

Moving Borders, Changing Perspective. P. P. Carp's Translations of *Macbeth* into Romanian

Daniela Maria MARȚOLE
"Ștefan cel Mare" University of Suceava, Romania

Abstract

Shakespeare's *Macbeth* was translated into Romanian by at least nine translators, beginning with 1850, when the first Romanian translation was published, and ending with the year 2014. P.P. Carp, an important political and cultural figure of the second half of the 19th century Romania, was the second translator of the play, and the first to have used an English original version and not a French or German intermediary text. Our paper deals mainly with the first publication of his translation of the play in 1864 and touches upon the second edition published in 1886. We focus on the way in which some major and accelerated changes in the Romanian language of the period are reflected in the text of the translation and, in spite of its subsequent severe criticism, on Carp's linguistic competence and literary skill.

Key words: *Macbeth*, *Shakespeare*, *translation*, *border*, *foreignizing translation*

Petre Carp (1837-1919) was one of the outstanding people who had a great impact on the cultural and the political life of the principality of Moldova. He received his education in Germany, where, in aristocratic student circles, he polished his political views and adopted social attitudes that he would embrace all his life. He had a great and immediate impact on the political and cultural life of the former Moldavian capital, Iași. As many

historians have noted, “he contributed substantially to the creation of the distinctive Junimea spirit, that mixture of critical intensity, erudition, and conviviality, which cemented relations among a diverse assemblage of individuals. Carp's colleagues respected him for his political and sociological knowledge, his wide reading in European literature, and his talent as a literary critic, and they often turned to him as a final authority” (Hitchins, 1994:58). However, he dedicated the best of his energies to his political career and the fact that, despite his exquisite qualities, his name is much less known by younger generations than that of Maiorescu (who was more concerned with the cultural issues of their time) is, in the words of a Romanian researcher, ‘the revenge of the literary on the political’ (Murariu, 2002: 13). Even if Carp was a prominent political figure in Junimea, it was his literary debut with the translation of the play *Macbeth* that marked the very beginnings of the society.

In a previous research article (Martole, 2016), I made an attempt at classifying the many translations of the play *Macbeth* in Romanian, according to Schleiermacher's principles stated in the work *On different Methods of Translating*: “Either the translator leaves the author in peace, as much as possible, and moves the reader toward him. Or he leaves the reader in peace, and moves the author toward him”(cited in Lefevere, 1992:149), later reformulated by Venuti as the domesticating and foreignizing methods (Venuti, 1995:20). I organised the translations of the play in two groups, the two 19th century translations qualifying as foreignizing texts, inviting the reader into a diverse linguistic space, whereas the five 20th century translations were given the ethnocentric label. The distinction may not be clearcut, but I have taken into consideration the great variety of foreign elements the 19th century translations are teeming with and the political, social and cultural factors that supported such a classification. While

Băjescu's presence in the first group is very easily justifiable, as many of the words used in his translation that were preserved in the Romanian language can still be found in dictionaries of neologisms, things are more difficult to prove in Carp's case. Debatable as it may be, as far as some of the Romanian researchers are concerned, Carp's inclusion in the foreignizing group depends on what was considered foreign and what was domestic in 1864, when the translation was published.

Dissatisfied with the reductionist binarism of Schleiermacher's and Venuti's classifications, in an article entitled 'Schleiermacher and the Problem of Blendlinge', Anthony Pym gives a new reading to Schleiermacher's work, analysing the two methods according to the local historical and cultural context. According to Pym, Schleiermacher develops a "complex theory of subject positions, particularly when constructing the kind of place to which people should belong and the kinds of foreignness they should thus experience" (Pym, 1995::np). First of all, Schleiermacher's lecture was very much part of a moment in German letters, participating in a general attempt to oppose German Romantic aesthetics to the *belles infidèles* of French Neoclassicism and his nationalistic opposition was made all the stronger by the Napoleonic invasion. The foreignizing translation method recommended by Schleiermacher - moving the reader rather than the author - is to be German, opposing the implicitly French method of naturalizing foreign authors. Schleiermacher's political opposition to French expansionism in Germany was entirely congruent with his arguments against French annexation through translation. His preference for the more literalist translation method is thus, according to Pym, a preference for one particular way of constructing a national place (*ibid.*).

Transferring Pym's reading of Schleiermacher's metaphor of belonging to the Romanian local context of the latter half of the

19th century, labelling Carp's texts as foreignizing or ethnocentric depends, to a large extent, on the side/kind of the border where the reader is placed.

In 1864, when Carp published his first translation of the play *Macbeth*, Romania's territorial unity was precarious; therefore one could hardly speak of unity in language. Nonetheless, the efforts of the Junimea intellectuals were channelled in at least two main directions: on the one hand, the evolution of Romanian society along the lines offered by the Western model and, on the other hand, the creation of a standardized language, comprehensible to all. In the linguistic field, Junimea was strongly positioned against the neologistic trend of the age. However, either due to the fact that Junimea and Carp's translation emerged concomitantly on the linguistic scene and the linguistic program of the society had not yet taken the afore mentioned direction, or due to the heavy influence of Carp's European, multilingual education, a close reading of the translation will immediately reveal foreignizing traits.

In my opinion, we can identify at least two explanations that lead to the inclusion of Carp text in the foreignizing camp. The first one is the source texts that Carp used in the translating process. Although Carp is known to have been the first translator in the 19th century to use an English version of the play, the text pays a great debt to Dorothea Tieck's German translation in 1833. Due to his German formation, it was only natural for Carp to resort to German texts for confirmation. Unfortunately, Tieck's major understanding errors of Shakespeare's text are accountable for many of Carp's less felicitous or dubious choices, as P. Grimm remarks in an article published in *Dacoromania* (1923:340). One of the most flagrant examples is Tieck's misreading of the following lines in *Macbeth's* monologue in the seventh scene of the first act: "But here, upon this bank and shoal of time, We'd

jump the life to come”. Dorothea Tieck mistakenly reads *shoal* and *bank* as *Schulerbank* „*schooldesk*” and, following the same reading, Carp comes with a nonsensical translation of the key moment of the play: “Pe banca de școlaru a greului presentu/ Bucurosu aș jărtfi cerescul viitoru.” (On the *schooldesk* of the difficult present?/ I would gladly sacrifice the heavenly future)⁸. In an article entitled “Translation and influence: Dorothea Tieck’s Translations of Shakespeare”, independent researcher Christian Smith demonstrates that even Freud’s earlier readings of *Macbeth* were influenced by Tieck’s interpretations of Shakespeare’s text. According to Smith, Dorothea Tieck changes the line “When the battle’s lost and won” to “Wer der Sieger ist, sich zeigt”, which means “Who the victor is, shows itself (will become apparent)”. Thus Shakespeare’s reference to the battle turns into a reference to the character, presenting Macbeth as victor at the very beginning of the play. This, says Smith, “immediately signals the success that Macbeth will have and that, according to Freud, will cause his downfall” (Smith, 2018:14). In Carp’s text, the same meaning is rendered by the verb *a se sfeti* “to become apparent”, of Slavic origin, that is no longer in current use.

Another, less harmful, example presented in Smith’s study (Smith, 2018:17) is Dorothea Tieck’s rendering of the word *kite* by *vulture* in MacDuff’s exclamation “O Hell-Kite!” (4.3.220)- *Höllengeier* (Hell vulture), or in act three, where Macbeth says to the Ghost of Banquo at 3.4.69-70, “If charnel-houses and our, graves must send / Those that we bury back, our monuments / Shall be the maws of kites” Dorothea Tieck translates “maws of kites” as “der Schlund der Geier” (maws of vultures; 3.4.76). According to Smiths, “Tieck may have picked up Shakespeare’s devouring vulture image in act 4, scene 3 where Macduff is

⁸ My back translation.

talking to Malcolm about the voraciousness of monarchs — ‘That vulture in you to devour so many’ — and applied it the play” (*idem*). We find the same interpretation in Carp’s text, although Shakespeare’s word, kite, translated as *uliu* would have been more readily assimilatable by the potential audience of the translation:

<p>- If charnel-houses and our, graves must send / Those that we bury back, our monuments / Shall be the maws of kites (3.4.69-70) -O Hell-Kite (4.3.220) (Shakespeare,1994)</p>	<p>-der Schlund der Geier (the vulture throat) -<i>Höllengeier</i> (Hell vulture) (Shakespeare, 1971)</p>	<p>-Di ne inapoiesce /Grópa pe aciñ, ci punemu in pamentu, /Gutița de vulturu e singurul mormentu./Ce mañ potemu ave! (If the grave gives back to us the ones that we put in the tomb/ the throat of a vulture is the only grave we can still have) -Vulture din iad!(vulture from hell) (Shakespeare, 1864)</p>
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The second explanation may reside in Carp’s linguistic environment which he could not deny, as his text functions as a living demonstration of the linguistic debates of the age. Carp’s translation teams with Latinate words which prove the translator’s constant preoccupation to enrich and elevate the Romanian language, trying to benefit from the influence exerted by the constant with other European languages.

The presence, in the text of the translation, of so many barbarisms that were the object of the criticism of both his contemporaries and of future generations is certainly the effect of the general tendency of the age to prove, at all costs, the Romance character of Romanian, a tendency he simply could neither deny nor avoid. These terms fall in two categories: the first one

contains words of Latin origin that are used as such or with a slightly different form *eu sum* (<lat. *ego sum*, “I am”), *anima* (<lat. *animus*, it. *anima* “soul”), *Mane* (<lat. *mane*, “tomorrow”), *ȕia* (<lat. *dies*, in Romanian *zi*, “day”), *hospe*(<*hospis*, current form *oaspete*, “guest”), *angeli*(<lat. *angeli*(pl), current form *îngeri*, “angels”). Such words are to be found in many other publications of the time, for the reason mentioned above. In the second category we can identify words of French origin *carta* (*hartă*-map), *futurul* (*viitor*-future), *îndemnatrice* (*femeie care îndeamnă*- woman who urges, *urgetrice), *francesê* (*franchețe*-frankness), *inimic* (*inamic*-enemy), *succesie* (*succesiune*-succession), *propise* (*propice* - appropriate), *novisu* (*novice*-novice), *breșê* (*breșă*-breech), *a simula* (to simulate), *a conjura* (to conjure), *a combate* (to fight, to combat), *leal* (*loial*-loyal), *laconic* (*laconic*). Just as in Bajescu’s case, most of the words from this list have an English counterpart of French extraction. In Romanian, in some cases, the words survived with a different form.

The text is also full of terms that today may be seen as an ethnocentric attempt to move the author towards the reader, as they are regional terms with restricted usage, few of them being still in use today in remote rural areas in Northern Romania: *gusgan* „șobolan”(rat), *barabane* „tobe” (drums), *scoboritori* „urmași”(descendants), *doftor*, *vadar* „marinar”(sailor), *a murui* „a murdări”(to besmirch), *hîdê* „urâtă”(ugly), *doleu* „încet în mișcări”(slow in movement), *a chiti* „a spera”(to hope), *a habuci* „a cășăpi” (to cut to pieces), *a priboi* „a împodobi” (to adorn). However, although Carp had an international thinking, the national approach to culture and its reception, in the sense of the wider national frame of the newly merged principalities, turned marginal many terms that had been considered standard language. Characteristic forms of the southern Romanian province gradually

became established norm in Romania, while their northern counterparts were restricted to informal/regional use, and some are still active nowadays, in the north, in some rural regions of the country. That the “dispute” among the diatopic variants for supremacy ended in the prevalence of the subdialect from Wallachia is “as natural as can be”, says linguist Ion Gheție, as are many other similar facts derived from the moving of Romania’s administrative-territorial center to Bucharest, beginning with 1862. Consequently, the Moldovans found it most difficult to adjust to the new linguistic norms, as they “had the most to give up and the most to take from others” (Gheție, 1978: 223).

In the field of word formation, two aspects concerning prefixation are relevant for the understanding of Carp’s system. First of all, we remarked the translator’s preference for the negative prefix *ne-* to render phrases that in English contain various affixes, privative or negative, as can be seen in the examples: *Ci pornesc nevêduți, pe aereștii cai - hors’d/Upon the sightless corners of the air, Nepașitului Duncan - Th’unguarded Duncan, neveșutul țelu unui planu tradatoru - The indivulg’d pretence (...) of treasonous malice, o necuviință - All-thing unbecoming nestrămutat legată - Indissoluble tie, pecatul/a nerecunoscinței - the sin of my ingratitude* The same prefix is used to translate different negative meanings rendered in English analitically in examples such as *nemultumit* (dissatisfied) for *without content*, *nevroind mai mult a se supune* (unwilling to obey) for *contending ’gainst obedience*. Other English phrases don’t even contain a negative affix or an obvious negative connotation but the translator chose to use the prefix *ne-*: *netrudite osti - furbish’d arms, nefirescul îndemnu - this supernatural soliciting, netotu - half a soul*.

Subjectively speaking, the reason for the choice of such a uniform method to translate such a great variety of phrases might

have something to do with the global significance of the play, with the preponderantly negative traits of the main character and of his actions. Linguistically speaking, the translator's choices are clearly motivated by the high frequency of the words formed with this prefix. Despite the fact that it comes from old Slavic, the prefix *ne-* was part of usual words which Carp did not consider appropriate to replace with Latinate counterparts. It is an early manifestation of a tendency that Lucian Boia identified at a later stage of Junimea when "the Slav contribution is no longer seen as something additional but as an important constitutive element of the Romanian synthesis" (Boia, 2001:57).

Another prefix that caught our attention is *des-*, that in Carp's translation is used with the Moldavian form *dis-*. The translation of the verbs *dismay* and *unsex*, on the other hand, using the Latinate prefix *des-*, shows the translator's attempt to create, in Romanian, appropriate forms for English meanings that were not present in Romanian. The English verb *dismay* is made of the Latin prefix *de-* and the old French verb *esmaier* (to trouble) that comes from an unattested verb in the Vulgar Latin, *exmagare* (to deprive of power). According to Romanian linguists Ion Coteanu and Angela Bidu Vrânceanu, the verb *a disbărbăți* (to unman) falls in the category of verbs that share the base with an antonym formed with the prefix *în-* (Coteanu & Bidu Vrânceanu, 1985:189). Although both the base and the antonym are present in the current Romanian language, according to dictionaries, the verb *a desbarbăta* is obsolete, being replaced by the neologic borrowing *a descuraja* (to discourage). Unlike *a desbărbăta*, the verb **a desfemeea* (to unwoman) has no antonym formed by derivation but only the neologic verb of French origin *a feminiza* (to feminize). Structurally speaking, the two verbs used by Carp are synonymous, both meaning "to deprive (a person) of the attributes of his or her sex", but, according to the cultural

stereotype, the attribute of masculinity is courage and the attribute of femininity is sensitivity and Carp manages a wonderful cultural adaptation of these two verbs that have no gendered root in English. The presence of such semantic constraints in the Romanian mentality is proved by the two synonymous verbs, *a încuraja* and *a îmbărbăta* both meaning “to encourage”, where the meanings of *courage* and *man* overlap. Haig Acterian, in 1945, will translate *unsex me here* by *îmbărbătați-mă pe loc*, ignoring the privative meaning of prefix *un-* and using, instead, an antonym that has the meaning “to invest with the attributes of the other sex”. These are the only two synthetic renderings of the verb *unsex*, all the other translators choosing a paraphrase instead. Carp uses the structural calque in the same synthetic way when he translates Macbeth’s endearing remark towards Lady Macbeth in the banquet scene, *sweet remembrancer* by *scumpă indemnatrice* (dear urgetrice) mimicking Shakespeare’s nominal derivation on Romance grounds.

Using such a literalist method, Carp may stir into his readers “the sense of the strange”, “this feeling of being faced with something foreign” to return to Schleiermachers binarism. One of the greatest objections to Carp’s text had to do with the graphic form of the translation. The revision of the text, after 20 years, in 1886, shows Carp’s interest in the reception of the translation and his attempt to make his text fit into the increasingly clear idea of the translation as a product. His wish to improve the Romanian version of the play *Macbeth* is consistent with Constantin Gane’s observation regarding the perfectionist character of the translator: “Carp’s principles, in all the manifestations of life, could be summarised in one word, *excelsior*. What was not perfect, in the superlativ, was mediocrity and for Carp mediocrity meant intense pain” (Gane, 1936:80-81). Gheorghe Panu, a younger Junimea intellectual remarks: “As far

as Carp was concerned, a literary work was either a masterpiece or a nonentity, there was no middle way, either Shakespeare and La Fontaine, or mere emptiness”(Panu, 1908:30). That’s why Constantin Gane, aware of the fact that the translator treated his own text according to the same principles could not explain why Carp had chosen, for his first attempt in translation, a text that he was clearly not able to outmatch. Anthony Pym considers that, unless one translates “in certain circumstances only, investing variable effort, in order to promote long-term cooperation between cultures (...), it would probably be best not to translate” (Pym, 2012:12). From this perspective, Carp translated for all the good reasons, but the misfortunes of his text originated in the wrong timing of the translation, as the moving borders of the national linguistic space never gave this second version of *Macbeth* in Romanian a chance to get known to a wider audience.

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