation as organically linked to the creative activity. In his opinion, translated poems are not mere reproductions of an original text into a distinct language, but new poems in their own right.

⁴⁴⁴ T.S. Eliot, "Introduction" in *Literary Essays of Ezra Pound*. New York: New Directions, 1968. xii.

⁴⁴⁵ Ezra Pound. *Literary Essays*, 34-35.

Pound's creative translations, for which he mainly chose texts which were remote both in space and in time as compared to the American tradition to which he belonged, are a means of coherently relating the past to the present, as they are, according to Apter, "in themselves new poems as well as reflections of old poems, because they are intended to belong to the body of contemporary poetry"⁴⁴⁶.

The experience Pound acquired as a result of his numerous literary encounters was used as poetic material in his own writings. He is the example of the poet-translator whose work fuses innovation and originality with the spirit of the works he translated. His translations "stimulated and strengthened his poetic innovations, which in turn guided and promoted his translations"⁴⁴⁷.

Eliot and his Translation of Cultures

History, more precisely the interdependence of past and present, lies at the core of the modernist concept of culture. It is the awareness of the close connection between the two axes that ensures cultural survival and development not only at European level, but at a universal scale as well. Given the modernist emphasis on the coexistence of past and present, a new translation theory had to be devised to encompass a map of literatures which spread synchronically and onto as large geographic planes as possible.

⁴⁴⁶ Ronnie Apter. *Digging for the Treasure. Translation after Pound*. New York: Paragon House Publishers, 1984, 8.

⁴⁴⁷ Xie Ming. "Intercultural Traduction: Distance and Appropriation" in *Perspectives*. Special Issue, 4:1, 1996, 75.

This new translation theory is outlined by Eliot in his review of Professor Murray's translation of a classic Senecan tragedy, "Euripides and Professor Murray". Eliot emphasized that the epoch needed

a digestion which can assimilate both Homer and Flaubert. We need a careful study of Renaissance Humanists and Translators, such as Mr. Pound has begun. We need an eye which can see the past in its place with its definite differences from the present, and yet so lively that it shall be as present to us as the present. This is the creative eye⁴⁴⁸.

Eliot's proposal for a new translation theory encompasses the Antiquity of Homer, goes all the way through the Renaissance and does not rule out the age of Flaubert. The complex panorama created by translations should rely on the emphasis of the differences which set the past apart from the present and on the manner in which the present assimilates the past so as to give it new meaning and life. This task can only be achieved by putting to work what Eliot called "the creative eye".

Considering the influential position which modernist writers bestow upon translation in Anglo-American literature, Eliot's claim for a translation which really speaks to contemporary readers is justified. Again condemning Professor Murray's translation for its choice of vocabulary, he stated: "Greek poetry will never have the slightest vitalizing effect upon English poetry if it can only appear masquerading as a vulgar debasement of the eminently personal idiom of Swinburne"⁴⁴⁹. Eliot calls for a translation theory which

⁴⁴⁸ T.S. Eliot. "Euripides and Professor Murray" in *Selected Essays*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1950, 50.

⁴⁴⁹ T.S. Eliot. "Euripides and Professor Murray", 48.

represents the fusion of past and present of his historical method — the foreign author preserves his alterity due to the content and structure of his work, yet he is shaped so as to be recognizable by the modern reader. This is only natural, since each generation needs its own translations which reflect the evolution in time of artistic sensibility.

This vision is precisely what Lawrence Venuti reproached Eliot. The translation theorist accuses Eliot for approaching translation as domestication, which tends towards assimilation of the foreign text by the target system, in this particular case, the British. The fault Venuti finds with Eliot is that the latter manipulates translated texts so as to make them accommodate modernist ideas. He claims that, like Pound, Eliot “concealed his modernist appropriation of foreign texts behind a claim of cultural autonomy of translation”⁴⁵⁰. In Eliot’s reproach to Symons that he had not rendered Baudelaire into English according to modern canons, Venuti sees Eliot’s preference for the effacement of particularities of the original text, therefore for fluent translations.

According to Venuti, fluency “is assimilationist, presenting to domestic readers a realistic representation inflected with their codes and ideologies”⁴⁵¹, therefore it operates in the direction of the annihilation of the otherness inherent in any foreign text from the perspective of target readers.

But Eliot’s preoccupation with many and diverse languages and cultures pleads against such allegations. Not only did he not limit the reception of the translated works to issues of target acceptability, but he considered that a

⁴⁵⁰ Lawrence Venuti. *The Translator’s Invisibility*. London: Routledge, 1995, 191.

⁴⁵¹ Lawrence Venuti. *The Scandals of Translation*. London & New York: Routledge, 1998, 12.

critique of translation should encompass a number of extratextual factors, mainly historical, that may clarify the general context of the foreign text. Speaking about the Elizabethan translation of Senecan tragedies, he claimed that

The appreciation of the literary value of these translations is inseparably engaged with the appreciation of the original and of its historical importance; so that although at first sight a consideration of the historical problems may appear irrelevant, it should in the end enhance our enjoyment of the translations as literature⁴⁵².

This interest in the enlarged context of the source text production hints at a concern with preserving as many details as possible on the foreign work. And this could hardly be interpreted as an attempt at obliterating the identity of such work.

The universal exchange of ideas which deeply concerned Eliot, as well as the concept of tradition which lies at the core of his poetics, suggest a constant preoccupation with this form of cultural transfer, namely translation. The essay “Tradition and the Individual Talent” revolves around the idea of tradition and although it addresses original poetry, it has profound implications for translation as well.

With Eliot, tradition acquires a new dimension; it is not only mere legacy, taken for granted, but one which involves hard work and which has to be deserved. Thus,

⁴⁵² T.S. Eliot. “Seneca in Elizabethan Translation” in *Selected Essays*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1950, 52.

tradition is a matter of much wider significance. It cannot be inherited, and, if you want it you must obtain it by great labour. It involves, in the first place, the historical sense [...]; and the historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence; the historical sense compels a man to writ not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order⁴⁵³.

Past and present create a unitary whole and acquire new levels of significance only in interaction. The past gains meaning not by being contemplated as a fixed form of experience. It has to be translated by the present conscience and thus, with the inherent similarities and differences between the two time dimensions, the past can contribute better to the shaping of the present.

Seen from this perspective, translation appears as the best tool of reviving past experience, since it assists the survival in time and space of a given author/text. Translations are a means of preserving a continuous contact with the past. Different languages have different ways of cutting out reality, but within the same language, distinct epochs conceptualize reality in distinct manners. As forms of interpretation, translations present themselves as the topos of reconciliation between the experience of the past and the way it is reconstructed to assist modern needs.

Venuti uses the following of Eliot's statements to support his alleged domesticating orientation: "the work of translation is to make something

⁴⁵³ T.S. Eliot. "Tradition and the Individual Talent", 4.

foreign or remote in time live with our own life”⁴⁵⁴. This statement is, in a nutshell, Eliot’s entire perception of translation. In his opinion, translation is a double channel of communication.

On the one hand, it covers the space dimension, ensuring the contact with other cultures. On the other hand, due to its temporal axis, it preserves the communication with one’s own past. This double axis suggests the desire to recuperate a wide range of works of art. At the same time, while preserving their otherness due to their time or space distance, translated works create a fusion with the present.

What Venuti ignores is the dynamism involved in this relation. He considers Eliot’s use of the past as a mere exploitation of experience to support his “peculiar brand of modernism”⁴⁵⁵. But the relationship between past and present in Eliotian modernism is not a one-way relation, whereby the present fully transforms the past leaving it devoid of identity. In fact, between the two there is a mutually advantageous connection, since “the past should be altered by the present as much as the present is directed by the past”⁴⁵⁶.

Moreover, in “Notes towards the Definition of Culture”, Eliot further develops this idea of the past-present interdependence: “what is wanted is not to restore a vanished or to revive a vanishing culture under modern conditions, which make it impossible, but to grow a contemporary culture from the old

⁴⁵⁴ T.S. Eliot. “Baudelaire in Our Time” in *For Lancelot Andrewes: Essays on Style and Order*. London: Faber & Gwyer, 1928, 98.

⁴⁵⁵ Lawrence Venuti. *The Translator’s Invisibility*, 189.

⁴⁵⁶ T.S. Eliot. “Tradition and the Individual Talent”, 5.

roots”⁴⁵⁷. His statement asserts the independence of texts brought to life in modern times and emphasises once more the role played by translations in the cultural development of a country.

Translation is also used in Eliot’s works as a compositional technique. His poetic texts require readers to make a massive effort of translation. In *The Waste Land* alone, he embedded not only allusions to works belonging to a various number of cultures (French, Italian, Latin), but also entire lines left in the original. The reader is thus confronted with two tasks at the same time. First, he has to detect the original context of each embedded text and second, he must try to translate the new meaning assigned to them as a result of Eliot’s surprising relocations. His greatest achievement in gathering together all the fragments which make the texture of *The Waste Land* resides in their governing idea of unity, of wholeness which dominates the text. Because fragments indicate that there must be a whole to which they belong. Due to such use, translations become an essential element of the reading process, providing keys which help decode the text.

The idea of unity and cultural dialogue is also the focus of Eliot’s “Notes Towards the Definition of Culture”. In this essay, he highlights the idea that he does not conceive unity as uniformity (“a world culture which was simply a uniform culture would be no culture at all”⁴⁵⁸), which annuls the entire concept of culture. His vision of culture encompasses a wide range of

⁴⁵⁷ T.S. Eliot. “Notes towards the Definition of Culture” in *Christianity and Culture. The Idea of a Christian Society and Notes towards the Definition of Culture*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1977, 127.

⁴⁵⁸ T.S. Eliot. “Notes”, 136.

manifestations, often incongruent, which ensure diversity in unity. Thus, culture is “the product of a variety of more or less harmonious activities, each pursued for its own sake”⁴⁵⁹.

The same respect for diversity and autonomy is manifest in the consideration of various cultures. Modernism, as Eliot saw it, did not tend toward the annihilation of difference and alterity: “no man is good enough to have the right to make another over his own image [...]; We can also learn to respect every other culture as a whole⁴⁶⁰”. The encounter with the Other takes place in conditions of respect for his individuality. The other’s discourse is translated into one’s own language with no loss of identity; on the contrary, both parties involved in the dialogue extract the benefit of this interchange from their individual peculiarities.

Another issue which is tightly interwoven with the idea of cultural transfer is influence. Eliot placed great emphasis on this dimension of the relationship between two or more cultures. The idea of total assimilation cancels the possible effect of influence, which Eliot deems highly useful in the rejuvenation of any literature. The conditions which impact upon and favour the necessary renewal of literature are “first, its ability to receive and assimilate influences from abroad. Second, its ability to go back and learn from its own resources”⁴⁶¹.

Eliot’s preoccupation with issues of intercultural exchanges is thus visible at various levels: in the design of his poetic work, in his social program

⁴⁵⁹ T.S. Eliot. “Notes”, 91.

⁴⁶⁰ T.S. Eliot. “Notes”, 139.

⁴⁶¹ T.S. Eliot. “Notes”, 190.

and in his activity as a literary editor. The foundation of the *Criterion* (1923) was a massive effort of bringing together the great minds of Europe. The purpose of the journal was to reunite men of letters from the entire continent who, through similarities and differences of opinion, might keep alive the intellectual effervescence of the continent. It was “a bond which did not replace, but was perfectly compatible with national loyalties, religious loyalties and differences of political philosophy”⁴⁶².

In order for the journal to reach as wide a readership as possible, the contributions of collaborators from all parts of Europe had to be translated into English. Translation was therefore acknowledged as a useful tool in ensuring the circulation of ideas with the help of a language that provided a high degree of accessibility due to its considerable coverage. The journal existed from 1923 until 1939.

Eliot’s Translation of St. John-Perse’s *Anabase*

In 1926, Eliot started to work on the translation of *Anabase*, a poem signed by St. John Perse. The translation appeared only as late as 1930; Eliot collaborated closely with the author, who constantly helped him with translating suggestions. This was not the first encounter between the two. In 1924, Perse had translated *The Waste Land* into French and published it in *Commerce*, a Parisian quarterly. Aware of the difficulty of the translation due

⁴⁶² T.S. Eliot. “Notes”, 195-6.

to the poem's multiple possibilities of interpretations, Perse called it an "adaptation" and published the two texts *en regard*⁴⁶³.

A French poet and diplomat, he maintained a clear separation between his professional life and his literary activity. One of the most largely praised French modernist writers, St. John Perse (1887-1975) made proof in his works (gathered in volumes such as *Éloges, Exile, Vents, Amers*) of an extraordinary gift for writing poetry with great musicality in prose form. In 1960, he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Anabase was written in China and published in 1924. It is the saga of a conqueror and his men, who embark on an expedition with exploratory purposes, and which culminates in the foundation of a new city. The conqueror is also the one who tells of the travels of this migratory people who move on horseback from the Asian steppes towards the sea, always in search of new adventures and discoveries.

Eliot's choice for this text could be viewed as an exemplification of his perspective on translation. The selection of the author to translate reveals his interest in the contemporary literature of another culture. In addition, Perse's text was not an ordinary literary piece, but one which challenges conventional forms of writing poetry. In the preface to the translated text, Eliot touches upon the reason for the choice of this text: "I believe that this is a piece of writing of

⁴⁶³ R. Abel. "Saint-John Perse Encounters T.S. Eliot" in *Revue de littérature comparée*, 49:3 (July-September), 1975, 425.

the same importance as the later work of Mr. James Joyce, as valuable as *Anna Livia Plurabelle*”⁴⁶⁴.

Anabase owes its English translation to its new approach to poetry, which appealed to Anglo-American modernist writers, also concerned with the rejuvenation not only of poetry, but of literature in general. In addition, the poem contains a number of aspects which are of particular interest to Eliot himself and which he tackled in his masterpiece, *The Waste Land*: “The poem is a series of images of migration, of conquest of vast spaces in Asiatic wastes, of destruction and foundation of cities and civilizations of any races or epochs of the ancient East”⁴⁶⁵.

It is a common practice of modernist writers to surround their productions with extratextual elements, and translation does not make an exception from this convention. Eliot’s preface to the translation somehow reminds of his Notes to *The Waste Land*. On the one hand, it provides a number of explanations whose purpose is to assist readers in deciphering the text. Therefore, he links the noun “anabasis” with the reference to Xenophon and the journey of the Ten Thousand, and already suggests possible reading directions. In addition, he supplies the ten divisions of the poem with titles, to help readers in the mazes of the poem.

On the other hand, the preface warns readers with respect to the difficulty of being decoded easily. That is why the translator suggests a

⁴⁶⁴ T.S. Eliot. “Preface” to St. John-Perse. *Anabasis*. London: Faber & Faber, 1930, 10.

⁴⁶⁵ T.S. Eliot. “Preface”, 7-8.

successive number of readings (he confesses having read it himself five or six times) before they can grasp all the subtleties and intricacies of the poem.

As for the translation proper, Eliot mentions that he benefited from the collaboration with the author, who provided him with all the necessary clarifications. Eliot admits having interfered with the text when he states that “what inaccuracies remain are due to my own wilfulness”⁴⁶⁶.

Eliot’s translation follows the source text quite closely and strives to render, besides the content, the rhythm and the expressiveness of the source poem. The strategies adopted by Eliot at the syntactic and lexical level reveal his concern with maintaining the text within the realm of poetry. He wishes to demonstrate, with the author, that regardless of the form it embraces, poetry remains recognizable as such due to expressive mechanisms of language.

The low number of explicitations to which the translator resorted do not account for a supposed desire to clarify the obscurity of the poem, which was not at all Eliot’s purpose. They are simply necessary and do not modify in any way the message of the original text:

Car le soleil entre au Lion [...]

For the Sun enters *the sign* of the Lion [...] (p.14-15)

[...] profession de son père: marchand de flacons.

[...] profession of his father: dealer in *scent*-bottles. (p. 36-37)

Another example which is more an interpretation of the source noun is the translation of “vétérinaire” as ‘horse-doctor’. It is clear that this translation

⁴⁶⁶ T.S. Eliot. “Preface”, 11.

decision was dictated by the context. Although the “vétérinaire” does not treat horses exclusively, it is obvious that this is his main activity in a text which deals with hoards of riding conquerors.

Whereas there are few explicitations in the English version, the mechanism of additions is visible at various levels and fulfils various roles. Some of them appear at word level, where, due to the insertion of the predicate, they complete the sentence:

Ah! Tant de souffles aux provinces!
O from the provinces *blow* many winds. (p. 14-15)

Au délice du sel sont toutes lances de l'esprit...
In the delight of salt the mind *shakes* its tumult of
spears... (p. 20-21)

Other times, they make the English text clearer than the source one:

Puissance, tu chantaï sur nos *routes nocturnes*!...
Power, you sang on our tracks of *bivouacs and vigil*. (p.
18-19)

The translation implies more than the original. It suggests the restless life of the conquerors, always on the road, for whom night is not only a time of rest, but also the time for being alert.

There is also a number of additions which result in an enlargement of the sentences:

Les armes au matin sont belles et la mer.
Our burnished arms are fair in the morning and behind
us the sea is fair. (p. 18-19)

Sur trois grandes saisons m'établissant avec honneur,
j'augure bien du sol où j'ai fondé ma loi.

I have built myself, with honour and dignity have I built myself on three great seasons, and it promises well, the soil whereon I have established my Law. (p. 18-19)

In this latter example, Eliot also resorted to repetitions ('I have built') in order to emphasize the conqueror's great endeavour of founding the city. Eliot completed Perse's 'honneur with 'dignity'. Honour, Eliot seems to suggest, does not give the full measure of its weight unless it is completed by dignity.

At syntactic level, Eliot opted for the merger of two shorter sentences into a single one:

Le vent se lève. Vent de mer.
Rises the wind, the sea-wind. (p. 24-25)

Bitume et roses, don du chant! Tonnerre et flûtes dans les chambers!
Roses and bitumen, gift of song, thunder and fluting in the rooms. (p.24-25)

This strategy of combining sentences is at times in close connection with their declamatory nature. In suppressing exclamation marks (of which French makes extensive use when highlighting the emotional load of a statement) and in uniting sentences, Eliot creates the effect of a more moderate, more solemn tone. The same is visible in the following example:

Nous enjambons la robe de la Reine, toute en dentelle avec deux bandes de couleur bise (ah! que l'acide corps de femme sait tacher une robe á l'endroit de l'aisselle!)

We step over the gown of the Queen, all of lace with two brown stripes (and how well the acid body of a woman can stain a gown at the armpit). (p. 24-25)

The content of the brackets in the French text presents a detail of the woman's body. The sexually charged load of the text is achieved with the help of the adjective "acide", the interjection and the exclamation marks. They suggest the sensations the Queen awakens in the conquerors — lust and desire, the temptations of the flesh. In the English text, Eliot suppressed the interjection and the exclamation marks. The sentence is thus unloaded of its sexual connotation, being reduced to a mere observation of a natural manifestation of the human body.

Another issue worth mentioning is capitalisation. The French text makes little use of capital letters for nouns which are commonly met without capitalisation: "l'Étranger", "les Morts", "le Soleil". Eliot observed the same use in his text, but he also capitalised other nouns of his own choice. Thus, "maître du grain, maître du sel" becomes 'Master of the Grain, Master of the Salt'⁴⁶⁷. It is obvious that the motivation behind his choice is to further highlight the significance of the concepts thus stressed. "Grain" and "salt" are two of the essential components of survival, especially for people living in the desert. Moreover, salt has a recurrent presence in the poem, being the main object of commercial exchanges.

"Ville" is rendered by Eliot either as 'town', when mentioning places of little significance for the teller ('For my soul engaged in far matters, an hundred fires in towns wakened by the barking of dogs'⁴⁶⁸) or as 'City'. In this

⁴⁶⁷ St. John-Perse. *Anabasis*, 18-19.

⁴⁶⁸ St. John-Perse. *Anabasis*, 39.

latter form, it always appears capitalised: ‘City of your dreams’⁴⁶⁹ which later in the text becomes ‘Foundation of the City’⁴⁷⁰. It is no ordinary city, but a place long dreamt of by the conqueror, the supreme materialisation of any conquest with the ambition of founding a new civilization, the symbol of a new beginning.

There are many men of many ways among the Stranger’s people: trackers of beasts, seekers of watercourses, breakers of camps. But the most important, the translator seems to suggest, are the ‘Seers of signs and seeds’⁴⁷¹. Their category is the only one which Eliot stressed graphically, for the actions and efforts of the others are highly dependent upon the Seers’ gift to decipher the signs of nature and who foretell the success or failure of their exploring adventures.

The lexical level reveals Eliot’s preferences for certain nuances. In selecting certain words, he added new layers of meaning to the source text. Where Perse talks about “pentes aves le sucre des coraux”⁴⁷², Eliot used ‘slopes with powder of coral’. “Powder” here, as a matter which is easily blown by the wind, hints at the ephemeral nature of the things of this world and the eventual futility of grand human deeds.

The noun “songe” appears repeatedly in the source poem. Eliot used the rich synonymic resources of English to render it into the target language with

⁴⁶⁹ St. John-Perse. *Anabasis*, 21.

⁴⁷⁰ St. John-Perse. *Anabasis*, 33.

⁴⁷¹ St. John-Perse. *Anabasis*, 21.

⁴⁷² St. John-Perse. *Anabasis*, 18-19.

nuances which change with the context. “Songe” is therefore ‘dream’, as the succession of subconscious errands of the mind during sleep:

Aux ides pures du matin, que savons-nous du songe?
At the pure ides of day what know we of our entail of
dream?” (p.18-19)

Other times, “songe” becomes ‘vision’:

[...] ceux qui ont fait de grandes choses, et ceux qui
voient en songe ceci ou cela...
[...] those who have done great things, and those who see
this or that in a vision... (p. 28-29)

There are many feminine presences in the poem, but the lexical elements used by the author and Eliot to introduce them indicates at times a difference of treatment. In certain instances, Eliot’s words seem to suggest the potentially sinful nature of women, who unsettle men and distract them from their ways:

Le prêtre a déposé ses lois contre le *goût* des femmes
pour les bêtes.
The priest has laid down his laws against the *depravities*
of women with beasts. (p. 28-29)

[...] vers nos filles ‘parfumées, qui nous apaiseront d’un
souffle, ces *tissues*...’
[...] towards our ‘scented girls, who shall soothe us with
a breath of *silken webs*...’ (p. 46-47)

Women’s taste for beasts is amended by Eliot as “depravities”. And whereas in the French text the girls are dressed in delicate clothes, their dresses are interpreted by Eliot as “silken webs” which hint at spider webs. It is suggested that with their transparent and alluring attire, women try to ensnare men and prevent them from pursuing their dream of exploration and conquest.

When translating *Anabase*, Eliot had the great advantage of the sustained collaboration of its author. He was therefore assured that the final form of the English version met Perse's approval. Although Eliot was very rigorous in following certain aspects of the source text such as its graphic shape, its structure and exotic atmosphere, his voice can be heard clearly especially at the vocabulary level. He did not make his translation choices based on a domesticating program, because the resulting English version is not an appropriation of the French source. Eliot's lexical interventions reveal instead his personal interpretation of certain aspects present in the poem. The nature and place of his additions and his lexical preferences indicate his translation as being compliant with the modernist translation agenda.

Chapter 5

Comparative Study of *The Waste Land* with its Romanian Translations

Methodological Considerations

The complexity and high degree of innovation of T. S. Eliot's poetry has always represented a real challenge with respect to translation approaches and strategies. The interpenetration of genres and the intertextual web which define both his poetry and his drama raise various problems at the hour of translation. When transferred from one language into another, *The Waste Land* in particular requires from translators an extraordinary amount of knowledge (of literature, history, culture, economics), strenuous work, a sparkle of inspiration verging on genius and even courage.

In 1926 Eliot translated the poem *Anabase*, by St. John Perse. In 1924, the French poet had rendered *The Waste Land* into his language. His translation was a fortunate one, since it benefited from the collaboration of Eliot himself who, furthermore, was well acquainted with French.

When rendering Eliot's work in another language, translators assume a particularly high sense of responsibility; they have to be very insightful readers first of all, they need to be equipped with a highly developed poetic sense and to possess considerable cultural proficiency.

In Romania, there are few translators who set off rendering Eliot's work into their language. One of the reasons might be that when Eliot began to impose himself as one of the dominant voices of modernism in Europe (1922), Romanian poets interested in his poetry, the generation of the sixties and, to a

more considerable extent, the poets of the eighties, had direct access to English, being able to read his works in the original.

Most translations of Eliot into Romanian were made by poets themselves: Ion Pillat, Ștefan Augustin Doinaș, Mircea Ivănescu, Sorin Mărculescu. *The Waste Land* benefits from five Romanian translations, which were performed at various moments in time. The first translation is signed by Ion Pillat (1933), followed by Aurel Covaci in 1970, Mircea Ivănescu in 1986, Alex Moldovan in 2004 and, the most recent appeared in 2009 as signed by Șerban Dragoș Popescu. These are full versions of the source poem. Fragments of *The Waste Land* were also translated separately, such as Part V, “What the Thunder Said”, produced by Ștefan Augustin Doinaș and Toma Pavel in 1965 and Part I, “Burial of the Dead” and Part IV, “Death by Water” by A.E. Baconsky in 1972.

This chapter presents a comparative analysis of *The Waste Land* and its Romanian translations. Since the approach of this analysis is target-oriented, it will make use of concepts imposed by the descriptive translation studies (DTS). As opposed to traditional approaches to translation which gave prominence to the source text and measured the target text against the extent to which it complies with the source, DTS mainly envisage the product of the translational process, namely the target text. Given the fact that translation is not a phenomenon occurring in isolation and that it has a time and space dimension, a proper contextualization is essential. Therefore, besides the text level comparison, the analysis will also consider extra-textual factors such as

the moment of the translation production and the translators' general background.

Considering that the main focus of the comparative study of the source text with its target productions is the extent to which translations are integrated in Romanian literature, the analysis will revolve around the concept of acceptability. According to Toury's theory, acceptability is one of the two poles that define a translational process and its products, the other one being adequacy:

whereas the adherence to the norms of the ST determines the *adequacy* of the TT comparing to it, the adherence to models set up in the target pole determines its *acceptability* in the target literary polysystem as well as its exact status and position within it⁵⁰⁵.

As no translation is fully acceptable or adequate, my analysis aims to indicate the balance that the five translations are supposed to strike between the two extremes, i.e. adequacy and acceptability. In order to determine the position of the translated texts in between these poles, I will use Toury's concept of "translational norms", which mediate the relationships between potential, desired occurrences of equivalence and the actual performance of a text's translation.

Also according to Toury, norms represent

the translation of general values or ideas shared by a certain community – as to what is right and wrong, adequate and inadequate – into specific performance instructions appropriate

⁵⁰⁵ Gideon Toury. *In Search of a Theory of Translation*. Tel Aviv: Porter Institute, 1980, 116.

for and applicable to specific situations, providing they are not [yet] formulated as laws⁵⁰⁶.

The norms that govern the translation process in the target system at a certain moment in time account for the translators' decisions and the possible constraints to which they are subjected. Such norms also indicate the orientation of the translator, and implicitly of the translation, towards acceptability or adequacy.

If priority is given to ST norms, the translation runs the risk of breaching the target system conventions and thus the degree of acceptability is significantly lower, especially if the linguistic and cultural gap between the two interacting systems is considerable. In fact, the translation's orientation is what Toury calls "initial norm", which defines the paradigm of solutions translators may resort to, as acceptability- or adequacy-oriented.

Toury further divides norms into preliminary and operational. The preliminary norms that refer to the translation policy existing in the target culture at a given moment dictate the choice of texts to be transferred through translation. In the case of Eliot's *The Waste Land*, the choice was not necessarily based on a well-defined pattern of text selection for translation into the Romanian literary system. It was more a decision made by translators in keeping with their translation agenda and their personal preferences, as we will indicate later.

⁵⁰⁶ Gideon Toury. *In Search of a Theory of Translation*, 51.

According to Ioan Kohn⁵⁰⁷, when the selection of texts to be translated is not part of a general translation policy dominant in the target system, the option to translate one author or the other and, within his work, a special part of his creation, is the result of a selection process determined by the beliefs and likes of the translator, especially when he is also a poet.

Operational norms guide the translation decisions made during the process and they may be linguistic or literary. The norms influencing the translation process may be extracted carrying out an analysis of the original text with its various translations, performed at distinct periods of time. Such a comparison is supposed to indicate the priorities of each translator, the perspective on the role and position of translations in the target culture at a given moment in time as well as individual decisions of the translators. Before proceeding to analyse the source text in comparison with its target productions, some general considerations on poetry translation might be useful.

⁵⁰⁷ Ioan Kohn. *Virtuțile compensatorii ale limbii române în traducere*. Timișoara: Editura Facla, 1983, 180.

Observations on Poetry Translatability

The special status of poetry among the other literary genres has always indicated the translation of poetry as a thorny issue from the perspective of the process, techniques and assessment. Literary language has its own particularities, which makes this process of transfer even more delicate. The debate centring on poetry translation basically focuses on the possibility or impossibility to transfer poetry from one language into another, preserving at the same time the poetic implications intact.

The dichotomy translatability/untranslatability of texts is a larger issue, of which poetry translation is only a part. The idea of the translatability/untranslatability of texts has divided scholars in two, the universalists and the monadists. The former propose the possibility to translate due to the existence of language and culture universals, whereas the latter claim that translation is impossible mainly because each linguistic community codifies reality in its own particular manner, which may not reflect the habits of another community in an absolute accurate way. This perspective is mainly supported by language theoreticians, such as Sapir or Whorf; another example is represented by Meschonnic's views according to which untranslatability is related to historic and social aspects rather than to what pertains to metaphysics — the incommunicable, the mysterious.

A further distinction is operated in the untranslatability field, namely between linguistic and cultural untranslatability. The former reveals the

possible linguistic gaps between the two languages involved in translation, while the latter sends to the cultural clash between source and target⁵⁰⁸. On the other hand, there are scholars, such as Walter Benjamin, who believe that the major law for translation is a text's translatability. The deconstructivists also rely on the hypothesis of the translatability of texts, but with certain reserves, since they tend to consider translations more like "rewritings" of source texts.

Besides all the arguments in favour or against translatability, which may also apply to poetry as a form of communication which offers the possibility of being translated, poetry brings to the fore the issue of human sensitivity, which goes beyond the transfer of linguistic structures.

In her doctoral thesis, Andrea Kenesei argues that "the hermeneutic problem with poetry lies not in the competent linguistic knowledge, but the understanding of the thing described in the text"⁵⁰⁹. "Thing" is understood here not necessarily as the content, but as the feeling transmitted by the poem.

Translation theorist Susan Bassnett considers the translation of poetry as no different from other forms of translation, which involves a process of decoding the text message and of considering the intra- and extratextual factors involved. In a didactic approach to poetry translation, she states that

spirit, we reach an impasse in order to translate poetry, the first stage is intelligent reading of the ST, a detailed process of decoding that takes into account both textual features and extratextual factors. If instead of looking closely at a poem and

⁵⁰⁸ Raquel de Pedro. "The Translatability of Texts: A Historical Overview" in *META*, Vol. 44. No. 4 (December), 1999, 551.

⁵⁰⁹ Andrea Kenesei. *Poetry Translation through Reception and Cognition: the Proof of Translation is in the Reading*. Ph.D. thesis, 2005, 68.

reading it with care, we start to worry about translating the “spirit” of something without any sense of how to define that⁵¹⁰.

Poets generally tend to express their mistrust in the potential poetry has for translation. Octavio Paz proposes translation as a means to suppress differences, even if he believes each language to offer a distinct perspective on the world. Paz rejects the idea of poetry untranslatability, because, in his opinion, if poetry cannot be rendered from one language into another, this means that poetry is not universal at all. Paz believes that translation and creation are one and the same. Both poet and translator perform creative activities; even if the end result of their endeavours is different, poetry is there. While rejecting the idea of mimetic activity, Paz considers the translated poem to be the “transmutation” and not the copy of the original⁵¹¹.

With respect to the status of the translator of poetry, whether he should be a poet or not, Paz, although holding that the best agent for the translation of poetry is ideally a poet, admits that not many poets proved to be equally inspired translators. In Paz’s opinion, the poet-translator almost always uses the source poem as a starting point for his own poem. In exchange, a good translator makes the reverse movement: his end purpose is to obtain a similar poem, although not identical to the source.

Regardless of the distinct manners in which each culture codifies reality, all cultures have the means and possibilities to render the content of

⁵¹⁰ Susan Bassnett. *Translation Studies*. London & New York: Routledge, 1991, 60.

⁵¹¹ Octavio Paz. *Traducción: literatura y literalidad*. Barcelona: Tusquets Editores, 1990, 21-23.

poetry, because, after all, it encapsulates universal emotional experiences.

Theodore Savory claims that

in poetry there is rhythm, emotion, sensuous emotion, there is an increased use of figures of speech and a degree of disregard for conventional word order; and there is imagination and the ability to see features in an object or a situation which another, not a poet, might miss. But none of this is the prerogative of any one language⁵¹².

Poetry is thus not the privilege of one single language. The quality of the transfer from one linguistic/cultural system into another depends on the mediator of the process, i.e. the translator. The success or failure of a translation, its acceptability, involves many factors, among which the dialogue translator-readers is of great significance.

In this respect, translation may easily be deemed impossible if no dialogue is possible or successful (because of puns, the coinage of new words or linguistic formulas), since, as Nida claims, a text which is translated acquires meaning only because the receivers have some previous knowledge related to its content. The translator engages thus in an anticipative dialogue with the target readers, trying to render the ST as intelligible as possible, but without having any guarantee of success⁵¹³.

In turn, when deciphering a text, readers deal with the translator's own interpretation of the source text, because the translator is first and foremost a reader and reading is fundamentally an act of interpretation. From this perspective, interlingual translation becomes "an extreme case of

⁵¹² Theodore Savory. *The Art of Translation*. London: Jonathan Cape, 1957, 76-77.

⁵¹³ Eugene Nida. *Traducerea sensurilor*. Iași: Institutul European, 2004, 166.

hermeneutical difficulty, i.e. of alienness and its conquest”⁵¹⁴. In this battle for conquest, the translator’s own background has a major impact upon the act of translation, since his previous experiences, attitudes and perception shape the way he interprets the source text. According to German philosopher Hans-Georg Gadamer, translation is therefore not just “the re-awakening of the original event [...], but a recreation of the text that is guided by the way the translator understands what is said in it”⁵¹⁵.

In Romania, the preoccupation of avant-garde poets with issues of language as a vehicle of poetry gave birth to interesting theories. Among them, Ilarie Voronca (1903-1946) was particularly interested in the innovating possibilities of language. This concern imposed him as one of the most inspired inventors of terms associated with the literary trend of which he was part (“picto-poetry” is one such term which designates a mixture of poetry and painting⁵¹⁶).

Voronca’s perspective on language could be likened to a theory of translation. Considered by Voronca from a synchronic perspective, words in different languages are never equivalent, though they stand for the same referent:

The same notions in different languages always change. For many, *drum*, *chemin*, *weg*, *camino* are one and the same. That’s incorrect. *Chemin* is totally different from *drum* or *camino*, because in our country the road is different from the one in Italy which, in turn, is different from the road in France”⁵¹⁷.

⁵¹⁴ Hans-Georg Gadamer. *Truth and Method*. New York: Continuum, 1975, 349.

⁵¹⁵ Hans-Georg Gadamer. *Truth and Method*, 347-348.

⁵¹⁶ Ilarie Voronca. “1924” in *A doua lumină*. București: Editura Minerva, 1996, 107.

⁵¹⁷ Ilarie Voronca. “Gramatică” in *A doua lumină*. București: Editura Minerva, 1996, 117.

The poet rejects the denotative value of words, considering that the main feature of a word should be nothing but a sensation. Furthermore, words acquire meaning only as vehicle of ideas-principles representative of a particular moment in time:

Each word represents in itself the sonority of its epoch, which is more valuable than its meaning. That is why we say that words are untranslatable and that is why a poem whose first line would be: *Fumatul e interzis (Smoking is forbidden)* and the second *Rauchen verboten* does not mean that the latter is a repetition, but they are two perfectly distinct lines⁵¹⁸.

It is, therefore, lack of meaning that would make words impossible to translate. He questions thus the very notion of equivalence, based on the idea that no significant equals another, especially if considered as representing a certain moment in the history of a language or culture.

Techniques for Poetry Translation

Although much has been written on poetry translation, the main issues centre on the dichotomy possibility/impossibility of such endeavour and on the assessment of the end results — the translated poems. Probably since it is such a difficult task, which involves, besides linguistic proficiency, a certain sense of the poetic, there are few considerations regarding the process and strategies used in translating poetry. Most of them are included in the translators'

⁵¹⁸ Ilarie Voronca. "Gramatică", 117.

prefaces to the poems they approached, with indication of the problems they were faced with and some explanations of the solutions for which they opted.

Some theoreticians of translation studies tackled the issue from a pedagogical perspective, trying to set up taxonomies and hierarchies of approaches to poetry translation. One of them is James Holmes, who distinguished between four forms of “metapoetic” expression⁵¹⁹. A first one is mimetic, used to emphasise the foreign character of the translated text, making the reader aware that he is reading a text not belonging to his own culture. Such method is indicated by Holmes to be used in periods when the target literature is in need of rejuvenation.

A second form is analogical, in which translators seek out traditional poetic forms of the target language to use as vehicles for the content of the original poem. Such form has a marked ethnocentric value, since the forms of the TL are deemed tools best suited to assess the literatures of other spaces and time periods.

These two forms he calls “form-derivative”, since they are aimed at translating foreign literatures using the forms existing in the target language. To these, he opposed two others. One is the organic form, which gives prominence to the content of the poem and allows it to take whatever form in the TL, as dictated by the inner value of the text. The latter “content-derivative” form is extraneous, and the original poem is the mere starting point

⁵¹⁹ James Holmes. *Translated! Papers on Literary Translation and Translation Studies*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1988.

for another one, which does not necessarily reflect the form and content of the original.

Another classification of strategies to translate poetry was set up by Andre Lefevere in his *Translating Poetry. Seven Strategies and a Blueprint*⁵²⁰ (1975). Phonemic translation is indicated to be successful with the rendering of onomatopoeia and proper names, but the emphasis on the sound equivalence between the ST and the TT tends to distort the content of the original. Literal translation, an extreme form of loyalty to the source text, is in danger of breaching the target language syntax and forcing the limits of its vocabulary. Metrical translation is a distinct form of loyalty to the original, not with respect to sound or content, but meter. One of the consequences is a limited word choice for the translator, distorting the meaning of the original, with the result of failing to present it as a viable work of art.

Four other forms of translation are added to complete those above, the main flaw of which is the fact that they focus on only one aspect of the source poem. One of these four other forms is poetry into prose, which, however favoured by readers, fails to direct their attention to certain words, as poetry does. Rhyme translation is a quite difficult form, since the translator is subjected to the restrictions of both meter and rhyme, which dooms the result of such translation from the very beginning.

Blank verse translation, although considered by Lefevere as having a higher degree of accuracy and literariness than the other forms, may result in a

⁵²⁰ Andre Lefevere. *Translating Poetry. Seven Strategies and a Blueprint*. Assen & Amsterdam: Van Gorcum, 1975.

poem that could sound clumsy, unnatural because of the limitations imposed by the metrical scheme. A last form is interpretation, which he divides into version and imitation. Despite such a generous number of translation types, Lefevere reaches the conclusion that none is best suited to approach the translation of poetry, their main fault being the emphasis they place on certain aspects of the ST to the detriment of others.

Within the wider frame of literary translation, poetry holds a special place both with respect to its philosophical implications and the methods and techniques involved in the process. The encounter of the two texts is a complex occurrence, with intricate relations between the various agents and actions involved — readers, translators, reading, interpretation, reception. The task of the translator is enormously difficult and the mediator between the two worlds envisaged is not a mere agent of transfer endowed with mimetic talents, but a craftsman where talent and hard work meet.

Considering the weight of the translator's presence in the translated text, an overview of the general background of the Romanian translators who approached Eliot's *The Waste Land* is essential.

Background Information on the Romanian Translators

Ion Pillat

The first translator who made Eliot known in Romania is Ion Pillat (1891 – 1945), whose personal life and career present some parallelisms with Eliot's life. Even if the similarities could appear as mere speculations or coincidences, it looks as if the Poet had found his Translator. Eliot was fortunate in that his first Romanian translator was also an outstanding poet.

Like Eliot, Pillat was born in a family with very strict moral principles, but in a merry atmosphere. The main figure of the family was the maternal grandfather, Ion Brătianu (who died one month after the poet was born, in 1891). Brătianu was a prominent figure on the Romanian social and political scene. He perfected his education in Paris, as most young intellectuals of the time did. When coming back to Romania, he took an active part in activities meant to reform his country at all levels. He successively held the office of prime minister, minister of external affairs and minister of finance.

As Pillat was to confess later, the memories of his infancy and teenage years were to leave a lasting impression on his sensitivity, imbuing his poetry with an acute sense of the past, of the cultural heritage that links the living to their ancestors. He started writing poetry at the age of fifteen and was not particularly encouraged by the family, who placed all possible virtues of seriousness, stability and hard work within the field of exact sciences. A literary spirit was suspected of "having a deplorable imagination" and was

blamed for superficiality. Nevertheless, his family allowed him to follow the path he had chosen.

Pillat spent the period between 1905 and 1914 studying in Paris, where, like Eliot at Harvard, had a very eclectic choice of subjects. Like Eliot, he attended Bergson's lectures at Collège de France and the poetry he wrote at the time bears Bergsonian echoes — nostalgia of the past, duration in absolute⁵²¹.

The City of Paris did not exert a tremendous influence upon Pillat as a city in itself; he was more fascinated by the mixture of cultures which he encountered there. It was a period of intense readings, not only from the French literature, but also from the German and English, which, together with a thorough study of plastic arts, left enduring traces on his poetry.

Pillat's work was tightly interwoven with his personal life and the three stages of his poetic career bear the marks of the places where he felt at home: France, in Paris (1905-1914), Romania and Greece (where he made three trips, in 1927, 1933 and 1937, respectively). Each stage of creation closely reflects the time spent in any of these places. The poet makes proof of poetic bipolar tendencies: awareness of the roots he had in his native land and an attempt to escape in the exotic and the imaginary⁵²².

Pillat was an extremely erudite poet, with a vast knowledge of the literature of all times, covering a wide range of cultures and forms of manifestation. He read works in the original, regardless of whether the author

⁵²¹ Cornelia Pillat. "Notă asupra ediției" in Ion Pillat. *Opere*. Vol. IV. București: Editura Du Style, 2002, vii.

⁵²² Alexandru Cistelean. *Celalalt Pillat*. București: Editura Fundației Culturale Române, 2000, 48.

was Heine, Ovid, Baudelaire or Quevedo. He assimilated the poetry of the world which is reflected in his poetry as a sign of profound respect and acknowledgment. His poetic efforts witness “a huge recapitulative availability and an experiment cultivated with a special vocation of a restorer or conservator of some poetic museum”⁵²³.

The poet tried his hand at all types of poetic genres, from the Persian Rubbayat to the Japanese haiku. In one of his literary confessions, he proposed critics, for entertainment’s sake, “to study the influences of my academic reading on the poetry of my early volumes imbued with allusions and proper names”⁵²⁴. No surprise, then, that a poet who was such a lover of the world literature was attracted by Eliot’s poetry⁵²⁵.

Being so organically tied to poetry, his activity as a translator came as a natural manifestation of his preoccupations. He translated from 1914 until 1944, one year before his death. His translating agenda reflects his various interests in world poetry, mapping the literary tastes of a poet deeply preoccupied with the dialogue between cultures. The need to translate was not

⁵²³ Pop quoted in Alexandru Cistelecan. *Celălalt Pillat*, 18.

⁵²⁴ Pillat quoted in Alexandru Cistelecan. *Celălalt Pillat*, 356.

⁵²⁵ Throughout his life, Pillat tried to reconcile two axes that are seemingly contrasted: tradition and innovation. He shared with Eliot the same preoccupation with tradition, which he placed at the core of any meaningful human endeavour. Pillat assigned two meanings to the notion of tradition, depending on its significance for a certain nation: on the one hand, there is dynamic tradition, accurately reflecting the life and roots of the said community and, on the other hand, there is tradition as the maintenance of artificial forms. In this latter meaning of tradition, the poet appears as “the representative of an epoch, of a thinking trend, of some form of literary manifestation, a human document of the highest value for the understanding of the soul of generations preceding him” (Ion Pillat. *Tradiție și inovație*. București: Editura Școalelor, 1943, 20).

only the manifestation of his love for poetry, but also an attempt, which proved to be highly successful, to introduce Romanians to universal poetry.

The translating efforts Pillat made immensely contributed to disseminating modern world poetry in Romanian literature, thus ensuring the synchronisation of Romanian letters with the European and American movements of the time⁵²⁶. The logical consequence of such an endeavour and Pillat's intimate hope was that his translations would represent an impetus for Romanian poets and would count as useful tools for the refinement of Romanian poetry.

The names of authors translated by Pillat range from the French symbolists to German poets, both classic and modern, as well as representatives of the Spanish, Italian, British and American poetry. This preoccupation with the great variety of the human lyric potential witnesses a desire to merge with the Other and hints at the existence of a genuine meditation on poetry and the world in general. Towards the end of his life, he would have liked to gather all his translations under the title *Sufletul altora* (The Others' Soul)⁵²⁷ as an homage to all those with whom he managed to establish an intimate spiritual relation through translation.

His numerous literary essays, which he published in the volume *Portrete lirice* (Lyrical Portraits), aimed at popularizing various foreign literatures. Essays such as "Don Quixote", "The Irish Soul in Poetry: William Butler Yeats", "Modern American Poetry", contain comments on some of the

⁵²⁶ Mircea Martin. "Tradiția modernității și modernitatea tradiției", 435.

⁵²⁷ Cornelia Pillat. "Notă asupra ediției", 21.

authors he translated. As a matter of fact, he translated almost all the poets he glossed on. The translations were usually published first, followed by his comments which served as a critical apparatus⁵²⁸.

Although he did not have a translation theory proper, he approached this task with great professional responsibility, even piety. He considered translation an act of interaction, which requires the presence of a mediator. In all modesty, he called his own translations “exercises of lyric equivalence”⁵²⁹ and his observations on the act of translation may be found, as is the case with many other poet translators, in the forewords of the translated works.

As for his dedication, one of his collaborators, Oscar Walter Cisek, together with whom he translated Rilke, stated that when Pillat worked, he would forget about food or rest⁵³⁰. For each word, syllable or phonetic nuance he would come up with a whole range of possible Romanian variants. He would pronounce every word, sound or cadence until the rhymes and rhythms could be somewhat superposed over the original without a single syllable ruining the organic harmony of the work. Such application goes beyond the mere desire of doing a good job; it is an expression of total adoration of poetry and the awareness of the responsibility the translator has as the messenger of somebody else’s work.

⁵²⁸ Cornelia Pillat. “Notă asupra ediției”, 450.

⁵²⁹ Cornelia Pillat. “Notă asupra ediției”, 32.

⁵³⁰ Ovid Crohmălniceanu. “Prefață” in Ion Pillat. *Opere*. Vol. IV. București: Ed. Du Style, 2002, 16.

A real modern translator, Pillat also emphasised the readers' role in deciphering a text. In 1932 he translated St. John Perses⁵³¹ *Anabase*, an endeavour that was also assumed by Eliot. In his foreword, Pillat warned about the poem's obscurity and hinted at the need of readers' collaboration. The understanding of the poem, in Pillat's opinion, required "a certain intellectual agility which may be acquired in time and a particular intuitive imagination that has to be inborn"⁵³². He could have successfully used the same observation with reference to the readers of another modernist he translated, i.e. Eliot.

There are several issues that drew Pillat toward Eliot: his taste of classicism and antiquity which, in Eliot's case, translated into an extensive use of mythology; the English poet's broad consideration of world literature and the rich complex of cultures reflected in his work.

Pillat embarked on translating *The Waste Land* in 1933, eleven years after its publication, in the magazine *Azi*, Issue 3 of February-March 1933. The magazine published literary criticism, but also original pieces of writing and translations. It appeared for the first time in March, 1932, as a monthly publication. In 1939 it began to appear on a weekly basis which it did until 1940, when it was banned by the short-lived military dictatorship of general Ion Antonescu.

Pillat published his translation of *The Waste Land* in Issue no. 3 of the magazine. In the next issue, he published an article entitled simply "Thomas Stearns Eliot". Here, Pillat touched upon Eliot's career as a critic, emphasising,

⁵³¹ Mircea Martin. "Tradiția modernității și modernitatea tradiției", 431.

⁵³² Pillat quoted in Mircea Martin. "Tradiția modernității și modernitatea tradiției", 432.

however, that “the poet Eliot is even more interesting than the critic”. Without providing a critical analysis of the poem, the translator stressed the significance of *The Waste Land* in the Anglo-American literature, indicating that, similarly to Joyce’s *Ulysses*, it marked “the end of a literary era and the beginning of another”⁵³³.

Given the fact that Eliot’s poetry was introduced for the first time to Romanian readers, Pillat might have considered useful to provide at least some basic information on the poet and his work. At the same time, in doing so, he somewhat justified the reasons that led to his selection of Eliot as a poet to translate. In all honesty, he warned his readers of the difficulties of the text when he specified that the excessively synthetic nature of the poem may give the impression of being obscure, a feeling which vanishes at a more careful reading.

Towards the end of the article, Pillat made a number of observations on his version and on the difficulties he encountered in translation:

I further add that one of the charms but also difficulties of the text is the fact that Eliot constantly imbeds lines – famous ones or merely some he liked – taken not only from the British literature, to which he often gives new meanings [...] With respect to the translation, faithful as much as possible, it strived to maintain at least the spirit and the letter of the original, if it often failed to render its entire beauty⁵³⁴.

In the poem presentation, Pillat specified that “the topic of the poem is death and resurrection from death”. He continued by relating *The Waste Land* to Joyce’s *Ulysses*: “*The Waste Land*, just like Joyce’s *Ulysses*, is one of those

⁵³³ Ion Pillat. “Thomas Stearns Eliot” in *Azi*, Issue 3, 1933, 767.

⁵³⁴ Ion Pillat. “Thomas Stearns Eliot”, 768.

texts loaded with deep significance, the message of which can only be grasped from the beginning by few, with an influence that increases continually in time and space”⁵³⁵.

The choice a translator makes with respect to the text he tackles broadly depends on several factors. One is the fashion of the time, with its restrictions, its already established canons and criteria. This is what Andre Lefevere calls the poetics of a period, which indicates what translations are acceptable in a certain system, at a given moment.

Another factor refers to what Lefevere names “ideology”, to which the translator subscribes willingly or not and which dictates the strategies to use both with respect to the translation of the source text content and the linguistic choices. Yet another motivation behind the choice of a text to translate is the translator’s own interpretation of the ST, which may or may not be compliant with the ideology or poetics of the time⁵³⁶.

In choosing the Anglo-American modernists and particularly Eliot, Pillat went against the mainstream poetics of the time, which favoured French literature. A visionary and a modern translator in his own right, he opted thus for the path of foreignizing, understood not only as a translation strategy meant to indicate clearly the alterity of a foreign text, but as the selection of a text “which challenges the contemporary canon of foreign literature in the target language”⁵³⁷.

⁵³⁵ Ion Pillat. “Thomas Stearns Eliot”, 767.

⁵³⁶ Andre Lefevere. *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*, 36-41.

⁵³⁷ Lawrence Venuti. *The Translator’s Invisibility*, 148.

Classic English poets had already been translated into Romanian to a higher or lesser extent, but the translation of a poetry such as Eliot's was a challenge, considering the fact that the Romanian poetry of the time was widely under the spell of French symbolism and surrealism, although German expressionism also appealed to Romanian poets such as Lucian Blaga or Adrian Maniu. One of the reasons for which Pillat embarked on such a difficult task might have been his great admiration for the collage of cultures Eliot presented in the poem, in an attempt at broadening the literary perspective of Romanian readers. Another factor could have been, bearing in mind the pedagogical purposes with which Pillat endowed the translation activity, that of challenging the virtues and linguistic possibilities of the Romanian poetic language, by granting some sort of linguistic and literary utility to the source text⁵³⁸.

Ion Pillat's 1933 translation did not enjoy a considerable critical reception in the epoch. This seeming neglect can be explained through various reasons. One such reason is that translation critical reviews were scarce at the time. When translations were indeed reviewed, they focused on an overview of the translated authors' works rather than on the intrinsic value of the translation or the translator's name. At the time Pillat performed his translation, Eliot's name was not familiar to an extensive number of Romanian readers.

Another reason for this synchronic neglect could be the position held by translations from the American and British literature in the Romanian literary

⁵³⁸ Gideon Toury. *In Search of a Theory of Translation*, 135.

system. According to translation theorist Even-Zohar, within the translation polysystem, its various sections are subject to certain dynamics which dictates their central or peripheral position. In 1933, when Pillat wrote his version, translations from works belonging to the English-speaking world held a marginal position as compared to those from French, which was the favourite source. Eliot's name was introduced then for the first time to the Romanian readership, together with other modernist writers who were making history in the literature of the time.

One should also consider that the interwar period in Romania presented a plethora of literary tendencies and trends, from avant-garde to surrealism and modernism. English literature was ignored as a potential source of influence, a position that was disputed by the French and, to a lesser extent, the German one. It was no surprise, therefore, that Eliot's poems in Pillat's mediation had no visible and immediate influence over the creative minds of the epoch.

However, in 1946, one year after Pillat's death, in a volume issued in his honour, literary critic Petru Comarnescu approached Pillat's translations from a critical perspective. He compared fragments of *The Waste Land* with its Romanian version, emphasising the inspired lexical choices of the translator, as well as the achievements at rhythm level:

The Romanian words are extremely appropriate, vibrant, fluid, sonorous, very close to the original, preserving the musical tones, the rhythmic variety and the poetic and philosophic meaning of the original⁵³⁹.

⁵³⁹ Petru Comarnescu. "Ion Pillat și cunoașterea poeziei anglo-americane la noi", 276.

Pillat's choice of translation techniques and options, which are predominantly domesticating, can be explained by his desire to draw readers towards an English poet, by making him accessible to the large majority of poetry lovers. Consideration should also be given to the positioning of the source and target texts in the Anglo-American and Romanian cultures, respectively. Whereas in the exporting literature, the Anglo-American, the poem was acknowledged as a masterpiece of modernist poetry from its publication, in the importing space, the Romanian, its translation did not enjoy the same recognition at the moment of its first appearance.

Ștefan Augustin Doinaș and Toma Pavel

In 1965, the prestigious Romanian literary journal *Secolul XX* dedicated a significant part of its Issue no. 1 to T.S. Eliot. On this occasion, the journal published an article dedicated to Eliot as a literary critic signed by Virgil Nemoianu and Toma Pavel, and Part V of *The Waste Land*, “What the Thunder Said”, translated by Ștefan Augustin Doinaș and Toma Pavel.

Ștefan Augustin Doinaș (1922-2002) was a poet who belonged to the generation of the sixties. He graduated the Faculty of Philosophy in 1948. After graduation, he worked as a school teacher in his home village for seven years. In 1955 he abandoned teaching and decided to move to Bucharest. Here, he was arrested in 1957 and sentenced to one year of imprisonment, being accused of “omission to denounce an enemy of the State”. At the time, he was working

as editor of the magazine *Teatru*. Three months before, one of his poet friends (Marcel Petrișor) had informed him on the Hungarian anti-communist revolution and suggested that a similar movement in Romania could have been successful in dethroning the regime. Arrested and fiercely beaten, Petrișor was made to confess the names of his interlocutors on this topic. One of them was Doinaș.

After one year spent in prison, Doinaș was released in 1958 and until 1963 he was not allowed to participate in the Romanian literary life. Because of this, his debut as a poet came quite late, in 1964, with the volume *Cartea mareelor* (The Tide Book). The first poems reveal a preoccupation with order and organization, a taste for the classics visible in the poetic structure and a quest for perfection of form and content which proved to be a constant feature of his entire poetry.

During his student years, Doinaș was a very active member of a literary group, *Cercul literar de la Sibiu*, which gathered poets, critics and prose writers. Some of the poets, among which Doinaș himself, were very interested in the revival of the ballad as a literary genre. Ballads appealed particularly to Doinaș because they required the construction of a complicated structure, in which aesthetic considerations are doubled by religious and philosophic ideas. Doinaș's poems abound in romantic elements (deserted castles, mysterious and gloomy landscapes) which he often blends with classical themes and heroes such as Demetrius or Alexander⁵⁴⁰. The epitome of his exploitation of myths is

⁵⁴⁰ Eugen Simion. *Scriitori români de azi*, 98.

his epic poem, *Mistrețul cu colți de argint* (The Boar with Silver Fangs). It is constructed around the romantic myth of the creator who is tormented and finally killed by his ideal of perfection which he only achieves in death.

The concern with myths and archetypes materialize in Doinaș's approach of various classical themes and characters from ancient Latin mythology and literary references alluding to Goethe, Shakespeare, Ion Pillat or Ion Barbu. Like Eliot, Doinaș brings myths to life in order to strengthen their value for the modern man and to re-establish the link between past and present. His use of myths and intertextuality witnesses his vision of poetry which, in Doinaș's opinion, is a combination of tradition and modernity, a palimpsest of rewritings and transformations of centuries of world literature.

The constant concern with poetry is also manifest in Doinaș's critical essays gathered in volumes such as *Poezie și modă poetică* (Poetry and Poetic Fashion), *Lectura poeziei* (Poetry Reading) or *Poeți români* (Romanian Poets). In parallel with his critical and poetic work, he carried out a sustained translation activity. The wide range of source authors from which he translated is represented by Goethe, Giovanni Papini, Stéphane Mallarmé, Hölderlin, Paul Valéry or Gottfried Benn. His own poems were also translated into French, German, English, Italian and Spanish. His articles on translation focus on the great importance this activity has in the development of a culture and, implicitly, of a language. He also tackled the issue of the expressive possibilities of Romanian to accommodate the variety of universal experience and artistic manifestations.

Beginning with 1969, he became the editor of *Secolul XX*. It was the main publication of the epoch which constantly addressed issues related to the theory and practice of translation. After 1989, Doinaş became a member of the Romanian Academy and a senator. His civic involvement was doubled by a very dynamic activity as a politic journalist. He died in 2002, two years after making his debut as a prose writer with the novel *T de la Trezor* (T from Trezor).

Toma Pavel (n. 1941) is a Romanian literary critic and novelist. In 1962 he graduated the Faculty of Philology and, together with other colleagues, he set up the Circle of Poetics and Stylistics. He moved to France in 1969, after which he developed a very active international career as professor of philosophy, literature and cultural studies in universities such as Ottawa, Montreal or Princeton. Currently, he is head of the French Department at Chicago University.

Aurel Covaci

Aurel Covaci (1932-1993), himself a poet, also accepted the challenge to translate *The Waste Land*. His version was published almost forty years after Pillat's, in 1970, in the volume *Cele mai frumoase poezii*⁵⁴¹ which gathered a selection of Eliot's poems. The volume features a foreword signed by Nichita Stănescu, a close friend of Covaci's, the spokesman of an entire generation of

⁵⁴¹ T.S. Eliot. *Cele mai frumoase poezii*. Bucureşti: Editura Albatros, 1970.

poets. Nichita Stănescu's knowledge of English was not thorough, so it is very likely that his contact with the English poet was mediated by the Romanian version of his dear friend, Aurel Covaci.

In the foreword, Nichita Stănescu considers Eliot as the best representative of the poetry of ideas, a digger for meanings hidden under the surface of reality. Stănescu's participation in the volume is not devoid of significance. Covaci dedicated his translation of *The Waste Land* to him, just like Eliot had dedicated his to Pound. An authoritative literary voice who introduces a piece of writing may have a significant contribution to the reception of the said work, and all the more so when it is a translation.

Given the fact that Eliot had already been introduced in Romania by means of the translated poems published in distinct literary magazines, a collection of poems under the form of a volume was only to be expected. In the seventies, Eliot was already a considerable source of inspiration for poets like Marin Sorescu or Mircea Ivănescu, who had access to Eliot's poems in unmediated manner, being familiar with English.

Covaci's life was dedicated to translation from the beginning to the very end. He managed to translate over one million lines, at a time when the political regime was not particularly favourable to his activity. In fact, in 1958 he was sentenced to three years of prison for accusations of plotting against the political regime. It was true that Covaci and a few of his colleagues at the Faculty of Letters in Bucharest would gather and talk about the difficult situation of the country caused by the Communist regime. The documents in

the file present in the secret police archives show that these meetings were considered “plots against social order”⁵⁴², Covaci in particular being considered a very dangerous anti-communist element, with a considerable influence upon his friends.

Although he served no time in prison, Covaci was forbidden the right to publish for five years. Between 1961 and 1964 he worked successively as interpreter and trip organizer with the National Tourism Board, a state-owned organization which hired geography and foreign language students as guides and translators. A self-made man coming from a family with modest origins, he studied by himself fourteen languages, which he used not only as sources for translation, but also as media for his own poetry.

Covaci, “the computer man” as he was called, left an impressive work of translation, being an emblematic figure in the field of translation in the Romanian culture. He was the genuine example of the translator who lived his life through the lives of the ones he translated. This could be one of the reasons for which he never published his own poetry.

In the fifties, when he was a student, in the grim years of the Communist oppression, he confessed to his future wife that his purpose in life was to render into Romanian the great literary masterpieces of humanity. And this is what he actually did for forty years dedicated exclusively to the translation of great masterpieces of world literature. In recognition of his outstanding work, the Writers’ Union in Romania awarded him three

⁵⁴² Stela Covaci. *Persecuția*. București: Editura Vreamea, 2006, 58.

translation prizes: in 1971, for a volume translated from William Carlos Williams, 1975 for Tirso de Molina's *Teatru* and in 1983 for the theatre of Corneille and Lope de Vega⁵⁴³.

Throughout his life, when times were difficult and he was in deep dire straits, he was offered commercial translations that could have helped him improve his economic situation quickly, especially since they were better paid and easier to translate. A man of no compromise, he rejected these opportunities and continued to translate what was really valuable, that is works belonging to great names of world literature, which required much time and infinite care and dedication. So it is that the work he left behind contains translations from the English, French, American, Italian, Spanish, Russian, Portuguese and African literatures.

In 2000, the Romanian versions signed by Ion Pillat and Aurel Covaci were gathered in a bilingual volume. On the literary market and even more significantly in the case of translations, the place of publication is one of the factors with a considerable impact upon the dissemination and finally reception of a title. The publishing house Cartea Românească, which issued this edition of Eliot's *The Waste Land*, has a considerable tradition on the Romanian literary scene. It was set up after World War I, through merger of a number of private publishing houses.

One of its founders, Ion Athanasiu, who was Rector of the University of Bucharest, declared that the purpose of the institution was to be a cultural

⁵⁴³ *Dicționarul general al literaturii române*. București: Editura Univers Enciclopedic. Vol. II, 2004, 425-426.

establishment that “will print an affordable library, literary but especially scientific in nature, in order to spread culture”⁵⁴⁴. Between 1948 and 1970 the publishing house forcibly interrupted its activity after having been declared hostile to Soviet ideals. In 1970 it became the publishing house of the Romanian Writers’ Union, maintaining this position until the present. Currently, its two main development axes cover the publication of already known Romanian writers and the promotion of young authors.

The coordinator of this bilingual edition of Eliot’s *The Waste Land* was Lidia Vianu, reputed translator and professor of British literature, whose name is linked to an authoritative work of criticism on Eliot, *T.S. Eliot – An Author for All Seasons* (1997). The edition contains a selective list with Eliot’s works, a number of reference titles and biographic considerations. In the after word, “Eliot e cu noi” (Eliot is with us), Professor Vianu emphasises the actuality of the poem and the impact Eliot still has upon contemporary poetry, specifying that “Eliot is with us. Eliot *is in us*. Today, tomorrow, who knows for how long from now on”⁵⁴⁵.

A subtle translation criticism is detectable in the fact that Professor Vianu provides her own Romanian version of the titles of the poem’s parts, when she mentions them in her word (‘Tărâm pustiu’ for *The Waste Land*, ‘Joc de șah’ for “A Game of Chess” and ‘Spusele tunetului’ for “What the Thunder Said”).

⁵⁴⁴ www.cartearomaneasca.ro

⁵⁴⁵ Lidia Vianu. “Eliot e cu noi” in T.S. Eliot. *The Waste Land*. București: Cartea Românească, 2000, 86.

A.E. Baconsky

Part I, “The Burial of the Dead”, and Part IV, “Death by Water” of *The Waste Land* were also translated into Romanian by A.E. Baconsky (1925-1977), who published them in his 1972 anthology, *Panorama poeziei universale contemporane*⁵⁴⁶ (Outlook on Contemporary World Poetry). The other poems by Eliot which Baconsky rendered into Romanian are *Marina*, *Bostianul de seară* (The *Boston Evening Transcript*), *Călătoria magilor* (Journey of the Magi) and *Dimineața la geam* (Morning at the window). At the time of the publication, his anthology was the most comprehensive collection of world poetry in Romanian translation.

One of the most interesting figures of the post-war literary scene, Baconsky contributed to the Romanian literature with his poetry, prose, literary criticism and translations. His poetry lacks an immediately detectable sense of unity and presents a number of structural and thematic modifications and changes which were in fact characteristic of post-war literature. Thus, he made his debut with verse written in the Proletcult vein, in no way distinct from the platitude imposed by the literary canons of the epoch.

The poems published after his debut and which were gathered in the volumes *Dincolo de iarnă* (Beyond Winter, 1957) and *Fluxul memoriei* (Memory Flow, 1957) reveal the real dimension of his talent. As manifested in these volumes, Baconsky’s poetry presents itself as the place where refinement

⁵⁴⁶ *Panorama poeziei universale contemporane*. București: Editura Albatros, 1972.

and solemnity meet. From the lexical level to the general atmosphere, his poems suggest the chiasm between everyday language and poetic expression, the impression transmitted by the poet being that of a self-aware spiritual noblesse. In fact, his poetry mirrors the man himself. He was as cool and reserved as a lord and his attitude was completed by his attire, which had become famous in the epoch: “He was continuing, in a proletarian era, the poetic ways specific to the previous century: his eccentric behaviour brought together the extravagance of a dandy and the profound melancholy of an artist of the Nervalian type”⁵⁴⁷.

His detached behaviour reminds another widely appraised dandy of modern literature, T.S. Eliot. Although the work of the Anglo-American poet was so distinct from his own, Baconsky translated Eliot into Romanian, probably attracted by the precision and order of Eliot’s thinking. Besides Eliot, Baconsky also rendered into Romanian a selection from the works of Robert Frost, Carl Sandburg, Wallace Stevens, Ezra Pound, Sylvia Plath and Robert Lowell, to mention only a few.

Baconsky accompanied his translations with brief, but dense commentaries on the translated authors. Thus, he indicated Eliot’s work as governed by the relations of man with history and time. Eliot’s artistic effort of assisting the present in reviving past experience made Baconsky liken him to Pound, Seferis and Pasternak, who share “a fascination with millennia of

⁵⁴⁷ Eugen Simion. *Scriitori români de azi*, 135.

human history and who saw history as a chain of sumptuous mirages”⁵⁴⁸. Thus, he placed Eliot in the family of poets for whom the spiritual survival of human civilization is highly dependent upon the interconnection between past and present.

The Romanian poet interpreted *The Waste Land* in the same key of the past and present co-existence. Baconsky considered that the structure of this poem belongs to the category of “contemporary baroque” as produced by seventeenth century poets. He justified this statement through a number of structural elements. One of them is the presence of the Notes, with their savant bibliographical references. Another element of this “contemporary baroque” is, according to the Baconsky, the wide range of allusions and symbols, doubled by original quotations in French, German, Italian or Sanskrit. The masterly achieved interplay of past and present as mirrored by the blending of such distinct cultures finally lead Baconsky to place *The Waste Land* under the sign of Seneca’s words: *Quae historia fuit, facta poesis est.*

Baconsky also tried his hand at writing prose. The results were a volume of short stories, *Echinoxul nebunilor* (Lunatics’ Equinox) and the novel *Biserica neagră* (The Black Church). The novel was published posthumously, in 1990. It could not be printed during the Communist period, since the novel is an anti-utopia and the topic of Baconsky’s allegory was precisely the Romanian totalitarian regime.

⁵⁴⁸ A.E. Baconsky. *Panorama poeziei universale contemporane*, 235.

Mircea Ivănescu

Mircea Ivănescu (b. 1931) is widely praised nowadays as one of the most significant names in Romanian poetry after World War II. He graduated the Faculty of Philology (French) of the University of Bucharest in 1954. Although he was born in Bucharest, in 1980 he left this city and settled in Sibiu, where he worked as an editor for the magazine *Transilvania*. He has been awarded numerous prizes for his achievements both as a poet and as a translator. In 1999, the Association of Professional Writers in Romania proposed him as a Nobel Prize candidate at the request of the Swedish Academy.

Ivănescu made his debut in a volume quite late, in 1968, with *Versuri*. He is one of the representatives of the relative liberalization period manifest in the Romanian literature in the sixties. Although at present his poetry is acknowledged as one of the most original voices in Romanian literature, this critical reception came quite late and is visible also in the number of volumes which have been reprinted of late by various publishing houses in Romania.

A man of absolute discretion in his life and with respect to the exposure of his biographic details in his poems, Ivănescu replaced biography with intertextuality⁵⁴⁹. In fact, this is the most original mark of his poetry: his particular use of intertextuality. Together with Marin Sorescu, Ivănescu introduced in the poetry of the sixties a new manner of establishing a

⁵⁴⁹ Radu Vâncu. *Poezia discreției absolute*. București: Editura Vinea, 2007, 10. Vâncu's monograph is the most comprehensive work on Mircea Ivănescu's poetry.

connection with the poetry of the world, by making it relive in their own poems. It is not a comfortable poetry, because it forces readers to initiate a search for the meanings and allusions hidden beneath the surface of words. As Radu Vâncu notes, the techniques used by Ivănescu to create such a palimpsest of poetic memory include brackets, references which are visible from the title to texts from the Romanian and world literature, all sorts of words with English or French forms which require the use of dictionaries, foot notes which quote secondary sources that gloss on the authors alluded to in the poems. A few examples of titles belonging to some of Ivănescu's poems are indicative of the role granted to world poetry in his own creation: *seară de iarnă la wuthering heights* (winter night at wuthering heights), *portretul unei doamne* (portrait of a lady), *je est un autre*, *time must have a stop* or *sweets to the sweet*⁵⁵⁰. From Dante, Daniel Arnaud all the way to Ezra Pound and T.S. Eliot, the great names of world literature find an astute reader, interpreter and transformer in the Romanian poet. As Professor Ștefan Stoenescu argues,

we recognize in Ivănescu's poems echoes from Pound and Berryman, from Eliot and Lowell, from Williams ad Jarrell [...] His familiarity with such poets (and with many other writers in the same tradition) created a poetic sensitivity whose means represent, in our opinion, the most significant interference between Romanian poetry and the Anglo-American cultural space from Young or Byron until the present⁵⁵¹.

The highly intertextual dimension of Ivănescu's poetry contributed to the fact that the main representatives of postmodernism see in him one of their

⁵⁵⁰ Radu Vâncu. *Poezia discreției absolute*, 61.

⁵⁵¹ Ștefan Stoenescu. „Introducere” in *Poezie americană modernă și contemporană*. Cluj Napoca: Editura Dacia, 1986, 16.

most influential precursors. This is also acknowledged by Mircea Cărtărescu, the leading voice of the nineties, who, in his *Postmodernismul românesc*, claimed that “From the perspective of current poetry, Mircea Ivănescu appears today as the most theoretically erudite and influential poet after World War II”,⁵⁵².

Ivănescu is known for his poetry as much as he is known for his translations. One of the most prolific translators in Romania, he translated from French, English, German and Italian. Thus, his name is linked to exceptional translations from William Faulkner (*Zgomotul și furia*), Kafka (*Pagini de jurnal și corespondență*), Rilke (*Povestiri despre Bunul Dumnezeu*), Kirkegaard (*Școala creștinismului*), Denis de Rougemont (*Partea diavolului*), James Joyce (*Ulise*). He translated massively from Anglo-American modernism and he gathered a selection of his translations in the anthology *Poezie americană modernă și contemporană*⁵⁵³ (Modern and Contemporary American Poetry).

Ivănescu’s anthology was published by Editura Dacia⁵⁵⁴, one of the most representative publishing houses in Romania. It was set up in 1969, when a group of intellectuals living in Cluj decided to found a publishing house that would promote the values of the Romanian culture. It was no accident that the place they decided to this was Cluj, the city in the heart of Transylvania, an

⁵⁵² Mircea Cărtărescu. *Postmodernismul românesc*, 317.

⁵⁵³ *Poezie americană modernă și contemporană*. Cluj Napoca: Editura Dacia, 1986.

⁵⁵⁴ www.edituradacia.ro

area which has represented for many centuries the confluence of various cultures and religions.

The anthology translated and edited by Ivănescu contains a selection from a representative number of Anglo-American modernist poets such as William Carlos Williams, Wallace Stevens, Sylvia Plath or John Berryman and centres on Eliot and Pound. The focal point of the anthology is Eliot's *The Waste Land*, which Professor Stoenescu introduces as a "kaleidoscope of myths and perverted rituals which provide a cross section of a world devoid of meaning, but which does not completely lack the need for transcendence"⁵⁵⁵.

Alex Moldovan

In 2004, the fourth version of *The Waste Land* appeared under the signature of Alex Moldovan at Editura Paralela 45. Born in 1977, Moldovan began his translating activity in 1998. He graduated the Faculty of Philosophy, Sociology and Anthropology in Cluj. A free-lance translator and a self-declared agnostic, he included on his list of translated works titles from philosophy, theology, as well as some poetry signed by authors such as Charles Taylor, Joseph Ratzinger or William Blake. Besides translations, his preoccupation with writing also takes the form of short and very short prose, yet to be published.

⁵⁵⁵ Ștefan Stoenescu, „Introducere”, 11.

Given the fact that his retranslation is separated from the last one by a time span of almost twenty years and considering the influence exerted by Eliot's work, it is surprising that the publication of this version registered no echo whatsoever on the Romanian literary scene.

Compared to other similar institutions, Editura Paralela 45 is relatively new on the market, since it was founded in 1994, shortly after the anti-communist revolution of 1989. Its initial aim was to print didactic materials, but it was later enlarged to include contemporary Romanian and foreign works. The main areas covered by its book production are literature, information and didactic titles, children's literature and entertainment. The year 2004, when they published Eliot's *The Waste Land*, was also the richest in published titles, namely 296. Paralela 45 has been awarded numerous prizes and is a constant participant in book fairs all over Europe⁵⁵⁶.

Șerban Dragoș Popescu

The latest translation of *The Waste Land* appeared in 2009, in the literary journal *România literară*, July 24, under the signature of Șerban Dragoș Popescu. It was fortunate for him to make his debut as a translator in such a prestigious journal as *România literară*, which has been a constant presence on the Romanian cultural scene ever since 1855, when the journal was founded. It managed to survive even during the tough years of the

⁵⁵⁶ www.paralela45.ro

Communist regime. In a general atmosphere which was hostile to authentic cultural values, *România literară* strived to promote and encourage the exchange of ideas and to maintain contact with European letters⁵⁵⁷.

Along the years, the journal has benefited from the collaboration of great names of the Romanian culture. After the 1989 revolution, it re-established the contact with Romanian writers writing in exile, and this is how names such as Paul Goma, Matei Călinescu or Vintilă Horia began to appear in the journal pages. At present, *România literară* manifests an interest in a wide array of cultural manifestations, from visual arts to sociology, literary criticism and history or philosophy.

The journal published Popescu's version of *The Waste Land* only five years after Alex Moldovan's translation. Popescu is also the youngest to have rendered Eliot's poem into Romanian. He was born in 1987 and in 2009 he graduated the English-Catalan Section of the Faculty of Philology in Bucharest. Currently, he is doing an MA in American Cultural Studies at the University of Bucharest.

The translation of *The Waste Land* is the practical application of his 2009 diploma paper entitled *Collated Fractures. Another Look at T.S. Eliot's The Waste Land*. The focus of his paper is an analysis of how the various cultural elements of the poem interact and work together as a hypermechanism. Although Popescu also resorted to an analysis of the source poem and its

⁵⁵⁷ www.romlit.ro

Romanian versions, he only envisaged the translations produced by Ion Pillat and Aurel Covaci. Furthermore, he insisted upon the detection of translation errors and the analysis of quite randomly selected translation decisions.

Popescu was encouraged by Professor Lidia Vianu to embark on this translation adventure. Thus, he began the translation of *The Waste Land* as late as 2007 and published Part I, “Burial of the Dead”, in the electronic magazine *Translation café*, also under Professor Vianu’s guidance. *The Waste Land* is in fact Popoescu’s first published translation and although there are parts of the poem where his scarce translation experience becomes visible, the poem as a whole witnesses a profound maturity and understanding of the Eliotian poem.

Comparative Analysis of the Source Text with its Translations

The comparative analysis of *The Waste Land* with its Romanian translations will hopefully lead to the detection of translation norms dominant in different historic periods in the Romanian literary system. Compliance with or the flouting of such norms will indicate the translators’ orientation towards adequacy or acceptability — the translation polarity indicated by Toury.

The two possible directions mentioned above that translators may undertake, adequacy or acceptability, somehow reflect the two opposing translation strategies specified by Lawrence Venuti, namely domestication or foreignization. In establishing this opposing pair, Venuti was influenced by Schleiermacher’s own vision of translation. In the German philosopher’s

opinion, there may only be two types of translation: one which takes the author as close to the target readers as possible (in Venuti's terminology, the domesticating orientation) and the other which takes the readers as close to the author as possible (the foreignizing orientation)⁵⁵⁸.

According to Venuti, the aim of a domesticating translation is "to bring back a cultural other as the same, the recognizable, the familiar"; it is "an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to the target-language cultural values". At the other pole, foreignizing translation "signifies the foreignness of the foreign text by disrupting the cultural codes that prevail in the target language. In its effort to do right abroad, this translation method must do wrong at home"⁵⁵⁹.

This analysis between the source text and its target realisations will also try to determine the degree of compliance with various linguistic and cultural norms in the target literary and linguistic system, and, with it, the higher or lower degree of acceptability of the translated texts in the receiving Romanian culture.

Since the analysis will apply to various levels of the ST-TT relationship, for clarity and coherence purposes, I have organised the units of the comparative analysis on grammar, lexical and cultural categories. They will represent different segments belonging to the source and target texts or "replacing" and "replaced" items respectively, to use Toury's terminology

⁵⁵⁸ Lawrence Venuti. *The Translator's Invisibility*, 18-20.

⁵⁵⁹ Lawrence Venuti. *The Translator's Invisibility*, 18-20.

again. Considering that the translations are operated within the frame of a set of norms, translational solutions are expected to present a certain regular pattern.

Titles

For any piece of writing, be it literary or non literary, the title is of utmost significance, since it is a key element that helps readers grasp the meaning that will have to be decoded as the reading of a particular text advances. As Genette claims, “the function of titles is to designate, to indicate the context of the text and to seduce the public”⁵⁶⁰. The responsibility the translator assumes when translating the title is enormous, as his choice to translate it or not and the solution for the title may or may not raise the readers’ interest in approaching a particular text.

Titles are generally classified as descriptive, which describe the topic of a text, and allusive, which display some sort of referential or relational link to the topic. As Peter Newmark aptly remarks, “a descriptive title should be literally kept and an allusive title, literally or, when necessary, imaginatively preserved”⁵⁶¹. The decision to translate the title and the related decisions are dictated by a number of factors among which the alleged baggage of knowledge of the target readership, the place of translation publication, the

⁵⁶⁰ Gerard Genette. “Structure and Functions of Title in Literature” in *Critical Inquiry*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 14 (4), 1988, 708.

⁵⁶¹ Peter Newmark. *A Textbook of Translation*. Hemel Hempstead: Prentice Hall, 1988, 70.

moment of the translation and the translator's intention, which may be different from or in keeping with the author's own intention.

In what concerns *The Waste Land*, the poem is organized in five parts, each with its own title, indicative of the content of the parts. The poem title has the same translation in Pillat and Covaci's versions, namely "Țara pustie", which is a literal rendering of the original title. There is, however, a distinction between the two Romanian versions. Covaci rendered both title components in capital letters, 'Țara Pustie', whereas Pillat opted for 'Țara pustie'. The Romanian norm referring to capitalisation generally accepts capital letters only for proper nouns. If, however, some other word is capitalised which is not a proper noun, it is to suggest certain attitudes or feelings, to mark the special value of a word, to emphasise it. In the case of "Țara Pustie", one could interpret the translator's intention as a desire to give a name to this barren land and possibly to include it in an already existing country topography.

The option to translate "land" as 'țară' (= "country") expands the geographic space of desolation and uselessness of the waste land. If "land" could be interpreted as a region or even part of a region, "country" hints at a comparatively larger space, with specific borders and presumably specific rules. "Tărâmul pustiu"⁵⁶² would have probably been a more poetic solution. With its Romantic connotations, not necessarily positive, "tărâmul" maintains an aura of vagueness and unreality both of space and of time.

⁵⁶² In the comments that accompany the 2000 bilingual edition of *The Waste Land*, Professor Lidia Vianu does not use the title employed by the two Romanian translators, but her own version, namely *Tărâmul pustiu*.

In fact, both Popescu and Ivănescu opted for this lexical solution, and the results are ‘Tărâmul pustiirii’ in Popescu’s version and ‘Tărâmul pustiit’ in Ivănescu’s case. In using the noun, ‘pustiire’, Popescu highlights the action of “making something waste”, whereas Ivănescu’s use of the adjective, ‘pustiit’, lays emphasis on the result of such action and indicates a place which was once alive and full of wonderful things but which is now spiritually meaningless and materially depleted. In this light, I believe that his solution for the poem title seems to be the most inspired of all.

As far as Moldovan’s version is concerned, he opted for the transference of the title into Romanian, “The Waste Land”. In the preface to his translation, he explains this translation decision. One of his reasons for maintaining the title in the original is the special status of *The Waste Land* within the world literature, which would make it unnecessary to provide a translation, since the work is so widely known that it needs no acculturation in order to be properly received in the target literature. The other reason lies in his mistrust in the capacity of Romanian to render the full load of “waste”, which encompasses many layers of meaning. Therefore, from his point of view, “waste” is an untranslatable word. Although we respect his translation decision, we believe, with the other translators, that the adjective “pustiu” or the noun “pustiire” are weighty enough words to replace the English “waste”. Furthermore, “waste” is by no means the most difficult lexical items to render into Romanian. It is also true that Augustin Doinaş, Toma Pavel and A.E. Baconsky did not translate the title of the poem at all, but in their respective

cases consideration has to be given to the fact that they only translated fragments of the poem.

The meanings provided by dictionaries for the two words, “waste” and “pustiu”, respectively do not indicate any incompatibility between them. Thus, *Webster’s New World Dictionary* indicates the meanings of “waste” as follows: “uncultivated or uninhabited, as a desert; wild; barren; desolate”. *Dicționarul explicativ al limbii române (DEX)* mentions the following meanings of „pustiu”: „care se află în stare sălbatică, fără vegetație și fără populație; singur; stinger; deznădăjduit” (English: ‘which is in a wild condition, with no vegetation or inhabitants; alone; isolated; desperate’).

Moldovan’s decision related to the title is indicative, on the one hand, of the evolution in the reading habits of the target readership and of the translator’s presuppositions with respect to the cultural knowledge of the recipients of his translation. The Romanian readers to whom the work addresses already have previous knowledge of the poem, and the assumption is that their contact with the work has been at some point in the original, since the title is preserved in English. This assumption is also manifest in the decision to publish the Romanian text in a bilingual edition, readers having thus access both to the original and to its Romanian version. The table below indicates the variants provided by the translators to the title of the poem and of its five parts:

ST	Pilat	Covaci	Ivănescu	Moldovan	Popescu
The Waste Land	Țara pustie	Țara Pustie	Tărâmul pustiirii	The Waste Land	Tărâmul pustiirii
The Burial of the Dead	Înmormântarea mortului	Îngroparea mortului	Îngropăciunea morților	Îngroparea mortului	Îngroparea morților
A Game of Chess	O partidă de șah	O partidă de șah	O partidă de șah	O partidă de șah	O partidă de șah
The Fire Sermon	Predica focului	Jurământul focului	Predica focului	Predica focului	Predica focului
Death by Water	Moarte prin apă	Moartea prin apă	Moartea pe ape	Moarte pe apă	Moarte în apă
What the Thunder Said	Ce a grăit tunetul	Ce a spus tunetul	Ce spune Tunetul	Ce a spus tunetul	Vorbele tunetului

The titles of the five parts of *The Waste Land* also display a difference with respect to the translation decisions. “The Burial of the Dead” became ‘Îngroparea mortului’ in Covaci and Moldovan’s versions and ‘Înmormântarea mortului’ in Pillat’s translation, rendering the idea of the ceremonial of the dead, except that the alliteration in Pillat’s version, with the repetition of the sound “m”, suggests a very gloomy atmosphere and thus creates certain expectations as to what readers will discover in this part. Although none of the translators above opted for the plural, ‘Înmormântarea morților’, which is, in fact, the correct translation, the plural inherent in the English “dead” was rightly grasped by Ivănescu and Popescu, who translated the title as ‘Îngropăciunea morților’ and ‘Îngroparea morților’, respectively. Although the translators exploited the synonymic resources of Romanian and resorted to “îngropare” and to “înmormântare”, there is a subtle difference of meaning between them. Whereas “îngropare” emphasises the idea of lowering the body in the tomb, “înmormântare” encompasses the idea of the religious ceremonial of burying the dead. In the particular case of “The Burial of the Dead”, my opinion is that the best solution is ‘Înmormântarea morților’, since this part of the poem alludes to various burial ceremonials representative of ancient vegetation myths.

The title of Part II is rendered identically by all translators: “A Game of Chess” as ‘O partidă de șah’. As for Part II, “Death by Water”, there are almost as many variants as there are translators. Pillat, Covaci and Moldovan rendered it as ‘Moarte prin apă’. Ivănescu opted for ‘Moartea pe ape’ which has a

different meaning than the original title. Ivănescu's solution hints at death as affecting all that moves on water (the English translation is 'Death on Waters'), and does not refer to death by water as cause of death. In exchange, Popescu's version is more inspired, 'Moarte în apă', which is the most explicit of all Romanian versions, although not as subtle as the versions of Pillat, Covaci and Moldovan. As for Baconsky, he translated "Death by Water" as 'Mort prin apă' (English translation 'Dead in Water'), which is more concrete and lacks the generality implied by the source version.

The title of Part III, "The Fire Sermon", was literally translated by Pillat, Ivănescu, Moldovan and Popescu as 'Predica focului', rendering "sermon" by the Romanian 'predică', thus alluding to Jesus's Mount Sermon. In exchange, Covaci translated it as 'jurământ', which is a case of mistranslation, since "jurământ" means "oath", thus changing the original meaning.

As for Part V, "What the Thunder Said", where the title introduces another intertextual reference which hints at an episode in the Upanishads, the time distance between the translations becomes visible in the lexical choice of verbs: 'Ce a grăit tunetul' (Pillat), 'Ce a spus tunetul' (Doinaş and Pavel, Covaci and Moldovan), 'Ce spune Tunetul' (Ivănescu) and 'Vorbele tunetului' (Popescu). The verb "a grăi" is only used nowadays as a regionalism, but in the thirties, it was widely employed, perhaps even with a higher frequency than "a spune", the verb preferred by the other two translators. Furthermore, "a grăi" is

also much more poetic than its synonym and much more appropriate even today to the situation, since it has an archaic connotation.

It is worth mentioning that Ivănescu maintained the capitalised form of the noun in the original, ‘Tunetul’ for “Thunder”, thus preserving the allusion to the Vedantic god. Popescu is the only one who builds his solution on the noun ‘vorbele’ which means ‘words’. His solution annuls the metaphoric connotation of the original. The thunder may ‘say’ something without using words, which is what Eliot hints at. In fact, it is Eliot who translates the thunder noises into words. When relating thunder to words, Popescu makes the reference very explicit and loses part of the subtle allusion of the original.

The accurate rendering, in keeping with the poet’s intention, of words such as “thunder” or “sermon” here, is of utmost importance, since they trigger some intended associations which make readers attach to them a specific emotional load⁵⁶³. These associations help them decipher the message encoded in the allusion. In Pound’s opinions, such key words “come up with roots, with associations, with how and where the word is familiarly used or where it has been used brilliantly or memorably”⁵⁶⁴. The actualization of meanings to which readers are accustomed represents a reading key which helps them decipher the text.

⁵⁶³ Ioan Kohn. *Virtuțile compensatorii ale limbii române*, 102.

⁵⁶⁴ Ezra Pound. *ABC of Reading*. New York: New Directions Publishing Corporation, 1960, 36.

Proper Names: Toponyms and Anthroponyms

Proper names may be a real touchstone for translators, especially in the case of literary works, where they often fulfil the role of cultural markers. Furthermore, there are situations in which such proper names have a marked semantic load of great relevance for the ST, situation which may be lost through transfer to another language. Especially since proper names are distinct from common nouns in that they represent a separate sub-class of the noun, with “a specific participation in morphologic oppositions and specific means for their creation”,⁵⁶⁵.

The main function of proper names is therefore to identify and name and represent different referents of reality. Even if they do not have meaning in themselves, they may provide indication as to the gender of the person identified, his age (since anthroponyms are subject to fashion) or geographic location⁵⁶⁶.

In the case of proper names, translations should reflect the translators’ awareness of norms and conventions of the TL. The translator has the choice of acting in compliance with such conventions, when the purpose of the translation is a high degree of acceptability in the target culture and the direction is towards domestication.

⁵⁶⁵ Domnița Tomescu. *Gramatica numelor proprii în limba română*. București: Editura ALL, 1998, 228.

⁵⁶⁶ Christiane Nord. “Los nombres propios en la comunicación intercultural” in Isabel Comiere Narváez & Mercedes Martín Cinto (Eds.). *Traducción y Cultura: El reto de la transferencia cultural*. Málaga: Libros ENCASA. Ediciones y Publicaciones, 2002, 17.

There is also the possibility of acting against the said norms, when the translation has a marked foreignizing orientation. In this latter situation, the translator resorts to the assumed knowledge of the target readers with respect to source culture realities and aims at making it clear that the translated text pertains to a distinct culture.

Christiane Nord indicates the following possible strategies of handling proper names in translation: they may be simply transferred in the target language with the form they have in the source language or they may be replaced by exonyms, specific forms adapted to the target language. In order to create an exonym, the following strategies may be used: calque, phonetic and/or spelling adaptation, explanatory translation, equivalent substitution and transcription or transliteration⁵⁶⁷.

The issue of proper names translation reveals both linguistic norms and cultural customs. Moreover, this translation strategy is also time-bound, as the perspective on this aspect may change over time within the same culture. Therefore, a translation may indicate the time of its production by also considering the treatment of proper names. In this light, the analysis of the Romanian translations of Eliot's *The Waste Land* may reveal interesting facts.

⁵⁶⁷ Christiane Nord. "Los nombres propios en la comunicación intercultural", 17.

Toponyms

As opposed to anthroponyms, toponyms have a higher degree of historic and geographic significance. When translated, such proper names require the need of an already existing amount of intercultural knowledge from the target readers. Comparing the translations of *The Waste Land* into Romanian, it appears obvious that the tendency of Pillat and Ivănescu's translation is towards domestication, whereas the other versions are towards foreignization.

From the point of view of translation strategies, the Romanian versions express the translators' preferences for the use of exonyms (in Pillat) or the use of transferences (the other Romanian versions). Transference

refers to a process in which an SL item is used in a TT, but with an SL meaning. This commonly happens when for cultural, geographical or other reasons, TL has no suitable equivalent for an SL item and consequently "borrows" it⁵⁶⁸.

Usually, transference is associated with foreignizing tendencies; the main advantages it is deemed to possess are great precision, a higher respect for the source culture and more local colour⁵⁶⁹. In what follows, the table with the toponyms in the original and in the two Romanian variants will reveal the ratio between the two strategies.

⁵⁶⁸ Mark Shuttleworth & Moira Cowie. *Dictionary of Translation Studies*, 179.

⁵⁶⁹ Virgilio Moya. *La traducción de los nombres propios*. Madrid: Ediciones Cátedra, 2000, 50.

As can be noticed from the table above, Pillat and Ivănescu opted for the translation of almost all toponyms, attempting to take the text as close to the readers as possible. Nevertheless, in Pillat's version there are a few exceptions. These refer to "Mylae", "Smyrna", "Canon Street Hotel", which are kept with the form in the source text, breaking the coherence of the treatment of the other toponyms, introducing sudden foreign references that might confuse the readers. There is also a case of mistranslation which concerns the hotel name "Metropole", which Pillat interpreted as "metropolis, big city" and translated accordingly.

Two other special cases of transference refer to "Himavant" and "Ganga", which are highly culturally marked for both source and target readers. The alien atmosphere introduced by these two terms (which are only one component of the general archaic Indian theme present in the poem) is valid both for the source and the target context. In order to maintain the same stylistic effect in the target as in the source text, the only possible solution is transference, with the help of which target and source readers are placed at an equal distance from the reality of the ST.

If Pillat and Popescu translated "Ganga" as 'Gangele', which is the Romanian noun "Gange" with the definite article, "-le", bringing the source reference closer to the target readership, Covaci, Ivănescu and Moldovan opted for transference in both cases, assessing, as Nord claims, as equal "the distance

between the text world and source culture reality and the distance between the text world and target culture reality”,⁵⁷⁰.

Whereas ‘Teba’, ‘Cartagina’ and ‘Tamisa’ for “Thebes”, “Carthage” and “Thames” are the accepted exonyms in Romanian, the situation is different with “St. Mary Woolnoth” and the street names. Ivănescu even resorted to an explicitation for “Magnus Martyr” to which he added the noun ‘Biserica’, indicating to Romanian readers that Magnus Martys is a church. From the point of view of modern readers, they may strike as unusual or could be interpreted as unnecessary explicitations.

This interpretation could be triggered by the modern readers’ higher degree of familiarization with the English background, as the cultural gap between the Romanian and the English cultures has significantly narrowed since the thirties, when Pillat produced his translation. This is a transparent example of the evolution of norms in time. The translation solutions in this case are not weighed in terms of strict textual appropriateness, but with respect to translation reception. From the viewpoint of modern readers and with respect to this particular issue, the other Romanian versions would thus gain a higher degree of acceptability.

This evolution of the cultural perception is already visible in Covaci, Ivănescu, Moldovan and Popescu where street names are simply transferred into Romanian. Less so in Ivănescu’s version, where he translated into Romanian all street names. In Covaci’s text there is a certain degree of

⁵⁷⁰ Christiane Nord. *Translating as a Purposeful Activity: Functionalist Approaches Explained*. Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing, 1997, 87.

inconsistency in the treatment of all toponyms, since he chose to translate “Isle of Dogs” – ‘Insula Câinilor’ and “London Bridge” – ‘Podul Londrei’. As Nord remarks⁵⁷¹, the rather strict pursuit of one translation direction may often lead to incoherence or inconsistent solutions.

The purpose of preserving the foreign nature of the ST drove Covaci towards the creation of some hybrid forms, namely ‘Theba’ and ‘Carthagina’, which are neither Romanian, nor English. They are perceived as awkward forms, which are not accepted as Romanian by the target readers and which may also induce a false representation of the source language, as Romanian readers, non speakers of English, might think these are the forms of the said toponyms in the source language.

In this context, the archaic (even for the source readership) toponyms “Ganga” and “Himavant” rendered as in the original lose some of their foreign weight, being integrated in the other foreign toponyms. Being of Sanskrit origin, they have in fact the same effect of strangeness both to Romanian and to English readers. In the poem, Eliot’s intention when using the two proper names in Sanskrit echoes was to clearly mark the archaic and mythical nature of the place and context which became co-existent with modernity. The mythical characters, for instance, such as Anthony and Cleopatra, Tristan and Isolde, Didona and Aeneas have, in Eliot’s poem, a simultaneous existence with modern characters. The translation fails to reproduce the same powerful impact upon Romanian readers as the one obtained by the author in the source

⁵⁷¹ Christiane Nord. *Translating as a Purposeful Activity*, 19.

language. However, the context might assist a careful reader in associating “Ganga” with ‘Gange’ and “Himavant” with ‘Himalaya’ and might help him grasp the archaic connotation that takes him directly to the Indian culture, without the mediation of the English one.

Anthroponyms

Proper names designating persons are, too, culture specific and present connotations that trigger certain associations in the users’ mind. If the situation is not particularly difficult with names of real persons, it is not the case with names of fictional characters, which, besides their function of identification, also have a descriptive role, helping to sketch a certain character⁵⁷². Although Romanian has a significantly higher freedom in the treatment of names of persons than other languages, there are, however, certain conventions the breach of which may trigger a lower degree of acceptability.

In *The Waste Land*, anthroponyms are significantly fewer in number than toponyms, since most human characters in the poem are anonymous. But the ones who do have a name, most often require the actualization of literary knowledge from the readers, as they form part of the poem’s intertextual weave.

⁵⁷² Christiane Nord. “Los nombres propios en la comunicación intercultural”, 18-19.

ST	Pilat	Covaci	Ivănescu	Moldovan	Popescu
Marie	Marie	Marie	Marie	Marie	Marie
Sosostris	Sosostris	Sosostris	Sosostris	Sosostris	Sosostris
Phoenician Sailor	Marinarul Phoenician	Marinarul Fenician	marinarul fenician	Marinarul Fenician	Matrozul fenician
Equitone	Equitone	Equitone	Equitone	Equitone	Equitone
Stetson	Stetson	Stetson	Stephen	Stetson	Stetson
Cupion	Cupidon	Cupidon	Cupido	Cupidon	Cupid
Philomel	Philomela	Philomela	Filomela	Filomela	Filomela
Lil	Lili	Lil	Lil	Lil	Lil
Albert	Albert	Albert	Albert	Albert	Albert
Porter	Porter	Porter	Porter	Porter	Porter
Eugenides	Eugenides	Eugenides	Eugenides	Eugenide	Eugenide
Tiresias	Tiresias	Tiresias	Tiresias	Tiresias	Tiresias
Phlebas	Phlebas	Phlebas	Phlebas	Phlebas	Phlebas
Coriolanus	Coriolan	Coriolan	Coriolan	Coriolan	Coriolan
Hieronymo	Hieronimo	Hyeronimo	Hieronymo	Hieronimo	Hieronymo

As can be noticed from the table above, the names designating persons may be classified into several categories. First, there is the group of mythical characters — Cupid, Philomel, Tiresias, Tereu. All three translators used the naturalized versions of such names, with the exception of Philomel, to whom Covaci and Pillat give a hybrid form — ‘Philomela’. The group “ph” is hardly ever used in Romanian and when this happens, it clearly indicates a foreign proper name, as this procedure to create proper nouns has an etymological explanation external to the history of Romanian language⁵⁷³.

A particular situation is the treatment of the “Phoenician sailor”. In source poem, the character is not identified by name, but only by origin. Some of the Romanian translators interpreted the text and, using capital letters, turned him into a character in his own right — ‘Marinarul Fenician’ (Covaci, Baconsky and Moldovan) and ‘Marinarul Pheonician’ (Pillat). Any reference to Phoenicia has probably the same archaic load to Romanian and to English readers. Nevertheless, it is even more remote and marked as foreign in Pillat’s version, where he opted for the “ph” spelling, unusual in Romanian, rather than with an “f”, which is the normal one.

Ivănescu positioned himself at the opposite pole as compared to the variants mentioned above of the “Phoenician sailor” and chose to simply indicate him as one of the anonymous characters which inhabit the waste land. Therefore, he rendered it as ‘marinarul fenician’, without any capital letters. Popescu is the only one who opted for a synonym of the Romanian noun

⁵⁷³ Ștefan Muntean. *Stil și expresivitatea poetică*. București: Editura Științifică, 1972, 53.

“sailor”, namely ‘matrozul’, which in modern Romanian has a restricted use, with archaic connotations. Given the intended juxtaposition of past and present layers in the poem and the allusion to Phoenicia, Popescu’s solution may be regarded as truly inspired.

In the category of anthroponyms with archaic load we could include “Eugenides”. This name comes from Latin and alludes to eugenics, the practice which attempts to improve the human genetic qualities. Except for Moldovan and Popescu, who preferred to render this name as ‘Eugenide’, the other four translators maintained the source spelling, thus preserving the allusion it contains.

Another category of anthroponyms designates ordinary persons: Lil, Albert, Porter, Stetson and Marie. They are all rendered with their source text spelling except for Lil, which Pillat turned into the Romanian ‘Lili’. The situation is different with “Marie”. In Pillat’s version, which has a clear domesticating orientation, one would expect it to be rendered as Maria. It is not the case, because ‘Marie’ is French and, well-accustomed with French, Pillat felt it as ‘domestic’. In fact, all translators transferred the name as such into Romanian, given its universality and its general symbolism (innocence, suffering). “Maria” is the most well-known and frequently used proper name, common to a large number of people and languages and continues in modern onomatology an old Biblical name, with all its connotations ⁵⁷⁴. A strange

⁵⁷⁴ Gelu Ionescu. *Orizontul traducerii*, 60.

solution is visible in the treatment of “Stetson” in Ivănescu’s translation, where he replaced it with ‘Stephen’.

A third category of names designating persons is represented by one name borrowed from another literary work: Hieronymo, which is from Kyd’s *Spanish Tragedy*. Hieronymo undergoes some spelling transformation. For reasons that are neither cultural nor literary, Covaci spelled it “Hyeronimo”, Ivănescu and Popescu transferred the source name, ‘Hieronymo’, while Pillat and Moldovan opted for “Hieronimo”. The accepted Romanian form is Ieronim, which is archaic and triggers associations with the monastic life, being frequently used as a monk’s name. In this situation, distance in time would have been given priority over distance in space.

Even if there is a certain degree of inconsistency noted in the treatment of proper names, the analysis above indicates a domesticating orientation in the case of Pillat and Ivănescu’s translations. The main purpose of such domesticating direction is that of rendering the text as acceptable to Romanian readers as possible, of taking the text so close to them as to allow them to easily locate themselves in the space and time of the text they read.

At the opposite pole are the other Romanian versions, which approached foreign names from a foreignizing perspective, trying to make readers more aware of the fact that they are in front of a foreign text. Unfortunately, Covaci’s attempt to mark the foreign as such sometimes leads to the creation of hybrid forms which at times betray the intention of the author and confuse the target readership.

Titles of Courtesy

As regards titles of courtesy, their translation difficulty depends on the linguistic and cultural distance between the two languages involved in the process. The closer the contacts between them, the higher the possibility of accurately translating them, as shared situations generally lead to an increase of translatability⁵⁷⁵.

In the case of the two languages analysed here, English and Romanian, titles of courtesy do not raise special problems. The poem has a very limited number of titles of courtesy and yet they are handled differently by the translators.

ST	Pillat	Covaci	Baconsky	Ivănescu	Moldovan	Popescu
Madame Sosostris	Madame Sosostris	Madame Sosostris	Madame Sosostris	Madame Sosostris	Madame Sosostris	Madam Sosostris
Mrs. Equitone	d-na Equitone	doamna Equitone	Doamna Equitone	d-na Equitone	d-na Equitone	doamna Equitone
Mrs. Porter	d-na Porter	doamna Porter	-	doamna Porter	d-na Porter	d-na Porter
Mr. Eugenides	d-l Eugenides	domnul Eugenides	-	Domnul Eugenides	d-l Eugenide	DI. Eugenide

⁵⁷⁵ George Mounin. *Les problèmes théoriques de la traduction*. Paris: Éditions Gallimard, 1963, 276.

“Madame Sosostriș” is rendered with a transfer into Romanian, where the translators preferred to preserve the French reference, which is also emphasized in the ST “clairvoyante”, also a word of French origins.

The use of the title of courtesy “madame” (the Romanian phonetic adaptation is ‘madam’) conveys in Romanian a distinct meaning than in French. French titles of courtesy were introduced in Romania in the nineteenth century. “Monsieur” and “Mademoiselle” were short lived, but “Madame” made quite a career, especially used in front of family names. The title underwent a regressive evolution, coming later to be used together with the first name, usually to address persons of lower social status, who, due to their age, are to be addressed with some respect, but not enough so as to be called by the name of “doamnă”⁵⁷⁶. Therefore, “madam” plus first name developed a sort of depreciative and ironic tinge, designating a woman with not that much of an education, but with some pretence of being a “lady”.

For the rest of the titles of courtesy, the translators were consistent with their choices, with a few exceptions. Pillat and Moldovan used abbreviations, ‘d-na Porter’, ‘d-na Equitone’, ‘d-l Eugenides’, but this form of abbreviation does not have a high frequency in modern Romanian, which prescribes the use of forms ‘dna.’ and ‘dl.’ for “Mrs.” and “Mr.”. Covaci favoured full forms, ‘doamna Porter’, ‘doamna Equitone’, ‘domnul Eugenides’ which, contrasted with the abbreviated forms, indicate a higher degree of respect and courtesy.

⁵⁷⁶ Alexandru Graur. *Nume de persoane*. București: Editura Științifică, 1965, 74.

There is however one exception to this use which refers to “Mrs. Equitone”, which Covaci transferred as such into Romanian. An option not extremely inspired, since Romanian readers who are not familiar with English will not know what to make of this “Mrs”, but to presume it is some form of courtesy (assumption supported by the context, since it is preceded by the feminine adjective ‘scumpa Mrs. Equitone’). The versions signed by Ivănescu and Popescu also present a certain degree of inconsistency, since they resorted either to long or to abbreviated forms, which cannot be accounted for by any rhythm considerations.

In close connection with the titles of courtesy are the pronouns of politeness, which reflect the social distance between issuer and receiver⁵⁷⁷. The relation between English and Romanian in this area is quite delicate and the translators’ intuition, careful reading and interpretation are the main factors behind their translation choices. English mainly expresses politeness with the help of modal verbs; the mere use of the pronoun in the second person is not indication enough of whether there is any formal relation between the interlocutors, whereas Romanian has special politeness pronouns, used for various degrees of formality.

Such pronouns are only used once in the Romanian versions, in the same context, namely when Madame Sosostriis is talking to one of her

⁵⁷⁷ In *Teoria și practica traducerii* (București: Polirom, 2000), Roger T. Bell distinguished between two axes of politeness: a) a horizontal one, indicating the gap between social groups, and b) a vertical one, specifying the relations referring to power which is given by the social status, experience, authority. The higher the distance between the participants, the higher the formality involved in the exchange.

customers. She addresses him “your card”. Ivănescu, Moldovan and Popescu opted for the informal ‘cartea ta’. The possessive adjective “your” is rendered by Covaci as ‘cartea dumneavoastră’ and by Pillat as ‘cartea Matală’. Covaci is not consistent with his choice, because further in her discourse, Madame Sosostriș addresses her client using the pronoun in the second person singular: ‘Spune-i’. Baconky opted for ‘cartea Dumitale’, a pronoun which, with respect to degree of formality, is in between ‘matală’ and ‘dumneavoastră’.

“Dumneavoastră” was hardly ever used in the thirties when Pillat produced his translation and from this perspective, his is a perfectly legitimate manner to express the highest degree of formality. Nowadays, “matală” is considered archaic and is generally used by older people. The younger generations also resort to this pronoun when addressing old people, usually in their family, with whom they have a certain affective relation, this pronoun being less formal and charged with a slight patronizing connotation.

Therefore, Pillat’s formulation ‘cartea Matală’, may sound quite archaic to a modern reader from two perspectives. First, the pronoun appears nostalgic in tone; it seems to transmit an air of old-fashioned romanticism. Second, the pronoun is capitalised, which is not the Romanian norm for pronouns; but in so doing, the translator’s intention might have been to emphasise the formal relation between Madame Sosostriș, a professional in her field, and her client. However, Pillat’s solution seems to be the most inspired in this context. The clairvoyante is doing something forbidden by the law, she is afraid of being

caught by the police, and so this pronoun emphasizes the degree of familiarity and complicity between her and her client.

Onomatopoeia

In literature in general and in poetry in particular, sounds produced by animals, birds and even objects are often conveyors of meaning. According to the Romanian poet and critic Ștefan Augustin Doinaș, “sounds reflect the expression of spontaneous feelings, in particular pleasure and pain, animal cries (including bird song) and the impact of rain, wind, storm, water and fire on the environment”⁵⁷⁸. Even if they have universal value, they are modified depending on the symbolic and phonetic conventions of distinct cultures.

Translators should be well-acquainted with such conventions, because the decisions they make trigger a certain degree of acceptability. Furthermore, they are sometimes endowed with special stylistic values which complete the message to which they are embedded, providing some sort of “audio image to the thing or phenomenon they designate”⁵⁷⁹ and helping them acquire a special status in the text.

The study of phonosemantics in a translation may disclose, when sounds are seemingly arbitrary, the translator’s own interpretation of the ST. From this perspective, it is a mark of the translator’s overall translation

⁵⁷⁸ Ștefan Augustin Doinaș. *Lectura poeziei*. București: Cartea Românească, 1980, 367.

⁵⁷⁹ Peter Newmark. *Paragraphs on Translation*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd, 1993, 64.

technique, since the rendering of such text units may indicate the domesticating or foreignizing orientation of the TT.

The Waste Land displays a reduced number of onomatopoeia, most of which refer to birds' song, an indication of sorrow and the action of water on a hard surface.

ST	Pillat	Doinaş & Pavel	Covaci	Ivănescu	Moldovan	Popescu
Twit twit twit	Tuit tuit tuit	-	Cri, cri, cri	Cip cip cip	Cirip cirip cirip	Cip cip cip
Jug jug jug jug jug jug jug	Iug iug iug iug iug iug	-	Tri, tri, tri, tri, tri, tri	Ciuc ciuc iuc iuc iuc	Cip cip cip cip cip cip	Giug giug giug
Weialala leia Wallala leia	Weialala leia Wallala leia	-	Weialala leia Wallala leia	Weialala leia Wallala leia	Weialala leia Wallala leia	Weialala leia Wallala leia
Drip drop drip drop drop drop drop	Drip drop drip drop drop drop drop	Clip clop clip clop clop	Pic plici pic plici plici plici plici plici	Plici ploc plici ploc ploc ploc	Pic pic pic pic pic pic pic	Pic pleosc pleosc pleosc pleosc
Co co rico co co rico	Cu-cu-rigu, cu-cu- rigu	-	Cu cu rigu cu cu rigu	Cu cu rigu cu cu rigu	Cu cu rigu cu cu rigu	Cucurigu, cucurigu

In the case of the first two sets of onomatopoeia, “twit” and “jug”, Pillat opted for a phonetic adaptation — ‘tiu’ and ‘iug’. For “twit”, the other translators chose the naturalising path, opting for Romanian onomatopoeia, ‘cip cirip’, which are normally employed to render birds’ song. Covaci’s solution for “twit” is rather unfortunate, since ‘cri’ is the sound traditionally associated in Romanian with the song of the grasshopper which could hardly be attributed to a bird. He probably used the Romanian version for “jug”, namely ‘tri’, for assonance effects, one bird song reflecting another as in a dialogue.

The analysis of these segments in the source text and the target text also reveals a phono-symbolic difference. In English, “twit” suggests a cry of desperation and grief, but also something sweet and harmonious suggest. On the other hand, “jug” expresses something vulgar, which alludes to copulation. The Romanian variants proposed by Covaci, Moldovan and Ivănescu hint only at a merry bird song. The effect is achieved through the use of the final “i”. Since the meaning of the sounds in the ST completes the wider context of their use, the Romanian variants could be seen as a semantic deviation from the original meaning. Popescu’s alternative, in exchange, ‘giug giug’ seems to grasp the meaning of the English onomatopoeia, creating in Romanian the same audio effect which suggests sexual intercourse.

The nymphs’ lament “weialala leia” is transferred by all three translators. Even if the sound group does not resemble any structure expressing sorrow in Romanian, the combination is suggestive enough to trigger such

interpretation. Furthermore, the immediate context provides the necessary information for an appropriate understanding of the nymphs' cry.

As for the sound produced by water, Pillat surprisingly transferred the series of sounds in the original, whereas the other translators went along the naturalising path, meeting the readers' expectations as to what they know water "sounds" like in Romanian. The last bird voice heard in the poem belongs to the rooster, a bird with transparent Biblical connotations. In the ST, the rooster's song is not rendered as is normally represented in English. This could be interpreted as a hint at the universality of its symbolism. Nevertheless, the translators resorted to Romanian equivalents "cucurigu", with slight graphic variation, thus presenting the readers with their own interpretation of the poet's intention. Furthermore, they might have considered acceptability reasons, since "cocorico" would have sounded bizarre to Romanian ears.

Register

The large cast of characters who make an appearance in *The Waste Land* reveals an organization according to social classes, too. Although they make their appearance at distinct levels, both rich and poor share the same sense of desolation and uselessness. Obviously, the manner in which they express such feelings is more or less subtle and coherent, since, usually, as Hatim and Mason mentioned, "social differentiation is also reflected in

language”⁵⁸⁰. Registers mainly differ from each other in what concerns language forms, such as grammar and lexis. It is the case with the dialogue between Lil, a wife overwhelmed by the burden of raising five children on her own in war times, and her friend, both belonging to the same social category.

Differences in register as compared to the remaining text are immediately visible in the flouting of grammar rules, coherence of ideas, choice of vocabulary and certain spelling indications that suggest a particular pronunciation. The translators’ task is to grasp the idea of identity involved by the language of the specific speech community the characters belong to. At the same time, they should be able to seize the impact of such register in the ST and try to obtain the same effect and impact in the TL.

The comparison of the following fragment in the original with the Romanian variants suggests that Pillat’s version is more neutral and the change of register is indicated in the organization of sentences rather than in the choice at lexical level.

ST:

“But if Albert makes off, it won’t be for lack of telling.
 You ought to be ashamed, I said, to look so antique.
 (And her only thirty-one).
 I can’t help it, she said, pulling the long face
 [...]
 You are a proper fool, I said.”

⁵⁸⁰ Basil Hatim & Ian Mason. *Discourse and the Translator*. London & New York: Longman, 1990, 42.

Pillat:

Dar de pleacă Albert, nu va fi din lipsă de a te fi
prevenit.
Ar trebui să-ți fie rușine, am spus, să arăți atât de antică
(Și ea n-are decât treizeci și unu).
N-am ce face, a spus ea, strâmbând din nas
[...]
Ești într-adevăr nebună, am spus.

Covaci:

Dar dacă Albert se cară, să nu zici că nu ți-am spus.
Ar trebui să-ți fie rușine, i-am zis, să arăți ca o vechitură.
(Și n-avea decât treizeci și unu).
N-am ce să-i fac, mi-a zis, făcând o mutră lungă,
[...]
Ești curat nebună, i-am zis.

Ivănescu:

Dar dacă Albert își ia lumea în cap, să nu zici că nu
ți-am spus.
Ar trebui să-ți fie rușine, zic să arăți așa, ca o babă.
(Și n-avea decât treizeci și unu de ani.)
N-am ce să fac, zice, și i se lungise fața de tot,
[...]
Ești chiar tâmpită, i-am spus.

Moldovan:

Dar dacă Albert o șterge, să nu spui că nu ți-am zis.
Ar trebui să-ți fie rușine, i-am spus, arăți ca o vechitură.
(Și are doar treizeci și unu de ani).
N-am ce face, spuse ea, făcând o față lungă
[...]
Ești nebună de legat, i-am spus.

Popescu:

Da' dacă Albert o să te lase să nu zici că nu ți-am zis
 Ar trebui să-ți fie rușine, i-am zis, s-arăți așa bătrână
 (și ea abia de tre'esh'unu de ani)
 N-am ce-i face, zise, făcând o față chinuită
 [...]
 Tu ești nebună de legat, i-am zis.

The words employed by Pillat could hardly be imagined as uttered by a lower middle class woman. In this respect, the other Romanian versions are more marked both at sentence and at word level. Consideration should also be given to the fact that the degree of what is tolerated with respect to colloquial formulations at different points in time varies considerably. Therefore, the lexical solutions the other translators proposed in their version might have sounded exaggerated to the ears of Romanian readers in the thirties.

Since in the ST the dialogue is not in real time, but it is only a rendition of it, the narrating character used the formulation "I said" repeatedly, which suggests the colloquial nature of her discourse; at the same time, it also helps create a certain musicality of the fragment:

When Lil's husband got demobbed, I said –
 I didn't mince my words, I said to her myself,
 HURRY UP PLEASE IT'S TIME
 Now Albert's coming back, make yourself a bit smart.
 He'll want to know what you done with that money he
 gave you
 To get yourself some teeth. He did, I was there.
 You have them all out, Lil, and get a nice set,
 He said, I swear, I can't bear to look at you.
 And no more can't I, I said, and think of poor Albert,
 He's been in the army four years, he wants a good time,
 And if you don't give it him, there's others will, I said.

The effect is lost in all five translations, where the repetition is maintained, but the verbs and tenses used are as neutral as possible: ‘am spus’ (Covaci, Moldovan), ‘am grăit’ (Pillat), ‘am zis’ (Popescu). The solution which best suits the purposes of the source text is Ivănescu’s translation, ‘zic’, which, used in the Present Tense, creates a strong impression of informality and insistence on the speaker’s part.

The effect could have probably been recovered with the use of another verb and verb tense, “zisei”. But if this form is not acceptable, given that it is geographically marked, being used in the Southern part of Romania, a second solution could have been “am zis io”, where the register level is expressed by means of the particular form of the personal pronoun in the first person singular.

The fragment ends in the same register-marked key, with a greeting constructed on two levels, in two distinct voices:

Goodnight Bill. Goodnight Lou. Goodnight May.
Goodnight.
Ta ta. Goonight. Goonight.
Good night, ladies, good night, sweet ladies, good
night, good night”.

The suggestion of informality created with the help of the cockney dialect is indicated in the spelling, “Goonight”, the formulation “Ta ta” and the absence of commas, “Goonight Bill”. In contrast, the last sentence (an intertextual instance, in fact) is clearly marked as belonging to a totally different character, who speaks Standard English, very formal and which suggests a high level of literacy.

In Pillat's version, these two levels are presented as indistinct. He used the same register and even inserted commas where missing, thus regularizing the original text. The only mark of informality is the greeting 'Pa pa'. For the rest, everything is in good plain Romanian:

Bună seara, Bill. Bună seara, Lu, Bună seara, May.
 Bună seara.
 Pa, pa. Bună seara. Bună seara.
 Bună seara, doamnelor, bună seara, doamnelor dulci,
 bună
 seara, bună seara”.

In exchange, Covaci marked the shift between the two register levels indicating the informality of the former greeting at spelling level 'B'nă seara' as opposed to 'Bună seara', which is the standard. Unfortunately, the effect is somewhat spoilt by the insertion of 'Ta ta', which is totally unfamiliar to Romanian readers, who can infer its meaning only if they have some knowledge of English. A possible alternative to the informal greeting could have been "Sara bună", more in the spirit, probably, of the Romanian lower middle class in the thirties:

“B'nă seara Bill. B'nă seara Lou. B'nă May. B'nă seara.
 Ta ta. B'nă seara. B'nă seara
 Bună seara, doamnelor, bună seara, scumpele mele
 doamne,
 bună seara, bună seara”.

Instead of "Bună seara", which is normally used when meeting somebody, Ivănescu opted for 'Noapte bună', the most frequent greeting when leaving a room or taking one's good bye. He strived to render in writing the oral expression of "Noapte bună"; when read out loud, his translation sounds

the most inspired, its written form, as conceived by Ivănescu, may strike as awkward, although it serves the purpose of making the difference between the two register layers as striking as possible:

'Pte bună Bill. 'Ptre bună Lou. 'Pte bună May. 'pte
bună.
Pa, pa. 'pte bu'. 'Pte bu'.
Noapte bună, doamnelor, noapte bună scumpele mele
doamne,
noapte bună, noapte bună.

Moldovan opted for 'Noapte bună' both for "Ta ta" and for "Good night", although he modified the syntactic structure of the original, choosing to maintain one sentence for each line, without dividing them into smaller units, as in the source text:

"Noapte bună Bill, noapte bună Lou, noapte bună May.
Noapte bună.
Pa, pa. Noapte bună. Noapte bună.
Noapte bună, doamnelor, noapte bună, scumpe
doamne, noapte bună, noapte bună.

Popescu also managed to render the informal greeting at graphic level, without resorting to the extreme formulas in Ivănescu's translation:

B'nă seara, Bill. 'nă seara, Lou. 'Seara, May.
'nă seara.
Pa pa. înă seara. B'nă seara.
Bună seara doamnelor, bună seara dragele mele doamne,
Bună seara, bună seara.

However, it is unexplainable why he normalised the text from the punctuation point of view in the cockney fragment with the insertion of commas ('B'nă seara, Bill'), while leaving them aside in the part with a high level of formality ('Bună seara doamnelor'), since in Romanian the norm

prescribes the use of commas to separate the greeting and the noun following it.

Cultural Elements

The Waste Land is the site of several distinct cultures. The interplay of various cultural elements inevitably engenders intercultural gaps which can be bridged in translation to a higher or lesser extent. Such items are handled with in translation considering the role, the position, the impact and the effect they achieve in the ST. The strategies and methods of their translation into the TT depend on the norms and conventions institutionalised in the target system.

Items and references representative of the source culture have been termed “culturemes” or “culture-specific items (CSIs)”. Due to their variety and degree of specificity, they have often been deemed untranslatable. Aixela provides a definition of such culture-specific items, which encompasses the various aspects related to them. Thus, CSIs are deemed to be

those textually actualized items whose functions and connotations in a source text involve a translation problem in their transference to a target text, whenever this problem is a product of the transference of the referred item or of its different intertextual status in the cultural system of the readers in the target text⁵⁸¹.

Having in view that culture-specific items are a translation problem, translators have at their disposal a variety of translational strategies ranging

⁵⁸¹ Xavier Franco Aixela. “Culture-specific Items in Translation” in Roman Álvarez & M. Carmen-África Vidal (Eds.). *Translation, Power, Subversion*. Clevedon & Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters Ltd., 1996, 58.

from conservation to substitution and deletion. The choice of one strategy or another depends on the variety of parameters, supratextual (nature of target readers, the translator's status), textual (previous translations, canonization) and intratextual (relevance, recurrence)⁵⁸².

The referential gap between the source and target texts in terms of culture-specific items is dependent upon the degree of contact between the two cultures to which they belong. In this respect, *The Waste Land* as the product of the Anglo-American culture does not raise special problems to Romanian translators. Although the distance between the English and the Romanian cultures is not very large and is getting narrower due to continuous cultural exchanges, there are some culture-specific items that were treated by the translators in distinct manners.

One of them refers to "hot gammon", which has a double connotation in English. Besides the ordinary meaning referring to a type of meal, "hot" also hints at the idea of being sexually aroused, which is, in fact, one of the topics of the dialogue between the two women, one threatening the other of taking her husband. Covaci translated it as 'ciondăneală' (which is a translation mistake, since "ciondăneală" in Romanian means "fight"), while the other translators played upon variations around the noun 'șuncă': Pillat rendered it as 'șuncă încălzită', Ivănescu as 'șuncă fiartă' and Moldovan as 'șuncă fierbinte'. This translation problem pertains to the category of instances related to customs, more specifically, gastronomy.

⁵⁸² Xavier Franco Aixela. "Culture-specific Items in Translation", 65-70.

In Romania, “șuncă”, which is basically the English “bacon” or “ham” is a type of food which is never served hot. Therefore, the Romanian readers will never identify their reality with the one in the text and if they transpose themselves in the ST reality, they might think it is a plate specific to the English. The more accurate translation could have been ‘tocană fierbinte’ (hot stew), which has also the advantage of being a plausible food for the lower middle class to which it refers. Popescu tried to include the meaning of ‘fight’ and that of ‘food’, ignoring, though, the sexual allusion: ‘Și m-au chemat și pe mine, să prind totul la cald, și sfadă și mâncare’.

Then, there is the term “C.i.f. London”, which deserves some consideration. Pillat, whose overall tendency in translating is obviously domesticating, surprisingly opts for the conservation of the term and renders it as such, which may create a feeling of frustration in his readers, probably not accustomed to economic terminology. The element of surprise is enhanced by the fact that the term is not indicated as a neologism, as was the case with the other words in the same situation, where he used the words between inverted commas. The entire collocation may strike as foreign, since the second term is preserved in the original. Covaci opted for ‘Franco Londra’, which is a complete mistranslation. Moldovan translated the term: ‘Preț, asigurare, fraht Londra’. Ivănescu and Popescu maintained the reference as in the original, ‘C.I.F. Londra’. Considering the evolution of culture-specific items in time, “Cif Londra” is in fact the accurate rendering of the expression, since

International Commercial Terms or INCOTERMS are not translated so as to be recognized in every language.

A special case of culture-specific items is represented by the references to third cultures, which are often as distant from the source text reality as they are from the target text. This is the particular case of the Indian elements at the end of the poem: “data, dayadhvam, damyata” and “shantih”. In certain situations, the ST contains some explanations to the third culture items. This is also the case with the above-mentioned terms, which are explained in Eliot’s Notes. As such, they become accessible to the source and target readers (through translation of the explanation) at the same time. The culture-specific items of this type have an equidistant relation to the source and target systems.

The translation norms with respect to such terms usually consider the textual function they have in the source text. Toury mentions three possible factors that might affect the solutions adopted by translators when faced with culture-specific items. One is the dimension of the element — the longer it is, the higher the tendency to simply transfer it in the target text. Another one refers to the distance between the languages involved: exotic languages tend to remain untranslated whereas European ones are translated. A third factor is the degree of alienness they have in the ST: the higher it is, the greater their tendency to be conserved in the TT⁵⁸³.

The Indian terms have a major significance in the text. Their centrality within the second half of the poem has been rightly grasped by the translators,

⁵⁸³ Gideon Toury. *In Search of a Theory of Translation*, 131.

who preserved them as in the original. They are of utmost significance in the source poem, where they set the main coordinates of the message. Their degree of foreignness is intentionally high, especially the term ending the poem — “shantih”, and the impact they create could only be rendered in the translation through transfer.

Covaci, Ivănescu and Moldovan maintained the typographic convention of the source, preserving the italics for the triad: “*Datta*”, “*Dayadhvam*”, “*Damyata*”, while Pillat and Popescu chose not to emphasise them and simply inserted them in the text. The last line, which provides the key to the poem, is partly naturalised by Pillat, who spelled it ‘şantih’. The decision was probably aimed at assisting readers in correctly pronouncing the word which has a high incantatory potential especially when read out loud.

Embedded Texts

Regardless of a translator’s domesticating orientation, *The Waste Land* is a poem that resists total naturalisation and easy integration in a monocultural frame. The blending of various cultural references represents a challenge to any translational norms aimed at a target-oriented approach. The polyglot voices and intercultural exchanges which, surprisingly enough, create a coherent whole, place a high responsibility on the translator’s shoulders, since he will have to re-create the same coherence in the target text and be consistent at the same time with his own translation approach.

The many cultures present in the poem are preserved in the TT either through representative terms as shown above, or through the quotations which are left in the original in the source poem, too. The accepted Romanian norm regarding quotations, especially if they are typographically signalled, is to render them as such. Except for Moldovan, the other translators' versions fully complied with the norm, rendering the poet's intention in an unmediated form.

However, in an attempt of uniformity, Pillat's version marked also the two quotations which are not italicized in the original, namely the quotations from Hesse

we stopped in the colonnade,
And went on in the sunlight, into the Hofgarten,
And drank coffee, and talked for an hour.
Bin gar keine Russin, stamm' aus Lituaen, echt deutsch.

Ne-am oprit în colonadă,
Și am pornit iar la soare, în Hofgarten,
Și am băut cafea, și am vorbit timp de un ceas.
Bin gar keine Russin, stamm' aus Lituaen, echt deutsch.

and Baudelaire

‘O keep the Dog far hence, that's friend to men,
‘Or with his nails h'll dig it up again!
‘You! Hypocrite lecteur! – mon semblable, - mon frère!’

Oh, ține departe Câinele, prietenul omului,
De nu, ghearele lui îl vor dezgheata iar!
Tu! Hypocrite lecteur! – mon semblable, - mond frère!

Moldovan's decision was to translate in a footnote such foreign quotations, a decision which, when asked about it, he said would not repeat in a possible future edition of his translation. It is a surprising decision, considering

that the target readers of the text in the Romania of 2004 are obviously already accustomed to the peculiarities of the ST and would not expect to have the quotations translated for them. Furthermore, he is not consistent with his overall translation orientation which is manifestly foreignizing, since he chose to preserve the title of the poem in English.

Typographic Considerations

The Waste Land is a text where every instance contributes to the overall meaning of the poem, this including capitalisation of certain key words, spacing, punctuation and indentation. All such issues make what is called “graphically representational language”, which is a significant element of linguistic communication and which raises particular problems in translation⁵⁸⁴. As such, they have to be accurately rendered in the target language, especially due to the fact that they convey meaning. In addition, it is understood that the more important is the language of a text, the more closely it should be translated at every level, punctuation and all included⁵⁸⁵.

Besides proper nouns, the poem also contains other capitalised nouns of varying relevance. Thus, there are the figures of the Tarot cards that Madame Sosostris introduces with brief presentations

⁵⁸⁴ Basil Hatim. “Discourse features in non-verbal communication. Implications for the translator” in Fernando Poyatos (Ed.). *Nonverbal Communication and Translation*. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1997, 52 .

⁵⁸⁵ Peter Newmark. *Paragraphs on Translation*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd., 1993, 36-37.

Madame Sosostris famous clairvoyante,
 Had a bad cold, nevertheless
 Is known to be the wisest in Europe,
 With a wicked pack of cards. Here, said she,
 Is your card, the drowned Phoenician Sailor
 (Those are pearls that were his eyes. Look!)
 Here is belladonna, the Lady of the Rocks,
 The lady of situations.
 Here is the man with three staves, and here the Wheel,
 And here is the one-eyed merchant, and this card,
 Which is blank, is something he carries on his back,
 Which I am forbidden to see. I do not find
 The Hanged Man. Fear death by water.

“The Wheel”, “Belladonna”, “the Hanged Man” are the only ones that are capitalized, although she also mentions “the man with the staves” and “the one-eyed merchant”. But “the Wheel”, “Belladonna” and “the Hanged Man” stand for concept/persons that are to have a recurrent presence in the poem, mainly in the subtext. Therefore, they have an introductory role and their relevance is graphically signalled, too.

The translations preserved the capitalisation⁵⁸⁶, in keeping with the poet’s intention. Another reference which is capitalised is “Dog”, included in the allusion to Webster’s *White Devil*:

Oh keep the Dog far hence, that’s friend to men,
 Or with his nails he’ll dig it up again!

The word’s capitalisation is not an arbitrary decision and is supported by the multitude of interpretations attached to it. Consequently, its relevance

⁵⁸⁶ The Romanian norms referring to capitalization stipulates that some words, which are not normally used capitalized, may be written with capital letters to indicate a certain concept, which is emphasized, as a sign of respect, in order to achieve a stylistic effect or to give a common noun the value of a proper name (*DOOM2*, 2005: LXI).

should have been rendered in the TT with the use of the same capitalisation, which Pillat, Ivănescu and Popescu did, but not Covaci, Baconsky and Moldovan:

Pillat:

Oh, ține departe Câinele, prietenul omului.

Ivănescu:

O, să ții departe Câinele, care le e prieten oamenilor.

Popescu:

O, deoparte ține Câinele, ce-i prieten omului.

Covaci:

O, ține câinele departe de acolo, e un prieten al omului.

Baconsky:

Oh, gonește câinele, acest amic al omului.

Moldovan:

O, ține câinele departe de acum, al omului prieten.g

The pub scene contains a full line that is written in capital letters:

“HURRY UP PLEASE IT’S TIME“:

What you get married for if you don’t want children?

HURRY UP PLEASE IT’S TIME

Well, that Sunday Albert was home, they had a hot gammon.

And they asked me in to dinner, to get the beauty of it hot –

HURRY UP PLEASE IT’S TIME

HURRY UP PLEASE IT’S TIME

It is an emblematic instance, since waste landers are warned that the time they spend in sinful pleasures of the flesh and futility is drawing to an end. The urgency and relevance of the line is doubly emphasised: first, through the graphic layout (which also displays the lack of any punctuation marks, relevant for the characters' state of confusion and desolation) and second through its five time repetition. The readers' participation is thus enhanced, since they are supposed to infer that "time" here does not merely refer to the closing hour of the pub, but to a more significant time which envisages all characters of the poem and, why, not, the readers themselves.

Pillat cancelled the effect, choosing to eliminate the capitalisation and to add the missing commas: "Grăbește, te rog, e vremea". In exchange, Covaci observed both source-text indications: 'GRĂBEȘTE-TE TE ROG E TIMPUL'. The two translators use synonyms of application, "vremea" and "timpul", respectively, which are indistinct semantically, but which display a difference in use frequency and stylistic effect. Whereas "timpul" is frequently used in modern everyday language, "vremea" has an almost archaizing value and a stronger poetic impact.

It is worth mentioning that as regards this particular line, both translators manipulated the ST through translation and thus guided the text interpretation in a certain direction. They translated the imperative "hurry up" in the second person singular, whereas the English verb, which makes no number distinction, opens a larger perspective of interpretation. The Romanian translations narrowed the array of possible invisible interlocutors, which are

reduced to an indefinite second person singular, “tu”. It is an interpretation that Moldovan and Popescu grasped and rendered with the same translation: ‘GRĂBIȚI-VĂ VĂ ROG E TIMPUL’, using the second person plural which includes all possible human referents that might be envisaged by the exhortation. The most inspired solution belongs to Ivănescu, who included in his solution all the possible meanings contained in the original line: ‘GRĂBIȚI-VĂ VĂ ROG E TIMPUL DE ÎNCHIDERE’. Thus, the line encompasses both the warning addressed to waste landers and possibly the bartender’s announcement that it was time to close the pub.

The comparison of the three Romanian versions will clearly indicate the different approach of this typographic issue:

ST: HURRY UP PLEASE IT’S TIME

Pillat: Grăbește, te rog, e vremea.

Covaci: GRĂBEȘTE-TE TE ROG E TIMPUL

Ivănescu: GRĂBIȚI-VĂ VĂ ROG E TIMPUL DE
ÎNCHIDERE

Moldovan: GRĂBIȚI-VĂ VĂ ROG E TIMPUL

Popescu: GRĂBIȚI-VĂ VĂ ROG E TIMPUL

The graphic form of the poem in the original conveys meaning as well; consequently, it is as part of the text as much as words are. Spacing and indentation fulfil various roles and failure to accurately render them in translation can be accounted as a serious loss. The graphic pattern of the poem adds to the semantic load of the words. As Professor Avădanei claims with

respect to the value of spacing in poetry, “each break, for instance, introduces a hesitation, each hesitation creates room for one more thought and each thought involves a departure from the “normal” meaning”⁵⁸⁷. Therefore, this issue is to be strictly observed in translation.

Furthermore, the typographic indications are, as Hatim observes, “part of every writer’s idiosyncrasy; they are as personal as the style of the author itself”⁵⁸⁸. Therefore, in works where this text level is as significant as the words themselves, accuracy in translation is a must; otherwise, the translator runs the risk of obtaining translation losses that cannot be compensated in any other way.

While Covaci, Ivănescu and Moldovan closely observed the typographic conventions of the text, Pillat and Popescu’s versions are, in this particular area, deviant renderings of the ST. The spaces are used to divide the text into scenes and fragments, to indicate the superposition of planes and to suggest the intervention of various characters. Therefore, they mark the passage to another episode and thus create certain expectations with the readers. As such, they could be considered an element of cohesion.

The fragmented structure of the poem acquires fluidity with the help of such blank spaces between the lines. Blank spaces stand here for what is not explicitly stated in the text; they are an expression of silence, which is never devoid of meaning: ”the silence that occurs naturally after a statement is not a

⁵⁸⁷ Ștefan Avădanei. *Introduction to Poetics*. Iași: Institutul European, 1999, 49.

⁵⁸⁸ Basil Hatim. “Discourse features in non-verbal communication”, 52.

vacuum or a signless gap”⁵⁸⁹. The omission of such spaces in Pillat and Popescu’s translations is random, since they chose to maintain some of them while leaving others aside and, consequently, no regular pattern can be deducted from their presence/absence in the TT.

Indentation and the particular organization of lines add yet another layer of meaning. The first line in each part is not indented in the original, a convention closely observed by Pillat, Ivănescu, Moldovan and Popescu. In exchange, Covaci added various indentations which have a random occurrence. In addition, there are lines which begin at the middle or at the end of the row.

The organization of lines 111-128, which render a dialogue, has a special relevance.

‘My nerves are bad tonight. Yes, bad. Stay with me.
 ‘Speak to me. Why do you never speak. Speak
 ‘What are you thinking of? What thinking? What?
 ‘I never know what you are thinking. Think.’

I think we are in rats’ alley
 Where the dead men lost their bones.

‘What is that noise?
 The wind under the door.
 ‘What is that noise now? What is the wind doing?
 Nothing again nothing.
 ‘Do
 ‘You know nothing? Do you see nothing? Do you
 Remember
 ‘Nothing?’

I remember

⁵⁸⁹ Fernando Poyatos. “Aspects, problems and challenges of nonverbal communication in literary translation” in Fernando Poyatos (Ed.). *Nonverbal Communication and Translation*. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1997, 36.

Those are pearls that were his eyes.

‘Are you alive, or not? Is there nothing in your head?’

The syncopated lines reflect the troubles of the woman’s mind, the state of confusion, desperation and irritation — a graphic representation of a nerve crisis, which is further reinforced by the presence of the negative words, used repeatedly, “never” and “nothing”. Besides, the dialogue lines are again separated by blank spaces, a clear indication of silence. This subtle reference to silence is totally cancelled through the deletion of the blank spaces, a solution to which all Romanian translators resorted, except for Covaci and Moldovan. Here is the fragment above in Pillat’s translation, where the spaces between the lines were all deleted:

“Nervii îmi sînt bolnavi azi-noapte. Da, bolnavi. Stai cu mine.

Vorbește-mi. De ce nu vorbești niciodată? Vorbește.

La ce te gîndești? La ce bun gînduri? La ce?

Nu știu niciodată la ce te gîndești. Gîndește”.

Cred că sîntem în alei umbrate de șobolani.

Unde oamenii morți și-au pierdut oasele.

“Ce înseamnă acest zgomot?

Vântul sub ușă.

“Ce înseamnă acest zgomot acum? Ce directică vîtul?

Nimic față de nimic.

Nu

Știi nimic? Nu vezi nimic? Nu-ți amintești

Nimic?”

Îmi amintesc

Măgelele acestea erau ochii lui.

“Ești viu sau nu? Nu e nimic în capul tău?”

The same happens with the last lines of “The Fire Sermon”, which are a whole-hearted invocation of God and which end in “burning”. The word is

separated again from the body of the text; the emphasis hints at its very special role in this part and in the poem as a whole:

To Carthage then I came

Burning burning burning burning
O Lord Thou pluckest me out
O Lord Thou pluckest

burning

Again, Pillat deleted the blank spaces between the lines, which in the source poem were meant to create a moment of meditation born out of despair and self-awareness of one's sinful existence:

La Cartagina atunci am sosit
Arzând, arzând, arzând, arzând,
O, Doamne, tu m-ai scos din foc
O, Doamne, tu m-ai scos
arzând

At the punctuation level, *The Waste Land* contains entire fragments with no other punctuation marks than the full stop at the end of the final line. There are scenes where the text is devoid of any punctuation whatsoever, such as the enumeration of the falling towers:

Jerusalem Athens Alexandria
Vienna London.

The lack of commas hints at the universality of the situation; cities, both old and new, all share the same fate of destruction and fall and the list is never ended. The effect is lost in Pillat's version, where he opted for the normalisation of the punctuation. He inserted commas and full stops where they were missing, strictly applying the formal punctuation norms:

Ierusalim, Atena, Alexandria,
Viena, Londra.

The other Romanian versions witness the evolution of the literary system and with it, of the perception on text conventions. By the seventies, when Covaci produced his translation, the first after Pillat's text, Romanian literature was already accustomed to modernist writings, having its own poets who were experimenting with new ways of expression. The system had already assimilated new forms and the peculiarities of the source poem no longer represented a novelty. As for Moldovan and Popescu, their accurate rendition of the poem at the typographic level is no surprise, if we consider the moment of their translation.

The Time Span between the Translations

The time distance between the translations is visible at various levels. One diachronic coordinate which indicates the time span dividing the translations is the archaic spelling of different grammar categories, from verbs to nouns and adverbs. Along with the archaic spelling, Pillat's version also contains words that are not used anymore in everyday language, but which survive in poetry translation when used to achieve an archaizing effect, usually to reflect the production moment of the ST. The parallel synonyms present in the other two translations are more neutral and therefore less loaded with poetic force:

ST	Pillat	Covaci	Ivănescu	Moldovan	Popescu
Pool	Tău	Iezer	izvor	baltă	izvor
handsome	Chipeș	frumos	frumos	arătos	frumos
lands	Țarină	pământ	pământuri	pământ	pământuri
daring	Cutezare	cutezanță	îndrăzneală	îndrăzneală	îndrăzneală

In Pillat's translation of the Notes there is even a word that underwent a semantic shift: "fable" is rendered as 'fabulație' ("result of the imagination") and not as 'fabulă'.

Every process of translation should consider the fact that the target language system is in a constant process of change. In order to maintain the dynamism of translation, Newmark suggests that any enduring work requires another translation every thirty years⁵⁹⁰. The presence of *The Waste Land* in the Romanian culture meets this requirement, since the time span between the existing translations is, on average, twenty years.

Considered from this diachronic perspective, the translations reveal the change in attitude towards norms of translation and the translators' expectations with respect to the readers' cultural proficiency. Whereas grammar is the language category most resistive to change, differences at lexical and even spelling levels are visible and contribute to the creation of a particular atmosphere carried by the ST in the target system.

⁵⁹⁰ Peter Newmark. *Paragraphs on Translation*, 135.

The word choice in the translations clearly indicates the time distance separating them. In fact, a reader who is not aware of the year Pillat wrote his version (1933) could easily approximate it even if considering only the vocabulary level. What mainly marks this distance is that in Pillat's version there are words which are no longer in common use and others which, in time, have acquired a marked poetic aura.

These are words which used, for example, by a contemporary translator, have the role of indicating the time of the source text, if it happens to be very distant from the translation moment. They belong to various grammar categories:

verbs – ‘a adăsta’ for “to wait” (FS l. 115-116: “At the violet hour, when the eyes and back / Turn upward from the desk, when the human engine waits” — ‘În ceasul violet, când ochii și umerii / Se ridică de pe birou, când mașina umană adastă’), ‘a zbugni’ for “to grow” (BD l. 19-20 “What are the roots that clutch, what branches grow?/Out of this stony rubbish?” — ‘Ce rădăcini sunt astea de se țin încleștate, ce crengi zbugnesc / Din aceste surpături de piatră?’), ‘a se depărta’ for “to depart” (FS l. 175: “The Nymphs are departed” — ‘Nimfele s-au depărtat’), ‘a isprăvi’ for “to be over” (FS l. 252: ‘Well now that’s done: and I’m glad it’s over’ — ‘Eh, s-a făcut și sunt bucuroasă că s-a isprăvit’);

nouns: ‘Prier’ for “April” (BD l. 1: “April is the cruellest month, breeding / Lilacs out of the dead land” — ‘Prier e cea mai crudă lună, născând / Flori de liliac din țara moartă’), ‘vântre’ for “sail” (WTS l. 419-420: “Damyatta: The

boat responded / Gaily, to the hand expert with sail and oar” — ‘Damyatta: Luntrea răspunse / Bucuros mânei îndemânatică la vântrele și vâslă’), ‘portărel’ for “solicitor” (WTS l. 409: “Or under seals broken by the lan solicitor” — ‘Sau sub pecetii rupte de portărelul jigărit’). This last noun reflects the reality of Pillat’s time, when a ‘portărel’ was a sort of a debt collector, a profession that no longer exists. In the remaining four translations, “solicitor” is rendered by ‘avocat’, because the profession expressed by “solicitor” does not have an equivalent in the Romanian legal system.

In Pillat, there is also a series of words which underwent a spelling modification and for this reason may sound quite archaic to modern readers when encountered with the old forms: ‘cari’ for ‘care’ meaning “who”, ‘diretica’ for ‘deretica’ meaning “to clean”, ‘a turbura’ for ‘a tulbura’ meaning “to disturb”, ‘ebreu’ for ‘evreu’ meaning “Jew” or ‘djungla’ for ‘jungla’ meaning “jungle”.

The presence of this lexical level creates the perfect setting for the target text, the reality of which refers to the thirties. Pillat’s translation should be considered in a three-fold relation: with the ST, with Pillat’s contemporary readers and with modern readers. From the perspective of Pillat’s readers, the translation is perfectly acceptable and they can easily identify their speech habits in the translated poem. Given the fact that the source text expresses the reality of the British culture in the twenties, Pillat’s version can also be considered a very fortunate rendition at the lexical level, which associates the TT to the ST in an almost synchronic relation.

As far as the modern readership is concerned, the translation clearly indicates a time distance as to the original poem. The translator being only a mediator, the contemporary readers have access to the source text through the translation. Therefore, they enter the ST world via the translated text. The result might be a higher degree of detachment and less emotional involvement since the reality of the ST is very clearly emphasised as temporally distant.

Another issue worth mentioning from the viewpoint of the time distance between the translations is the use of neologisms in Pillat's text. According to Newmark,

neologisms are either new words naming newly invented or imported objects or processes or new expressions that suddenly fill one of the innumerable gaps in a language's resources for handling human thought and feelings at some level of formality⁵⁹¹.

The different treatment of the same source terms reveals the evolution they underwent in language. In his translation, Pillat employs the following terms between inverted commas: 'clairvoyantă', 'weekend' and 'City':

Madame Sosostriș, faimoasă "clairvoyantă"
Avea un guturai, cu toate acestea
E cunoscută drept cea mai înțeleaptă femeie din Europa.
[...]
Nimfele s-au depărtat.
Și amicii lor, trîndavii moștenitori ai bancherilor din
"City".
[...]
M-a poftit într-o franțuzească demotică
Să iau dejunul la Canon Stret Hotel,
Urmată de un "weekend" în Metropolă.

⁵⁹¹ Peter Newmark. *A Textbook of Translation*, 122.

It goes without saying that in resorting to this technique, he indicates to his readers that these are not Romanian words. Emphasising their foreign nature, he stressed their cultural English specificity.

The other translators used precisely the same terms, but without marking them in any way: they are simply assimilated by the text. This indicates that the terms are already used or known by Romanians ('weekend' as such and 'City' as the symbol of the financial district) and therefore the translators' expectations with respect to their readers' knowledge are quite high. Moldovan is the only one who preserved 'weekend' with the graphic modification 'week-end' and translated "City" as 'oraş', a decision which deprives the term of its symbolic connotations.

The lack of any typographic signalling may suggest thus the degree of familiarization, and with it, acceptance of the terms designating a distinct cultural reality. On the other hand, it could be a technique consistent with the general foreignizing orientation of the translations, in which case the readers are exposed to yet other instances of the foreign culture of the ST.

"Clairvoyantă" is a special case. Pillat and Covaci adapted it by adding the feminine ending "ă". It is quite clear, judging by the treatment of the other neologisms, that Pillat considered it one of Eliot's idiosyncratic expressions. Besides, at the time he was translating *The Waste Land*, French was the language in fashion in Europe; therefore, he might have justly assumed that the word would sooner or later be assimilated in Romanian (as was the case with "weekend"). Both Pillat and Covaci were aware of the fact that this adapted

French word was used ironically in English. Therefore, in using “clairvoyantă”, they maintained in Romanian as well the ironic effect that dominates the entire fragment which makes reference to Madame Sosostris. Ivănescu, Moldovan and Popescu translated the word as ‘clarvăzătoare’, which is deprived of the ironic connotation the noun has in the source poem. Baconsky, in exchange, opted for ‘ghicitoare’, which, although not ironic, has a somewhat depreciative value.

Cases of Mistranslation

In a text with the scope and complexity of *The Waste Land*, inevitable cases of errors or mistranslation occur, which are not necessarily the result of incompetence or ignorance on the translators’ part. The seriousness of such cases depends, up to a certain point, on the position or value they hold in the text. Translation scholar Peter Newmark distinguishes between “errors”, which he relates to meaning, and “mistakes”, which refer to the message. He further classifies mistakes into “misleading” and “nuanced”⁵⁹² and he divides the misleading mistakes into referential (inaccurate rendering of information) and linguistic ones. The nuanced mistakes can be, also according to Newmark, stylistic or lexical.

In performing the analysis of a translated text, consideration should be given to various degrees of an error, which may sometimes be absolute and

⁵⁹² Peter Newmark. *A Textbook of Translation*, 31.

other times debatable. Some of them may be “brutal mistakes”,⁵⁹³ to use Barnstone’s terms. She also considers that such mistakes derive from the misunderstandings of the ST or failure to grasp subtleties of the SL. In this category, Barnstone includes the confusion of personal pronouns, the misinterpretation of reflexive verbs or simply confusion of one word for another.

Errors could also be accounted for by the translator’s own approach to the translation process, the emphasis he places on readability to the detriment of accuracy or the dominant translation policy of the time⁵⁹⁴. Reception is also a significant factor in assessing a mistake, since what certain readers may evaluate as creative translation, others could consider a sheer flouting of accuracy norms.

As Newmark remarks, errors⁵⁹⁵ may also be the result of solving translation problems facing translators in an unfortunate or uninspired manner. The process of decision making when dealing with translation problems is very complex and may depend on the translator’s own linguistic/cultural competence, the constraints to which he is subjected and which can be both intra- and extra-textual. The translator’s orientation towards accuracy or acceptability is another factor with considerable weight when dealing with

⁵⁹³ Willis Barnstone. *The Poetics of Translation. History, Theory, Practice*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1993, 119.

⁵⁹⁴ Peter Newmark. *A Textbook of Translation*, 128.

⁵⁹⁵ In *Translating as a Purposeful Activity* (73), Christiane Nord quotes Kupsch-Losereit, who groups errors into six categories. They are considered to be breaches of: 1. the function of the translation; 2. the text coherence; 3. the text type or text form; 4. linguistic conventions; 5. culture and situation-specific conventions; 6. the language system.

translation problems, which can be pragmatic, cultural, linguistic or text-specific⁵⁹⁶.

The comparison of the translations with the ST discloses certain errors that can be grouped in various categories. The first one refers to misreadings or careless reading, with various consequences on the text interpretation. Some of them reveal ignorance of the general or immediate context. It is the case with the adjective “myself“ (GC l. 140: “I didn’t mince my words, I said to her myself”), translated by Pillat, Covaci and Moldovan as ‘însumi’, the masculine form, when the context clearly indicates that the person referred to is a woman. “Put another record on the gramophone” (FS l. 256) is another example, where Pillat rendered “record” as ‘suvenir’, an error that could have been easily avoided with a more careful consideration of the context: “Mai pune un suvenir pe gramofon”.

Pillat and Covaci’s translations of “clearing her breakfast” (FS l. 222) are clear deviations from the ST: ‘îi lumineaza cina’ (Pillat), ‘pregătindu-i micul dejun’ (Covaci), when the meaning is clearly as indicated in the other versions, namely ‘își strânge dejunul’ (Popescu), ‘micul dejun îl pregătește’ (Moldovan) or ‘curăță masa de la dejun’ (Ivănescu). Another case of “brutal mistake” is Covaci’s version of “She’s had five already, and nearly died of young George” (FS l. 159): ‘Luase de pe acum cinci și mai că murea după tânărul George’, where all references are confused. “Five” refers to children and not pills and she was not at all high over heels with George, as the

⁵⁹⁶ Christiane Nord. *Translating as a Purposeful Activity*, 75-76.

translation wrongly suggests, but she almost died after giving birth to George, her fifth son.

These are referential mistakes and cannot be overlooked, especially if they result in confusing the reader, who can find no support for the target terms in the immediate context. It is also the case with “lilacs” (BD, l. 1-2: “April is the cruellest month, breeding / Lilacs out of the dead land”), translated by Covaci as ‘lilieci’: ‘Aprilie este luna cea mai crudă, zămisliind / Lilieci din pământuri sterpe’. The literal translation is confusing, since, when designating a flower, “lilac” is uncountable and only receives the plural form when it indicates the noun “bat”. Consequently, the image of “bats” filling the air in spring is rather horrible, in total contrast with the English reference, which creates an atmosphere of serenity and freshness.

The other referential mistake refers to the translation of “rag”, which the same Covaci rendered with the first dictionary meaning, ‘zdreanță’. The noun has depreciative values in Romanian (‘whore’) and it is not usually associated with adjectives such as “intelligent” and “smart”. In addition, the reference to rag music is forever lost, with no compensation provided. The other translators rendered “Shakespeareian Rag” as ‘refren shakespearian’.

Such misreadings do not always affect the general message of the text, but distort the meaning of isolated scenes. In this particular case, the reader misses the shift from Antiquity to contemporaneity which Eliot is operating in the poem. There are also other misreadings which refer to key words or references that distort the overall meaning of the poem and guide the text in

totally new directions. It is the case with the line “By the waters of Lemman I sat down and wept...” (FS l. 182), a subtle personal indication to the poet’s life and, at the same time, a reference to David’s Psalms. Pillat grasps the latter meaning and translates the line in the first person plural, losing the personal connotation: ‘La apele Lemmanului noi șezum și plânsem...’.

Another set of errors from the acceptability point of view is represented by lexical inventions. They appear only in Covaci’s version. One of them is ‘hyaciniți’ for “hyacinths” (BD L. 35: “You gave me hyacinths first a year ago”), which he calqued after the English term and for which a Romanian reader with absolute no knowledge of English can hardly find any reference in his reality. Moldovan opted for the same solution, with a slight graphic variation, ‘iaciniți’. The context might clarify the concept, but only in providing the general idea — they may represent some sort of flower.

Other inventions in Covaci are ‘hoarde *înglugate*’ for “hooded hoardes” (WTS l. 369: “Who are those hooded hoardes swarming”) and ‘înstrunând’ for “fiddled” (WTS l. 78-79: “A woman drew her long black hair out tight / And fiddled whisper music on those strings”), coined after the nouns “glugă” (“hood”) and “strună” (“fiddle”). Usually, new coinages are the result of the process to find equivalents in the TT to terms existing in the ST with an equally strange behaviour⁵⁹⁷. Therefore, these two words could have been accepted in extremis if they had been solutions to some problems raised by

⁵⁹⁷ Peter Newmark. *A Textbook of Translation*, 143.

source terms. But it is not the case at all, as Pillat's translation proves it: 'hoarde cu plugă' in the former case and 'strune' in the latter.

The mixing of styles when such is not present in the ST may also result in a nuanced stylistic error. The blending of styles can be rendered in the TT if present in the ST or if the translator's intention is to produce certain effects, which is not the case here. If not, neologisms and old words or lexical items belonging to different registers are an unfortunate association⁵⁹⁸.

In Covaci's text we find words such as 'sifon' for "soda water" (FS l. 201: "They wash their feet in soda water"), 'șleपुरi' for "barges" (FS l. 268-269: "The barges drift / With the turning tide"), 'sigilii' for "seals" (WTS l. 409: "Or under seals broken by the lean solicitor") together with 'oaspe' for "guest" (FS l. 230: "I too expected the awaited guest"), 'a cerca' for "to endeavour" (FS l. 235-237: "The time is now propitious, as he guesses / The meal is ended, she is bored and tired, / Endeavours to engage her in caresses"), 'barem' for "at least" (FS l. 426: "Shall I at least set my lands in order?").

The violation of the ST form often results in errors that may have a highly negative impact upon the TT. Covaci's translation displays a paradox. Although adequate from the ST perspective, the translated text is at times highly unacceptable when considered from the target language point of view. The translator's orientation gives prominence to the ST, where certain fragments have rhymed lines. In the desire to preserve the rhyming structure,

⁵⁹⁸ Leon Levițchi. *Îndrumar pentru traducătorii din limba engleză în limba română*. București: Editura Științifică și Enciclopedică, 1975, 221.

the translator completely modified the line organization of the ST, one of the consequences being an increased number of lines in the TT.

Other serious consequences are illogical structures: “Inexplicable splendour of Ionian white and gold” (FS l. 265) is rendered as ‘splendori nespuse de ionie alb și aur’, “And gropes his way, finding the stairs unlit...” (FS l. 248) as ‘Scări: drum pe băjbâite-n întuneric’; confusion with respect to the various referents or facile rhymes which undermine the gravity of certain scenes: “Nu pot să leg un pic / Nimic cu nimic”.

As we have already seen that omissions can represent translation errors when they affect meaningful textual units, the same could be said with respect to additions, which load the text with unnecessary information, especially in Covaci’s translation: “Trams and dusty trees” (FS l. 292) is translated as ‘Tramvaie, arbori cu praf pe trunchi’; “Who is the third who walks always beside you?” (WST l. 360) as ‘Dar cine umblă de de cealaltă parte a trupului tău?’ (which would translate into English as ‘But who walks on the other side of your body’, which creates a ludicrous situation). The translator chose to split whole lines and in some instances introduced information in the newly created ones.

The target text’s readability is thus seriously affected not because the source text is difficult, but because of uninspired translation decisions. The translator sacrificed form, coherence and even logic at times in favour of rhyme. Weighing the relevance of the replaced items and the results of the replacing process, one may note an imbalance between the two texts and a

displacement of emphasis which was not at all called for by the needs and requirements of the ST.

Ivănescu's version reveals fewer translation errors due to his careful preservation of the source poem structure and a thorough knowledge of its intertextual references. There is, however, an inconsistency in the treatment of the source "hyacinths" which he rendered as 'zambile', but he translated "Hyacinth Garden" as 'Grădina Hiacinților'. It also remains a mystery why he chose to render the proper noun "Stetson" as 'Stephen' and why he opted for the Romanian 'schit' to represent the source noun "chapel", which would have been an adequate equivalent for the English word, preserving all connotations, including the literary reference to Chapel Perilous. The English noun has a symbolic value of which Ivănescu was fully aware, since he marked 'schit' with a foot note, in which he uses the term 'capela': "In the Grail legends, the Perilous Chapel is the last stage of the Great Search" (Note 69).

As regards Popescu's translation, the existing errors do not alter considerably the meaning of the original, but at times his solutions are incongruent with the atmosphere of certain paragraphs or are simply uninspired lexical choices. In this last category we can indicate "dull canal" rendered as 'canalul plictisit' (FS l. 189), which is unacceptable in Romanian even as a poetic expression, "the hand expert with sail and oar" (WTS l. 420) is rendered into Romanian as 'mâna expertă cu pânza și vâsla', where the adjective 'expert' is completely out of place and "she smoothes her hair with automatic

hand” (FS l. 255) is literally translated as ‘își netezește părul cu mâna-automată’ and reminds of the movement of a robot limb.

False friends are another category that could distort textual meaning unless properly identified and handled. The errors resulting from inappropriate treatment of false friends may result from their synchronic or diachronic use. The former case applies to the word “character” appearing in the Notes, where it refers to Tiresias: “Tiresias, although a mere spectator and not indeed a ‘character’, is yet the most important personage in the poem, uniting all the rest” (218). Pillat and Covaci, rendered it as ‘caracter’, which in Romanian means “feature”, “nature” or “letter”, and not as ‘personaj’ which is in fact the accurate translation of “character” into Romanian and which was the solution proposed by Ivănescu and Moldovan.

The Translation of the Notes

In broad lines, the translation of the Notes follows the same pattern as the translation of the text, the translators being generally consistent with themselves. The only Romanian version which is not accompanied by the source poem’s Notes is Popescu’s, who did not publish them due to the lack of appropriate space (he published his translation in a magazine consequently he had to observe the imposed space restrictions).

Since the Notes provide explanations to certain references in the poem, they display a large array of titles of literary works and their corresponding

authors. Covaci and Ivănescu chose to translate all English titles and texts, opting for a high degree of readability. In Covaci's case, the translator's presence in the text is also visible at the typographic level, since he wrote the entire body of the Notes in italics, except for the titles of the various works mentioned therein. The decision could have been triggered by the desire to indicate the clear distinction between the text of the poem and the explanatory Notes, although since the publication, they have become an integral part of *The Waste Land*.

The Notes in Moldovan's translation indicate the same translation pattern as the body of the poem. He translated all the titles of the books referred therein, but also the foreign quotations, which the other two translators did not do. It is not surprising if one is to consider that, in footnotes, he provided the Romanian variant for the foreign references in the poem. The translator assumed the task with great responsibility and performed a laborious work of research; consequently, the Romanian translations from Virgil, Hesse or Baudelaire are mentioned as produced by celebrated translators in the target culture, whose names are indicated between brackets.

The analysis of Pillat's variant reveals at times a surprising translational behaviour and his treatment of the titles is rather inconsistent. They are at times translated into Romanian, with indication of the source title between brackets, and other times are preserved in the original. At the same time, he opted for the non-translation of all English quotations, which is a surprising decision considering the general domesticating strategy he favoured. English loses thus

its centrality in the Notes, being placed on the same level with the other languages of the various quotations (French, Latin, German). However, he resorted to referential additions, inserting information that he considered might further assist readers. Therefore, all references to Shakespeare's works are presented with the author's name between brackets, even though it is not the case in the ST.

With respect to reference 210, "The currants were quoted at a price 'cost, insurance and freight to London'; and the Bill of Lading etc. were to be handed to the buyer upon payment of the sight draft", Pillat left it completely untranslated, although it represents the poet's own intervention and it is not a quotation. He also displayed some inconsistency as regards the relation between the Notes and the body of the poem. Although in the poem he graphically adapted "shantih" as "șantih", in the Notes he preserved the reference as in the ST. The same line of inconsistency is also present in Covaci and Moldovan, who, in the same paragraph, maintained the ST spelling "Buddha", which in Romanian is 'Buda', but rendered the common noun as 'budism'.

Given the fact that the role of the Notes is to assist readers in deciphering some references of the poem, their translation should be rendered as closely as possible, with little personal interference of the translators. However, the translators manipulated the text to various degrees, some verging on translation errors. It is the case with Covaci's text, where he rendered "damyatta" as "stăpânește", which means "to possess something". But in the

meaning indicated by Eliot, “control” refers more to “refrain oneself”, to control one’s feelings, emotions and deeds. The Romanian verb “a stăpâni” has this meaning only when used reflexively, ‘stăpânește-te’. Otherwise, it is closer to the meaning of the English verb “to rule”, which is not at all the case here, where the contrary is advised, i.e. the practice of humility.

Covaci also makes proof of a limited interpretation of the ST when he translates “the formal ending of an Upanishad” as “sfârșitul formal al uneia dintre Upanișade” which would translate back into English as “the formal ending of one of the Upanishads”. The translator misunderstood the use of the indefinite article here and his Romanian variant wrongly suggests that “shantih” is the ending of a particular Upanishad and not of Upanishads in general. In his translation of the Notes, Moldovan mistranslated “sympathize” (in the Notes, l. 402: “Datta, dayadhvam, damyata’ (Give, sympathize, control)”) which he rendered as “ai simpatie” (“Datta, dayadhvam, damyata” (Dăruiește, ai simpatie, controlează)), which is not the meaning of the English verb.

Ivănescu’s treatment of Eliot’s Notes is very personal and represents a clear case of a translator making his presence very visible in the mediation between the source and the target text. Besides producing the Romanian version of the poet’s own Notes, Ivănescu also provides his own comments to explain the various references and allusions for which Eliot did not provide an explanation. At the end of the poem, he warns his readers on his personal

intervention: “In the following notes, out of which some accompany the first edition of the poem, Eliot’s notes have been completed”.

The translator has in fact two types of interventions. One of them refers to Ivănescu’s comments placed between round brackets immediately after Eliot’s observation. Obviously, the numbering of the Notes in the target text no longer corresponds to that in the source poem.

For instance, one of Eliot’s Notes reads as follows: “Cf. Part III, v. 204”. Ivănescu’s solution is: ‘*Cf. partea a III-a, v. 204. (Nota lui Eliot se referă la propriul poem și anume la versul unde onomatopeele pentru cântecul privighetorii sut adaptat într-o formă pervertită “pentru urechi murdare”, adică pentru un mediu degradat sufletește)*’. The content of the brackets, which represent Ivănescu’s intervention has the following translation: ‘Eliot’s Note refers to his own poem, namely the line where the onomatopoeia for the nightingale’s song are adapted to a perverted form ‘for dirty ears’, that is for a spiritually degraded environment.

As can be noticed, Ivănescu’s explanation provides additional information to that which is succinctly indicated by the source poet. Another form of the translator’s interference with the original text is Ivănescu’s explanation of events and characters present in the poem, but which Eliot does not specify in his Notes. Such an example is Note 63 in Ivănescu’s numbering: “*Moartea pe ape, la care se referă și alte versuri ale poemului, trebuie privită în economia textului ca un aspect al acțiunii distrugătoare, pentru a deveni apoi purificatoare, a apei*”. English translation: ‘*Death by Water*’, referred to in

other of the poem's lines as well, has to be considered as an aspect of the destructive and then purifying action of water'. Such comments are the translator's personal interference with the text and make what could be seen as a critical analysis of the poem for the benefit of the readers. Furthermore, although Ivănescu transfers the foreign embedded texts as such, he provides a translation for each and everyone of them in the Notes.

The abundance of the translator's comments, which double those of the poet, betrays the text in a way. Eliot's intention with respect to the Notes was not necessarily to explain, but to challenge the readers in finding their own reading keys. Furthermore, the Notes are sometimes ironic or misleading, which initiates a game with the readers. In providing such detailed information, the translator in fact overexplicit what was initially meant to be only alluded to.

The Translators' Visibility

The translation decisions and strategies adopted by the Romanian translators indicate to various extents their presence/visibility in the TT. The issue of the translator's visibility in the translated text is tightly linked to the overall orientation of the translation, either towards domestication or towards foreignization. In the former case, the translation presents a tendency to read as an original, being what Venuti calls a fluent translation.

The agent who produces the resulting text, namely the translator, assumes a sort of self-annihilation, whereby the reader is given the illusion that he has direct access to the text world without any mediation whatsoever. Also according to Venuti, “the illusion of transparency is an effect of fluent discourse of the translator’s effort to ensure easy readability by adhering to current usage, maintaining continuous syntax, fixing a precise meaning”⁵⁹⁹. In other words, the translator’s efforts are directed towards acceptability rather than adequacy.

In the case of foreignization, the translator ignores the possible narcissistic desires of the readers, putting them face to face with the Other, clearly “signifying the foreignness of the foreign text”⁶⁰⁰. In the process, the translator signals his presence as the mediator between the familiar universe of the target system and the alien world of the source. The translation resists the ethnocentric orientation of the target system and introduces the culturally and linguistically distinct components of the foreign text.

Although the general tendency of Pillat’s version is to domesticate (the translator avoids peculiar syntactic structures, neologisms, the use of the punctuation) and the translation displays a coherence that might indicate readers that they have a Romanian text in front of their eyes, the text resists complete naturalisation. Despite the translator’s efforts to create a fluent translation, in Venuti’s terms, the ST itself has a strong tendency of maintaining its foreignness by means of the cultural terms, peculiar

⁵⁹⁹ Lawrence Venuti. *The Translator’s Invisibility*, 1.

⁶⁰⁰ Lawrence Venuti. *The Translator’s Invisibility*, 99.

typographic indications or foreign references that have to be preserved in the TT, their absence threatening to affect the integrity of the ST, both at message and form level.

Even though Pillat's translation may well read as an original (the poet-translator's artistic craftsmanship creates a Romanian version which rises up to the original), the comparison between the ST and his translation indicates several aspects where the translator made his presence clearly visible. Therefore, he assumed major decisions with respect to punctuation, spacing and graphic elements that, at times, interfere with the poet's intentions, the main consequence being a reduction of the effect obtained in the original. The effort of normalising the ST in translation is indicative of the concern of TT acceptability in the target system. At the same time, it suggests the assumptions the translator made regarding his readers' degree of openness and willingness to renounce the familiar and the stereotype literary patterns to which they were accustomed.

Pillat also marked his presence in other assumptions he made in the Notes, where he indicated between brackets authorial information related to certain titles mentioned there, information that was not present in the original. Furthermore, he interfered with the title of the Notes as well. In the original, the title read as follows: "Notes to 'The Waste Land'". Pillat's version is: "Notele autorului (la poemul *Țara pustie*)". The translator resorted to two additions, which could be viewed as unnecessary explicitations; the former is "autorului" and the latter is "poemul". The translator's reason for the former

addition might be to suggest his readers that the Notes and the clarifications contained therein were not his contribution and are an integral part of the poem as the poet intended them to be.

As such, he implicitly placed himself in the title of the Notes and he seemed to say “I, translator, indicate to you, reader, that the Notes you are about to read belong to the poet”. Thus, he clearly marked his status as “the third”, to use Eliot’s words, always present in the relationship between readers and the translated text. The brackets contain a superfluous addition, being well-understood that the Notes refer to the poem *The Waste Land* and not to some material external to it.

At the level of paratextual elements, it is worth mentioning that Pillat opted for the omission of the elements which make the title page of the poem. As such, he deleted the date, 1922, the quotation from Petronius referring to the Sibyl and the dedication to Ezra Pound. Their presence in the poem is far from being arbitrary. The reference to Petronius is tightly linked to the theme of the poem, hinting at the same time (by means of the Latin and Greek indications) at the richness of cultural presences in the text. The dedication to Pound (an intertextual instance as well) hints at the making of the poem, in which Pound played a significant part.

The choice to delete such elements cancels the poet’s intentions, the “introduction” to the poem, depriving it of the challenge to decipher the Sibyl’s words; at the same time, it ignores the poet’s desire to acknowledge the contribution of his friend, Pound, to the creation of the poem. His decision

could be accounted for by the wish to lure the readers into approaching the poem and discovering its beauty, assuming the risk of omitting the above-mentioned elements. Since they did not actually impede the further evolution of the text, he might have considered that he could delete them altogether.

Pillat's clarifications and translation strategies hinting at his visibility are more than a manifestation of his concern with the Romanian readers. His purpose was to serve both the original poem and its target recipients to the best of his abilities; it is a strenuous effort to strike a balance between the rendition of the poem without affecting its personality and integrity and its accurate reception by the target readership.

Due to the fact that it follows the source poem more closely, Covaci's version reflects a higher degree of the text's foreign load. The translator becomes a visible guide into the mazes of the text; the consequence is, at times, an orientation of the poem's message in directions that deviate from the poet's intentions, as reflected in Covaci's use of capital letters or the treatment of certain key words. He assumed the status of visible translator from the very beginning, where, on the title page, he added his own dedication: "*Se dedică lui Nichita Stănescu*". The dedication is written in italics, in order to indicate it as distinct from the rest of the text. Nichita Stănescu (1933-1983), the poet to whom the translation of the poem is dedicated, was Covaci's close friend and a prominent voice in the Romanian poetry. He also signed the preface to the 1973 volume of verse translated by Covaci from Eliot. The label "il miglor fabbro" attached by Eliot to Pound somehow mirrors Covaci's dedication to

Stănescu, one of the major craftsmen of modern Romanian poetry in the sixties.

Another intervention of the translator at text level is the modification of the number of lines, which is higher in the Romanian version. In part II, “A Game of Chess”, the longer lines of the original are divided into shorter ones. Here is an example from the beginning of “A Game of Chess”. These are lines 77-85 in the source poem:

The Chair she sat in, like a burnished throne,
 Glowed on the marble, where the glass
 Held up by standards wrought with fruited vines
 From which a golden Cupid peeped out
 (Another hid his eyes behind his wing)
 Doubled the flames of sevenbranched candelabra
 Reflecting the light upon the table as
 The glitter of her jewels rose to meet it,
 From satin cases poured in rich profusion”.

In Covaci’s version, the lines were split, the nine lines becoming twelve as a result:

Și scaunul pe care ea stătea
 Era ca tronul lustruit, încât
 Sclipea pe marmură, unde oglinda,
 De stâlpi și vii cu struguri sprijinită,
 Din care se ivea un Cupidon
 (Căci altul capu-și ascunde-n aripă)
 Dubla lumina unui candelabru
 Cu șapte brațe, reflectând-o pe
 Chiar masa noastră, ca și cum atunci
 Lucirea giuvaerurilor ei
 S-ar fi sculat s-o-ntâmpine de prin
 Cutii de fin satin, în fast bogate’.

The first 34 lines in Part II, “A Game of Chess”, (l. 77-110) become 45 lines in Covaci’s translation; the other translations strictly observed the structure of the source poem, maintaining the same number of lines (433).

The obvious consequence is that lines are no longer numbered as is the case with the ST. Therefore, the poet’s explanations in the Notes, instead of clarifying references, blur the text even more. Covaci numbered each explanation in each Part starting from 1; the reader is left in a sheer state of confusion, since he cannot relate the explanation to the line in the poem it refers to. Thus, the Notes significantly lose their explanatory role, increasing the frustration of the readers whose expectations are betrayed — they turn to the Notes to find clarifications, which indeed they do, but another task awaits for them there, that of discovering the correct link between them and the lines they explain.

Together with the omissions and additions, specific translation choices at text level which the translator made during the process, Covaci’s version also displays the visible intervention of the translator in the resulting text. This also hints at the evolution of the attitude towards translation in the Romanian literary system, in which translation ceased to be relegated a second plane.

In Moldovan’s version, the text displays fewer instances where the translator’s presence is visibly indicated. As a matter of fact, in the translator’s preface, Moldovan specifically stated that his intention was not to “improve” the source text, favouring a strict translation path to the detriment of “spectacular effects”. Nevertheless, he opted for the translation of foreign

quotations both in the text, under the form of foot notes, and in the Notes. On the title page he preserved, though, all references in the original, including the English term in the dedication, “For Ezra Pound”.

If an author wishes his work to acquire “the afterlife” Benjamin was talking about, both in time and in space, its translation in a given culture should be accessible to different generations of readers. Each retranslation reflects the translation norms and policy at the time of its production, the general attitude of the public towards translation, the translator’s expectations with respect to his target readership. The poem performs each time a re-enactment under new and different circumstances, especially when the poem offers such an open perspective as *The Waste Land* does.

The fundamental purposes of a translation — that of being, on the one hand, a genuine artistic event and, on the other hand, that of transmitting the specifics of the source culture — are in a constant relation of tension under three main aspects: the language, the cultural context and the individual style of the author/translator, especially in the case of powerful poetic personalities⁶⁰¹. The Romanian translations of *The Waste Land* represent the encounter between the style of a titan of European letters and the literary skills of the Romanian translators, most of whom (Pillat, Ivănescu and Covaci) were writers of poetry themselves.

⁶⁰¹ Ioan Kohn. *Virtuțile compensatorii ale limbii române*, 112.

Chapter 6

The Translation of Cultural Elements in

The Waste Land

***The Waste Land* as a Work of Translation**

Recent decades of research in translation studies have advanced the idea that the translation field has broadened and expanded beyond the limits of mere linguistic considerations. Thus, translation is nowadays approached in terms of cultural exchanges, transfers of meaning, inter-systemic relations or interpretations which range from adaptation to complex recontextualizations. In this light, *The Waste Land*, a fusion of literary experiments and methods, may also be considered from a translational perspective.

Relying on theories belonging to George Steiner (1978), Itamar Even-Zohar (1990) or Robert de Beaugrande (1994), this chapter intends to analyse the manner in which *The Waste Land* adopted a wide range of intertextual instances, as well as techniques borrowed from various semiotic fields, and transformed them into new material, continuing or altering original significances. Astounding interpretations, relocations and rewritings support the idea that *The Waste Land* may be approached as an elaborate work of translation, in which ‘the task of the reader’, to paraphrase Benjamin, is to compose and decompose the distinct layers of significance together with the poet.

Andre Lefevere considers translation as the most powerful type of rewriting (the forms of which include anthologies, translations proper, criticism, literary histories etc.), which is the transformation of an original material manipulated in such a way so as to suit the ideological trends or

aesthetic purposes of a certain period/writer. In *The Waste Land*, Eliot takes over and rewrites fragments of world literatures, an endeavour that brings to the attention of modern readers, together with great literary names, writers or works that have been forgotten or neglected by contemporary literary tastes, taking the survival of the said work/writer a step further. As Lefevere holds,

in the past, as in the present, rewriters created images of a writer, a work, a period, a genre, sometimes even a whole literature. These images existed side by side with the realities they competed with, but the images always tended to reach more people than the corresponding realities did⁶⁹⁹.

Poetry, as Eliot created it, is a place of various encounters: of the poet with his readers, of the readers with the text, of the poet with an entire tradition from which he extracts his inspiration. Artistic expression, and poetry in particular, is the sublimated essence of entire generations: “I have tried to point out the importance of the relation of the poem with other poems by other authors and suggested the conception of poetry as a living whole of all the poetry that has ever been written”⁷⁰⁰. *The Waste Land* is such a puzzle, in which representative items of the world literature, together with allusions to painting, music and dance, intermingle in an act of cultural interrelation and mutual reflection. Each piece depends upon the others and upon the context as a whole, and the overall poetic meaning is a blend of distinct references.

If considered from a certain angle, the monumental work which is *The Waste Land*, with its various cultural transmutations, may resemble an act of translation. In this respect, we look at translation as Even-Zohar does, in terms

⁶⁹⁹ Andre Lefevere. *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*, 5.

⁷⁰⁰ T.S. Eliot. “The Frontiers of Criticism”, 17.

of transfer⁷⁰¹. He considers that the notion of “transfer” could be successfully employed to refer to translation, since it provides a wider context to the translating activity and allows for inter-systemic relations, with their variety of types, to be included in the field of translation. Eliot himself resorted to various inter-systemic transfers. On the one hand, there is transfer at the language level, both intra- and interlinguistic. This is proven by the abundance of quotations in French, German, Italian, Latin or Greek, which are simply transplanted in a basically English-dominated context. This transfer provides them with new meanings and opens them to new interpretations.

Intralinguistic relations envisage a fusion of language registers, from the colourful English of the London bar to the religious idiom of St. Augustine and to the elevated discourse of the speaker/poet as representative of the English-speaking intellectuals. On the other hand, the poem houses transfers between distinct semiotic systems, expressing, by means of words, rhythms and cadences of opera and jazz or scenes and themes inspired by Picasso or Bosch. All these forms of transfer are placed against a common cultural background, a universal adherence to a mythical structuring of the human spiritual experience.

The transfers, either under the form of foreign languages preserved as such, or as presentation of distinct ideas and approaches to life in all its aspects, raise the issue of the Other, a chronotopical Other, remote both in time, as was the case with various English writers, or Virgil and Dante in the broader

⁷⁰¹ Itamar Even-Zohar. “Translation and Transfer” in Itamar Even-Zohar. *Polysystem Studies*. Special Issue of *Poetics Today*, 11:1, 1990, 74.

European context, and in space — the Indian culture. The dialectic self-other automatically involves a process of decodification. The Other manifests his alterity and opens himself to interpretations, a process which transgresses the borders of self-referential frameworks. The two polarities converge in *The Waste Land* so as to create a new background, in which differences and similarities coexist and work together to find solutions to a situation of crisis.

The Waste Land is an intricate web of cultural references displayed under the form of allusions, quotations, partial translations and which spread over a wide array of time periods and spaces. The relations and associations among them or between them and the poem as a finished product suggest an impressive effort of finding a pattern that indicates the possibility of spotting unity in diversity. But this process deliberately implies certain transformations and recontextualizations that hint at a resemblance with a work of translation, because, in fact, “any approach to a given culture always involves a process of translation”,⁷⁰².

The relationship between two interacting cultural systems has beneficial consequences in either direction. The importing context, in this case *The Waste Land*, ensures the survival of the imported items, enriching their layers of significance due to recontextualization. The life of a work of art is the sum total of its derivations and interpretations which embrace a variety of forms⁷⁰³. By means of such perpetual re-enactments, it proves its translatable nature and

⁷⁰² Ovidi Carbonell. “The Exotic Space of Cultural Translation” in Román Alvarez & M. Carmen-África Vidal (Eds.). *Translation, Power, Subversion*. Clevedon & Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters Ltd., 1996, 81.

⁷⁰³ Miguel Gallego Roca. *Traducción y Literatura*, 29.

flexibility which allows it to fit a vast array of contexts. In turn, the resulting poem depends on the associations between the transferred items and their relation to the overall intention of the poem. It is a form of interdependence that ensures coherence and the set up of a rich cross-cultural network of meanings. This process alludes to the procedure of interanimation which raises both texts to a higher level, since their association provides more significance that they would not have enjoyed if considered in isolation. Steiner mentions this procedure as mutually beneficial for two texts involved in a cultural transfer, since it creates a ‘dialectic of fusion’ in which the identity of either text is enriched and redefined by this relation of reciprocity.

George Steiner holds that culture is a repetition of past meanings. By extrapolation, one could extend such statement to translation, since it is often deemed one of the basic components of culture, if not one of its main mechanisms. *The Waste Land* is a complex network of intertextual analogies and relations. The strategy of fusing elements belonging to distinct cultural spaces is basically the tool of translation and it can vary “from immediate reduplication on to tangential allusion and change almost beyond recognition. But the dependence is there and its structure is that of translation”⁷⁰⁴.

Drawing on Roman Jakobson’s classification of translation types, Steiner designs a new category which he places in between ‘translation proper’ and ‘transmutation’. He calls it ‘partial transformation’, which covers a wide range of cultural manifestations. They include “paraphrase, graphic illustration,

⁷⁰⁴ George Steiner. *After Babel*, 485.

pastiche, imitation, thematic variation, parody, citation in a supporting or undermining context, false attribution (deliberate or accidental), plagiarism, collage and others”⁷⁰⁵. Eliot’s poem does not merely take over previous texts, but proceeds to their ‘metamorphic repetitions’, a process which involves the adjustment of the imported item to fit the new context and the adjustment of the target context (which includes the readership) to accept and assimilate the presence of the Other (especially in the case of quotations in the original, where the Other can be sensed as resisting the assimilating tendencies of the target text).

Steiner’s approach to translation is developed by Beaugrande to encompass all processes which involve a form of transformation or another:

translation could be seen to occur not merely when a person ‘transposes’ a ‘source language text’ into a ‘target language text’, but in the far broader sense of when a person transposes any content into any form or from one form into another form⁷⁰⁶.

This definition could apply to the intersemiotic transfers implied by the paintings and musical artefacts whose substance was moulded and turned into poetic content by Eliot. It may also envisage the transfer between genres; the poem incorporates allusions to and fragments from tragedies, hagiographic writings, sonnets, novels, opera librettos.

⁷⁰⁵ George Steiner. *After Babel*, 437.

⁷⁰⁶ Robert de Beaugrande. “Cognition, communication, translation, instruction: The geopolitics of discourse” in Robert de Beaugrande, Abdullah Shunnaq and Mohamed Helmy Heliel (Eds.). *Language, Discourse and Translation in the West and the Middle East*. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1994, 2.

Eliot's design is to gather the debris of a crumbling world. To this end, he shores against the ruins of the European civilization any piece of art with particular intrinsic value to or which represents a certain period or place. The intertextual framework unites fragments covering an impressive display of geographic spaces, from Europe to Asia, including references to the literary past of the poet's adoptive country. From a temporal point of view, the poem moves mostly in a synchronic direction; the hypotexts⁷⁰⁷ trace the Western artistic evolution from Antiquity to the beginning of the twentieth century. The palimpsest thus obtained is subjected to a process of contextual translation by means of which each piece is interpreted depending on its relation with the context in which it is placed. Chaucer's April becomes 'the cruellest month' from the perspective of the modern wastelander and Webster's dog is turned from foe to friend, because it fulfils a completely different role in the modern poem.

Thus, the experience of the Other manifests itself not only at the encounter with a foreign culture. The poem contains allusions and quotations from works signed by names such as Milton, Spencer, Webster or Kyd, not

⁷⁰⁷ G. Genette set five types of transtextuality, from among which approximately three have applicability in the particular case of Eliot's *The Waste Land*: *intertextuality*, where he includes plagiarism, quotation and allusion (of which Eliot makes extensive use), *paratextuality*, with a particular significance for the interpretation of a text, since it provides potential reading keys, *architextuality*, which mainly deals with the relations between a text and the genre it belongs to, *metatextuality*, which indicates when a text is being self-referential and *hypertextuality*, in which Genette includes irony, pastiche, caricature and translation, and which points to a relationship between a previous text (called hypotext) and a subsequent artistic product (called hypertext) derived from such text. In the light of such classifications, we may consider *The Waste Land* a hypertext which is the successful result of a combination of hypotexts that have undergone a variety of transformations and permutations (Gerard Genette. *Palimpsestes: la littérature au second degré*. Paris: Seuil, 1982).

easily recognizable by the contemporary readership. This process of transfer performed by Eliot is therefore faced with the issue of reception and literary history. As Andrew Benjamin indicates, within such types of exchanges, history introduces the concept of “temporal alterity”. Representatives of distinct periods are ultimately perceived by modern readers as a “historical other”⁷⁰⁸. An inevitable gap is visible between authors of more or less distant past and modern receivers of their works. Consequently, the recovery of the meaning and identity of such intertextual instances might prove difficult, if not impossible, were it not for contextual indications or paratextual explanations — in this particular case, the final Notes.

The distance between past and present is also emphasised starting at a basic level, spelling. In the quotation from Kyd’s tragedy, Eliot decided to maintain the archaized spelling: “Why then Ile fit you. Hieronimo’s mad againe”. The detachment from bonds with the present is also visible in the indication of distance in time and space upon which the poem closes. The ending in Eastern key, which suggests the weight placed upon a literature outside Western borders, tends to subvert the dominance of previously listed items. The parallel with the Indian culture triggers a re-assessment of the Western artistic legacy and of its positioning in the context of the contemporary panorama.

⁷⁰⁸ Andrew Benjamin. *Translation and the Nature of Philosophy*. London & New York: Routledge, 1989, 61.

Presupposition

The extensive intertextual material requires a special effort from the reader, who has to reactivate his literary knowledge. There have been hints at Eliot's elitism, which may translate, to a certain extent, into a preference for learned readers, able to decipher the large amount of cultural data referred to in his writings. Readers are challenged to infer a great deal from the material they have in front of their eyes resorting to their cultural background. In the twentieth century, poetry, according to Eliot, should shake readers off their habit of merely 'swallowing' information of whatever nature, be it poetic or factual, without any effort at making connections and analyzing the surrounding context. "It appears likely that poets in our civilization, as it exists at present, must be *difficult*. [...] The poet must become more and more comprehensive, more allusive, more indirect"⁷⁰⁹.

Consequently, placing himself in this range of "difficult poets", he launches the challenge for his readers by resorting to a massive use of presuppositions, by means of which he addresses the various fields of knowledge with which his readers are allegedly familiar: geography, religion, history, literature. As Alcaraz puts it, presupposition "refers to various facets of the pragmatic meaning of the passage that its writer or sender assumes are

⁷⁰⁹ T.S. Eliot. "The Metaphysical Poets" in *Selected Essays*. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1950, 248.

previously known to the hearer or receiver”⁷¹⁰. Even if the definition envisages a more pragmatic perspective, it could be extrapolated and applied to this particular situation.

Presupposition implies the establishment of a special relationship between the sender, in this case, the poet behind *The Waste Land*, and the intended recipient of the message. When he resorts to such presupposition, the sender indirectly suggests that he has high expectations from the reader, whom he trusts to possess the necessary cultural competence that could assist him in making sense of the text. The readers, representatives of modern age, have to reach conclusions and find the proper keys by themselves: “Our civilization comprehends great variety and complexity, and this variety and complexity, playing upon a refined sensibility, must produce various and complex results”⁷¹¹.

Eliot is a very demanding creator, who sets difficult deciphering tasks for his interlocutors. Thus, the text witnesses the presence of both linguistic and non linguistic, cultural and contextual, presuppositions. Readers are expected to be proficient in several languages (some of which require a classical education), in order to be able to understand the quotations and allusions preserved in the original. At the same time, they have to activate their literary knowledge in order to detect whom the various voices resounding in the poem belong to, as well as their contextual relevance. A number of such

⁷¹⁰ Enrique Alcaraz. “Translation and Pragmatics” in Roman Álvarez & M. Carmen-África Vidal (Eds.). *Translation, Power, Subversion*. Clevedon & Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters Ltd., 1996, 106.

⁷¹¹ T.S. Eliot, “The Metaphysical Poets”, 248.

presuppositions are cancelled by the context⁷¹², which is the case with the thunder words and the glosses explicating them or the Notes at the end of the poem, when they specify the original context and the source of the said quotations. The intention of the poet might have been to fill in the gap between what he assumes to be the cultural competence of his readership and their actual information baggage. At any rate, the impact of the poem is highly dependent upon the readers' ability to translate into full meaning the rich intertextual material, which is partly explained, partly merely alluded to.

Intersemiotic Translation

The Waste Land, “the master document of the modernist movement in literature”⁷¹³, gathers the special, synaesthetic techniques and methods of writing that set modernism apart from previous literary movements. When Pound, the initiator of the movement, initiated a search for revolutionary means of expression to impose a new aesthetic, he looked outside the literary field, to alternative structures of artistic manifestation, such as painting and sculpture.

⁷¹² Peter Fawcett, in “Presupposition and Translation” in Leo Hickey (Ed.). *The Pragmatics of Translation*. Clevedon & Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters Ltd., 1998, mentions defining features of presuppositions among which one is that of being ‘defeasible’, i.e. they are cancelled by the context or mode of discourse. Other features refer to the fact that they do not vary depending on whether they are used in affirmative or negative sentences.

⁷¹³ A. Walton Litz. “*The Waste Land* Fifty Years After” in Walton Litz (Ed.). *Eliot in His Time*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973, 8.

To a large extent, the modernist code somehow contained “the wish that poetry could be written with something other than words”⁷¹⁴.

Eliot incorporated in his poetry, and in *The Waste Land* in particular, interpretations and variations of musical works or cinema products, besides themes and motives borrowed from painting. In this direction Eliot also manifests his craft in dealing with “the parodies and ventriloquial effects of English music hall [...], literary variations on the effects of collage Cubism, montage techniques borrowed from the repertoire of early cinema”⁷¹⁵.

Eliot’s attempt at embedding in the poem all this variety of artistic expression resembles a particular form of translation. Roman Jakobson called it transmutation or intersemiotic translation, “an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems”⁷¹⁶. Jakobson’s taxonomy included three types of translation, among which transmutation is placed last. The first one is intralingual translation or rewording, which refers to interpretation within the same language. The second type is interlingual translation or translation proper, which is the transposition of code units from one language into another. In Eliot’s use of transmutation, the process is somewhat reversed, since his translation envisages the transformation of other sign systems into the verbal one⁷¹⁷.

⁷¹⁴ Frank Kermode quoted in Michael H. Levenson. *A Genealogy of Modernism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984, 130.

⁷¹⁵ A. Walton Litz. “*The Waste Land* Fifty Years After”, 8.

⁷¹⁶ Roman Jakobson. “On Linguistic Aspects of Translation” in Rainer Schulte & John Biguenet (Eds). *Theories of Translation. An Anthology of Essays from Dryden to Derrida*. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992, 145.

⁷¹⁷ Jakobson’s intersemiotic translation is approached by Umberto Eco in *Mouse or Rat? Translation as Negotiation* (London: Orion Books Ltd., 2003) in terms of ekphrasis, in which

Musical Echoes in *The Waste Land*: Wagner, Jazz, Bird Songs

Wagner

The music of Wagner reverberates in the poem at crucial moments in the evolution of characters. The quotations from *Tristan and Isolde*, itself a story of unfulfilled love, are the framework of another painfully unaccomplished love affair, featuring the speaker and the hyacinth girl. The couple of Tristan and Isolde is not chosen at random to give weight to the story in the hyacinth garden. They are the archetype of ultimate love. Since mediaeval times, they have conveyed the symbol of a love so great that could only be achieved in death.

What Wagner⁷¹⁸ succeeded through his music was precisely this: to raise their story from the individual level to the universal one. “His opera is not mere re-telling of the ancient story, but a radical re-creation of it ⁷¹⁹”. If the ancient couple fails to be together because of the adversity of external factors, most of them of supernatural order, Eliot’s pair of lovers finds it impossible to reunite at an emotional level because of a failure to communicate, to connect to

he mainly includes the description of visual works of art by means of the verbal system. He underlines that many paintings of the past have survived the passage of time due to such procedures as ekphrasis.

⁷¹⁸ Wagner’s own ‘translation’ of the myth is relevant. His intentions were to present a drama that developed at the psychological level rather than on a realistic plane. To this aim, he eliminated much of the narrative material in the myth, choosing to express through music the interior drama of the heroes. Although some of Wagner’s opponents criticized the opera which they saw as the glorification of adultery, his version is “the most tragically ascetic of all” (Ernest Newman. *The Wagner Operas*. Vol. 1. New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1981, 175).

⁷¹⁹ Ernest Newman. *The Wagner Operas*, 188.

each other. Tristan and Isolde's feelings transcend the mundane. On the other hand, the isolation of the modern lovers is spiritual; the two remember the passionate encounter they had had "a year ago", in their separate ways.

The later encounter surprises the man "looking into the heart of light", symbol of transcendence, knowledge, spiritual epiphany as opposed to the desire and passion he had experienced before. Unconsciously, he had renounced passion and by so doing, he lost the ability to connect to the hyacinth girl. Hence the lack of communication, the isolation. At the other extreme there is the mythical pair, devoured by "endless yearning, longing, the bliss and the wretchedness of love [...]; one thing alone left living – longing, longing, unquenchable, a yearning, a hunger, a languishing forever renewing itself"⁷²⁰.

The two pairs, the frame and centre of the Eliotian scene, are separated by their attitude toward passionate experience. However, their feelings converge towards the same point, that of hopelessness in sharing, on the one hand, a transcendental experience, and on the other, a material union. Hope is the missing link that, paradoxically, brings the two couples together. *Tristan and Isolde* is one of the operas most devoid of hope, because "it expresses desire, which is the opposite of hope"⁷²¹.

⁷²⁰ Wagner quoted in Ernest Newman. *The Wagner Operas*, 206.

⁷²¹ Jacques Rivière. *Études*. Paris: Éditions de la Nouvelle Revue Française, 1911, 144.

Jazz

Wagner's music and the state of elation it induces in the hearer/reader are counterbalanced by the insinuating rhythms of jazz. The blend of cultures that granted *The Waste Land* such a particular and, at the same time, universal value, is also visible at the level of other musical elements. In *The Waste Land*, modernity lives side by side with classicism. In the poem, jazz is the conveyor of a double significance. On the one hand, it is among the few elements that remind of Eliot's American roots. Ragtime, imported at the beginning of the century from America, was successfully adopted by the old continent. Eliot himself was a great fan of jazz. Even if, later on, he turned into a naturalised European, at the time he was writing *The Waste Land*, he still saw himself as a "metic, a foreigner". He was still the Other, who needed something familiar from home that could facilitate his process of adjustment.

On the other hand, the artistic avant-garde considered jazz as a symbol of change. With its African-American roots, ragtime offered a sort of "primitive" alternative to the so prim and proper Western culture. As David Chinitz argues,

jazz was embraced by avant-gardists and progressive intellectuals as a symbol of their onslaught against sterile mores and 'traditional' aesthetics. For these groups, jazz became the cornerstone of a new, more broad-minded attitude towards popular culture, often leading to a call for commerce between high culture and the popular⁷²².

⁷²² David E. Chinitz. *T. S. Eliot and the Cultural Divide*. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 2003, 30.

The techniques of jazz, its richness of allusions, the smooth transfer from one theme to another, the seeming incoherence and rupture of lines and rhythms appealed to the young poet in search of a means to translate into words his own fragmented, mixed feelings. He managed to equal the mastery of jazz musicians, creating with words what they did with music:

I was intrigued by this power to move me while eluding my understanding. Somehow its [*The Waste Land*] rhythms were often closer to those of jazz than were those of Negro poets, and even though I could not understand then, its range of allusion was as mixed and as varied as that of Louis Armstrong⁷²³.

The influence of jazz in literature, the so-called “jazz movement”, expressed through syncopated rhythms and a particular, more inarticulate use of grammar. Syncopation and the adjustment of the poetic discourse to the linguistic habits of popular culture represented by such genre are lessons that Eliot had learned even prior to the extraordinary success of jazz in Europe⁷²⁴. His propensity for the music of the masses and the mere fact that he used it as a source of inspiration are proofs against the accusations according to which Eliot was the exclusivist representative of the elitist culture, who ignored and disdained the rich potential of the “low-brow” one. *The Waste Land* is yet another example pointing to the contrary. Suffice it to think of the soft rhythms of jazz, soothing, accessible, indolent, fragmented, lacking in any inhibitions, and lines such as

⁷²³ Ellison quoted in David E. Chinitz. *T.S. Eliot and the Cultural Divide*, 141.

⁷²⁴ Laforgue was one of the first revolutionary poets who inserted popular songs in their poetry. Themes and ideas are often introduced by means of musical intertextual instances. The urban landscape could only be complete if featuring the particular traits of people inhabiting it.

Good night Bill Good night Lou Good night May
 Goodnight.
 Ta ta. Goodnight. Goodnight.
 Good night, ladies, good night, sweet ladies good
 night, good night

seem to instil in the reader/hearer a pleasant feeling of drowsiness.

The aforementioned lines are an appropriate closing for the pub scene, but they also remind of Hamlet, a messenger of Shakespeare, who, in his turn, had become the character of a rag song. The insertion of the “Shakespearian Rag” draws a parallelism with *The Waste Land* itself. It was often hinted that the allusion could have a self-referential value. Like the composer of a jazz song, the poet gathers allusions from miscellaneous artistic fields to create his own rag piece. Both artistic forms seem more connected than one might think. They both resist the already established standards of the time and possess the arguments with the help of which they can face any possible attacks. At the same time, they stand for what was representative in the epoch: the confusing rhythms of everyday existence, the lack of order and stability, asserting and opposing all these at the same time.

“The Shakespearian Rag” (which Eliot spells “Shakespeherian”) mentions Shakespeare in what one might consider an irreverent, mocking manner. It acknowledges his importance for the world literature, but sees him outdated and pedantic and in need of a new presentation that would make him more appealing to contemporary audience. It admits the cultural superiority of the old master, purporting that, however, times impose a change.

Even if the allusions were often interpreted as Eliot's reinforcement of the gap existing between modernity and the classical period in the art history of Europe (as indeed is the case with most of the other intertextual instances), jazz here is indicative of his ambivalent attitude toward the period he was living in. The comment of the poet/character which accompanies the allusion: "It's so elegant / So intelligent", acknowledges the place assigned to this genre in the epoch. No irony may be detected here and the conciliation between high- and low-brow cultures, which seems to be achieved by means of ragtime, is one of the few moments of conciliation in the poem. A ray of hope shines on the possibility of reaching a common ground. It appears as if modernity, although lacking in values and self-balance, might still survive due to its relation with classical reminiscences.

Bird Songs

Since humans are not the only characters in *The Waste Land*, the poet did not deny other creatures the opportunity to express themselves in a manner as close as possible to the verbal system. Normally, the songs of birds that make an appearance in the poem, the swallow, the nightingale, the lapwing, the rooster and the hermit-thrush, are, by themselves, devoid of any meaning to human ears. Here, they are turned into language, even if inarticulate or absurd.

The presence of the "bird dialect" could be interpreted as an extreme reduction of language. It stands for a number of signifiers which, in fact, point

to no meaning, except for the subjective, symbolic one granted to it by humans. The birds in question are not chosen at random. There is the triangle made by the swallow, nightingale and lapwing, avatars of three characters in an ancient tragic love story. The myth of Philomel, her sister, Procne, and the latter's husband, Tereus, king of Thrace, is alluded to in three of the five parts of the poem. Their story, presented in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, mirrors the many unhappy sentimental affairs in the modern world. Except that in the myth, characters are turned into birds, a radical transformation that is a return to the state of innocence which precedes reason and meaning. Even though as humans these characters went through experiences marked by violence, gods were merciful and liberated them turning them into birds. What pervades is a dreadful story and a "twit" and a "jug", powerless laments reaching deaf human ears.

In Part V, "What the Thunder Said", the other two birds provide their artistic performances. One of them is the hermit-thrush, about which, in the Notes, Eliot states that "Its water-dripping song is justly celebrated". Water is the great absence in this last part of the poem and the quester/speaker is in desperate need of a few drops. Under such circumstances, he turns delusional and interprets sounds and movements as indicative of some water presence:

If there were the sound of water only
 Not the cicada
 And dry grass singing
 But sound of water over a rock
 Where the hermit-thrush sings in the pine trees
 Drip drop drip drop drop drop drop
 But there is no water.

The song of the hermit is very much like the sound of water hitting a hard surface⁷²⁵ and gives the speaker the illusion that water may be somewhere near. But, despite its seemingly prophetic song, the hermit is not the one meant to bring about rain.

This role is, instead, given to the rooster, which closes the bestiary parade in the poem. The above-mentioned story of this transformation into birds, a primitive and pagan explanation of an act of creation, is counterbalanced by the presence of the rooster, a powerful Christian symbol:

Only a cock stood on the roof-tree
 Co co rico co co rico.
 In a flash of lightning. Then a damp gust
 Bringing rain.

It is the messenger of the long waited for rain, so arduously expected to restore life to the physically (and spiritually) dry land. Interestingly, the rooster sings in French and not in English. This comes, however, as no surprise, since the main voice of the poem has already proven its polyglot talents. Thus, the image of the rooster as a universal messenger is once more reinforced.

⁷²⁵ Joseph Bentley & Jewel Spears Brooker. *Reading The Waste Land. Modernism and the Limits of Interpretation*. Amherst: The University of Massachusetts Press, 1990, 177.

Plastic Arts

Visual arts did not seem to raise the same interest in Eliot as did, for instance, ballet or music. Nevertheless, he shares with the new movements in painting such as cubism or surrealism the desire to break away with the traditional, logical sequence of scenes, be them visual or linguistic. Fracture of meaning and representation seemed more accurate in depicting real life, with its inchoate movements and disturbing emotional landscape.

The Cubist vision involves the simultaneous existence of parallel images that hint at the possibility of pluriperspectivism, of a pool of interpretations triggered by an artistically deployed element. Similarly, scenes in *The Waste Land* reflect and superpose each other. Such is the case with the figure of “the third” both in the trip to Emmaus and in Shackleton’s expedition, Phlebas, the drowned Phoenician sailor and the allegedly dead king of Naples, Ferdinand’s father, the image of the City reflected in Baudelaire and Dante. Hunt even associates the Dantean echo of a hellish city with one of Magritte’s paintings:

A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many / I had not thought death had undone so many” – achieves a simultaneous presence of external and internal, of fact and dream, of conscious and unconscious, like Magritte’s *Golconde*, where the wealth of the fabulous city in Hyderabad showers down like a rush-hour rain of clerks⁷²⁶.

⁷²⁶ John Dixon Hunt. “Broken Images: T. S. Eliot and Modern Painting” in A. D. Moody (Ed.). *The Waste Land in Different Voices*. London: Edward Arnold, 1974, 174.

The powerful impact on the reader/seer is further increased due to more surprising associations. Dante is placed near Baudelaire, Wagner near Conrad, the Bible near Buddhist teachings, all displaced of their original contexts and re-arranged so as to create a new puzzle. Likewise, Cubism embraced the idea of creating painting from pre-existing forms and materials through a process of fragmentation. It was also revolutionary to believe that painting could be obtained from using other materials than those traditionally employed. This is, in fact, what Eliot himself did in poetry while resorting to art material that usually defines branches of art different from literature.

This technique of collage by means of which the artist decontextualizes original pieces of work and then re-organizes them so as to create new spaces / meanings, hints at the effort to deconstruct inherited, ready-made interpretations. Images from concrete reality (the pub scene, allusions to Mr. Eugenides's commercial preoccupations) are completed by hallucinating scenes relating to the same urban landscape (the crowd of somnambulist clerks, the Thames nymphs lamenting their sort).

The same technique is visible in Eliot's depiction of women. The feminine presences in *The Waste Land* are in fact an accumulation of fragments of women's portraits. There are some powerful ones, such as Cleopatra, Procne or Mrs. Porter, others much more vulnerable, Ophelia, Philomel, fragile — the hyacinth girl, or carefree — the typist. The features that define them are dislocated and fragmented, indicative of their mixed sets of emotions. Some of

these women stand for purely carnal pleasure, being reduced to mere sexual objects, while others are depicted with particular delicacy and sensitivity.

In Cubism, space is reinvented and expanded beyond the limits of immediate experience. The objects and characters that inhabit such spaces stand for signs and symbols of an inner reality. In Eliot, rats creeping through vegetation trigger the idea of decay and squalor, the minutely constructed interior of a modern courtesan sends to immense inner emptiness compensated for by an overwhelming profusion of material artefacts, while Sweeney is, as in mediaeval morality plays, the incarnation of lust and temptations of the flesh.

Cubism, with its richness of expression and the exploitation of the hallucinatory and distorting potential of the human mind, is not the only painting movement that appealed to Eliot and that is visible in *The Waste Land*. The poet himself mentioned in the Notes that the following lines are inspired by a painting signed by Hieronymus Bosch, a predecessor of Dali and the Surrealists:

A woman drew her long black hair out tight
 And fiddled whisper music on those strings
 And bats with baby faces in the violet light
 Whistled, and beat their wings
 And crawled head downward down a blackened wall.

The image probably alludes to Bosch's *Hell*, one part of the triptych called *The Garden of Earthly Delights* (1503-1504). This part mainly depicts the fatal doom of eternal punishment which sinners have to bear for their earthly misdeeds.

The Flemish painter is well-known for his renderings of a phantasmagorical universe inhabited most often by hellish creatures. His introspection in the realm of dreams, nightmares more specifically, creates apocalyptical visions which offer no alternative or escape. The fragment dominated by “bats with baby faces” is a successful blend of image and sound. Visual and audio fragments create a surrealist landscape. The poet manages to do with words what could have been rendered as a painting or a musical piece. The woman has black hair, the light is violet, the wall down which bats crawl is blackened — all colours of a perfect scene depicting a corner of hell. The image is dominated by all sorts of sounds, scary because of their crescendo verging on insanity: the woman sings a harp made of her own hair, bats whistle, tolls strike the hour and mysterious voices rise from “empty cisterns and exhausted wells”. Eliot processes the old master’s theme, expands and enriches it to reflect a scene of a modern hell.

Untranslated Quotations

The Waste Land contains a large number of quotations left in the original, from the epigraph to the final line and note. The reader is faced with the challenge to decipher a multitude of languages, ranging from Latin, Old Greek or Sanskrit to Italian, French and German. The places and roles assigned to each of them vary depending on the context and the idea they have to support in the economy of the poem. Sometimes, English holds the core

position, other times it becomes peripheral, renouncing the leading part in favour of other languages. Such is the case with the concluding lines, where it is but one of the pieces that create the final linguistic puzzle:

Poi s'ascese nel foco che gli affina
Quando fiam uti chelidon – O swallow swallow
Le Prince d'Aquitaine à la tour abolie
 These fragments I have shored against my ruins
 Why then Ile fit you. Hieronymo's mad againe.

With such a wide array of linguistic representations, the poem could be read as a failure of communication caused by the lack of a common vocabulary. This, in turn, might be interpreted as having triggered all the plights of the modern world displayed in the poem. But, on the other hand, this linguistic device could be deemed a completion, at a different level, of the technique that allowed Eliot to employ a variety of points of view.

Multiple languages mean multiples perspectives. Interpretation is mediated not only by a single, but a variety of consciousnesses. Once the reader, who naturally expects to find a text in English, has overcome the feeling of initial frustration caused by such a surprising encounter, he might become aware that his vision of the world is not the only valid one. His perspective is only one of a series of interpretations of reality, which complete and add new meanings to each other.

The Other comes to this linguistic encounter assuming many faces which point to the particular and the universal at the same time, in a context of interwoven relations. In fact, the apparent Babel might even provide the solution to the salvation of the waste land. Of divine origin, the word,

instrument of creation, might help restore a lost unity. According to Donaghue, the aim of *The Waste Land* “is to establish the word that is true because it is not our invention, against the reduction of Logos to Lexis that has been effected upon the sole authority of the human will”⁷²⁷. An original Adamic language encompasses all the fragments of post-Babel communication and may bring peace to the waste land and a return to the state of innocence and purity that preceded the fragmentation of modern languages/civilizations.

The idea of a return to the origins of language is emphasised straight from the beginning of the poem. The paratexts make extensive use of allusions and quotations left untranslated. The epigraph, the dedication and the Notes create a frame for the entire poem, providing hints with respect to the lyrical content. In the attempt to fill in the potential information gap, they offer keys (a powerful symbol in the poem) to the puzzle that is the very matter of *The Waste Land*.

History over time and space comes full circle: the epigraph is in Latin and Greek, languages that symbolize civilizations that are the roots of an entire continent, and the final note explains the meaning of words in Sanskrit. Ancient languages represented the foundation of another powerful culture, with rich traditions and a seemingly different vision of the world as compared to the European one.

The Notes, where the reader might turn to so as to find some translation or explanation of fragments left in the original, prove to be rather misleading.

⁷²⁷ Denis Donaghue. *Words Alone. The Poet T. S. Eliot*, 131.

They do assist the reader but not in the expected manner. Instead, they provide completions and further quotations by means of mere transferences. Such is the case with the passage from Ovid on Tiresias upon which Eliot's comment is that "it is of great anthropological interest" or the quotation from Herman Hesse (367-77 in the Notes), which, instead of clarifying the lines of the poem referred to, might frustrate a non German speaker.

Eliot had initially chosen as epigraph a passage from Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. But at Pound's advice, who considered that Conrad was not "weighty enough", he replaced it with a quotation from Petronius's *Satyricon*. In a mixture of Latin and Old Greek, the Sibyl of Cumae expresses her desire to die, which would put an end to the pain inflicted upon her by the burden of feeling all the suffering of the world. The epigraph opens the door to what the reader will meet further. It also indirectly introduces Tiresias, "the most important personage in the poem", to use Eliot's own words in the Notes.

Tiresias, like the Sibyl, fulfils the role of mythic seer, whose vision extends to the modern world. "What Tiresias sees is the substance of the poem" concludes Eliot and the presence of such immortal seers reinforces the structure of *The Waste Land*. An all powerful consciousness, seeing it all, containing all possible perspectives from within or outside time and experience: "A mythic seer like the Sibyl of Cumae or Tiresias differs from

ordinary human beings in not being restricted to a single perspective, at a single moment”⁷²⁸.

The mixture of past and present which defines the poem may be perceived as a whole due to the expertise of such seers. Unity is achieved by means of the superposition of multiple points of view and, implicitly, multiple interpretations. Each period can be seen from within, as a self-reflection, but also from the outside, through reference to a different epoch. Experience of reality encompasses all such perspectives and this is the essence of a seer’s consciousness:

mythic seers have a binary perspective. That is, they enjoy both a mythic and a relational mode of knowing and being and, moreover, enjoy both at once. They can see from the inside, part to part, but also from the outside, part to whole⁷²⁹.

The Sibyl’s death wish may come, therefore, as the consequence of what her consciousness has gathered along centuries, culminating in the disaster of modernity.

The fragment from Petronius was maintained in the original and the reader is thus warned as to the nature of what would follow. There is no translation provided to the dialogue with the Greek-speaking Sibyl and the reader, unless assisted by his linguistic proficiency, feels compelled to decipher the message either continuing to read the text or by looking it up elsewhere. The linguistic voyage continues with the dedication. Eliot acknowledges

⁷²⁸ Joseph Bentley & Jewel Spears Brooker. *Reading The Waste Land. Modernism and the Limits of Interpretation*, 46.

⁷²⁹ Joseph Bentley & Jewel Spears Brooker. *Modernism and the Limits of Interpretation*, 47.

Pound's influence on the design of *The Waste Land* and addresses him as "il miglor fabbro", formulation borrowed from Dante. The Italian master used the same to honour the celebrated troubadour, Arnaut Daniel.

The series of parallelism creates a bridge over time. Dante held Arnaut in high esteem considering him "the finest smith of his maternal tongue"⁷³⁰ and, as such, the "better craftsman" of European letters. Eliot saw Dante as one of the greatest of European minds and, in the contemporary context, believed that Pound would best suit the role of "miglor fabbro".

Quotations from Dante's *Inferno* and *Purgatory* also appear in the Notes. But the Dante-Arnaut reference is not limited to the dedication. It is resumed towards the end of the poem: "*Poi s'ascose nel foco che gli affina*". It is one of Eliot's favourite lines in the *Purgatory*. Dante placed Arnaut in the Purgatory. There, the troubadour, still singing, mentioned the joyous life he had had and for which he had to pay now. However, he talks of himself as of someone who continues to sing and, in so doing, he transcends suffering and turns it into art, into music.

As a matter of fact, the concluding lines are a puzzle of quotations, culminating with the words of Prajapati. As Brooker and Bentley notice, all these final quotations have to do with music, "singing that persists through and transforms disaster"⁷³¹. The line from Dante is followed by a quotation from an anonymous Latin poem, *The Vigil of Venus*, "Quando fiam uti chelidon". The

⁷³⁰ Jack Lindsay. *The Troubadours and their World*. London: Frederick Muller Limited, 1976, 170.

⁷³¹ Joseph Bentley & Jewel Spears Brooker. *Reading The Waste Land. Modernism and the Limits of Interpretation*, 203.

poet laments the fact that he cannot express himself and waits for the inspiration that would enable him to sing like a swallow. The line is completed by an allusion to poems by Tennyson and Swinburne, “O swallow swallow”.

Both references remind of Philomel’s myth, a story which includes violence, suffering and finally, happy transformation. In contrast with the song of the swallow doubly invoked, there is the sad incantation of Nerval’s Prince of Aquitaine, “Le prince d’Aquitaine à la tour abolie”. Sitting on the derelict ruins of his once imposing castle, the prince laments his lot of being the last in the rich lineage of troubadours. Again, his pain is turned into art and suffering becomes music through a cathartic process.

Not the same could be said of Hieronymo, Kyd’s hero, for whom not even art can quench his desire of revenge and the pain caused by his son’s death: “Why then Ile fit you. Hieronymo’s mad againe”. Eliot maintained the archaic spelling, he did not translate it into modern English, and so the rage and madness haunting the grieving father acquire gigantic proportions, as if surviving time and resisting forgiveness. Thus, the poem seems to deny the Christian principles in the New Testament which rely on love, humility and forgiveness and that have been mentioned before these last lines and apparently closes on ideas reminding of the *lex taliones* governing the Old Testament. But the end comes after the Buddhist teachings, a plea for understanding and peace:

Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata.
Shantih shantih shantih

The quotations in German have a definite role, too. In “The Burial of the Dead”, in the scene of the hyacinth girl, Marie allegedly says: “Bin gar

keine Russin, stamm'aus Lituanen, echt deutsch" [I'm not Russian; I come from Lithuania, a true German]. The issue of identity is addressed here and it is not accidental, since there have been a number of speculations as to the potential identity of the couple in this scene. The poem is inhabited by a wide array of characters: some faceless and nameless, a mass of anonyms in the hellish contemporary city of London, others carrying the burden of double sexuality, like Tiresias, others with personalities borrowed from ancient myths and legends.

Identity is therefore a concept with somewhat blurred borders and the quester, since he is the main character in the poem, seems to be searching for his own self, "visiting" several other selves, in several other languages and spaces:

The fragments are in many languages because the European culture is being tapped, going back to its earliest origins in the Sanskrit Upanishads. As the protagonist, through association and memory, makes his identity, he is able to give fragments a new order⁷³².

The identity of the modern man is hinted at as a Babel-like creation, in which pieces of languages gather together in an attempt at founding a common ground of understanding.

References to Wagner are recurrent and imbedded in the poem at various levels. Thames nymphs are created after the model of Rhine maidens; Verlaine's *Parsifal* is inspired by Wagner's opera, not to mention the direct quotations from *Tristan and Isolde*. These quotations allude to such strong

⁷³² Robert Langbaum. "New Modes of Characterization in *The Waste Land*" in A. Walton Litz (Ed.). *Eliot in His Time*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1973, 118.

human emotions, love, desolation, desperation, that could be expressed best through music; they refer to “the transformation of human experience beyond the capacity of human utterance to express it, for which the language of music is necessary”⁷³³. And Wagner’s overwhelming music could be recalled to the reader only by rendering the quotations in German.

The quotations are not direct interventions of the Wagnerian main characters. The former,

*Frisch weht der Wind
Der Heimat zu
Mein Irisch Kind
Wo weilest du?*

is from the beginning of the opera, when Tristan brings Isolde to be married to king Mark. The song is sung by a sailor, who mentions a woman left behind. It is a song of hope and longing. In contrast, the latter quotation appears towards the end of the opera, when Tristan, lethally wounded, expects for his Isolde to come with the cure. While he is waiting, a shepherd comes to announce that Isolde’s ship is nowhere to be seen and that, as a consequence, the sea is empty: “*Oed’ und leer das Meer*”. The sea, silent and troubled, spreads like the threat of forgetfulness. The quotations are the frame of a love story in which the lovers experience a deep sense of loss and the inability to recreate the profound bond that had linked them “a year ago”.

After the end of World War II, in a Europe still trying to heal the wounds of the conflagration, *The Waste Land* was trying to restore a lost unity.

⁷³³ Bernard Harris. “This music crept by me: Shakespeare and Wagner” in A. D. Moody (Ed.). *The Waste Land in Different Voices*. London: Edward Arnold, 1974, 108.

At the time Eliot was writing it, many countries were in the process of gaining their independence and by so doing, of defining their identity. On the other hand, chaos was still imprinting its traces on the mentality of the world.

An aimless generation needed to feel that it still possessed some deep, lasting roots. Eliot, giving a voice to his generation (even if later he rejected the idea), tried to gather pieces of artistic craft which could give a new impetus to his confused contemporary fellows. “The impulse to repetition, to organization via backward reference is sovereign”,⁷³⁴ and so it is that *The Waste Land* turns into a translation of impressive proportions, mixing various techniques and methods. One of them is foreignization, by means of which the poet-translator chooses to maintain references in the original in an attempt to shake readers off their comfortable reading habits and make them aware of the presence of the Other.

The experience of the Other is significantly captured in the partial quotation from Baudelaire: “You! hypocrite lecteur! – mon semblable, - mon frère!” It is as if the speaker recognizes in the reader a fellow in suffering, affected by the same major illness of modern times, the terrible spleen. The reader is the speaker’s “semblable”, his friend, yet hypocritical, since he does not care to admit that not even reading can chase away the feeling of acute boredom. The reader is addressed first in English and then in French since boredom, this “monstre délicat”, as well as its expansion, cannot be stopped by mere linguistic barriers.

⁷³⁴ T.S. Eliot. “Dante”, 229.

By the same process, the reader is included in the great category of spleen-affected persons whose communication goes beyond words, because

although language is not universal, languages nevertheless form part of a universal society in which, once some difficulties have been overcome all people can communicate with and understand each other⁷³⁵.

If most of the other instances left untranslated are graphically marked, being written in Italics, it is not the case with this one. It is as if Baudelaire's line had already entered universal conscience and need not be marked as foreign. The Other is assimilated to the self in a union which transcends linguistic or time frontiers.

***The Waste Land* — a Space of Mythical Reconciliation**

In his 1923 review to James Joyce's *Ulysses*, Eliot explained what he understood by the "mythical method", with the help of which writers could use myths as a means of restoring order in the artistic field at the beginning of the twentieth century. It has been implied that the explanations he provided for Joyce's method were in fact meant to justify his own mythical pattern in *The Waste Land*.

⁷³⁵ Octavio Paz. "Translation: Literature and Letters" in Rainer Schulte & John Biguenet (Eds). *Theories of Translation. An Anthology of Essays from Dryden to Derrida*. Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992, 152.

A first reading key for *The Waste Land* is indicated in the Notes, where he admits that the design and the plan of the poem owes much to the works of George Frazer and Miss Jesse Weston:

Not only the title, but the plan and a good deal of the incidental symbolism of the poem were suggested by Miss Jessie L. Weston's book on the Grail legend: *From Ritual to Romance* (Cambridge). Indeed, so deeply am I indebted to, Miss Weston's book will elucidate the difficulties of the poem much better than my notes can do, and I recommend it (apart from the great interest of the book itself) to any who think such elucidation of the poem worth the trouble. To another work of anthropology I am indebted in general, one that has influenced our generation profoundly; I mean *The Golden Bough*.

He suggested at the same time that the education of any young person would be incomplete without knowledge of both anthropology and psychology, both branches of science which were enjoying unprecedented attention at the time. Another indication, this time indirect, of the importance of myth is the epigraph, which introduces a mythical figure, the Sybil of Cumae, whose intervention announces the theme and atmosphere of the poem.

Eliot held that myths are helpful tools in ordering "the immense panorama of futility and anarchy" represented by the modern world. As such, by using the procedure of superimposition, he juxtaposes mythical and modern spaces, the association of which gives rise to new meanings. The anxiety and sterility of the barren land in the Holy Grail legend (upon which *The Waste Land* mostly relies) are constantly presented in comparison with the spiritual aridity of the modern spiritual landscape; the coherence and substance of the past with the meaninglessness and decay of the present.

The role of such associations is to emphasise the clash between the two. Myths are translated first into the content of poetry, becoming thus poetic material, and then into a useful term of comparison upon which the poem is based. The mythical method attempts to translate mankind's ancient universal experience into meaning that may assist the modern man in making sense of his seemingly pointless existence. Myth is embedded in the modern psyche, ensuring the survival of the past.

The poet's own translation of the Arthurian myth does not consist in totally recreating it, but in putting it to new use as a frame of reference to suit his literary and ethical purposes. "*The Waste Land* summarizes the Grail legend, not precisely in the usual order, but retaining the principal incidents and adapting them to the modern setting"⁷³⁶.

Myth acquires a new significance due to such recontextualization and relocation in the vicinity of various artefacts of the modern intellect. The fusion of the ancient and the contemporary might prove useful to a world in prey of chaos:

In art there should be interpenetration and metamorphosis. Even the *Golden Bough* can be read in two ways: as a collection of entertaining myths, or as a revelation of that vanished mind of which our mind is a continuation⁷³⁷.

Myths are creations which belong to the primordial stage of human civilization; a myth tells of things which happened at the beginning of the

⁷³⁶ Grover Smith. *T. S. Eliot's Poetry and Plays*, 70.

⁷³⁷ Eliot quoted in Grover Smith. *T. S. Eliot's Poetry and Plays*, 71.

world, in a moment pertaining to the sacred time⁷³⁸. This sacred time is consistently distinct from the time of everyday existence, which is continuous and irreversible. The evocation of a myth, the mere recollection of one, abolishes the historical time and opens the door to sacred time.

Interweaving myth with everyday experiences specified in the poem, Eliot offers modernity a chance to recuperate its ancient, sacred values, since one becomes contemporary with a myth when reciting it or when imitating gestures of mythical characters. The poet takes over the role of the original myth-maker; his endeavour is oriented towards assisting his fellows in finding a pattern in their life, towards “suggesting for the quotidian rituals of modern life a meaning like that provided to less-conscious societies by myth and magic”⁷³⁹.

The mythical framework is not confined to only one space or legend, since myth has universal value. For example, from the Indian perspective, Buddha, Horus, Moses, Christ and Mohamed are different names of the same repeated avatar and who even appear in the poem under various guises. The legend of the Holy Grail, with characters such as the Fisher King and the quester, sends to other fertility myths featuring Adonis, Horus or Indra, the Indian god. They all fuse into one idea: the existence of a spiritually arid land and the need for revival which is only possible due to the endeavours of a figure with strong faith. The wastelanders might turn into saviours of the

⁷³⁸ Mircea Eliade. *Aspecte ale mitului*. București: Editura Univers, 1978, 18.

⁷³⁹ Harold Bloom. *T. S. Eliot's The Waste Land*. New York & Philadelphia: Chelsea House Publishers, 1986, 101.

affected land once they acquire an identity, thing which is only possible if they recognize the archetypal value lying in themselves.

Charles Moorman states that Eliot used the Fisher King and the waste land images as objective correlatives to express his attitude towards the modern world⁷⁴⁰. As a matter of fact, these are not the only mythical figures, although central, by means of whom he sets up the parallel old-new. The range of characters includes both pagan and Christian ones: Tiresias, Diana, the tragic triangle Philomel, Procne, and Theseus, Perceval, who are contrasted with contemporary figures. The regeneration of the modern arid land depends, as in the myth, upon the immolation of a major figure who defines it. Death as the result of self-sacrifice is the main instrument of such rebirth. But the revival is not possible in the absence of water⁷⁴¹, and thus search for water in the poem equates the quest of the Grail.

The Waste Land is a place where religious fertility is put face to face with secular aridity. The Fisher King is the major religious symbol in the myth. In *The Waste Land*, he is “fishing in a dull canal”, a modern desacralization of his mythical situation. In order to fulfil his mission, he needs to be restored to his sanctified position.

⁷⁴⁰ Charles Moorman. *Arthurian Triptych: Mythic Materials in Charles Williams, C. S. Lewis and T.S. Eliot*. New York: Russell and Russell, 1973, 37.

⁷⁴¹ Water has a paradoxical symbolism; it supports life by taking life. The contact with water is always two folded: the dissolution into water is followed by rebirth; on the other hand, water is the major fertilising agent. Consider also the symbolic death through baptism, as a result of which man, with all his passions and sins, dies, only to appear again, after being baptised, as a new person, purged and cleansed of all earthly bondage.

In the myth, the Fisher King regains his status; in *The Waste Land*, he is still waiting for someone (the poet? the reader?) to help him. But order and salvation can only come through religion, so it is up to the modern quester to take actions or not in this direction. Modern behaviour witnesses various enactments of myth, whether conscious or not; basically religious in nature, myths provide order and a sense of belonging to the community which adheres to them. But a legitimate question arises and we may ask it together with Eliade⁷⁴²: what has replaced myths in a community where religion is dead letter, mere literature?

Due to the complex relations it establishes between diverse levels of significance, *The Waste Land* involves a massive effort of interpretation. The poem resists facile approaches, and the readers have the responsibility to find the key to the meaning imprisoned in the text. Readers are associated with the image of the quester, in search of a literary cipher; they are expected to possess the knowledge necessary to help them translate the fragments which acquire coherence only if interpreted against a common background of cultural competence which goes beyond linguistic proficiency.

⁷⁴² Mircea Eliade. *Mituri, vise și mistere*. București: Univers Enciclopedic, 1998, 24-25.

Shakespeare in Eliotian Translation

Many times did Eliot express his admiration for Shakespeare⁷⁴³, whose presence in *The Waste Land* may be recognized at several levels. Eliot employed Shakespearean themes and characters as counterparts or additions to his own. The greatness of the model, be it Hamlet, Ophelia or Ferdinand, is contrasted with “the instability of a present devoid of ideals”⁷⁴⁴. Eliotian and Shakespearean characters play a game of rapprochement and detachment, some of them reflecting the others like in a mirror, others, by the same process of reflection, pointing to the difference.

Thus, there is Hamlet, who does not make a visible appearance in the poem, but who lives in Kyd’s Hieronimo in the concluding lines of *The Waste Land*. Like the Danish prince, the Eliotian main character is tormented by the dilemma of whether art could save or not a world on the verge of disaster. In fact, it seems that art and particularly words are the instruments of destiny;

⁷⁴³ Eliot often treated Shakespeare in connection with Dante, since he saw both as great representatives of the European literary tradition. He admitted that they shared the same design of transforming personal experiences into expressions of universal value, which carried at the same time the seal of their time. If Dante had “the brave attempt to fabricate something permanent and holy out of his personal feelings”, Shakespeare too was preoccupied with the “struggle [...] to transmute his personal and private agonies into something rich and strange, something universal and impersonal” (“Shakespeare”, 117). However, they focused on rendering emotions at distinct levels. If Shakespeare was more keen on approaching the widest possible range of human feelings, Dante exploited a deeper level and provided them with increased grandeur: “Shakespeare gives the greatest *width* of human passions; Dante the greatest altitude and greatest depth. They complement each other” (“Dante”, 226). Their relevance for the world literature is all the more important since their beliefs and feelings mirrored the set of norms and values dominant in the thirteenth and sixteenth century, respectively.

⁷⁴⁴ Monica Pillat. *Cultura ca interior*. București: Editura Vremea, 2001, 171.

although they bring about death, they impart peace to the ghost of the beloved father and a sense of accomplishment to the son.

If Hamlet vacillates between madness and sanity, like most of Eliot's characters who vacillate between life and death, true love and the illusion thereof, there is another one who comes to join the line of heroes living in between. It is the "broken Coriolanus", whose fall was caused by his inability to balance pride with a sense of proportion. Although a great warrior and a significant figure of the Roman aristocracy, he is finally made to pay with his life for having betrayed his fellow citizens. That is probably why his actions are brought to the modern consciousness by mere "aethereal rumours", not words or great stories of glory.

His life and its memory are inconsistent, immaterial, verging on inexistence. Failure, the reader seems to be reminded, is not an invention of the modern world. History has known many such cases, but the names of similar heroes still survive the passage of times, whereas the losers of modern times, who do not even have a label attached to their identity, will disappear without leaving any trace.

Coriolanus is contrasted by the figure of Ferdinand, the prince of Naples, who, due to a happy mixture of wisdom, humility and unconditioned love, managed to reach everlasting bliss. "Those were pearls that were his eyes" he says in Shakespeare and later in Eliot, a quotation that appears twice in the poem, as a reinforcement of the water theme.

In the Shakespearean play, Ariel uses this metaphor to tell Ferdinand that his father was not dead, but was undergoing a transformational process following which his eyes were turning into pearls and his bones into corals. He hints at the idea of regeneration that also crosses *The Waste Land* like a red thread. Except that in Eliot's poem, Ariel is replaced by Madame Sosostris and the regeneration process refers to an ancient character, the Phoenician sailor. And Madame Sosostris warns against mere death by drowning ("Fear death by water!"), devoid of any further significance, as opposed to the promise of rebirth in Ariel's song.

Similarly, the corals formed through the accumulation of the allegedly dead king's bones are contrasted with the squalid and depressing image of the "rats' alley / Where the dead men lost their bones". The original Shakespearean theme of forgiveness and redemption is turned in the modern context into facts and dirty images reflecting the existing landscape, in which sacrifices of past heroes have lost any significance and have been completely demythified.

Shakespeare was also one of the writers who provided a hypertext for the game of chess. As was often noted, "A Game of Chess" is mainly concerned with the concept of loveless sex, "especially within marriage"⁷⁴⁵. In *The Tempest*, characters play chess as a gesture of reconciliation and as a symbol of sportsmanship. On the contrary, Eliot's use of the same game of the mind points to the fact that notions such as insanity or royalty (both represented by chess pieces) are well-represented in the poem. However, they

⁷⁴⁵ Grover Smith. *T. S. Eliot's Poetry and Plays*, 79.

seem to be dominated by the figures of the pawns, moved by a merciless destiny on the plane board of modern consciousness. Or, from a different perspective, “the people in the waste land belong to a drama they do not understand, where they move like chessmen toward destinations they cannot foresee”⁷⁴⁶.

Shakespearean situations and characters are transformed by the creator of *The Waste Land* so as to obtain reflections, in most cases twisted, of Eliotian ones. Whether it is an unhappy Ophelia, the epitome of betrayed innocence, an opulent Cleopatra, a revengeful Hamlet or a “broken” Coriolanus, the array of characters are tools to translate one literary experience into another. Eliot’s own statement, “I do not believe that any writer has ever exposed this bovarysme, the human will to see things as they are not, more clearly than Shakespeare”⁷⁴⁷, is an acknowledgment of the Elizabethan’s craftsmanship. By contrast, his characters lack the force and imagination even to see things as they are and to assume the consequences of such a state of affairs.

Shakespeare strolls the ruins of the waste land like the ghost of a murdered king, telling of things that once were and are no longer or that have survived in order to put together the pieces of a fragmented world. The invocation of his spirit, transformed and interpreted by the modern imagination, is one of the corner stones Eliot used to rebuild the destroyed castle of modern civilization.

⁷⁴⁶ Grover Smith. *T. S. Eliot’s Poetry and Plays*, 82.

⁷⁴⁷ T.S. Eliot. “Shakespeare”, 111.

Dante and the Troubadours

Eliot saw Dante as the utmost expression of the European spirituality, the ambassador of the entire continental civilization: “The culture of Dante was not of one European country, but of Europe”⁷⁴⁸. He exerted an enduring influence upon the modernist poet, who learned from the Italian master the craft of the difficult and the art of exploring the ineffable. In *The Waste Land*, Dantean imagery and symbolism are indicative of the manner in which Eliot embedded the mediaeval thought into the modern text. Eliot invoked Dante in the presentation of contemporary London as the perfect location of Hell:

I had not thought death had undone so many.
Sighs, short and infrequent, were exhaled,
And each man fixed his eyes before his feet.

The allusion refers to the moment when Dante, on the threshold of Hell, expressed his surprise as to the number of the dead encountered there.

Dante’s infernal landscape is in fact a map of cities and countries arranged in concentric circles, linked by the resisting tie of urban egotism. It is not a concrete place, with smelly marshes and tar-filled boilers; it is more of a concept, the substance of which is spiritual punishment⁷⁴⁹. The wide range of feelings for any *polis*, be them love, hatred or passion, is the main coordinate of the mythical location of perpetual damnation.

The “Unreal City” is a mixture of perspectives: Dantean, Baudelairian and Eliotian. However surprising the association of Dante and Baudelaire may

⁷⁴⁸ T.S. Eliot. “Dante”, 237.

⁷⁴⁹ Osip Mandelstam. *Eseu despre Dante*. Iași: Editura Universității “Al.I.Cuza”, 2001, 84.

seem, it creates a picture which would have been incomplete in the absence of either. Dante's experience of Hell is translated into the atmosphere of forbearance of modern citizens. At the same time, this recontextualization and the collocation with modern poetry provides Dante with new meanings: Baudelaire's city is depicted at the level of material and physical decay, whereas Dante's presents the torments of a community at the spiritual level. The inner panorama of the wasteland is in fact the Hell the characters inhabit. The attitude they adopt, with eyes fixed to the ground, suggests their life in death.

In Dante's Hell, sinners are subjected to the same treatment they had applied to others while still living. Since wasteland inmates' actions in life are not distinct from what they might be forced to do in Hell, one may infer that, for them, there is no difference between life and death. They live suspended between the two axes which define the human condition, without being fully aware of either.

Dante's *Inferno* is relocated at the level of an "unreal city" at the beginning of the twentieth century, is reinterpreted according to modern data and is activated by the general feeling of inertia and uselessness. The ancestral anxiety before death and the perspective of a potentially eternal life spent in punishment for sins is totally inexistent, since modern consciousness has rejected faith and, with it, any possibility of redemption.

The *Inferno* offers no escape; it is a dead end, the culmination of an existence driven by corruption of the mind and of the senses. Purgatory, in

exchange, is inhabited by sinners who can still hope in divine pardon. It is here that Dante placed Daniel Arnaut, legendary representative of the poetry of *fin'amors*⁷⁵⁰: "Poi s'escose nel foco che gli affina". The purifying fire of Purgatory annihilates the fire of carnal desire of which Arnaut himself admits having been prey to. Eliot brings together Dante and Arnaut to reiterate the theme of love that has been a constant throughout the poem. Tragic, desperate, devotional love or lack of love is compressed in the two poets' distinct vision of this powerful human feeling: erotic with Arnaut and mystic with Dante.

The borderline between the two is quite thin, since the poetry of courtly love borrowed much from both Islamic and Christian doctrine of asceticism. *Fin'amors* was in itself a mixture of cultures, a space which allowed for cultural exchanges. In both religions, love is seen as the ultimate force which, experienced at its fullest, drives man towards divinity. In the troubadour poetics, man's submission to God is substituted by the relationship between man and woman, with the latter in a superior position of power; "in the working out of this relationship, there is a ceaseless dialectic between submission and freedom, power and equality"⁷⁵¹.

⁷⁵⁰ *Fin'amors* is usually translated as "pure love". But "pure" is not to be understood as spiritually immaculate, innocent; it refers to an act which is unfettered by any constraints, free of derelictions and moral barriers which may impose physical limitations. The troubadour poetry created a feudalisation of love relationships, while subverting the power hierarchies at the same time. The lady was often addressed as *midons*, which comes from *mi dominus*, or *senhor*, both terms pertaining to the male terminology. The lover presented his affection to the lady and placed himself deliberately in an inferior position. But his continuous claim for being accepted and being granted possession of the lady's body and heart hints at a repeated reversal of the power relationships and woman worship.

⁷⁵¹ Jack Lindsay. *The Troubadours and their World*, 213.

The continuous religious quest for spiritual fulfilment and perfection is likened by the troubadour experience with the lover's quest for sentimental achievement, which involves confrontation with endless doubts, hope, fears, uncertainty. Not only themes are borrowed from the mystics, but also symbols. Troubadours depict love using a rich religious vocabulary. The abstract relationship with God is replaced by one of a more earthly nature. The place of God, who usually stands for an ontological Other, is taken by the lady, onto whom the lover projects his desires of communion.

Dante was a fervent admirer of Arnaut as the representative of the troubadour tradition and especially praised his achievements with respect to rhyme, meter and diction. However, in what concerns the topics approached, Dante handled the love theme in a manner that mainly reflects the Christian perspective; in this respect, it is quite different from the concept of love as treated by Arnaut. The troubadour's verse is often sensual, quite erotic, and seems dominated by the image of Amour as the supreme deity; nevertheless, in the troubadour tradition, he employs religious metaphors and images which suggest a connection between the two rather than a clash.

The layers of intertextual relations expand their significance even further. Both Dante and Eliot had set on a quest for answers (which, in the fine tradition of Perceval, can only be obtained after advancing the appropriate question), for solutions to problems that exceed the strictly personal level: how to ensure the survival of a civilization and what might be the causes that bring about such a state of affairs.

In both cases, a viable answer may come from tradition. Thus, Dante places in Purgatory a number of significant names of European poetry. There are poets such as Guido Guinizzelli and Arnaut, who played an essential role in the evolution of their vernacular language in the twelfth and thirteenth century. It is due to their craft that they are in Purgatory and not in Inferno and it is through their craft that they may hope at salvation. In Purgatory, poetry is brought to life again and becomes an instrument of regeneration, of illumination⁷⁵².

Art, and poetry in particular, is also hinted at by Eliot as the main vehicle for the salvation of his age, confused, in distress, in need of a tradition to cling to. He caters to that need by bringing together voices of both the remote and recent past of European literary history, alongside guidelines of religious nature, for those who have not lost faith or for those who, having lost it, might wish to recover it. To suit this purpose, Dante himself comes up like a useful civilizing instrument, and his art — a meaningful stop in the historical trip that *The Waste Land* proves to be.

The impact of Dante's poetry on the world literature has been a constant in time; this is most probably due to the fact that his writings maintained universality of thinking and the ability to impose due to subtleties of poetic expression. "The ghost of Dante haunts us, just as it does many modern writers, who are caught in the dilemma of wanting to blend the

⁷⁵² Jeffrey T. Schnapp. "Introduction to Purgatorio" in Rachel Jacoff (Ed.). *The Cambridge Companion to Dante*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007, 98.

imaginative with the discursive, the difficult with the graspable”⁷⁵³. *The Waste Land* reflects such dilemma, mirroring at the same time the fascination for the resistance of such values of humanity and the hope that they may last long enough to ensure the survival of a meaningful civilization.

The Symbolist Legacy: Baudelaire, Verlaine, Nerval

Baudelaire

Eliot came into contact with the symbolist poetry in his first year of college. While browsing through the titles in the University library, he came across Arthur Symon’s anthology, *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*. In the essays where the poet approached the issue of Baudelaire’s works, he appraised his place among the great poets of modernity. Baudelaire’s attitude towards Good and Evil were somewhat echoed by Eliot’s own vision on the dualist facets of life:

So far as we are human, what we do must be either evil or good; so far as we do evil or good, we are human; and it is better, in a paradoxical way, to do evil than to do nothing: at least we exist⁷⁵⁴.

The statement is in fact a plea, even a rise to action, to taking one’s life into one’s hands and doing something with it, assuming any consequences deriving from this. In *The Waste Land*, characters’ modus vivendi is an in-

⁷⁵³ James J. Wilhelm. *Il Miglor Fabbro. The Cult of the Difficult in Daniel, Dante, and Pound*. Orono: The University of Maine at Orono, 1982, 57.

⁷⁵⁴ T.S. Eliot. “Baudelaire”, 380.

between good and evil, love and indifference; it is a road that leads nowhere. Except for a murderer digging a corpse in the backyard or for occasional prostitutes such as Mrs. Porter and her daughter, the faceless personages are not even able to take condemnable actions that could shake them off their somnambulistic existence.

Under such circumstances, evil could paradoxically come up as a viable alternative: “[...] damnation itself is an immediate form of salvation – of salvation from the ennui of modern life, because it at last gives some significance to living”⁷⁵⁵. This terrible ennui affects both the characters and the “hypocrite lecteur”, a mere pawn in the game of modern life. “Hypocrite” because, although subconsciously aware of the futility of such endeavour, he keeps turning to reading as to a potent remedy for the illness he is suffering from. The hypocritical reader is yet another inhabitant of the “Unreal City”, the epitome of any human agglomeration with the pretence of urban civilization:

Unreal City
Under the brown fog of a winter dawn
A crowd flowed over London Bridge, so many.

In the Notes, Eliot indicated the first two lines of Baudelaire’s “The seven old men”: “Fourmillante cité, cité pleine de rêves, / Où le spectre en plein jour raccroche le passant”. The reader, unless already familiar with the poem, feels compelled to look it up; thus, he may discover that it can provide keys to the poetic ideas that will dominate “The Burial of the Dead” up to the end. The unreal city of London superposes over the image of Paris, itself

⁷⁵⁵ T.S. Eliot. “Baudelaire”, 379.

inhabited by ghostly figures that approach the passer-by in full daylight. The spectrum finds an echo in Stetson, an ancient soldier in the battle of Mylae, except that in this case, it is the modern character that approaches the ghost. With surprise and perhaps a shadow of awe, he addresses him a question and a warning/suggestion:

Stetson!
 ‘You who were with me in the ships at Mylae!
 ‘That corpse you planted last year in your garden,
 ‘Has it begun to sprout? Will it bloom this year?
 ‘Or has the sudden frost disturbed its bed?
 ‘O keep the Dog far hence, that’s friend to men,
 ‘Or with his nails he’ll dig it up again!’⁷⁵⁶.

The city is the perfect place for accidental meetings, some fortunate, some not quite so, since the alienation of the individual in the huge mass of anonyms does not allow anymore happy reunions. The image of Baudelaire’s Paris, “a cluster of intersecting trajectories, a fantastic arabesque of criss-crossing paths”⁷⁵⁷, may very well reflect the foggy city of London.

In a manner similar to Baudelaire’s, Eliot feels more attracted to depicting urban landscapes, inhabited by people with petty lives and almost

⁷⁵⁶ The image of the dog here has been given many symbolic interpretations. In Webster’s *White Devil* to whom the line addresses, the animal was a wolf, to be replaced by Eliot with a dog. Paradoxically, such an animal, normally associated with the idea of man’s friend, is presented here as foe. According to Grover Smith, the dog may stand for the idea of lust that is to dominate some parts of the poem. He also alludes to the symbolism of the Tarot cards, where a dog appears in the company of the Fool. Interpretations go even further: “it also secures and allusion to the Dog Star, the star of lust and polestar of the Phoenician navigators, to Stephen Dedalus’ joke about the fox and his grandmother and even more curiously, to the tradition of the dog and the mandrake” (*T.S.Eliot’s Poetry and Plays*, 79). Furthermore, the poet capitalized the noun and, in this light, the speculations according to which “dog” is reversed for “God” acquires even richer meanings.

⁷⁵⁷ Marjory A. Evans. *Baudelaire and Intertextuality*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993, 12.

inexistent expectations, rather than nature. The urban atmosphere is bleak and oppressive and it is pretty much the same whether we speak of London or Paris.

In Baudelaire, the city is invaded by “un brouillard sale et jaune”, whereas London is surrounded by the “brown fog of a winter dawn”. The colours are gloomy and dark; nevertheless, they create the perfect background for the multitude of people walking aimlessly down London Bridge. It is most probably a repetitive motion⁷⁵⁸, a ritual they perform every night when the bells of St. Mary Woolnoth strike nine. The reduction of life to moments carried out mechanically is one of the symptoms of spleen, unconscious boredom. Baudelaire’s crowds react in much the same way as Londoners do, and the spectacle of mediocre human nature awakens in the poet the painful feeling of spleen.

Nevertheless, Baudelaire’s city is “fourmillante” and full of dreams, swarming with life under all its aspects. Life defines the city with the toing and froing of prostitutes, pimps, criminals, old persons walking in the street to chase away solitude. Imperfection is not rejected, but accepted as the symbol of mortality. The mere fact that the poet talks about them gives them an aura of

⁷⁵⁸ The crowd of faceless Londoners draws imaginary circles somewhat predicted beforehand by Madame Sosostriis and the people turning the wheel. “These people spiritually sterile describe a purposeless circle” (Grover Smith. *T. S. Eliot’s Poetry and Plays*, 78). As such, it is in total opposition to the Buddhist symbolism of the wheel, “the wheel of learning”, where successive reincarnations lead to liberation from suffering. Another positive interpretation is that of the wheel as the entire Universe and the creative evolution itself being perceived as a perpetuum mobile (Hans Biederman. *Dicționar de simboluri*. Vol. 2. București : Editura Saeculum I.O. 2002, 366). What Eliot does in this upside down interpretation of the wheel is take the symbol of perfection and deprive it of its original significance to reflect the idea of uselessness and futility.

“subtle decency”⁷⁵⁹. There is dynamism even under the form of repetitive motion.

Great cities such as Paris or London are in broad lines the same, but what sets them part is the image seen from “the eyes of the beholder”. If Baudelaire accepts the city as it is, Eliot sees it as “unreal” not because it is idealized, but because it is a vision pertaining to the realm of nightmares rather than dreams. The cruel awareness of urban reality is not mediated by any trace of compassion for the human. Outdoor scenes are depicted as squalid and ignominious, a direct consequence of the inhabitants’ actions. This bleak image of the city had been initiated by Baudelaire and was already common in the French poetry from him onwards; in English poetry, on the contrary, few poets had expressed such a view when Eliot exposed his as he did in *The Waste Land*⁷⁶⁰.

Nature is in an advanced stage of decay and, during summer nights, the river waters are spoiled with “empty bottles, sandwich papers, / silk handkerchiefs, cardboard boxes, cigarette ends”. Vegetation is nothing but home to repulsive rodents and the unworthy depository of bones, the ultimate remainder of past inhabitants. The sheer contrast between “then” and “now” is

⁷⁵⁹ Jacques Rivière. *Études*, 36.

⁷⁶⁰ At the beginning of the century, London was going through many architectural changes driven by economic development. The city centre was transformed so as to accommodate an increasing number of offices for banks and insurance companies. As a result, people moved to live to the suburbs, and the City, in spite of the immense crowds of employees, turned into a dehumanized space, dominated by an atmosphere of commercially driven interests which were taken over the city. The growth of the economic activity brought about a rapid development of transportation means, with electrified railroads and a fast Tube. Life was turning into a mechanically performed activity, carried out at a rapid pace and with a minimum of personal involvement.

manifestly expressed in the nostalgic echoes of long-gone meaningful times that had left lasting traces:

O City city, I can sometimes hear
 Beside a public bar in Lower Thames Street,
 The pleasant whining of a mandoline
 And a clatter and chatter from within
 Where fishmen lounge at noon: where the walls
 Of Magnus Martyr hold
 Inexplicable splendour of Ionian white and gold.

In the general picture, little wonder that the seer deems the beauty of such exponents of the cultural past as “inexplicable splendour”, a mystery that holds the key to the resistance of cultural and mythical (“fishmen”) elements⁷⁶¹.

Items of the industrial evolution are included in this gloomy outlook on the city life. Baudelaire hailed them as factors of progress, recognizing at the same time their potential negative effects upon people’s lives. In exchange, in *The Waste Land*, the poet’s distaste for the elements of the civilized universe is manifest in the depiction of “trams and dusty trees”, dust, which is a direct consequence of the transportation means. The landscape is also dominated by “the sound of horns and motors” that seem to disturb the deathlike somnolence of the inhabitants. Progress appears to add nothing to the inner life of the inhabitants; on the contrary, what might look like an increase of comfortable living standards numbs the spiritual growth of the beneficiaries.

⁷⁶¹ Nicole Ward. “Fourmillante Cité: Baudelaire and *The Waste Land*” in A. D. Moody (Ed.). *The Waste Land in Different Voices*. London: Edward Arnold, 1974, 102.

As depicted by Eliot, the City stands as the ultimate representation of an urban community which is falling from within, torn by the misdeeds and superficial ideas consummated within its own walls. Debased by a strange combination which implies the wrong use of progress and unleashed basic instincts, it is among the many falling cities of the world, broadly suffering from the same illnesses:

Falling towers
 Jerusalem Athens Alexandria
 Vienna London
 Unreal.

The urban refuge is in fact a place of profound alienation and the image of Unreal London is turned into the small-scale representation of the entire European urban topography.

Verlaine and Nerval

The tradition of symbolism is further reinterpreted through quotations from Verlaine and Nerval. The quotations are indicated as such in italics. They are maintained in the original, but are rewritten in a new context and this relocation within the broader frame of *The Waste Land* enriches their spectrum of significance.

Symbolism emphasised the values of past poetic traditions set against the trivial realities of everyday life. It rose as a protest against superficial social habits and stressed the profound spiritual level of existence. Accent was laid on

a certain intuition of the mystery of life and a desire to capture the very essence of pure poetry. In the process of transference between the two cultural systems envisaged (the British and the French), the quotations acquire new meanings and open themselves to alternative interpretations which fit the new context to which they belong.

Verlaine's line in *The Waste Land* closes a scene that gathers a number of characters and themes with mythical and self-referential echoes:

But at my back from time to time I hear
The sound of horns and motors, which shall bring
Sweeney to Mrs. Porter in the spring.
O the moon shone bright on Mrs. Porter
And on her daughter
They wash their feet in soda water
Et O ces voix d'enfants, chantant dans la coupole!

"Parsifal", Verlaine's sonnet from which this line is taken, is inspired by Wagner's opera, *Parzival*, the richest in religious overtones of the composer's works. The sonnet ends with the image of the quester, who had resisted all temptations set in order for him to fail in his endeavour, and who worships the chalice while listening to the boys' choir singing in the dome. It is a song of victory, not only of religious nature, but from a more personal perspective as well. All the more so since in Verlaine's poem, Perceval had managed to overcome a temptation of a sodomistic nature.

The immediate context of Verlaine's line is the washing up of two prostitutes, Mrs. Porter and her daughter, who prepare themselves for new love encounters with pecuniary ends. The hygienic process of the two women points to a profound desacralization of important rituals of purification such as

Christ's foot washing and the purification of the Fisher King while preparing to sacrifice himself. The association of the two moments, i.e. the glimpse at the prostitutes' intimacy and Verlaine's verse, has often been interpreted as indicating "perversions of religious rituals and experiences"⁷⁶², with the former perverting and debasing the significance of the latter.

Mrs. Porter is likened to Diana, ancient goddess of fertility and, later, of hunting. But the image of this modern Diana, hunting for clients, is completely reversed. Far from supporting any idea of fertility, Mrs. Porter uses soda water, which was occasionally believed to have prophylactic properties; in her profession, fertility is the least desirable quality to possess. Such fires of the flesh also haunted Verlaine's Perceval, who felt attracted to young boys.

But whereas Mrs. Porter nonchalantly carries on with her lucrative activity, Perceval's final exhortation expresses the relief at the end of a work well-done, for which he had managed to overcome all obstacle. The battle with carnal weaknesses ended in a victory over burning lust. It is a victory that may be set as a model for other characters in the poem, who are faced with similar battles, but lose them from the beginning, because they have no moral dilemmas, no goal to reach. It is not the case with Perceval, upon whose resistance and determination depends the destiny of the wounded king and, with him, of an entire land.

⁷⁶² Joseph Bentley & Jewel Spears Brooker. *Modernism and the Limits of Interpretation*, 135.

Another nobleman, this time in quest for lost aristocracy and with it, for a lost identity, holds the leading part in Nerval's *El Desdichado*⁷⁶³ (1854). The quotation "Le prince d'Aquitaine à la tour abolie" appears toward the end of *The Waste Land*, alongside other allusions and quotations from the world literature. Nerval's poem speaks of the lost legacy of a rich tradition. The character sees himself as Guillaume d'Aquitaine, a twelfth century troubadour, one of the most celebrated French representatives of the tradition of *fin'amors*. Nerval saw every person as an archetype and every concrete object as the translation of a superior intellectual reality on a micro-cosmical level. "La tour abolie" is the loss of the creative capabilities meant to ensure the survival of a century-old craft. The prince is the heir of such craft, but unfortunately he has failed to fulfil the duty that had been placed upon him.

He is left alone to mourn over the ruins of a lost past, gone together with his art and his love. The boundaries of his own identity become blurred and thus he strives to recreate a new one from fragments of figures pertaining to various cultures: Amour, Phoebus, Lusignan, Biron. The relationship with Eliot's endeavour is obvious, since he also tries to assemble the identity of the twentieth century man from scraps of various cultural data.

The prince's discourse abounds in symbols inspired from the Tarot imagery, with which Nerval was well-familiarized: the flower, the black sun,

⁷⁶³ The title of the poem is itself caught in an intertextual relation. Highly appreciative of medieval literature, Nerval borrowed the reference from Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*. A knight who was a companion of Richard Lionheart, dispossessed of his inherited castle by John Lackland, presents to a tournament without any piece of armament; his shield, leaning against the wall of his castle, was bearing the words "el desdichado".

the star etc. Symbolist poetry professed deep faith in occult elements, the invocation of which allegedly helped the restoration of a lost unity. Nerval's prince does the same, invokes such elements that might assist him in travelling back in time and re-covering a lost world. The escape away from time turns into a quest of a lost paradise⁷⁶⁴.

The relevance of Nerval's presence in *The Waste Land* is twofold. On the one hand, Eliot introduces the above-mentioned line in a new context, where he uses it as an instrument to support the idea which closes the poem: one of the possible solutions to the disaster of the modern world is the word. If words are lost, there is little hope for a world in prey of chaos.

On the other hand, Nerval's method and style suit the overall plan of *The Waste Land*. Nerval was the writer par excellence who had the habit of embedding in his work archetypal patterns sending back to a joint psychic conscience. To these he added issues of a personal nature such as individual dreams, desires and feelings, as well as memories of his readings, all blended together so as to form an indivisible whole. His work presents thus a mixture of personal and transcendental experiences. In turn, *The Waste Land* gathers pieces of experience dating back from the childhood of human spirituality and the most innovating inventions of the first half of the twentieth century. They intermingle with personal experiences of the poet and with a wide range of emotions and situations lived by the characters he created or borrowed from other texts.

⁷⁶⁴ Jean Richer. *Gérard de Nerval*. Paris: Éditions Pierre Seghers, 1957, 110.

Christianity and Buddhism — a Cultural Dialogue

In an attempt to find a comprehensive perspective to encompass the diversity of human spiritual creations, Eliot used as main instruments myths and a mixture of Buddhist and Christian principles. The development of Eliot's religious sensibility was a complex process, which did not rule out doubts and dilemmas. But, whereas his Christian path had been oriented more or less since his early childhood, his preoccupation with the Oriental universe came later, during his years as a Harvard student.

He studied Oriental culture and languages with reputed professors in the field such as Charles Lanman or James Woods. The result, as he would later on acknowledge, was a state of perplexity: "Two years spent in the study of Sanskrit under Charles Lanman and a year in the mazes of Pantajali's metaphysics under the guidance of James Woods, left me in a state of enlightened mystification"⁷⁶⁵. During the same period, he was profoundly interested in readings from Dante and St. John of the Cross.

The teachings of *The Baghavat Gita*, which he considered "the next greatest philosophical poem to the Divine Comedy"⁷⁶⁶, are visible in *The Waste Land*. Significant figures of the Upanishads such as Indra or Prajapati are collocated with major personalities of Christianity — Jesus Christ or St. Augustine. The *Gita* is considered a guide to Hindu philosophy and its profundity of thought and applicability to common situations make it a valid

⁷⁶⁵ T.S. Eliot. *After Strange Gods*, 43.

⁷⁶⁶ T.S. Eliot. "Dante", 219.

guide to everyday life. Eliot wanted to bring to the fore similar issues in the two religious systems. Together, they could come up with the solution to the disastrous situation of the waste land of modernity, deprived of guiding principles and enduring values.

The inmates of the waste land lead an existence driven by futile ends and biologic compulsions. As such, no wonder they do not recognize messengers and messages of divine order, sent to free them from the routine of everyday life that had enslaved them. This is why the figure of Christ remains unperceived, and clues of situations that might bring about redemption remain vague and undeciphered:

After the torchlight red on sweaty faces
 After the frosty silence in the gardens
 After the agony in stony places
 The shouting and the crying
 Prison and palace and reverberation
 Of thunder of spring over distant mountains
 He who was living is now dead
 We who were living are now dying
 With a little patience.

No hope is left, since “he who was living is now dead” and the wastelanders are left to die slowly, with no possibility of escape. From this reference one may infer that the passage relates to the moment after the Crucifixion, but prior to the Resurrection. Unaware of the great miracle of Christ’s Resurrection because they expect no miracles, the reference to the trip to Emmaus conveys another mystery:

Who is the third who walks always beside you?
 When I count, there are only you and I together
 But when I look ahead up the white road

There is always another one walking beside you
 Gliding wrapt in a brown mantle, hooded
 I do not know whether a man or a woman
 - But who is that on the other side of you?

The identity of the third traveller remains unrevealed because of his companions' incapacity to see beyond the immediacy of phenomena. As far as they are concerned, Christ had remained dead and thus any hope as to the revival of the land was dissipated. The idea is reinforced by the sexual ambiguity⁷⁶⁷ involved. "I do not know whether a man or a woman" rejects the idea of fertility. "Whether it is androgyny, homosexuality, transsexualism or simply ambiguity, the effect is sterility. The effect, in short, is the waste land and the barren body which mythic saviours died to rejuvenate"⁷⁶⁸.

Christian imagery and allusions abound in the poem, hinting at the possibility that salvation may come from religious faith. Therefore, at the beginning the inhabitants are invited "under the shadow of this red rock", ultimate refuge from the extreme aridity finally leading to death. There is also the rooster, symbol of spiritual awakening and the reference to "the murmur of maternal lamentation" which echoes Virgin Mary's suffering on the Crucifixion night. In another instance, a representative of the wastelanders is addressed with "son of man" and invited to be initiated in more than "a heap of broken images" — limited knowledge entailing limited perspectives.

⁷⁶⁷ According to the Legend of the Grail, the sterility of the land was brought about by a sexual offence inflicted upon the nuns at the Chapel Perilous by the King's soldiers.

⁷⁶⁸ Joseph Bentley & Jewel Spears Brooker. *Reading The Waste Land. Modernism and the Limits of Interpretation*, 180.

But such Christian references seem to cause no reaction. The poem moves eastwards, in an attempt at broadening the frame of reference. Together, Buddhism and Christianity may join forces and fight inertia. “The Fire Sermon” alludes to Buddha’s sermon, one of the two ever pronounced by him, and “which corresponds in importance to the Sermon on the Mount”, as Eliot held in the Notes:

To Carthage then I came

Burning burning burning burning

O Lord Thou pluckest me out

O Lord Thou pluckest

burning.

At this point, Buddha is placed next to St. Augustine. Their bringing together as main representatives of two distinct ascetic systems “is not an accident”, as the poet himself confessed again in the Notes. Just as it is no accident that these voices are heard in the part of the poem most concerned with persons involved in stories of fruitless passion: the prostitutes and their client, the typist and the young man carbuncular, the Thames daughters and their unhappy love affairs, Philomel and her tragic ending. The saints’ invocation comes at the climax of a state of affairs that could not go further. Paradoxically, however, the fire of lust both Buddha and St. Augustine preach against does not touch the above-mentioned characters, since they lack even the will and power to abandon completely and wholeheartedly to such erotic practices.

Fire has a dual symbolism in the religious context. On the one hand it is the fire of lust, of carnal pleasure, which only pushes man away from divinity. Slaves to the urges of the senses, wastelanders burn in a fire that brings about decay and destruction. According to Saint Augustine, when one surrenders to the senses, one spoils the image of God in man. Again, annihilation of the senses is the path towards communion with God: “I will have to overcome this force which keeps me tied to the body. It is not by this force that I shall find God”,⁷⁶⁹.

Temptations in themselves are not deemed sins by the Christian doctrines. They have a well-defined role, that of helping man test his resistance and endurance of faith. The battle with and the victory over temptations enhance his sense of Christian virtue. Christ Himself was tempted by Judas in the Garden of Gethsemane, which was part of the divine plan. In this light, St. Augustine’s, “O Lord Thou pluckest me out” is an invocation of the power to *resist* temptations; but the battle with the senses cannot be victorious unless assisted by divine grace.

Grace is also one of the basic tenets of Buddhism, a pre-requisite for reaching Nirvana.

All things are burning, says Buddha. All things are on fire. They are on fire with the fire of passion, with the fire of hatred, with the fire of infatuation, with birth, old age, death, sorrow, lamentation, misery, grief and despair... are they on fire⁷⁷⁰.

⁷⁶⁹ St. Augustine. *Confesiuni*. București: Nemira, 2006, 210.

⁷⁷⁰ Shastri quoted in Amar Kumar Singh. *T. S. Eliot and Indian Philosophy*. New Delhi: Sterling Publishers Private Limited, 1990, 13.

Buddha taught that rest and peace can be acquired through transcendence of passions and senses and a higher goal of fulfilment which excludes physical gratifications.

On the other hand, fire hints at purgation. It is an instrument by means of which purification from temptations of the flesh can be achieved. Disappointed by the void of the waste land, which is the consequence of uncontrolled use of the senses and of an existence under the sign of the material and the superficial, the poet invokes the purifying fire of Eastern and Western asceticism.

Not only does he warn against the then current state of affairs, but, in an action which indicates love for his debased fellows, he proposes a solution, even if radical. Since the wastelanders do not possess the ability to love fully, detachment from all earthly bondage may lead to redemption. The idea is common to Buddhism, Pantanjali, the *Gita* and Christian mysticism, especially represented by St. John of the Cross, who asserted that “the soul cannot be possessed by the divine union until it has divested itself of the love of created beings”⁷⁷¹.

India seems to provide further guidelines that might present an antidote to the crisis of the modern world. This time, Eliot resorts to the myth of Prajapati, the thunder god, to be found in Brihadaranakya Upanishad. The fable is announced in the title of the last part of the poem, “What the Thunder Said”.

⁷⁷¹ Narsingh Srivastava. *The Poetry of T.S. Eliot*, 12.

The title sounds like the conclusion enunciated by the thunder god with respect to the panorama of human futility displayed in the poem.

Men, gods and demons were affected by a prolonged period of spiritual bareness and aridity. As a result, they decided to address Prajapati, to whom they turned for answers. Prajapati noticed that gods had grown fond of earthly pleasures, men had fallen prey to their selfish nature and demons had become cruel and merciless. In order to help them, Prajapati offered them the solution, but stated it in a mysterious way. He spoke “DA” three times through the thunder and the three categories of creatures interpreted the sound in three distinct manners: as Datta (“give”), Dayadhvam (“sympathize”) and Damyata (“control”).

The fable may well refer to humanity in general. Every person has parts of demon and god. Consequently, one is affected by the three plagues in the fable: taste for lust, cruelty and selfishness. The injunctions of the thunder suggested as cures for the above-mentioned illnesses are conditions to reach a status of harmony and inner peace. “Give” is one, since self-sacrifice is an initial step toward detachment of all worldly limitations.

Buddhism places great emphasis on the precept of self-renunciation, which is also to be found in the Christian doctrine, where it relies on Christ’s words, *denegat seipsum*. The question “What have we given?” receives answers of a secular nature — we have given material things which, after death, are limited to “empty rooms” and legal issues. The commandment is misunderstood by the narrow-minded wastelanders, who consider that “giving”

means imparting physical pleasure and surrendering to urges of palpable order. The mystic philosophy of “give” is translated into existentialist principles. Man is defined by what he gives to the others and the action is all the more valuable if it involves self-sacrifice.

The second interpretation, Dayadhvam, “sympathize”, hints at self-annihilation and communion with the others:

Dayadhvam: I have heard the key
Turn in the door once and turn once only
We think of the key, each in his prison
Thinking of the key, each confirms a prison.

The metaphor of the prison stands for our being trapped in the circle of trivial, insignificant things which revolve around our own self, a prison built by our egotistical needs. By demolishing the walls of the prison one can overpass the limits of the self and project oneself onto the other. This reflection is possible only after acknowledging the importance of empathy. Reaching this stage requires a process of awareness, inner analysis and considerable efforts; i.e. searching for the key. Lack of sympathy eventually leads to isolation and alienation.

The last of the three commandments is Damyata, “control”:

Damyata: The boat responded
Gaily, to the hand expert with ail and oar
The sea was calm, your heart would have responded
Gaily, when invited, beating obedient
To controlling hands.

As suggested by the metaphor of the successfully steering boat, control can be learned and applied to all aspects of life so as to turn it into a “calm

sea”. Unfortunately, the subjunctive “your heart would have responded” points to the failure of such endeavour; in order to acquire total control, one needs practice and dedication.

The detailed interpretation of the thunder words is followed by a return to the Western world, manifested in a potpourri of allusions and quotations from the European literature. After this intermezzo more familiar to the reader, the poem ends with the reiteration of the Indian triad of words, followed by the mystical “Shantih”, repeated three times, like an incantation.

Eliot stated in the Notes that the translation of “shantih” would be “the peace which passeth understanding”. The word represents the ending of a Hindu prayer or of a religious rite. Among its rich meanings, it is worth noticing that of “absence of passions” or “to be calm or tranquil”⁷⁷². Placed at the end of the poem, it is a plea for the restoration of order and tranquillity in a land that experiences dryness at all levels. Used at the end of a poem that gathers so many pieces of the world civilization, “shantih” pinpoints the need of religious order that alone could bring appeasement and give a sense of meaning to a world torn between lack of values and inertia.

Blending perspectives of Eastern and Western origin is a plea for accepting the Other. In the midst of the chaos dominating a world living on the ruins caused by an exhausting war, India appeared as providing the proper distance for an objective assessment of the state of affairs. “India is remote enough to make the Western panorama of futility and anarchy look like a

⁷⁷² Narsingh Srivastava. *The Poetry of T.S. Eliot*, 52-53.

simple, limited fact”⁷⁷³. Furthermore, the spiritual traditions of the Orient could give viable suggestions for the recovery of a sickened civilization.

Eliot introduced the notion of the Other in terms of proximity, both in space and with respect to shared ideas and principles. There are allusions and quotations from the European literature, just as there are names and concepts representing the Orient, placed at a significant distance in spirit and space. If one were to think of Eliot as doing the task of a translator, one might notice that he favours a way in between foreignization and domestication. Exoticism is preferred in this context over any other form of cultural transference. The use of such a method aims at reminding that “we deal with a foreign culture which is part of a certain stereotyped semiotic category”⁷⁷⁴, in our case an archaic culture.

He himself writing at the beginning of the twentieth century, Romanian philosopher of religions Mircea Eliade also suggested the need for the Western space to become more flexible so as to accept different cultures. Europe was no longer making history by itself and was to take into consideration the role of so to say ‘peripheral’ cultures in this universal process.

One of the consequences of this new order was that European values were to lose the privileged place as generally accepted standards. The dominance of Western sets of values and principles was already challenged by

⁷⁷³ Joseph Bentley & Jewel Spears Brooker. *Reading The Waste Land. Modernism and the Limits of Interpretation*, 206.

⁷⁷⁴ Ovidi Carbonell. “The Exotic Space of Cultural Translation”, 149.

others, equally valid, even if different, coming from exotic spaces⁷⁷⁵. With respect to the relationship with a distinct culture, as is the case with India, Eliot also considered that assimilation was not the appropriate approach. Instead, he proposes cultural dialogue, in which each interacting culture maintains its integrity, identity and has the opportunity to express its alterity.

Eliot's treatment of culture-specific items pertaining to the Oriental space displays a relation of appropriation and distantiation⁷⁷⁶. Notions are rendered in the original, "Datta, Dayadhvam, Damyata", but at the same time they are reinterpreted with the help of references which indicate a clear Western background: Coriolanus, the metaphor of the key borrowed from Dante. Somehow the poet translates for his readers the significance of Indian words using relatively easily identifiable metaphors. The intention might have been to reconcile the familiar and the strange and to reach a point of release from the tension between the two extremes. As Ricoeur stated,

to appropriate is to make "one's own" what was "alien". Because there is a general need for making our own what was foreign to us, there is a general problem of distantiation. Distance, then, is not simply a fact, just the actual spatial and temporal gap between us and the appearance of such-and-such work of art or of discourse. It is a dialectical trait, the principle of a struggle between the otherness which transforms all spatial and temporal distance into cultural estrangement and the ownness by which all understanding aims at the extension of self-understanding⁷⁷⁷.

⁷⁷⁵ Mircea Eliade. *Mituri, vise și mistere*, 52-53.

⁷⁷⁶ Xie Ming. "Intercultural Traduction: Distance and Appropriation", 71.

⁷⁷⁷ Ricoeur quoted in Xie Ming. "Intercultural Traduction: Distance and Appropriation", 77.

The Upanishads preach renunciation of the self as a means of reaching liberation, of breaking free from the prison of selfishness. Accepting and allowing the Other to express himself while effacing the self is such an act of renunciation. The result of the encounter is enrichment of the self, “an engaged self which only finds itself after it has traversed the field of foreignness and returned to itself again, this time altered and enlarged, ‘othered’”⁷⁷⁸. “Give” and “sympathize” are fused in a movement that transcends material barriers.

Using the series “give”, “sympathize”, “control” instead of the Sanskrit words would have annihilated the weight of the argument. The Other is different and marked as such. Finding the familiar in the foreign is the reader’s task, with some help from the poet. The use of the English equivalents would have meant an interpretation of the interpretation.

“DA”, what Prajapati said, was interpreted by men, gods and demons in different manners, to suit their respective situations. This hints, on the one hand, at a significant freedom in interpreting transcendental messages with perfect validity for distinct circumstances. It is a point of divergence from Christianity, “where only ancient prophets could be taken seriously as translators of such messages”⁷⁷⁹. On the other hand, it underlines the relativity and arbitrariness of language, which allows for mere sounds to be turned into concepts with considerable mystical weight (“DA” as such is devoid of

⁷⁷⁸ Paul Ricoeur. *On Translation*, 19.

⁷⁷⁹ Joseph Bentley & Jewel Spears Brooker. *Reading The Waste Land. Modernism and the Limits of Interpretation*, 190.

meaning; it is only a reminder of the contingent world, like the sound of the water or the crow of the rooster).

Since the thunder words are provided with explanations that fit the readers' familiar background, "shantih" is rendered with the help of St. Paul's intervention: "And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Jesus Christ". In the Notes, Eliot held that "our equivalent to the word" is "peace which passeth understanding". He does not talk about a translation proper, but of an equivalent, i.e. he explains the term using phrases with similar semantic value for the Western readership. Nevertheless, the distance is there and is marked by the seemingly irrelevant possessive "our", which automatically implies a relatively distinct "they". Should "our" refer to us as Christian or to us as Europeans? Or are the two to be understood as interchangeable in this particular context?

Awareness of the existence of the Other is also conveyed by Eliot's use of the Sanskrit names for Himalaya and Ganges:

Ganga was sunken, and the limp leaves
 Waited for rain, while the black clouds
 Gathered far distant, over Himavant .

As in the previous cases, foreignization results in a clear mark of the difference. "Himavant" and "Ganga" fall under the category of proper nouns which usually enjoy special treatment. According to Theo Hermans, proper nouns may be conventional and loaded. The former category comprises nouns considered 'unmotivated', devoid of special significance, except for the

potential values granted to them by authors in a certain context. The latter category includes

those literary proper names that are somehow seen as ‘motivated’; they range from ‘suggestive’ to overtly ‘expressive’ names and nicknames and include those fictional as well as non-fictional names around which certain historical or cultural associations have accrued in the context of a particular culture⁷⁸⁰.

The Sanskrit nouns belong to the latter category, since they possess specific connotations for someone familiar with Indian mythology. The Ganges, “Ganga”, was said to originate from the Himalayas, the house of Lord Shiva, a location of continuous peace and bliss.

The association of the two toponyms has a high mythic and religious connotation for Orientals; they are carriers of particular cultural load. Their rendition with the English variants would have diminished this load and they would have been assimilated by the Western culture as mere representatives of a temporally and spatially distant civilization. Preserving the original Sanskrit names is also a form of reverence for the identity of the imported culture and a sign of acknowledgment of the difference⁷⁸¹.

At the graphical level as well, “Himavant” and “Ganga” are not marked, since the reader is believed to be able and infer what they stand for. It is not the case with Prajapati’s words which are written in italics the first time they appear, to indicate their exotic nature. Their repetition in the last but one

⁷⁸⁰ Theo Hermans. “On Translating Proper Names, with Reference to *De Witte* and *Max Havellaar*” in Michael Wintle (Ed.). *Modern Dutch Studies*. London: Athlone, 1988, 12.

⁷⁸¹ The experience of the exotic, in this case, the Orient, is considered by Said as mediated by the Western set of values, norms and ideology.

line of the poem is no longer emphasised, an indication of their behaviour as potentially accepted items in the target culture.

This particular treatment of such cultural terms manages to create a delicate balance between what the Orient really is and what the Orient is by Western standards. It is indeed a difficult thing to acquire since the poet attempts to introduce the Other without overemphasising differences or similarities. According to Said, the Orient is more of a product of the Western mind and it has always been treated in terms familiar to Westerners. The Oriental, with his set of values and lifestyle, was always “*like an aspect of the West*”⁷⁸², a perspective which encouraged this cultural exchange in terms of a binary relation us/them.

Eliot mediates the encounter with the Other by means of Western elements. But he performs his role as a mediator with respect and fully aware of its importance for a potential self-definition. Ultimately, any confrontation with the Other clarifies to a certain degree our own situation; self-definition acquires validity through reference to another. In the relation the West has always had with the Orient, Said notices a movement of the former towards the latter and not the other way around. This might be the result of a need for self-assessment. The aspect might have two completely different reasons.

On the one hand, the Westerner turns to the Oriental as to a term of comparison which, according to the former’s subjective standards, places him in a superior position, the result of a desperate need for positive self-appraisal.

⁷⁸² Edward D. Said. *Orientalism*. Timișoara: Editura Armacord, 2001, 45.

The other perspective justifies the movement as a result of the profound questioning of one's own principles, a quest for the self for which the presence of the Other is indispensable.

The encounter between self and Other may have a positive outcome, in which one's values are validated due to cohesion with the Other's principles, or a negative one, in which the Other manifests its alterity so strongly, that one experiences an acute sense of isolation. He is suggested the idea that he may be the Other, may take on the role of the Stranger.

Eliot's decision regarding the manner in which he could deal with the Indic material was difficult and context-bound. The Indic experience was not a novelty for the literary scene of his time, even if one is to consider both shores of the Atlantic. In America, Thoreau, Emerson or Whitman had manifested great interest in the Oriental system of thinking. Europe, in its turn, had had a rich line of writers, from Goethe or Hugo up to Yeats who had exploited the new and exciting material offered by India.

But, as Eliot himself stated, these images were distorted, manipulated to a significant degree, being filtered through the European/American vision. He was well-aware that a foreigner would always distort a given culture, to which he does not belong, to some degree or another. As a result, his attempt was directed at rendering and re-using the Indic material by resorting to a compromise: he presented the Indian culture as it was, with its particularities that set it apart from the Western civilisation, without renouncing at the same time his own cultural heritage.

A new relationship was created, in which the former dichotomy superior/inferior culture was replaced by dialogue in equal terms. In so doing, he also met the needs of a whole new generation of readers, with an already formed Oriental literary background, ready to detect foreign allusions and capable to grant them the expected significance in a given context.

Eliot has often been accused of being Eurocentric, of placing European cultural values and traditions at the core of his preoccupations. In support of such charges, the following statement in *After Strange Gods* has been quoted:

A good half of the effort of understanding what the Indian philosophers were after – and their subtleties make most of the European philosophers look like schoolboys – lay in trying to erase from my mind all the categories and kinds of distinction common to European philosophy from the times of the Greeks. My previous and concomitant study of European philosophy was hardly better than an obstacle. And I came to the conclusion – seeing also that the ‘influence’ of Brahmin and Buddhist thought upon Europe, as in Schopenhauer, Hartmann and Deussen, had largely been through romantic misunderstanding – that my only hope of really penetrating to the heart of that mystery would lie in forgetting how to think and feel like an American or a European: which, for practical as well as sentimental reasons, I did not wish to do⁷⁸³.

For Eliot, one needs to give up one’s own culture in order to be able to understand a foreign one. Furthermore, he holds that the European perception of the Indian thought was somehow perverted by wrong interpretations. In fact, the implication might be that Indian philosophy should be approached in an unbiased manner, with a clear mind and ignoring preconceived ideas so as to better understand it.

⁷⁸³ T.S. Eliot. *After Stange Gods*, 43.

The strategies and themes Eliot used in both his poetry and drama witness the enduring effect of Indian philosophy upon his sensibility. It is a consciously assumed influence and not simply the remains of youth readings, as he would later acknowledge: “I know that my own poetry shows the influence of Indian thought and sensibility”⁷⁸⁴. It is enough to consider *The Waste Land* to understand that he did not see the association between Eastern and Western values in terms of a schismatic relation.

In an interpretation which rejects pessimistic overtones, the solution to the decadence of twentieth century Europe is provided by faith, submission to the divine word and embracement of a valid set of moral guidelines, be them presented by Hinduism or Christianity. Potential divergences are melted into a broader perspective that seeks to bring together the alien and the familiar. Inter-confessional associations and cross-cultural understanding suggest the possibility of a way out for a world whose main spiritual coordinates are disjointed and blurred.

⁷⁸⁴ Eliot quoted in A.N. Dwivedi & G.K. Vishwavidyalaya. *Indian Thought and Tradition in American Literature*. New Delhi: Oriental Publishers & Distributors, 1978, 222.

Conclusions

T.S. Eliot continues to maintain alive the interest of the postmodern world, a situation which is encouraged by the fact that the interpretation of his work never seems to be exhausted. The aim of this thesis has been to capture the richness of *The Waste Land* and to propose a reading in a translation key. The complexity of the poem has allowed for an approach which has developed along two axes: intra- and interlinguistic exchanges, with particular emphasis on its Romanian versions.

The intercultural dimension of Eliot's creation and his particular recontextualizations and relocations of universal works of art entitle us to see him as a translator figure. Viewed from this perspective, one may even say that he put his craft to work in order to carry meaning across time and space. This is fully proven in *The Waste Land* which is the site of various artistic encounters and which represents a genuine challenge for both source and target readers.

My thesis centres on Eliot's presence in Romania through his master poem, *The Waste Land*, one of the symbols of Anglo-American modernism. This analysis has envisaged the poem from the perspective of its Romanian translation, which is one of the most influential and powerful form under which an author can exist in a foreign culture.

The main purpose of this comparative analysis of the source text with its Romanian productions was to demonstrate the way in which translators managed to render the complexity of *the Waste Land* for Romanian readers. At the same time, I have also given consideration to the translators' compliance with the linguistic and cultural norms prevailing in the Romanian culture at the

various moments when they produced their Romanian variants of the Eliotian poem. In this respect, the five versions of *The Waste Land* manifest distinct patterns of the translation activity. The advantage of Eliot's poem and the fortune of Romanian readers has been that *The Waste Land* benefited from the translation of two great poets, Ion Pillat and Mircea Ivănescu. Partial translations were also produced by poets, namely Ștefan Augustin Doinaș and A.E. Baconsky.

The translations are each separated from the other by a time span of approximately twenty years, except for Moldovan and Popescu's versions, with only five years between them. Each version bears the marks both of the translator, with his personality and his own translation policy, and of the general literary context in which he performed his translation.

Pillat's version has a marked domesticating tendency. His translation strategies reveal an attempt at making the text as accessible as possible to a high number of readers. This aim probably accounts for the overexplicitations in the Notes and the omission of paratextual elements such as the information on the title page. The Romanian literature was only initiating its contact with masterpieces of English literature. In this context, it was only natural that the concern of acceptability should be given prominence over adequacy.

His translation remains a truly inspired literary event, which captures both the message and the soul of the poem and which resists the trial of time as a wonderful "tălmăcire" ("translation"), as he would have put it, of a great piece of poetry. His version manages to preserve the message of the original, as

regards both content and form, being at the same time an extraordinary success of poetic expression in Romanian.

As opposed to Pillat's version, Covaci's Romanian text is clearly foreignizing in orientation. His translation manifests a switch towards the preoccupation to emphasise the foreign nature of the poem. Such preoccupation is visible in the strict observance of all typographic indications, the general treatment of proper nouns or the way he handled neologisms. However, the same orientation leads to the creation of certain hybrid forms at the lexical level, which can be interpreted as a forced attempt to impose the foreignness of the source text in the target system. The text also contains several cases of mistranslation, which, in certain instances, alter the text message. The analysis of the translation with the original revealed some inconsistencies with respect to proper nouns, as well the modification of the poem structure, one of the consequences being a diminished explanatory role of the Notes. Covaci's translation affected the integrity of the poem with respect to form and length; at times, it even made it difficult for readers to grasp the message of the original poem.

However, Covaci's translation is valuable for bringing Eliot's poetry on the Romanian literary scene of the seventies, under the form of a volume (*Poeme*, București, Ed. Albatros, 1970), at a time when his poems appeared only sporadically, in literary magazines. On the other hand, it also helped the other translators in drafting their own translations, since Covaci's text, together

with Pillat's, is a relevant exemplification of Eliot's work in Romanian at a given moment in time.

Together with Pilat's version, Ivănescu's is definitely among the successes of Eliot's poetry in Romanian translation. Ivănescu's craft as a poet and his intimate relation with poetry is visible at various levels, from the lexical choices to surprising poetic associations. One of his greatest achievements is that of managing to strike a balance between the registers of language which are distinctly marked in the source poem.

Ivănescu's translation witnesses an even higher concern with the Romanian readers than in Pillat's case. This is surprising given the fact that Ivănescu's version addresses a readership already familiar with Eliot's work and with *The Waste Land* in particular due to previous full or partial translations. This concern with making the text as accessible as possible may account for the explicitations with result, at times, in considerably longer lines than in the original. Likewise, the translator's notes, which present themselves as an exercise of erudition and careful reading, somehow run counter Eliot's intention, which was that of challenging the readers to decipher the text for themselves.

It is clear that Moldovan's version benefited from the existence of the previous translations. The errors are fewer, the text preserves its integrity both with respect to form and with respect to message. For the year 2004 and for Eliot's poems in translation, acceptability versus adequacy is no longer an issue, the Romanian literature being already accustomed to various literary

experiments, both received through translation from other literatures and produced within its own frontiers.

The Romanian text also benefited from the existence of an extensive critical apparatus available to the translator who confesses that the critical bibliography contributed to his better understanding of the poem, especially with respect to its intertextuality. Given the translator's credo according to which poetry should be read and written word by word, his translation follows the ST closely, managing to strike a balance between the dry and the poetic tones, not overemphasising one over the other, the general impression being that of detachment whereby the poet is allowed an almost unmediated dialogue with Romanian readers, in their own language.

Considering the conclusions of the comparative analysis of Moldovan's version with the other four Romanian texts, Moldovan's translations seems to be very faithful to the original; the structure, the form and the meanings of the source poem are all present in his Romanian text, but his detachment and visible concern with maintaining the balance between the original and the translation are at times detrimental to the feeling which the poem transmits.

The Romanian version signed by Popescu is also the most recent. Popescu imposed his personality and his own interpretation of the text. These are visible, for instance, in the interventions at the graphic level, the general layout of the lines being visibly modified as compared to the source poem. The literary allusions, the texts in foreign languages, the culture specific items are no longer emphasised in his translation, and thus, the intercultural dimension of

the poem is suggested as being inherent and well-understood by readers. Popescu's translation implies that twenty first century readers no longer need explicitations in or outside the text. However, in this era of fast communication and cultural dialogue, with information which is readily accessible, a trip through the mazes of a poem such as *The Waste Land* maintains its challenges in the absence of a solid amount of already acquired cultural knowledge.

Due to the considerable time distance between the translations, the analysis which focused on the norms of adequacy and acceptability suggests that they have occupied different positions of significance over time. Such a position was determined not necessarily by the poet's personal penchant towards one or the other, but was mainly dictated by the general translation tendency at a given moment in the literary system of the target culture. Consequently, Pillat and Ivănescu's versions favour acceptability as a means to ensure easier access to and a better reception of the source poem in the target culture. As the target literary system developed, a tendency towards a higher acceptability of diverse literary forms and messages has moved the focus towards adequacy, the translator being no longer willing to indulge in the target readers' narcissistic experience of reading, which would favour identification with the text they read.

Translations never appear in a cultural or literary void. That is why I have addressed issues related to the general translation policies in Romanian literature and the literary context in which Eliot's poems were introduced in the target culture. As I have tried to demonstrate, Eliot's presence has been a

constant in the Romanian literature both as regards translations from his work and his critical reception. This thesis has also attempted to pinpoint the significant moments in the evolution of Romanian literature and the potential similarities between Anglo-American modernism represented by Eliot and certain Romanian writers such as Lucian Blaga, Ion Pillat or Ana Blandiana. The Anglo-American poet also shared with the first wave of modernism a concern with tradition, with the return to the values of one's own past. The generation of the sixties, which in Romania represented a second wave of modernism, manifested the same aesthetic preoccupations as Eliot did in his poetic and critical work. Romanian writers of the eighties also made use of modernist devices, particularly allusion and intertextuality, and in this they manifestly praised Eliot as their main precursor. Eliot's presence on the Romanian literary scene has constantly been ensured by studies and books which centre on his poetic and critical titles.

Based on the general similarities between Eliot and certain modernist Romanian writers, this thesis can represent a starting point for further research to focus on a more in-depth analysis of the influence which Eliot exerted upon specific Romanian poets. Likewise, my research on the translation of *The Waste Land* could also represent the basis for future studies on Romanian translations from other Anglo-American modernists and on the position of Eliot's work in the Romanian literature as compared to other colleagues of his generation.

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