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Daniela Hăisan

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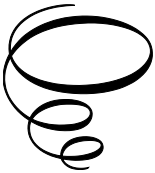

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NOTATIONAL AND TYPOGRAPHICAL CONVENTIONS

In my quotations from foreign sources, I usually provide a translation alongside the original text. Literal back translation (from Romanian or French to English), often placed between brackets, is mine unless otherwise stated.

Italics for special emphasis in the excerpts used for comparative analysis are usually mine.

Even if Romanian uses a type of inverted commas that are slightly different in form and in use than in English, we will be using a unitary punctuation all through the book (except for a few examples where dashes used for dialogues are meaningful in a given translation).

The titles of Wilde's nine (fairy) tales are in italics, not between inverted commas, as some of them were published in Romanian as one-tale books.

The acronym TT (for "target text"), though potentially rebarbative, is used in the titles of the chapters in Part Two for the sake of economy and practicality, and also because such abbreviations are still standard currency in translation studies literature.

Occasionally, for lack of space, the following title abbreviations will be used:

- Prince (*The Happy Prince*)
- Nightingale (*The Nightingale and the Rose*)
- Giant (*The Selfish Giant*)
- Rocket (*The Remarkable Rocket*)
- Pomegranates (*A House of Pomegranates*)
- King (*The Young King*)
- Infanta (*The Birthday of the Infanta*)
- Fisherman (*The Fisherman and His Soul*)
- Star-Child (*The Star-Child*)
- W. H. (*The Portrait of M. W. H.*)
- Millionaire (*The Model Millionaire*)
- Savile (*Lord Arthur Savile's Crime*)
- Canterville (*The Canterville Ghost*)
- Sphinx (*The Sphinx without a Secret*)

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My thanks go to the editors of *Lublin Studies of Modern Languages and Literature* (Maria Curie-Sklodowska University Press) for allowing me to reprint some elements from the article "Subjectivity in (Re)Translation: The Case of Oscar Wilde's Tales in Romanian" (published in vol. 44, no. 1 (2020), 39–50, DOI: 10.17951/lsmll.2020.44.1.39-50). I would also like to express my most sincere gratitude to Professor Magda Teodorescu for the delightful correspondence which provided some useful insights into the present topic.

INTRODUCTION

Overarching Aims

In March 2021, no fewer than nine different editions of Oscar Wilde's (coincidentally, also nine) children's tales could be found in Romania's bookshops and libraries, offering thus unparalleled, unprecedented access to competing translations. Since 1911 (the date of the first Romanian version of one of the tales), these stories have been periodically but constantly retranslated or reedited, transcending any conceivable trend in reading or publishing. The present book examines the breadth of this phenomenon by looking into the internal factors (text analysis and translation strategies), and, though to a lesser extent, the external ones (different types of agents: mostly translators and publishers, and different types of contexts: editorial, socio-historical, and institutional) that have helped consolidate Oscar Wilde's multicultural afterlife.

Broadly speaking, this is a book about translation (on a bilingual, English-Romanian, basis, but observations on translation at large will definitely be made at times). It is also inevitably about retranslation, which automatically involves (re)translation history[1] and translation criticism. It is equally about socio-translation (or the sociology of translation), with due attention paid to translators as well. It is, in addition, about translating children's literature (even though Wilde's tales have an obviously ambivalent addressee: *kiddults* (sic!)).

Along with its modest proposal of a template based on a series of universal parameters in translation criticism applied to (children's) literature (which are largely dictated by the source text itself, with its own idiosyncrasy and with the challenges it poses to translators), the present study also attempts to rehabilitate the target text[2] (i.e., target text analysis, or textuality), which seems to be out of fashion for many translation scholars. After all, what translation studies essentially does is "investigate

[1] *Cf.* Henri Meschonnic: "L'histoire de la traduction est surtout l'histoire des retraductions." (Meschonnic 1999, 175) [Translation history is above all retranslation history.]

[2] Translation as a text in its own right is, nevertheless, an epistemological principle embraced by many translation scholars (e.g., Walter Benjamin, George Steiner, Antoine Berman, and Henri Meschonnic, to name but a few).

the linguistic and textual realizations through which cultural exchange takes place" (Simon 2005, 129). Furthermore, the procedures inherent in translation and the resulting text may tremendously influence the perception of the original text in the target culture. Sometimes, the translation as text deserves as much attention as the original text, especially when addressing a new type of audience. We feel, like Berman (1991), that the fundamental principles of literary translation evaluation have to do with establishing whether a given target text managed to acquire some kind of authority within the receiving culture, whether it contributed to enriching the target language, whether it constitutes an event in the receiving culture, and whether or not it ensures the survival of the source text.

Methodology

In literary translation, understanding the style of a source text and being able to recreate similar stylistic effects in the target text are crucial. That is why, in this book, beyond the inevitable diachronic perspective on translated Wilde, there lies a constant preoccupation with the way the main stylistic features of his (children's) fiction can be and have been preserved, restored, and compensated for in Romanian.

Secondly, while fully aware that literature is not a matter of word-for-word (nor of sentence-for-sentence) translation but must be fundamentally approached from one discourse to another, we nevertheless tended to select very small textual fragments for analysis in order to emphasize this or that stylistic quirk that resists translation (or not). These textual fragments were selected in accordance with two criteria: on the one hand, we focused on those that are strategic narrative-wise (i.e., the incipit, the excipit, and certain key phrases); on the other hand, we also dealt with culturally or semantically imbued terms or phrases or paragraphs that we found interesting and apposite translation-wise.

The ad hoc solutions, microtext analysis, and details are, however, always seen in relation to the macro-text and the global strategy. Furthermore, the translation as a book, the book's format, and the book as an object (with either a paratext or illustrations, often institutionally recommended and distributed through the school market) were also considered relevant in the context of Oscar Wilde's reception in Romania.

While based on various concepts in use in translation studies, ours is more empirical than conceptual research. Furthermore, as neither source-oriented nor target-oriented approaches alone can account satisfactorily for translation phenomena, our approach to quality assessment is synchronously

source-oriented (i.e., based on the relationship between the translation and its source text) and target-oriented (the degree of naturalness in the target language being also at stake)[3]. To these we might add the emphasis laid upon the agency of individual translators, which involves relying on the sociological side of translation and, although to a much lesser extent, an effect-oriented approach (a number of published reviews of the translations under debate being equally taken into account).

We start from the premise that the retranslation hypothesis, although partially confirmed by our corpus, is far too simplistic to cover all the possible retranslation types of Wilde's tales and all the reasons behind them (that is why we will be employing some translation metaphors to label and synthesize the various types of translation in the corpus in part two). These tales being literary classics, not to mention one constantly included in pupils' recommended bibliographies, commercial criteria and language evolution are only two of the many reasons Wilde has been retranslated; others have to do with writers trying their hand at what are deemed among the most difficult texts to reproduce stylistically (see Leviţchi 2001, 160), students practising translation as a form of apprenticeship, and academics intent upon changing the perception of these works established by previous versions.

We posit then that retranslation needs to be scrutinized from both a historical and a cross-cutting perspective[4]. That is why the second part of the book offers a diachronic view of Wilde's tales in Romanian (the translated text in relation to older texts or practices that acquired some sort of authority in the receiving cultural tradition), whereas the third part analyses the translated texts by comparing them with one another (with a view to emphasizing notable changes in Wilde's Romanian reception but also a series of observations on translation in general, starting from the case in point). In other words, we aim at looking at the translations included in our corpus in their *synchronic* and *diachronic temporal dimensions* (see Venuti, 2005), but the comparative examination of these texts is definitely not restricted to the synchronic or the diachronic lens.

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[3] See also Frank (1990), Kittel (1998, the Göttingen approach), and Gentzler (2001).

[4] *Cf.* Cadera: "Studying retranslations in different periods makes it possible to discover how aesthetic questions and translation strategies change over time in keeping with evolutions in the 'environment.' Moreover, comparison of retranslations of the same work can reveal different types of manipulation due to the social and historical context" (Cadera, in Cadera and Walsh 2017, 14).

Theoretical Framework

As the Romanian translations of Wilde's tales are the object of our research, a flexible, multi-methodological approach to (re)translation is proposed, which draws on a rather eclectic translation theory (or translation philosophy) in the effort to reconcile clashing (sometimes opposite) views but also leans on paradigms from narrative theory, narratology, linguistics, onomastics, and sociology. The comparative analysis itself adopts an equally eclectic model, loosely dwelling on the works of Vinay-Darbelnet (1958), Berman (1985), Hervey and Higgins (1992), and Epstein (2012) for the general techniques employed in translating styles. Henri Meschonnic's and Paul Bensimon's *traduction-introduction*, the concept of *canonical translation*, *(translator's) agency/voice*, *translation tradition*, *translation temporality*, and *translation autonomy* are, among others, brought into question from descriptive, contrastive, and historical standpoints by means of textual and contextual analyses.

Such terms as *descriptive* and *historical* may be perceived today as gradually falling into desuetude within the ever-expanding, ever-changing field of translation studies. Reputed translation scholars like Jean-René Ladmiral[5] see descriptive studies (and, implicitly, the practice of contrasting a source text to its translation) as practices from an irrevocably bygone era[6], claiming that a retrospective look on how one used to translate is definitely a thing of the past. Ladmiral pleads instead for what he calls a *productive traductology*, which aims at anticipating the moves to make in future translations rather than pointing out the flaws of the old ones. By the same token, a straightforward, historical view of translation may seem too simple a way to deal with the overwhelming complexity of the translation phenomenon[7]. Nevertheless, both *description* and *history* are

[5] The exact, original quotation: "Mon problème n'est pas de savoir comment un autre a traduit hier, mais comment moi, je vais traduire aujourd'hui. C'est la différence que je fais entre une *traductologie descriptive*, qui s'attache à un travail rétrospectif de comparaison contrastive entre le texte source et sa traduction (ou ses traductions), et la *traductologie productive* pour laquelle je plaide, dont le discours vise à anticiper la traduction à faire." (Ladmiral 2004, 548)

[6] *Cf.* "*Parallel bilingual corpora*, consisting of original texts and their translated versions, have traditionally been the most popular data for research in translation studies. They can tell us a great deal about those patterns of language use specific to certain target texts, and should thus be very informative regarding particular translation practices and procedures used by the translator." (Hatim 2013, 163, emphasis added)

[7] *Cf.* As Yves Gambier points out, retranslation is a phenomenon grounded in history: "La retraduction conjugue à [la] dimension socioculturelle la dimension

central to any research on retranslation, all the more so when its direction is from a "major" linguaculture[8] (e.g., the British) into what Sean Cotter (2014) calls "minor Romania"[9] (i.e., a country whose language and literary culture are rather unfamiliar to scholars working in translation studies). The importance of translation varies with the status of the national literary tradition: in a "minor" culture like Romania's, translation has practically always had a primary position within the literary polysystem.

For Lance Hewson (2011), the key elements of translatological reflection are the factors that trigger translation, the translational framework (time, space, the source language, the target language, the source text, the reading public, the initiator, the reviser and the editor), the translator, the translational act, and the target text. To these, we might add some of the core concerns of children's literature translation[10] (e.g., cultural context adaptation, ideological manipulation, dual readership, features of orality, etc.).

In the present book, we inevitably detail or touch upon almost all of these aspects while trying to uncover what it is exactly that triggers the immense retranslation potential of Oscar Wilde's tales, the (Derridean[11] but also Bermanean and Ricœurean[12]) *hospitality* the Romanian language and culture has shown to these texts, and the interpretative potential of the target text compared with the source text.

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historique" [Retranslation adds a historical dimension to a socio-cultural one] (Gambier 1994, 413, translation mine).

[8] We employ this portmanteau, in a similar fashion to Paul Friedrich (1989), as a fusion of language and culture.

[9] Inspired by Lawrence Venuti's and Deleuze and Guattari's conceptualizations of the "minor" which he in fact utterly opposes, and by the Romanian context he investigates, Sean Cotter provides his own definition of *minor*, which he sees as an active rather than passive "transvaluation of a lack of national agency, on one hand, and of translation, on the other" (Cotter 2014, 146), and as a valuable "remarkable work of national imagination." (*ibidem*, 147)

[10] *Cf.* Alvstad (in Gambier and van Doorslaer 2010, 22).

[11] "To be hospitable is to *give place* to the foreigner" (Derrida 2000, 25).

[12] "Linguistic hospitality, then, where the pleasure of dwelling in the other's language is balanced by the pleasure of receiving the foreign word at home, in one's own welcoming house" (Ricœur 2006, 10). Ricœur's hospitality has very much in common with Berman's theory of translation.

Towards a Model

Attempting to map the contours of the theoretical framework of this book makes us realize once again the truth behind Cay Dollerup's words: "No existing theory or school in Translation Studies is entirely wrong and completely inapplicable, but at the same time none covers the facts of this case completely and exhaustively" (Dollerup 1999, 323).

We, too, start from the premise that there is no universally valid model of translation criticism, all the more so when it comes to literary translation. What experience (working on a number of case studies on retranslation: E. A. Poe, Rudyard Kipling, Jules Renard, Maupassant, etc.) has taught us is that the model is actually dictated by the source text (in a first instance at least). The difficulties and challenges of all sorts posed by a given source text, ultimately its style but also its status acquired in time, will govern the way translator critics choose their own instruments. Secondly, these instruments will be sharpened based on a necessary comparison with the target text but not only; any choice translators might have made needs to be measured in accordance with the greater picture offered by a thorough analysis of their habitus and idiosyncrasies as displayed in other translated works. Thirdly, these already sharpened instruments will need to be put aside for a moment in order to allow the translation critic to look into the way the given target text passed the test of the public.

The beauty of translation criticism lies in noticing particular aspects related to this or that particular case; no model will ever be applicable to all cases. Each case will dictate instead its own (customized) model. However, if subjectivity lies inevitably at the very heart of the work of translation critics, (almost) as much as it does at the heart of the work done by translators, then any model of translation criticism needs to rely on the right objective parameters to counterpoise and support its fundamentally subjective framework. After all, translation criticism is not (simply) about "communicating the enjoyment a given translation might have brought us" (Delisle 2013, 29)[13].

Motivation

First, as regards the necessity of a study on retranslation, the last decade has shown the great interest taken in the topic. For example, in 2010, Robert Khan and Catriona Seth published *La retraduction*; in 2011

[13] The exact quotation in French: "Faire la critique d'une traduction littéraire ce n'est pas communiquer le plaisir qu'une traduction a pu nous procurer".

appeared Kieran O'Driscoll's *Retranslation Through the Centuries: Jules Verne in English* as well as *Autour de la retraduction: Perspectives littéraire européennes*, edited by Enrico Monti and Peter Schnyder; in 2014, Sharon Deane-Cox published *Retranslation: Translation, Literature and Reinterpretation*; in 2015, the journal *Target* edited a monographic volume on *Voice and Retranslation*; in 2017, Susanne Cadera and Andrew Samuel Walsh edited *Literary Retranslation in Context*; and in 2019, Özlem Berk Albachten and Şehnaz Tahir Gürçağlar issued the volume *Perspectives on Retranslation. Ideology, Paratexts, Methods*. To these we might add a series of pluridisciplinary doctoral seminars on retranslation such as *La retraduction: Lieu et moment d'interprétation. Pour une histoire culturelle de la subjectivité en retraduction*, with two components: Retranslation Historicity, Theory and Criticism, 2019–2020, and Subjectivity in Retranslation, 2020–2021, organized by LLA-CRÉATIS, a research centre validated by the French Ministry of Research.

Consistently relevant and invariably ambiguous (Gambier 2011, 52)[14], retranslation is always worth exploring if not in order to challenge the "truth" contained in the "original" text, then at least for the different textual and sociological variables accounting for it. There might be no systematic studies on retranslation yet (as deplored by Gambier 2011, 49), except for a number of case studies (very often meant to either confirm or contest the *retranslation hypothesis*), but it seems that retranslation needs constant revisiting and will continue to provide fertile ground for investigation.

Second, the present study aims to chart the retranslation history of Oscar Wilde's tales and thus signal the extraordinary reception of these tales in the Romanian-speaking world. Why Romanian? Among other reasons, for the fact that in Romania there is a genuine cult of translation, and it has often happened, in the last 150 years, that the publication of a translation becomes a real cultural event[15]. Translation has proved vital in building a national language and literature while enjoying high status, especially when undertaken by prominent figures in public culture or when used as a tool of resistance against the oppressive communist regime. Such aspects enabled researchers like Sean Cotter to describe Romania as a "smaller nation, one born of a hyperengagement with

[14] The exact quotation in French: "La retraduction est toujours d'actualité et toujours ambiguë".

[15] See, for instance, the 25,000 copies of Lucian Blaga's translation of *Faust* into Romanian, mentioned by Cotter (2014, 14): "When Blaga's *Faust* appeared in 1955, in Bucharest it sold out in three days".

translation; one modelled on, developed within, and expressed through translation" (Cotter 2014, 145).

According to the statistics on *Index Translationum*, English ranks first as a source language in Romania; Romanian, in turn, ranks 23rd as a target language (in the top 50 target languages), thus testifying to the high "translation rate" (i.e., the number of translated books published every year), which is one of the best indicators of "the cultural acceptance of translation in a certain country" (Hale 2009, 217). Quantitatively (if not always qualitatively), translations into Romanian can be seen as relevant in the context of the "unequal translation activity between the Anglo-American cultures and the rest of the world" (Venuti 1995, 12) and consequently in the context of a growing (be it slowly) interest in translation in small cultures, conveyed by peripheral languages. Translation's intrinsically ancillary, therefore peripheral, nature itself, along with a corpus of texts supposedly written/translated for children (again, literature at the margins), what is more, in a minor thus peripheral language (such as Romanian), makes ours a thrice-marginal topic, which is ultimately promising, against all odds, as it proves to be hugely productive.

Still, literary translation is not so much about translating from one language into another as it is about translating authors. In this particular case, we are interested in Oscar Wilde, a classic Irish author, but since he wrote in English, and though "born in Ireland, of notable Irish parents, it was nevertheless in England that he made his name, for both good and ill" (Elinor Shaffer, in Evangelista 2010, vii), it is probably safe to consider English as the source language while Romanian assumes the role of target.

We should emphasize here that, while many critics and scholars have examined the works of Oscar Wilde, they have rarely addressed his works for children from a unified coherent translatological perspective that brings together intratextual as well as extratextual factors and which, at the same time, traces the profile of the (Romanian) children's book (re)translator. Furthermore, the translation history of Oscar Wilde's tales is still under-researched, especially at a time when, in Europe at least, there is an openness to such a topic (see, for instance, the series coordinated by Yves Chevrel et al., *Histoire des traductions en langue française*, published between 2012 and 2019).

This book aims to contribute both to retranslation studies and to children's literature translation scholarship[16] by providing an extensive

[16] *Cf.* "Translation for children in particular is a rare research topic, with few exceptions, for instance, Constantinescu (2013) and Pelea (2007, 2010a)" (Cocargeanu 2015, 156). We should, however, mention Cristina Chifane's *Translating Literature*

analysis of retranslation(s). The relatively lengthy investigation is probably the first study attempting to cover the entire corpus of Romanian translations of Oscar Wilde's tales. Naturally, due to space limitations, the study will focus on a selection of thirteen of these translations (a dozen debated upon in part two, plus another one analysed in part three); however, every effort was made to find if perhaps not all, then as many Romanian versions of Wilde's tales as possible.

Challenges

Apart from the challenge of having to deal with a huge corpus of texts while striving to achieve some kind of balance at the intersection of as many disciplines as translation studies can and needs to encompass, an additional challenge has to do with establishing a target public for the present book, given that the corpus itself (i.e., "the original texts"), Wilde's two volumes of fairy tales, *The Happy Prince* (1888) and *A House of Pomegranates* (1891), was written, according to an 1888 letter, "partly for children and partly for those who have kept the childlike faculties of wonder and joy." Furthermore, the corpus of Romanian translations consists, on the one hand, of texts published as children's books and on the other of scholarly editions meant for aficionados (of Wilde or of Irish studies or of translation) or simply for the general public. Therefore, if what Wilde (as well as some of Wilde's translators) had in mind was a double (better yet, a dual) address(ee) for these tales, we, too, can hope our analysis will appeal to various categories of readers, be they Romanian speakers or simply English speakers (instances of literal, back translation of Romanian terms or texts being always at hand).

Yet another challenge has to do with the (un)availability of (reliable) information on (research on) retranslations. As emphasized by Paloposki and Koskinen, "retranslations cannot be picked out from bibliographical databases the way authors, translators or source languages can, as there is no search word of bibliographical field for the crucial piece of information that a translation is in fact a retranslation" (Paloposki and Koskinen 2010, 36). Apart from the scanty character of online catalogues and of the national bibliography, we were also confronted with scarcity of data on old editions of Oscar Wilde's tales in Romanian, as well as with the deficient paratext of many books (printed without a date stamp or without

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for Children (2016), a book on children's literature analysing translations from and into Romanian.

the translator's name), all of which unfortunately stand in the way of producing either an exhaustive, definitive list of translations or a highly accurate view on the reception of Wilde's tales in Romania.

Despite all these, the present study attempts, in its turn, to challenge some generally-held ideas regarding (re)translation (for children) (in Romania), thus prompting a reconsideration of related research topics.

Premises

Our perspective on retranslation revolves around three main factors: the dynamics of the ideologically, politically, and economically regulated book market, the somatics of translation/translators in general (which makes us occasionally address issues like subjectivity, choice, and creativity), and the instability of the source text. Underlying this view is Clive Scott's allegation that "the literary is never a given; [that] it needs, therefore, constantly to be re-defined or reinvented. [...] The literary has a migratory capacity and alights where the reader finds it, or the translator puts it." (Scott 2012, 15)

We need to take into account not only the indelible temporality or historicity of translation, but also that of the "original." It, too, is subject to the passage of time and what today's readers see in it might differ from what yesterday's readers saw in it. Even canonical texts may never fully preserve the same degree of canonicity: they may at times fall into oblivion, as Annie Brisset (2004) astutely points out, only to rise again from ashes (quite possibly thanks to a new translation, which manages to reinvent them). Retranslation is thus, if well done, a process of gradual reanimation in which "the TT compels the ST to rethink itself, both as language and as a structural mechanism for producing sense" (Scott 2018, 52).

Some of the characteristics of retranslation (as pointed out by our investigation) are probably universally valid, while others will always remain trapped in the context of the target culture. What we aim at is a critical descriptive analysis of what is gained rather than what is lost in translation, with negative criticism being usually accompanied by a suggestion of a different, if not better, solution.

The Structure of the Book

The book has a differentially weighted (chapter-wise, at least) three-part structure, with part one containing four chapters, part two containing twelve, and part three containing two. Between part one and part two, as

well as between part two and part three, we have interludes, shorter chapters meant to pave the way for and explain the structure of the part to follow. The book ends, as expected, with a series of conclusions and a bibliography as well as two appendixes.

Part one offers a global view of Oscar Wilde's tales in Romanian in four chapters: *A Word on Oscar Wilde's Reception in Romania, Oscar Wilde's Tales, Underlying Dichotomies*, and *The Corpus*.

The first chapter of part one places the topic of the book within the wider context of Oscar Wilde's reception in Europe and in Romania. Even though we left out Oscar Wilde's main œuvre, the corpus cannot be entirely separated from the rest of Wilde's works if taken in the context of the receiving culture. Oscar Wilde's first text to be translated in Romania was apparently *Salomé* in 1907, when Romania was still a kingdom. The statistics on the Romanian translations of Oscar Wilde's works show *The Happy Prince* as the most translated piece by Oscar Wilde ever (over 20 times since 1922), followed by *The Portrait of Dorian Gray*, *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*, *The Nightingale and the Rose*, and *The Fisherman and His Soul*.

The second chapter of part one clarifies the choice of terminology (using *tales* rather than *fairy tales* in the (sub-)titles and through the book), and then presents the genesis of Wilde's nine stories, their reception in the source culture, their main themes, and a few possible lines of interpretation. The tales' style and imagery are also briefly analysed as a way of highlighting the main difficulties they pose for translators.

Underlying Dichotomies, the third chapter, is designed to lay the further foundations for our comparative analysis by scrutinizing relevant literature on translation vs. retranslation, edition vs. reedition, and targeting children vs. targeting the general public.

Finally, the last chapter of part one delineates the corpus we used in the present research. After a preliminary discussion on why the corpus can never be exhaustive, we proceed to a display of the corpus at large (made up of 30 Romanian versions of Wilde's tales: translations only, no adaptations or rewritings). This corpus, spanning more than 100 years (1911–2021), is meant to offer a relevant glimpse at the dynamics of retranslation in Romania. The primary corpus of study, on the other hand, consists of only twelve out of the thirty proposed versions (dealt with extensively in part two), plus one discussed in part three. Representativity was the main criterion used in the selection of the thirteen translations, meaning that we selected those versions we found to be most representative for a given stage in the evolution of the Romanian

language, culture, and society. The chapter also underlines the variety of these translations in terms of:

- *translation type* (e.g., first translation, retranslation, canonical translation, etc.)
- *public targeted* (e.g., translation for very young children, for schoolchildren, for the general public, for a dual audience, etc.)
- *format* (e.g., hardcopy, e-book, audiobook; single-tale books vs. collections of tales; monolingual vs. bilingual editions, depending on the history of publishing in Romania and on the politics of publishing houses over time)
- *(re)translator type* undertaking the task of (re)translating Oscar Wilde's tales into Romanian (e.g., writers, editors, reporters, teachers, medical doctors, illustrators, diplomats, lawyers, BA or MA students, etc.)
- *translational act type* (e.g., solitary vs. collaborative).

Between part one and part two there is an interlude, which is meant to ensure a smooth transition between the two sections and highlight the role of chronology or diachrony in analysing retranslation. Anticipating the next twelve chapters, the interlude clarifies the fact that the comparative analysis that follows aims to track the main idiosyncrasies of the target text on both the macro level and the micro level while making use of three major parameters (each with a number of subparameters) that underlie a possible template applicable to (children's) literature in translation. The three parameters are *the translator*, *the edition*, and *the target text* (in short, TET). The interlude also emphasizes the historicity of retranslation by pointing out that each version will be analysed taking into account the norms of the time in which it was produced, given that the work of the retranslator is definitely influenced by the language of their time. The variable longevity of the translations in our corpus is also discussed, as well as the potential canonicity of one of the versions and the main historical stages of (re)translation in Romania.

Part two (*Oscar Wilde's Tales in Romanian: A Diachronic View*) contains a sequence of twelve sections of varying length dealing with twelve TTs [target texts] or translations of Wilde's texts analysed in order of publication, with brief comments on salient points. TT1 (Dimitrie Anghel's 1911 translation) addresses the general public rather than children, and it is surprisingly source-oriented for a first version of one of Wilde's tales in Romanian (thus disproving the retranslation hypothesis). TT2 (Igena Floru's 1922 translation) is actually the first Romanian version of all the tales included in *The Happy Prince and Other Tales*. It is a translation for children, remarkable for its humour, irony, readability, and

poeticity. TT3 (I. Ol. Ştefanovici-Svensk's 1929 translation) is a highly coherent version but with a dissonant register (regionalisms, diminutives, and unexpected instances of direct transfer from English: e.g., *Little Hans*). TT4 (Eugen Boureanul's 1929/1945 translation) clearly addresses children (but not exclusively). Excessive punctuation (commas, suspension marks, dashes, etc.) ultimately proves useful in achieving an alluring dramatic effect. Despite the inconsistency in the treatment of proper names and a tenacious avoidance of repetition (which we interpret as part and parcel of an overall strategy of intensification), Boureanul's version makes an indelible impression upon the mind of the reader while fully displaying the translator's "voice." TT5 (Al. T. Stamatiad's 1937 translation) is actually a third edition of some pieces by Wilde. It was widely popularized at the time but, seen in the context of the entire series of retranslations of Wilde's tales, fails to meet raised expectations. TT6 (Ticu Archip's 1960/1967 translation) displays a complex strategy of intensification, a high coefficient of poeticity, and a few cleverly interknitted touches of heteroglossia which account for its time-sanctioned authority in the receiving culture. TT7 (Agop Bezerian's 2000 translation) is part of a bilingual edition endowed with a substantial epitext provided by the translator himself (a clear indicator of the intended public). TT8 (Andrei Bantaş's 2005 translation) is the first complete edition of Wilde's short prose (the volume containing all nine tales as well as other short stories). A very laboured version but at the same time one that gives the impression of effortlessness, Bantaş's text is the result of fully conscious, assumed translation decisions. TT9 (Constantin Dragomir's 2010 translation) is a version of *The Happy Prince*, the only story by Oscar Wilde included in a collection of classic fairy tales. TT10 (Laura Poantă's 2015 translation) is characterized by the accuracy of the time sequences, a steady narrative voice (manifest in intratextual as well as extratextual glosses) and a charming flowing style which gives the text a suitable rhythm, with the right pauses for a reading aloud session. TT11 (Magda Teodorescu's 2008/2018 translation) is a valuable version due to its generous paratext which turns into a good account of the cultural side of Wilde's text, an aspect which considerably mitigates the somewhat dysphemistic translational strategy. TT12 (Lavinia Braniştе's 2019–2020 translations), copiously illustrated by Anca Smărăndache, can be said to display an uncanny type of literality.

The second interlude, marking the transition between part two and part three, focuses on the role of comparison of several translations of one and the same text in revealing a translation's temporality. Whether they are active or passive (Pym, 1998), older retranslations do tend to influence the

ones to come, and comparative analyses between these versions are useful not only for revealing multiple causes of retranslation but also for showing the way the target language and ideology evolved.

Part three (*Oscar Wilde's Tales in Romanian: A Transversal View*) contains two chapters only. The first, *Text Granularity: Noun Phrases as Translation Units*, reflects upon the essence of key phrases as translation units, starting from a comparative analysis of twelve noun phrases, six from Wilde's first volume, *The Happy Prince and Other Tales*, and six from *A House of Pomegranates*, and the way they have been translated over time in the Romanian versions of Wilde's tales. We consider phrases such as *a sensible mother*, *a ridiculous attachment*, *a golden bedroom*, and *some great admirer* (from *The Happy Prince*); *a delicate flush of pink* (from *The Nightingale and the Rose*); *the chief mourner* (from *The Devoted Friend*); *the green lateen sail* (from *The Young King*); *some dull monster*, *a gatherer of samphire*, and *the field of the Fullers* (from *The Fisherman and His Soul*); and *a changeling* and *a great pine-forest* (from *The Star-Child*). As for the second subchapter, *Retranslation Rivalry*, it presents two cases of retranslations in synchrony (1929, 2010), with a view to checking whether they were indeed born out of rivalry or if, once published, they ended up in rivalry.

After the final conclusions, appendix no. 1 offers a tabular distribution of translated tales in the primary corpus and appendix no. 2 contains a diagram with the translation metaphors used to capture the essence of the twelve TTs analysed in part two.

PART ONE

OSCAR WILDE'S TALES IN ROMANIAN: A GLOBAL VIEW

A WORD ON OSCAR WILDE'S RECEPTION IN ROMANIA

Translation is the act
of freeing a text from its own culture.
(Scott 2018, 241)

Before embarking on our study of Oscar Wilde's tales in Romanian translations, we need to place the topic of the book within the wider context of Wilde's reception: first in Europe, and then in Romania. Even though we will only focus on the tales he dedicated to children, we cannot entirely separate our corpus from the rest of Wilde's works.

How can one even attempt to synthesize Oscar Wilde's works, influence, and flamboyant personality? Even his alliterative full name (Oscar Fingal O'Flahertie Wills Wilde) somehow resists abbreviation. Very breviloquently and irreverently put, he was born on the 16th of October 1854 in Dublin (the son of Dr. William, later Sir William Wilde, a surgeon, and Jane Francesca Elgee, later known under the pen name Speranza), he died on the 30th of November 1900 in Paris, and some of the key words one tends to associate with him for posterity are poetry (sarcastically clever epigrams; the excruciating *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*), fiction (his one and only novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, plus a number of tales), drama (*Lady Windermere's Fan*, *A Woman of No Importance*, *The Importance of Being Earnest,* etc.), criticism (*The Decay of Lying*), aestheticism (his art for art's sake essays), dandyism ("One should either be a work of Art, or wear a work of Art," as he used to say), and damnation (the Reading episode).

Though Irish by blood and at heart, and recently claimed back by Ireland as well as England,

> ...it was on the continent of Europe, in France, Germany, and the Austro-Hungarian Empire, that he was overwhelmingly received, welcomed, performed, and greeted with much sympathy, as a man and as a writer. He had wished to be a French writer, and his *Salomé*, his most widely received play on the continent, was written in French; and he died and was buried in France. (Shaffer, in Evangelista 2010, vii)

Stefano Evangelista's 2010 book, *The Reception of Oscar Wilde in Europe* (especially the chapter compiled by Paul Barnaby, "Reception Timeline"), provides a very useful inventory of translations of Wilde's works as well as of Wilde criticism into various European languages (French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian, Swedish, Hungarian, Croatian, Czech, German, Russian, Romanian, etc.), though this inventory begins, significantly enough, with a performance (i.e., the premiere of *Salomé* on the 11th of February 1896 in Paris). European enthusiasm for Wilde's works (especially for his plays and essays) is undeniable and grew at a steady rate, starting in 1889 (i.e., the birth of Wilde's reception in France), even during the two World Wars. Oscar Wilde's first Italian edition came out in 1890[17],' in Spain, the earliest reference to Wilde was in to 1891[18]; in Sweden, in 1893[19]; in Austria, in 1894[20]; in Croatia, on 1900, and so on, but in Romania, it was not until 1907 that the first text (incidentally, *Salomé* again) reached the public.

Looking back at the Romanian reception, we should first consider the general context, which provided fruitful ground for Oscar Wilde's works. First, as previously mentioned, for a minor language like Romanian, translation has always been of utmost importance, and Romanians have, generally speaking, been very accepting of foreign books. As in most other non-English-speaking countries, around 80–90 per cent of all translated books are from English (the majority of which have either Great Britain or the United States as the country of origin), but it has not always been so. As emphasized by Petre Grimm (1924, 284), of the great European literatures, British literature was historically and regrettably one of the last to be known by Romanians because there were very few people who could actually speak or understand English. Grimm mentions Byron's *Manfred*, in C. A. Rossetti's 1843 translation (Rossetti learned English for Byron's sake) as the first translation from English. A rare occurrence, for, if British literature reached the Romanian readers during the nineteenth century, it did so more easily by means of indirect translation (i.e., via French or German versions) rather than directly from English. Poet George Coşbuc, for instance, translated, in 1884 at the tender age of 18, Byron's *Mezappa* from a German version, to which we might add various (major, as well as

[17] *Vera; or, The Nihilist*, soon followed by extracts from *The Soul of Man under Socialism* (1892).
[18] Nicaraguan essayist E. Gomez Carrillo discusses *Intentions* in *Sensaciones de arte.*
[19] *Intentions*.
[20] A German version of *The Decay of Lying*.

minor) writers who, during the same period, translated E. A. Poe's stories based on Baudelaire's much celebrated version.

Grimm's study, entitled *Traduceri şi imitaţiuni româneşti după literatura engleză* [Romanian Translations and Imitations after English Literature], is a manifesto against indirect translation and the mercantilistic logic behind translation in general. It is equally relevant when it comes to Oscar Wilde's reception as it signals the publication of several translations of Wilde's prose of a better quality in Grimm's opinion, than the poetry by Wilde that had been translated into Romanian up to 1924. It also remains an important document in the history of Romanian translation (criticism), especially after a prolonged period of translational inflation, of intense *literary bulimia* as Paul Cornea (1966) calls it, borrowing one of Paul Van Tieghem's terms, of indiscriminate consumption of French works or translated via French. It was an era in which doctrinary efforts, which could have imposed some selection principle (like Titu Maiorescu's or Mihail Kogălniceanu's), were few and far between. If not performed by writers (and even here there was no guarantee of quality since they very often could not translate directly from the original language), then translations were produced simply for the sake of practice (meant to improve either the source or the target language), for their immediate utility (political or pedagogical purposes), or for entertainment (occasional translations produced to the translator's or a specific reader's delight). The liberties translators took when translating were far too copious (even for the so-called imitations), and could partially be explained by the elasticity of the concept of literary property and partially by sheer ignorance (either of the said concept or of the source language). In any case, as suggested in the *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, these translations were nothing but failed attempts at synchronization with the major cultures, as

> [u]nfortunately, the Romanian public was not yet ready to receive and appreciate literary masterpieces or alternative moral and cultural values and could not assimilate European culture. The aristocracy continued to enjoy the masterpieces, while the less educated middle class preferred the melodrama, comedy or mawkish novelette. (Baker 2001, 536)

Nevertheless, ready or not for the European culture, Romanians could not refrain from translating and, in so doing, they managed, for better or worse (and perhaps at a slower pace than expected), to "build the