

the endless debates regarding historical priority in the land. Next to the scholarly argumentations, daring mountaineers (especially Saxon and Hungarian urban elites) also took on a national mission. By documenting their trips and naming a newly explored place, they were looking to “symbolically appropriate it for the community” (p. 167).

The last part of the book explores the state’s official take on Magyarization. The official regulation of names began with the state’s assumption of birth, marriage and death registers in 1894. At the same time, the Hungarian authorities drew up a list of Hungarian equivalents for most of the ethnic minorities’ first names, to be used when registering a newborn’s name or the names of the newlyweds. Berecz aims to determine whether the rationale behind these new regulations had to do with a deliberate assimilationist strategy or with what the Hungarian governments said to be a need for administrative modernization. He finds that the Hungarian political discourse portrayed modernization and Magyarization “as two closely intertwined goals and saw social, not to mention official, multilingualism as an obstacle to progress” (p. 206). In contrast, state intervention regarding family names was limited to their transcription, an operation usually taking place in the administrative sphere or in Hungarian state schools. Chapter 8 follows the debate stirred among the intellectuals concerning this issue, while at the same time pointing out how such practices “increasingly conveyed a principled dismissal of a Romanian writing system’s right to existence in Hungary” (p. 225). The book’s last and longest chapter is a tour de force on the Hungarian state policies on the Magyarization of settlement names. Berecz firstly investigates the

ideological motives behind this “grand toponymic maneuver.” He finds that Magyarizing settlements’ names was seen as “closely ty[ing] the respective places to the nation’s space” (p. 242). The author then closely examines the slow application of the 1898 Law, seen as the starting point of a long process which concluded around 1910, when most of the renamings took place. In charge of Magyarization was the Communal Registry Board, a heterogenous body composed of both academics and laymen. By 1910, when the Magyarization of settlement names came to an end, 671 out of the 3,684 localities had had their name Magyarized.

Overall, Ágoston Berecz’s choice for a name-based social history of nationalism in Dualist Hungary proved to be a very fruitful one. Next to the compelling analyses on nationalizing the elites’ discourse and the state regulation of names, I believe that the book’s main breakthrough concerns the examination of the peasants’ nationalism, a social stratum usually neglected by the elite-focused studies dealing with nationalism in this area.

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DRAGOȘ-DUMITRU IANC

**RODICA MARIAN****Poezii/Poems**

Translated by MIHAELA MUDURE

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**M**ORE THAN two centuries ago, John Dryden, in his Preface to *Ovid’s Epistles*, translated by several hands (London: Jacob Tonson, 1680), identified and described three types of translation: metaphrase, paraphrase and imitation. He defined metaphrase as “turning an author word by word,

and line by line, from one language into another” (p. 1). Paraphrase, the second variant, represents the detailed restatement of the source material, when the translator takes some liberty within the text, yet never losing sight of the authorial intention. Finally, by means of imitation, the translator uses creatively the material, playing around with images while conjuring new ones.

Of the three methods propounded by Dryden, the translator Mihaela Mudure fully embraces the rigors and limitations of the first; in so doing, she endeavors to reproduce both Rodica Marian’s artistic sensibility as well as the metrical structure and rhyme of the original text.

The 28 selected poems make up an insightful selection of poems interweaving emotions which evolve in silence and heightened visions of reality stemming from deeply personal experiences. Rodica Marian’s prose poems, reminiscent of a commanding brand of French surrealism, are clearly in touch with European poetic traditions, yet evince a special sensibility deeply marked by the Romanian culture.

Mudure’s translation captures in Marian’s verse manifold instances of liminality, ambiguous states of transition which trap mind and emotions in surreal moments. In a tempered and enduring voice which never ventures far from the kinetoscopic space of the text, the translator scrutinizes her choices and weighs them against the originals. Her nuanced commitment to the text enables her to capture both the poetess’ quiet moments of self-recognition and inner peace, as well as her sense of pain and loss.

“Life Testimony” dwells on the fluidity of feelings; contentment slowly morphs into discontentment and the process, uncannily experienced from a state of peaceful pain yet shivering horror gives rise to

an unearthly, mystical, sublime ecstasy. In “The Library of Alexandria,” patience, as the ultimate state, is only reached after an infinite number of inner and outer struggles. The poem revolves around the metaphors of the statue and the library; the statue of Ptolemy II represents patience, the only enduring feeling to follow the fire that devastated the Library of Alexandria, a metaphor signifying the convulsions and turmoil of one’s existence.

As feelings and emotions morph, so do bodily representations. When awareness gives way, kinesthetic illusions replace stable corporeal representations. As such, virginal bodies, chlorotic in their purities, change into sexualized copper-colored ones (“Maybe, the Immaculacy”). Detached from its corporeal reality, the body experiences its innate duality: simultaneously child-like and delicate, yet decrepit and old (“Always, On the Way to Emmaus”).

Mudure does not take many liberties with the Romanian text; she changes words, while striving to preserve the delicate ambiguity of images, meanings and allusions. But in so doing, she captures the ongoing transition between states of mind and emotions, the game of liminality which suspends body and mind in fleeting, miraculous seconds. Uncreated beings and chimeras can vaguely materialize in “the unsung, the un-invented song,” in “flashes of lightning . . . which do not stir” (“The Invisible Obelisk”). The exploration of non-beings is continued in “The Buds,” which dwells on the mystical silence of things not fully created, living things which carry in them the promise of life, without yet knowing the plenitude of living.

In “The Butterfly Farm,” the self is infinitely mutable and divisible, an effervescent swarm of butterflies trapped in a confined chamber. The focus on multiple,

countless pieces to loosely fit into an existential puzzle is the central theme of “Storytelling”; life is a complex succession or overlapping of spatial texts (Santorini, Portuguese Fortresses, Semiramida Gardens), musical texts (Puccini) and literary texts (Scheherazade’s stories). In “Self-Portrait,” the poetess gives voice to already existent voices, tunes and tales, which have long been “squandered on who knows what /Exotic, marvelous or poor lands.” In “Shaping Games,” death is described as sleep and a hypnotic and kaleidoscopic game of crystals, swirling into cascades of colors and brilliant sparks.

The state of liminality is occasioned by mystical time intervals: the crepuscule entices thoughts of death, “gleaming strangely, drowned in the amber of patience” (“The Boulevard of Absence”) and rain is a mystical veil that facilitates the vacillation between spaces: from streets to icons, from dreams into words, from past to present, from present to future (“The Rain that Brings Ghosts”). Yet in other cases, consciousness travels across temporal dimensions, as the past fuses with the present, while the past spills into the present. Such moments are occasioned by artistic reveries or emotional encounters, such as between people and their deceased parents. In “The Genius of the Lamp,” a poem inspired by Tonitza’s painting *In the Light of the Lamp*, the passage between worlds coincides with escaping reality and entering the world of the painting.

In translating Marian’s poems about multiple selves in dialogue with each other, caught in multiple existential possibilities, Mihaela Mudure finds the perfect balance between form and content. Her translation preserves both implicit meanings, unexpressed emotions, thoughts intuited but never explicitly given as well as the loose,

irregular rhyme scheme and delicate internal half-rhymes. Within each structure, the translator transacts with Romanian so as to get at the English version; each pairing captures both the poetic inspiration as well as the performative presence of Rodica Marian’s version. In inlaid replication, a whole set of nested structures, from the beat-measured lines to the open-form verse, give the measure of a strict semantic and prosodic parallelism.

The translator is self-effacing, as she seeks an appropriate form that preserves as much of the original as possible, literal and denotative meanings alike. But in spite of her desire to protect and nurture the authorial intention, the translator does not create a carbon copy of Rodica Marian’s poems, but a recreation of their mood. Indeed, behind the self-effacing translator, there is the critic who sees translation as a process through which a literary work is analyzed and interpreted. As the translator reflects and judges on the original text, the English translation turns into a metatext, by means of which the translator explores and employs her voice as a writer. The resulting text, which successfully captures and imparts the spirit of Rodica Marian’s poetry in English, is less the effect of a given translation strategy or choice of text, and more an ongoing dialogic process of intimate cultural interaction between the author and the translator. In the present-day cultural landscape, where the market for poetry is marginal, and the market for translated poetry is even smaller, such volumes of bilingual poems might be the right antidote to parochial and insular tendencies in literature and an immensely enjoyable way to glimpse at cosmopolitan promises.

