

An Ideological Distant Reading of the American Novel

Translated in the Romanian Literary System (1853–1989)

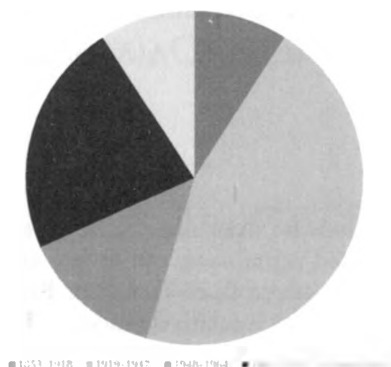
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AMERICAN TRANSLATIONS into the Romanian literary system have a relatively short history. The first translated novel came out as late as 1853. Moreover, quantitatively, compared to translations from French or Russian/Soviet literature, the number of American novel translations is relatively modest. Nevertheless, from the perspective of the present moment, in which American culture and economy have produced, in the past decades, a sort of globalist irradiation, we consider necessary to map out the way in which the decoupage and appropriation of American imaginary was operated, in close connection with various cultural, social, political, economic debates—all poignant from a national perspective. Several preliminary research questions, which will establish the working site of our analytical hypotheses, are: (1) to what extent do chronological periods—described as temporal nodes—mark a social, cultural, and political junction convergent with the translations of the American novel?; (2) what ideological function do American translations carry during the variously delineated historical intervals?; (3) do the translations of the American novel form a *countertranslationscape*¹ in the context of the Romanian literary system?; (4) which of the five major forces identified by Lefevre²—patronage, poetics, ideology, universe of discourse, language—dominate the network of American translations in each of the identified nodes?

Starting from a retrospective view of the phenomenon of American novel translations into the Romanian literary system—“the present comes first and we then move progressively back in time with each nodal date”³ as Cornis-Pope and Neubauer put it—, but also from the acknowledgement that the conventional timeline of cultural history does not circumscribe homogenous collective experiences, our approach traces three temporal intervals which are symptomatic for the dynamics of the translation of the American novel. Graph 1 diachronically groups the translated novels according to their correlation

to the stable stages of literary history: the long nineteenth century, the interwar period, the socialist period (with its classical subdivisions, socialist realism, socialist liberalization, and Ceaușescu-era nationalism, respectively). Thus, the interwar period, as well as the liberalization one are the most intense, translation-wise, by obvious contrast with the other three intervals. However, this type of quantitative synthesis⁴ exclusively reveals the fact that some historical eras are more heavily oriented towards the American space than others.

GRAPH 1. AMERICAN NOVELS (INCLUDING THOSE IN SERIAL FORM) TRANSLATED INTO ROMANIAN (1853–1989)



SOURCE: *Dicționarul cronologic al romanului tradus în România de la origini până la 1989* (Bucharest: Editura Academiei Române, 2005) (hereafter cited as DCRT-1).

GRAPH 2. THE TEMPORAL NODES DETERMINED BY THE INTENSIFIED TRANSLATION OF THE AMERICAN NOVEL (1853–1989)



SOURCE: DCRT-1.

Between Progressivism and Populism

THE LIMITATION of the dialogue with foreign countries to the French space during the 19th century represents, within the economy of Romanian literary culture, a reality which has already been demonstrated, both empirically and quantitatively.⁵ In this context, we believe that neglecting the sporadic contacts with other cultures and discussing them mostly in relation with the center comes as natural, given that the modernization of the Romanian novel happened in light of the French influence. As the data collected by Ștefan Baghiu⁶ (regarding 19th century novel translations into the Romanian space) has shown, the contact with the American (then) semiperiphery was limited to a few novels that gained international prestige. The most significant among these was, obviously, the translation, through French ricolchet, of Harriet Beecher Stowe's novel, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*, by I. Codresco, in Iași (1853).

Containing a sizable preface signed by M. Kogălniceanu, the abolitionist⁷ novel predates the emancipation of the Romani people on Romanian territory. The publishing of this translation, only slightly significant for the evolution of the novel in terms of form and subject matters, despite being emulated in V. A. Urechia's 1855 *Coliba Măriucaî* (Măriuca's cabin),⁸ is one of Kogălniceanu's manifestos for the emancipation of the Roma population, explicitly retrieving anti-slavery discourse. The central figure of abolitionism in the Romanian space, Kogălniceanu exploits the event of this translation within his social fight. His intervention is dense in terms of constructing the literacy of the Romanian people concerning the origins of slavery, consequently having a strongly militant character. The particular case of this translation is, therefore, less interesting as a moment of a direct literary relationship between Romanian and American cultures during the 19th century, as the translation is published as a consequence of the interaction with the French space, a fact which makes the thesis of a transcontinental synchronicity difficult, if not impossible, to uphold. It is, however, a notable event in the construction of an argument linked to the social function of literature. The absence of translations from the American space in the following decades does nothing but confirm the isolated case of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. This social function of translations is rather visible in the relationship with the American literature, since the translation were mediated through French editions, both at the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th.

Between 1877 and 1897, translations are constrained to several publications which can be classified as popular literature.⁹ Between 1898 and 1913, however, several event-novels are once again published, not without echoes within Romanian culture. It is the case of novels like *Ben-Hur*,¹⁰ authored by Lewis Wallace, which are reissued for the first time (we are exclusively referring here to the translations of American novels) and which produce a series of imitations within Romanian culture: religious novels, the inspiration for which is uncertain, oscillating between Wallace's novel and Henryk Sienkiewicz's novels, which are translated later on (starting from 1900). Adventure novels by Francis Bret Harte are also translated, as well as Thomas Reid Mayne's and Anna Katharine Green-Rohlf's mystery novels, among others. The contribution of these early translations is notable to the way in which Romanian critics and writers would regard the

American space in the first decades of the 20th century. A phenomenon of synchronicity with a global semiperiphery can barely be discussed here—it is sufficient to revisit the graphs devised by Ștefan Baghiu¹¹ to demonstrate that American literature is unable to support the hypothesis of a coherent translation project, instead inscribing itself in a series of sporadic and isolated efforts to either import popular literature, or to coagulate the image of an extremely far-removed alterity (exotic, attractive, but untouchable). If the effects of exoticizing translations are obvious in literature (an author like Rădulescu-Niger, for example, produced numerous novels set in exotic spaces from America and Africa, with narratives which clearly suggest their being inspired by the aforementioned novels),¹² they are even more visible in the critical discourse, which, around the 1920s and the 1930s, increasingly discusses this semiperiphery.¹³ The neo-Protestant and exoticizing alignment engendered during this interval are primarily in the service of the modernist and liberal faction, rather than the Orthodox and nationalist one, as represented by N. Iorga's *Sămănătorul* (The Sower) review, despite the projects they were committed to.¹⁴ In addition, the divide between the apparently progressist project engendered by Iorga's politics of translation and his nationalist stances can be noted at this point. This apparent incompatibility can be explained through the convergence of the populist European movements which were relatively close to the social democrats, through the limits imposed on industrialization and the articulation of a critique of capitalism. Even though they did not adhere to a potential socialist revolution, the populists proposed a sort of national humanism with social elements.¹⁵ On the other hand, "the populists took a keener interest in peripheral literatures,"¹⁶ and, during this time, American literature belongs to this category. It is worth mentioning that, compared to Nordic and other Eastern-European cultures, in that period, American culture was perceived as an emergent one, still colonized by the British. Therefore, the American social, cultural, literary, even economic model was of interest for populists, despite their bluntly predicated nationalism. Unfortunately, though, the translation practices from the end of the 19th century do not follow their ideological model. The American novels translated during this temporal node do not provide an alternative social model, viable for minor, somewhat autonomous cultures—as a reply to the hegemonic French domination—, but rather circumscribe the import of an exotic and "orientalized" sociology of the United States.

Social Critique and Working-Class Imagery

THE SAME tendency is visible immediately after World War I. The first novel translated then, in 1920, is Francis Marion Crawford's *The Primadonna*, followed by novels for children and teens. Towards the 1930s, however, the boom of the 1937–1945 period begins to take shape, when a significant number of American novels are translated. Novels authored by the likes of Jack London, Mark Twain, Henry David Thoreau, James Cooper or Upton Sinclair gradually set up several ideological directions towards which the policy governing the translation of the American novel was headed, on a national level. In the field of translations, leftist, anti-imperialist tenden-

cies are visible. In terms of novels, we are referring to translations of Sinclair, Twain, Bromfield, London or Dreiser. Among the translations published in periodicals, along with the aforementioned authors, the presence of John Dos Passos is notable. Upton Sinclair, a poignant figure of the American public sphere (as socialist writer and political personality who exposes blatant social inequalities) is translated between 1937 and 1945 with novels like *No Passarán! (They Shall Not Pass): A Novel of the Battle of Madrid*, *They Call Me Carpenter*, *Samuel the Seeker*, or *The Metropolis*, which are built as narratives of social critique surrounding the proletariat and the labor conditions of workers (more specifically, immigrants). Sinclair's novels enjoyed the attention of the American public primarily because of their documentary quality, which exposed the exploitation from various industrial sectors of the American society, in which the precarious and difficult work conditions constituted a quotidian reality for the great number of economic immigrants. During the same period Mark Twain's *The Prince and the Pauper*, *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer*, and *The American Claimant* are also translated; his abolitionist, syndicalist, anti-imperialist militantism is metabolized in his prose through allegorical techniques; because of them, he is associated with moralizing narrative for the youth. The first two of the aforementioned novels were retained by the Romanian collective memory as two of the most popular children's novels and were intensively reissued in various collections dedicated to the young public. Jack London's socialism is similarly explicit in *The Great Adventure* and *The Mutiny of the Elsinore*, which were also translated around 1940. Written at the beginning of the century, Jack London's autobiographically infused novels contain an abundance of militant stances, targeting the emancipation of oppressed races and women, delivered through the construction of strong allegorical images, built around the relationship of humanity, society, and natural spaces, of the dominant and the dominated. The translation of John Steinbeck's *The Grapes of Wrath* is not without echoes within Romanian translation culture; the explicitly socialist novel, which militates for the rights of the working class, enjoyed a substantial amount of critical attention at the time of publishing. Although we can infer a left-leaning translational program, the influences of the translated authors and narratives on local Romanian novelistic production were sporadic and minimal, with the ideological debates surrounding this area primarily, and more intensively, happening predominantly in the periodicals. Lewis Sinclair, whose *Babbitt*, *Martin Arrowsmith* and *Dodsworth* were all translated during the analyzed period, is a centrist, oftentimes critical towards American capitalism, but oscillating between his leftist positioning and a tamer propensity to demystify the American dream in his commentary on the middle class. At times, his narratives come near the well-disguised social critique practiced by F. Scott Fitzgerald. Specifically after 1937, the Romanian space underwent a process of expelling exotic translations, and borrowed from American literature a strong realism which targets the frustrations engendered by the war and the financial crisis among the proletariat.¹⁷ In 1942, even Theodore Dreiser's *Jenny Gerhardt* was translated; the author also wrote non-fiction with pro-Soviet elements, influenced by his affiliation with the League of American Writers. Six more of Dreiser's novels were translated during the 1950s and the 1960s, somewhat entering the canon of Romanian socialist import. However, the synchronic interferences of the policies of American novel translation and the social democratic political ideas

preceding the World War II solicit further inquiry, conducted from a sociological perspective, given that they form a yet unexplored ideological network which could furnish conclusive data regarding the potential convergence of (1) the public discourse regarding the United States produced by the only Romanian leftist democratic party from the beginning of the 20th century, and (2) the import of narratives which were critical of American society and economy following the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Socialist Aestheticism and the Translation of William Faulkner's Novels

BEYOND THE rigidity of the “patronage”¹⁸ model, practiced through the massive selection of contemporary titles from Soviet literature, the 1950s certainly offered Romanian readers the opportunity to access multiple cultural spheres through the circulation of translations.¹⁹ So as to avoid the confusion of a coherent continuum regarding the system, politics, and dynamic of American novel translation, we further adopt the periodization put forward by Ștefan Baghiu, who adapts the frame established by recent Romanian literary histories.²⁰ Thus, “the first geographical dispersion (1948–1955)” predictably marks the domination of Soviet translations, while the American novel joins the same category as the French, English, and German one. “The second geographical dispersion (1955–1964)” balances out the relationship between translations originating in the Soviet East and Western ones. The recovery of the interwar modernist direction constitutes the third important turn of the socialist era between 1964 and 1975, while also being the only truly relevant temporal node in terms of American novel translation. The prominence of William Faulkner and Ernest Hemingway after 1964 will generate emulation within Romanian literature, in a way that is symptomatic for the context and the cultural exchanges determined by the logic of the Cold War.²¹ It is also a period during which the institutionalization of translation programs undergoes a development which has yet to be properly researched. After 1975 and until 1989, American novel translations are inscribed in a general tendency towards the quantitative decrease of translations, a phenomenon which can be correlated with the increase in local literary production. Furthermore, “the Anglo-American literatures revolutionize the Romanian translation market”²² starting with the 1960s; a potential explanation for this phenomenon resides in the more relaxed ideological surveillance of translations (in contrast with the local production), which allowed for a more open and flexible type of cultural transfer.²³

If in other European democratic cultures “the market demand has overtaken educational and cultural hierarchies,”²⁴ in post-1950s Romania one can discover a more nuanced situation. Between 1964 and 1975 the development of translating popular genres was rather proportional to canonical literature, which, although it did not dominate the market, irradiated the literary field, generating debates and specialized studies and, essentially, contributing to the sedimentation of the public consciousness around social and economic aspects of American realities. From this angle, the 1960s–1970s

coherently extend the turn that took place at the end of the 1930s. Transferring David Damrosch's conceptual framing of the canon into translation studies, Ștefan Baghiu identifies an American *countertranslationscape* within Romanian literature:

*a contestatory, hard to assimilate, yet so catchy during the 1960s and throughout the 1980s . . . Although vilified by the main socialist realist critics, since William Faulkner as well as Henry Miller were regarded as depraved writers, it was very inspiring for mainstream Romanian authors such as Marin Preda or D. R. Popescu.*²⁵

This subversive *translationscape*, which developed in Romanian culture as a way of recovering canonical writers, rather than as a mechanism of synchronization with the American literary market, enters an oppositional network, Baghiu argues, (1) against the Russian *shadowtranslationscape*, a field dominated by ephemerality (through the obsessive program of contemporary translations from the socialist realism period), (2) which enabled the survival of the French *hypertranslationscape* (especially through the translation of 19th century classics), once again becoming dominant after 1960.

In this context, the defining phenomenon of the 1964–1975 temporal node is represented by the fact that the translated American novel provides literary devices and models for writing modern fiction.²⁶ For the Romanian writers who gained relevance during the 1960s–1980s period, the translations of William Faulkner represented an essential vector of influence.²⁷

Following 1947, the installation of Stalinism happened abruptly, from the collectivization of agriculture to the socialist realism of art. However, an important detail is that Romanian culture lacked Marxist dissidents and reformers. In principle, the subversive preoccupation of several Romanian novelists who debuted after the era of socialist realism is tied to the configuration of an alternative humanity, contrasting the rigidity of socialist humanity. However, as Mircea Martin notes,

*the progressive displacement, at the beginning of the 60s of the class criterion with the national one in the management of Romanian society by the Communist Party . . . allowed for the rehabilitation of another indispensable, constitutive criterion: the aesthetic criterion.*²⁸

The recognition of aesthetic specificity lessens post-Stalinist dogmatism, even allowing for the “ideological validation of a literature (art) which did not necessarily bear a socialist message: it was enough for it to be humanistic.”²⁹ Martin argues that this cultural openness was made possible, on a cultural level, by the greater flexibility surrounding the understanding of Marxism. The Marxism-Leninism of the 1950s scaled any issue down to class struggle. But after 1964, once the emphasis was placed on the integrative force of Marxism, not only on its dialectical one (which had been abusively employed), it could become compatible with a vision in which art, and the aesthetics could have an increased degree of autonomy. Writers understood that this ideological opening could be instrumented through the reappropriation of the literary field, and the context of the increased flexibility of literary production. The consistent translations of Faulkner's novels marked the repositioning of Romanian writers towards an American model. Thus, the

autonomy of literature also gained legitimacy through the way in which translations irradiated the field of national literary production. Mircea Martin argues that, in the cultural field, the period following 1964 was dominated by an *aesthetic fundamentalism*, a bizarre species of intransigent liberalism, opposed to the socialist ideological fundamentalism of the 1950s. Subsequently, the debatable subversion of 1960s Romanian literature—fueled by the interference of various European (the New French novel), South American (Marquezian magical realism), or North American (Faulknerian modernist realism) influences—is contextually derived from a flexible interpretation of Marxist aesthetics, which enabled the transition towards a justified socialist aestheticism through a plea for the humanist values of universal culture.

This aesthetic fundamentalism engendered a particular reception phenomenon of William Faulkner's translations into Romanian. This is, surely, the most important aspect of this temporal node, for it enables us to understand the way in which the profile of the American writer and, implicitly, his story-world were appropriated after 1964. As Cosmin Borza notes in an article on the reception of Faulkner and Márquez in Romanian culture (published in this very issue of *Transylvanian Review*), the two writers were assimilated by the logic of an extreme aestheticism that functioned as a transnational mechanism which contributed to the recovery of interwar Romanian modernism. There was a reception consensus around the idea that the technical and stylistic arsenal engaged by the two authors of the global South (experimentalist narrative) weighs more than their perspectives on social realities or their ideological profile. The historical and poetical homogenization of modernism, and the refusal to problematize an author like Faulkner in a political context determined a distorted perception of the literary innovations the American writer inspired in postwar Romanian modernism. Filling this interpretative gap, Borza demonstrates that the translation of Faulkner cannot be exclusively reduced to his subversive association with the scenario of recovering modernism, because he was translated, not at all accidentally, during a period when a fundamental process for Romanian society was drawing to a close: collectivization (the nationalization of agricultural land). Given that Faulkner's thematic universe is a rural one, the interest to import him in Eastern European contexts also becomes ideological, even political:

*portraying peasantry as an avantgarde class in modernizing the country implies going beyond the dogma of socialist realism. As such, certain modernist literary forms and types became the norm simply because they were capable of both creating psychological complexities within rural representatives and of reflecting the diverse intertwining between countryside and modernity. Moreover, they were meant to highlight that capitalist alternatives are intrinsically perverted.*³⁰

Consequently, the aesthetic subversion inspired by the model of modernist American translations, which was heavily clamored for in the circles of Romanian writers and literary critics, “does not surpass in magnitude the ideological, legitimizing nature retained by the communist regime.”³¹

Conclusion

BY FOLLOWING Franco Moretti's theoretical system and focusing on the conditions that influence the production of cultural goods, and implicitly the translation systems, Giselle Sapiro identifies

*two contrasting processes: isomorphism and differentiation. As analyzed by neo-institutional sociological theory, isomorphism results from three types of mechanism: constraint, imitation and professional norms.*³²

It bears mentioning that Sapiro's perspective is exclusively relevant for democratic societies, and that things are more complicated in the case of the contact between American and Romanian literature. The conceptual contortion proves to be more functional than the typological scenario, as American translations into Romanian culture personalize a *differentiation through isomorphism*. On the other hand, from the three identified mechanisms, the professional norms component is the most modestly represented within Romanian culture (even today, in Romania, we still lack the profession of literary agent, in the same way in which, during socialism and the first twenty years following 1989, the producer was absent³³ from the audio-visual domain). Imitation itself has two predictable levels: one is the import of globally acknowledged authors (legitimized through Nobel or Pulitzer Prizes), while the second is the heavy influence of the American novel on local production. From the angle of differentiation, originality remains a fundamental criterion until 1989: popular culture and genre literature did not manage to undermine the dynamics, tendencies, and, implicitly, the domination of the realist or modernist novel.

A progressive dimension codified during the 19th century; an alternative culture perceived as reasonably inclusive by the populists with nationalist values; the disappointment surrounding American capitalism following the economic crisis of the 1930s; the revolutionary socialism of the authors translated during the 1950s; the version of rural modernism recovered within official communist ideology during the 1960s—this imagological route served as an opportunity for Romanian culture to circulate the ideas of leftist liberalism, even of some versions of democratic socialism. A consistent explanation of this situation is derived from understanding that the contact between Romanian culture and American literature and society represented a case of “cultural triangulation.”³⁴ Alternately under French or Soviet cultural hegemony, Romanian culture discovered, in the American route, a sort of solidary compensation for the various subaltern relationships with Western Europe, thus appropriating narrative voices and ideological perspectives which it would have organically developed only fragmentarily.



1. Ștefan Baghiu, "Quantitative Translationscapes and Chronological Constellations: French, Soviet, and American Novels in Communist Romania," *World Literature Studies* 13, 3 (2021): 117–129.
2. André Lefevere, *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* (London–New York: Routledge, 1992).
3. Marcel Cornis-Pope and John Neubauer, "Preface by the General Editor of the Literary History Project," in *History of the Literary Cultures of East-Central Europe Junctionures and Disjunctionures in the 19th and 20th Centuries*, vol. 1 (Amsterdam–Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2004), xv.
4. For an accurate quantitative analysis of the development of the local novel production, in relation to the novels translated into the Romanian literary system, see Andrei Terian, "Big Numbers: A Quantitative Analysis of the Development of the Novel in Romania," *Transylvanian Review* 28, suppl. 1 (2019): 55–71. The open-ended conclusion of the study is that during political crises (wars, revolutions), the autochthonous novel tends to stagnate/regress, whereas economic crises proved to be intervals of expansion for the genre, in terms of local production, to the detriment of translations.
5. Recently, these relationships have also been represented through statistical methods in articles like Ștefan Baghiu "Translations of Novels in the Romanian Culture during the Long Nineteenth Century (1794–1914)," *Metacritic Journal for Comparative Studies and Theory* 6, 2 (2020): 87–106; id., "Translations of Novels in the Romanian Culture during the Interwar Period and WWII (1918–1944): A Quantitative Perspective," *Metacritic Journal for Comparative Studies and Theory* 7, 2 (2021): 28–45.
6. Baghiu, "Translations of Novels" (2020).
7. See Rodica Mihăilă, "The Politics of Translation: The American Novel in the 19th Century Romanian Territories," *British and American Studies* 11 (2005): 288. "Uncle Tom's Cabin was instrumental in speeding up the abolition of gypsy slavery in the Romanian principalities—in Moldavia in 1855 and in Wallachia in 1856, ten years before abolition of slavery in the US."
8. See *DCRT-1* for additional information regarding the translated editions mentioned in this paper.
9. Novels like Mary Agnes Fleming, *Măritată și totuși fâni bărbat* [*A Mad Marriage*], translated by Anastasia Tempea (1878), Thomas Reid Mayne, *Calărețul fâni cap: Narațiune din deșerturile Texasului* [*A Headless Horseman: A Strange Story of Texas*], translated by G. M. Mileticiu (1883), Marie Darcey, *Crima celebră: Roman american* [*The Famous Murder: An American Novel*], transl. unknown (1888), Kate Douglas Harte, *A iubi și a fi iubit* [*To Love and to Be Loved*], translated by N. N. (1892). It is notable that, during this period, female authors are translated to a relatively high degree.
10. Lewis Wallace, *Ben-Hur sau Zilele lui Mesia* (Blaj: Tip. Seminarului Arhidiecezan, 1889).

11. Baghiu, "Translations of Novels" (2020).
12. See Ștefan Baghiu et al. "Geografia romanului românesc (1901–1932): Străinătatea", *Transilvania* 10 (2020): 1–11 and Ștefan Baghiu et al. "Geografia romanului românesc (1933–1947): Străinătatea", *Transilvania* 9 (2021): 1–9.
13. See, for example, the Romanian periodical titled *Bilete de papagal* (Parrot Tickets) that was published between 1928 and 1945 (with interruptions), in which critics who were very vocal in the era, like Felix Aderca, wrote numerous articles about American society, exhibiting obvious tendencies towards exoticization.
14. In spite of the modernists' positioning towards the French space and central cultures, and of Iorga's insistence on the dismantling of the dominant model and the return towards other peripheries, the translations of American literature seem to be more useful to the first faction, rather than to the second one.
15. A symptomatic fact for this temporal node, particularly for the junction between the populist and the social democrat vision, is the translation of Edward Bellamy's novel, *Looking Backward* (1888), translated as *Privire îndărăt* (1891), which "helped revitalize the Romanian traditions of utopian socialism, making an acknowledged contribution to the founding in 1894 of the Social-Democratic Party of the Romanian Workers, the first workers' party in this country, of its newspaper *Munca* [The Labor] and the socialist review *Lumea Nouă* [New World]." Mihăilă, 288.
16. For a deeper understanding of the theoretical position of populist intellectuals in regards to translation ideology and policy at the end of the 19th century, see Cosmin Borza, "Translating Against Colonization: Romanian Populists' Plea for Peripheral Literatures (1890–1916)," in *The Culture of Translation in Romania/Übersetzungskultur und Literaturübersetzen in Rumänien*, edited by Maria Sass, Ștefan Baghiu, and Vlad Pojoga (Berlin etc.: Peter Lang, 2018), 36: "the shift of 'samanatorism' and 'poporanism' to the translation and promotion of the so-called 'minor'/'peripheral' literatures of that period reflect their opposition to the cultural hegemony of the West, and to France in particular."
17. Although less represented, the ecologist positioning is no less important—see Baghiu, "Translations of Novels" (2021) for this—traced in the translation of the likes of Thoreau, Louis or Bromfield. During the same period, the hit novels of American culture (either high or popular literature) are also translated: Anita Loos, *Bărbații preferă blondele* (*Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, 1931); Margaret Mitchell, *Pe aripile vântului* (*Gone with the Wind*, 2 vols., 1940); Vladimir Nabokov, *Camera obscură* (*Laughter in the Dark*, 1940); Edgar Rice Burroughs, *Tarzan regele maimuțelor* (*Tarzan of the Apes*, 2 vols., 1941); Melville Herman, *Moby Dick* (1943); Ernest Hemingway, *Cui îi bate ceasul* (*For Whom the Bell Tolls*, 1945), as well as various titles authored by Jack London, John Steinbeck, Upton Sinclair, Louis Bromfield, Pearl S. Buck, James Fenimore Cooper, besides the aforementioned ones.
18. Lefevere, 16. Patronage is one of the main factors that frame a translation system especially when it comes to an authoritarian regime: it consists of three interconnected elements: the *ideological* one, the *economic* one, and the *status* one. Patronage has an authoritarian component, which is specific for centralized modes of cultural production, manifested through ideological manipulation (which is most often in-

- stitutionalized), the controlled selection of source-texts (in line with a firm agenda), the censorship of translation work.
19. See Ștefan Baghiu, "Strong Domination and Subtle Dispersion: A Distant Reading of Novel Translation in Communist Romania (1944–1989)", in *The Culture of Translation in Romania*, 69. Through the consistent number of world literature translations (novels from Ecuador, Mexico, Brazil, Argentina, Bolivia, Uruguay, China, Korea, Vietnam, Philippines, Algeria, Egypt, Cameroon, and Senegal), "socialist realist literature nonetheless marks one of the first attempts to professionalize the Romanian reading experience and, in turn, to internationalize Romanian literature". See also Alex Goldiș, "The Pressure of Eurochronology and the Romanian Rural Prose," *Transylvania* 11–12 (2021): 45–48.
 20. Baghiu, "Strong Domination," 66.
 21. This logic is also available for the way in which Romanian culture appropriated Western Europe values, cultural goods, and daily life. For details, see Constantin Parvulescu and Claudiu Turcus, "Devices of Cultural Europeanization," *Studies in Eastern European Cinema* 9, 1 (2018): 3–14.
 22. Parvulescu and Turcus, 76. The author's argument targets the translation, at the beginning of the 1960s, of essential novelists like: Jack Kerouac, *On the Road* (1962); Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit* (1963); J. D. Salinger, *The Catcher in the Rye* (1964), but more precisely the American turn following 1964, through the translation of Ernest Hemingway, Truman Capote, Norman Mailer, and Saul Bellow. Naturally, William Faulkner's case deserves special attention, seeing as seven of his novels were translated during this interval.
 23. Brian James Baer, *Contexts, Subtexts and Pretexts: Literary Translation in Eastern Europe and Russia* (Amsterdam–Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2011), 9.
 24. Gisèle Sapiro, "How Do Literary Works Cross Borders (or Not)? A Sociological Approach to World Literature," *Journal of World Literature* 1, 1 (2016): 92.
 25. Baghiu, "Quantitative Translationscapes," 127.
 26. Itamar Even-Zohar, "The Position of Translated Literature Within the Literary Polysystems," *Poetics Today* 11, 1 (1990): 45–51.
 27. See Ana-Karina Schneider, "William Faulkner and the Romanian 'Criticism of Survival,'" *Faulkner Journal* 24, 1 (2008): 99–117.
 28. Mircea Martin, "Despre estetismul socialist," *România literară* 37, 23 (2004): 18.
 29. Martin, 19.
 30. Cosmin Borza, "Translating Modernism Through Communism: William Faulkner and Gabriel García Márquez As Cold War Writers," *Transylvanian Review* 31, suppl. 1 (2022): 115.
 31. Borza, 118.
 32. Sapiro, 92–93.
 33. See Claudiu Turcuș, "Restructuring a Cinema That Didn't Exist: The Romanian Film Industry of the 1990s," *Iuminace* 29, 3 (2017): 9–26.
 34. See Andrei Terian, "Cultural Triangulation in Romanian Travelogues to China under Communism," *World Literature Studies* 11, 2 (2019): 16–30, and Alex Goldiș, "Beyond Nation Building: Literary History As Transnational Geolocation," in *Ro-*

manian Literature As World Literature, edited by Mircea Martin, Christian Moraru, and Andrei Terian (New York–London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), 107: “cultures consist in a closed-shop kind of interminglings, and so when these cultures deal with one another, such dealings are quintessentially international, whereas truly transnational interchanges occur throughout national traditions across, over, and at the expense of political borders.”

Abstract

An Ideological Distant Reading of the American Novel Translated in the Romanian Literary System (1853–1989)

Using the data in the *Chronological Dictionary of the Novel Translated into Romanian from Its Origins to 1989*, along with other secondary lexicographic sources, this article approaches the translations of American novels into the Romanian literary system from a double perspective. On the one hand, by using distant reading practices, it conducts an elementary quantitative analysis, looking to map out several historical moments of intensified translation from the American space. On the other hand, it processes this logic of translation dispersion through the conceptual framework of “conceptual nodes” (Cornis-Pope and Neubauer), advancing an ideological reading of the way in which the transfer of American literary imagery into Romanian literature has happened by means of translation. We argue that, even in the absence of coherent institutional policies, this process of literary import and cultural transfer acutely interrogates the intersection of the political debates, identity configurations, and aesthetic forms of various eras. The purpose of the article is to generate a functional periodization for the dynamics of American novel translation into the Romanian literary system, and, additionally, to open up deeper research fields for each of the three temporal nodes taken into consideration.

Keywords

American translations, Romanian literary system, temporal nodes, distant reading, ideology