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Subjectivity in (Re)Translation: The Case of Oscar Wilde's Tales in Romanian

ABSTRACT

Based on a corpus of nine tales by Oscar Wilde (making up the two well-known volumes: *The Happy Prince and Other Stories*, 1888, and *A House of Pomegranates*, 1891), along with nine Romanian versions of these texts, the present article aims at reflecting on the linguo-semantic expression of emotion (with a focus on subjective adjectives like *little*, *big*, *poor* etc.), as well as making an inventory of the compensation strategies used by translators, taking into account the fact that most Romanian versions are addressed to children, and also that translation criticism, just like translating itself, is a matter of instinct, taste, affinity, finally emotion.

Keywords: retranslation, subjectivity, children's literature, compensation, Oscar Wilde

1. Introduction

Whether we perceive translation as an art, a craft or a science, as a process or a product, as a mere text or an ever-expanding discipline, we cannot but acknowledge the crucial role emotion plays in it, on a number of different levels – some of which we will try to emphasize in the present paper. That translation and emotion are irrevocably linked is readily detectable in our corpus: in the source texts (Oscar Wilde's collection of nine tales, published in two separate volumes, allegedly written for children), as well as – to perhaps a greater extent – in the numerous target texts (reflecting the translators' choices, especially seen in the context of retranslation).

The Happy Prince and Other Tales (the "other tales" being *The Nightingale and the Rose*, *The Selfish Giant*, *The Devoted Friend* and *The Remarkable Rocket*) and *A House of Pomegranates* (containing the stories: *The Young King*, *The Birthday of the Infanta*, *The Fisherman and His Soul* and *The Star-Child*) are two collections of tales published by Wilde in 1888 and 1891 respectively, which he actually wrote for his sons, Cyril and Vyvyan. This very fact, to which we might add Wilde's fateful imprisonment that kept him for ever apart from his children, not long after these books appeared on the market, is relevant enough for the emotional circumstances which led to their creation and which also left an imprint on their reception.

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The stories themselves are no less demonstrative about feelings. They are all, one way or another, about unsung sacrifice and often futile trials (The Happy Prince and the Swallow are thrown in a dust heap after sacrificing themselves for the poor; the Nightingale dies a painful death while trying to produce a red rose in the name of love; little Hans wastes a lot of time and effort and ultimately loses his life for the sake of a *devoted* friend; a grotesque but soulful dwarf dies of a broken heart upon recognizing his deformity in a mirror and having been the object of the Infanta's mockery; the egocentric Star-Child redeems himself through unspeakable hardship, only to die of exhaustion three years after finding his identity and happiness etc.). Wilde's highly descriptive style, adorned with countless epithets, so simple apparently, but so difficult to transpose into another language, brings its own affective charge into play.

2. The Corpus

The nine Romanian versions we have selected out of over 20 also display an interesting array of translation techniques and strategies testifying to the variety and richness of retranslation. After all, besides various historical, editorial, commercial, political factors, retranslation is also triggered by what Robinson¹ calls *ideosomatics* (the collective, social feeling of a group or people that a given literary work of art needs to be retranslated due to a growing gap between the original and its latest translation), but also by what he calls *idiosomatics* (the translator's / critic's / reader's personal, purely subjective feeling, akin to a spontaneous physical reaction, that a new version is necessary). This paper falls, as a result, under the scope of subjectivity as a branch of Translation Studies. And if "subjectivity lies at the very heart of the translator's work" (Hewson, 2013, p. 13), it is above all in retranslation that the said subjectivity becomes manifest (see Skibińska, 2002). The nine versions selected for analysis cover almost a century (1922-2015)², thus offering a bird's-eye view on the history of translations from Oscar Wilde, while

¹ We employ here Douglas Robinson's terminology as used in *The Translator's Turn*, (1991) (especially the first chapter: *The Somatics of Translation*), as well as in an online article: *Retranslation and the Ideosomatic Drift*.

² In selecting the corpus, we relied on classic criteria such as representativity: we wished to illustrate different periods in the history of translation into Romanian. However, the first Romanian version of one of Wilde's tales appeared, by all appearances, in 1911, by the hand of a symbolist writer, Dimitrie Anghel. His version of one of Wilde's least known stories, *The Fisherman of His Soul*, bears the mark of a literary language still in the making, and it is debatable whether he translated the original text or an intermediate – possibly French – version, that is why we chose to leave it out. We also left out a series of versions which appeared between 2015-2019, which were not fully relevant to our topic, and which will have affected the (manageable) size of the corpus. Of the nine retranslators listed here, only Magda Teodorescu, Andrei Bantaş and Laura Poantă provided versions of all nine tales Wilde wrote, the others preferring either the stories included in *The Happy Prince and Other Tales* (e.g., Igena Floru, Ticu Archip, Agop Bezerian) or a mixture of stories taken from both volumes.

at the same time delineating idiosyncrasies of a given translator or epoch. The following list gives the names of these retranslators, together with the year they published their version of Wilde's tales:

- Igena Floru (1922)
- Olimpiu Ștefanovici-Svensk (1929)
- Alexandru Teodor Stamatiad (1937)
- Eugen Boureanul (1945)
- Ticu Archip (1967)
- Agop Bezerian (2000)
- Magda Teodorescu (2000)
- Andrei Bantaș (2005)
- Laura Poantă (2015)

Interestingly, most retranslators actually practised translation as a side activity rather than as a main profession. Besides being (occasional) translators of Wilde's tales, they were better known as:

- writers (Igena Floru, Olimpiu Ștefanovici-Svensk, Eugen Boureanul, Ticu Archip)
- reporters (Eugen Boureanul)
- teachers / professors (Eugen Boureanul; Olimpiu Ștefanovici-Svensk; Ticu Archip; Andrei Bantaș; Magda Teodorescu)
- medical doctors (Laura Poantă – doctor of internal medicine, PhD)
- illustrators (Laura Poantă)
- diplomats (Agop Bezerian)
- lawyers (Eugen Boureanul)

Furthermore, their versions coming from different historical and political periods (from 1919 until 1947 Romania was still a kingdom; between 1947 and 1989, it went from socialism through communism to Revolution, and from 1989 on – from the Revolution to democracy), they need to be evaluated in their respective contexts (more or less affected by issues such as censorship or copyright laws, which definitely had a bearing on the translators' choices). At the same time, these versions cover different cultural times with different grammatical norms and different mentalities, which explains the spelling variety between the target texts, as well as other syntactic, semantic or pragmatic aspects.

3. Emotion in Translation

In the present paper we will focus on the way these retranslators dealt with the so-called *emotion lexicon*, so lavishly supplied by Wilde's tales – a topic rarely dealt with, if ever, from the contrastive viewpoint translation imposes. If we choose to look at it from Johnson-Laird and Oatley's (1989) perspective, as analysable into five coherent categories depending on just five basic families of emotion modes (*happiness, sadness, anger, fear, and disgust*), then Wilde's emotional terminology

falls primarily under *sadness*, occasionally, *anger*, *disgust*, and only rarely under *happiness*. As emphasized by Kerbrat-Orecchioni (1980, p. 125), affective / linguistic subjectivity fulfills a primarily conative function. Wilde evidently premeditated a long-term perlocutionary effect on his public, whether young or old: what he aimed at, above all, was to incite reflection on some painful aspects of the society he lived in and of humanity at large – aspects he presented, as in some sort of parable, to the young and to the old, in his (fairy-)tales. By relying on *sadness* as the staple of his semantic configuration, he allows his readers to access and develop their emotional side through a feeling like, for instance, compassion.

Since the various situations depicted in Wilde's tales, as well as the author's colourful style, can be pinned down to a handful of straightforward categories, emotionwise (i.e., *sadness*, *anger*, *disgust*), and since these texts were designed to appeal to a double addressee (children and adults), they rely on triggering a not too complex³, but all the more efficient array of feelings on the part of the reader. Things are, however, not always so straightforward when it comes to translated texts, since something is ostensibly always lost in translation.

Charles Bally (1909) used to say that if affectivity is to be considered a constitutive dimension of language, then the most subtle affective nuances can only be perceived in one's mother tongue. This being said, I will look into the way the Romanian retranslators of Wilde's texts chose to deal with the many instances of "subjective adjectives"⁴ like *little*, *big*, *poor* etc., while fully aware that:

[t]he lack of simple, single word translational equivalents for emotion categories between English and other languages suggest that English categories may be a limited "anchor" for explorations of the emotion lexicon across cultures (Lindquist, Jackson, Ferri, & Weinberg, 2016, p. 590).

4. A Comparative Analysis

The overall picture of the nine Romanian texts selected for analysis shows a number of common characteristics in the treatment of affective terms like *little*, *big* or *poor*, irrespective of the epoch in which they were produced and irrespective of who authored them. Among these, a technical fact, having to do with the morphological differences between the two languages: Romanian uses diminutives

³ Cf. Wierzbicka (1972) "Thoughts have a structure which can be rendered in words, but feelings, like sensations, do not. All we can do, therefore, is to describe in words the external situations or thoughts which are associated in our memory or in our imagination with the feeling in question and to trust that our reader or listener will grasp what particular feelings are meant" (p. 59).

⁴ Kerbrat-Orecchioni's (1980) classification relies on pragmatic criteria for the categorisation of adjectives. Depending on the role they fulfill, adjectives can be either "objective" (e.g., *single*, *male*, *red*) or "subjective". The subjective type is in its turn subclassified into "emotional" (e.g., *happy*, *sad*, *heartbreaking*) and "evaluative" adjectives, the latter including the "non-axiological" (e.g., *abundant*, *hot*, *large*) and "axiological" (e.g., *nice*, *good*, *correct*) sub-types.

much more than English, and it is more enclitically creative than English, that is why, where Wilde says *little boy*, Romanian translators will employ *băiețel* or *băiețaș*, rather than a syntactically literal *băiat mic*. Secondly, all nine translators choose to redistribute the load of affectivity: in other words, they sometimes omit or neutralise terms which are emotionally imbued in the original, only to accentuate affective connotations in other parts of the texts or by other means. It is what Hervey and Higgins (1992) call *compensation in place* and *compensation in kind*, respectively. Take, for instance, Floru's 1922 versions, in which we can find, on the one hand, a rather detached description of the death of characters like the Happy Prince, the Swallow or the Nightingale, as well as various omissions of *little* (e.g., *the little Lizard*, in *The Nightingale and the Rose*, is but *Șopârla* [the lizard] in her version). On the other hand, additions and double diminutives come to compensate for the lost effect in other passages:

Oscar Wilde's *The Happy Prince*: "Will you come away with me?" he said finally to her; but the Reed *shook her head* [emphasis added].

Igena Floru's *Prințul Fericit*: "Nu vrei să mergi încolo cu mine?" o întreabă el la urma urmei; dar Trestia *dădù trist din cap* [emphasis added];

lit.⁵: Won't you come away with me? he asked her in the end; but the Reed shook her head sorrowfully.

Oscar Wilde's *The Nightingale and The Rose*: As the shadow of a rose in a mirror of silver [...], so was the rose that blossomed on the topmost *spray* of the *Tree*.

Igena Floru's *Privighetoarea și trandafirul*: Ca umbra unui trandafir într'o oglindă de argint, așa eră la început Trandafirul care înflori pe cea mai înaltă *rămurică a pomișorului* [emphasis added].

The Romanian text follows the letter of the original, with two notable exceptions: *rămurică* – counterpart of *spray* – and *pomișor* – counterpart of *Tree* – are diminutives.

Oscar Wilde's *The Selfish Giant*: It was the farthest corner of the garden, and in it was standing *a little boy*.

Igena Floru's *Uriășul cel egoist*: Eră colțul cel mai îndepărtat și în el stă *un băiețaș mititel*... [emphasis added].

Again, the Romanian version is literal, but we have double intensification here, as both *băiețaș* and *mititel* are diminutives.

Thirdly, *poor Hans* (in *The Devoted Friend*) is almost invariably *bietul Hans* in the Romanian versions, rather than *sărmanul*, *săracul* or *sărăcuțul*, which are perfectly valid synonyms in the context. They are characterized by the same

⁵ Literal translation is always mine.

semantic ambivalence (literally poor, but also pitiful), whereas *biet*, while perhaps more phonaesthetic and more literary than the other terms in the series, can also suggest meaninglessness, which augments its connotative force.

Sometimes, equivalents of *little* and *poor* are interchangeable in Floru's version, with the latter obviously displaying the more forceful overtones of the two:

Oscar Wilde's *The Selfish Giant*: It was really only *a little linnet* singing outside his window...
Igena Floru's *Uriaşul cel egoist*: *O biată mierlă cânta într'un pom, lângă fereastră...* [emphasis added];

lit. *A poor blackbird* was singing in a tree, by the window.

Conversely, the house the seamstress with an ill boy lived in, so touchingly described in *The Happy Prince* as either *a poor house* or *the poor house* (*poor* in this particular context, being, however, a much more objective term than *poor* in *poor Hans*), is constantly rendered in Romanian by a diminutive: *o căsuţă / căsuţa sărăcăcioasă* [lit. *a poor little house*]. The many birds populating Wilde's tales are also introduced to the Romanian reader by means of diminutives (e.g., *the birds* are invariably *păsărele* or *păsărici* [little birds], whereas *the dead bird* is invariably *păsărica moartă* [the dead little bird]). The clouds in the various descriptions are also almost always *norişori* or *noruleţi* [little clouds].

A special collocation in which *little* appears quite a few times in *The Happy Prince* is the formula used by the Prince to summon and persuade the Swallow to assist him in helping the poor (i.e., *Swallow, Swallow, little Swallow*). In Romanian, this bird species, usually identified by the feminine *rândunică*, already sounds hypocoristically, just like its masculine counterpart, *rândunel*, which is actually most often used in the Romanian versions of *The Happy Prince*. Placing *mic* [little] alongside *Rândunel* can be perceived as slightly pleonastic, that is why some of Wilde's retranslators chose to neutralise the epithet or avoid the redundancy (e.g., *Rândunel, mic Rândunel* [Swallow, little Swallow] – a “natural” choice, given that avoiding repetition is statistically one of the most common *translation universals*). On the other hand, other translators opted for the exact opposite, in order to enhance the Prince's doleful incantation – that is, they chose the path of intensification:

Oscar Wilde's *The Happy Prince*: Swallow, Swallow, *little Swallow*...
Alexandru Teodor Stamatiad's *Prinţul Fericit*: Rândunică, Rândunică, *scumpă Rândunică*...
(*scump* being closer to the meanings of “dear”, “adored”, “beloved”)

Oscar Wilde's *The Happy Prince*: Swallow, Swallow, *little Swallow*...
Agop Bezerian (*Prinţul Fericit*): Rândunelule *micuţ*, Rândunelule *drăguţ* ... [emphasis added].

Here the translator reduces the occurrences of *Swallow*; he compensates, however, by adding *drăguţ* – meaning “sweet”, “nice”, “lovely” – which, together

with the diminutival *micuț*, creates a symmetrical, well-balanced highly-connotative rhyming refrain.

The Devoted Friend introduces the protagonist of the story within the story by using the classic fairy-tale formula: “Once upon a time, said the Linnet, there was an honest little fellow named Hans”. The *little* attached to the character’s name from the very beginning will actually stick to it to the very end. That is why transferring this *little* as such in Romanian (as Ștefanovici-Svensk did), is perhaps not the best choice, especially for a translation published in 1929, when very few Romanians understood English, and the rest probably took *Little Hans* for a proper name. The opposition between *little Hans* and *big Hugh the Miller* is also destroyed in the process:

Oscar Wilde’s *The Devoted Friend*: *Little Hans* had a great many friends, but the most devoted friend of all was *big Hugh the Miller*.

Olimpiu Ștefanovici-Svensk’s *Prietenul devotat*: *Little Hans* avea o droaie de prieteni, dar cel mai devotat dintre toți era *Hugh cel mare, Morarul* [emphasis added].

big Hugh the Miller is literally rendered, as is the rest of the sentence, whereas *Little Hans* is simply transferred.

Archip, on the other hand, vacillates between four solutions for *little Hans*:

- the paradoxically augmentative *un băietan*, when Hans is first introduced by the narrator
- the too (physically) explicit *firavul Hans* [the puny / the frail Hans], when the narrator mentions him the second time
- the slightly misleading *tânărul Hans* [the young Hans], whenever the narrator mentions him again, and
- the too ingratiating *Hans, puiule* [approx. baby, sweetheart] or *frățioare dragă* [dear little brother], whenever *little Hans* is used as a form of address by his “devoted” friend, the Miller.

This is another interesting example of avoiding repetition, but not just for the sake of it: by using different syntagms, the translator reinforces the contrast between the voices in the text (principally between the narrator’s – who is also a character in the frame story, and the miller’s – the antagonist). This strategy of intensification is confirmed by many other examples in Archip’s text and is very much consistent with what Berman (1991) terms *principle of variety* (one possible side of the *principle of abundance* explicated in *Palimpsestes*), which supposes rendering a highly recurring signifier of the original text by a multitude of signifiers. This emphasis placed on this or that term or turn of phrase is more often than not a felicitous choice on the part of the translator, thus offering a colourful, inciting text to child-readers. *Little* is almost never rendered in Romanian by the most convenient equivalent, by a readily available word like *mic*, *mititel*, or even *drag*.

Oscar Wilde's *The Remarkable Rocket*: Then a little Frog, with bright jewelled eyes, and a green mottled coat, swam up to him.

Ticu Archip's *Un foc-de-artificii fără pereche*: Deodată, o pîrdalnică de Broscuță, cu ochi strălucitori de nestemate și o hăinuță verde pestrițată, veni înot spre el [emphasis added];

pîrdalnic, a familiar, euphemistic or jocular term meaning “cursed”, obtained by metathesis from *prădalnic* – a demon believed to be a predator of souls.

Oscar Wilde's *The Happy Prince*: One night there flew over the city a little Swallow.

Ticu Archip's *Prințul Fericit*: Într-o noapte, a zburat peste acea cetate un flecușteț de Rîndunel [emphasis added];

here, *flecușteț* – a diminutive form of *fleac* [trifle] – is almost derogatory; the translator thus highlights the spiritual evolution of this character, from the beginning of the story, when he was frivolous and vain, until the end, when he died like a martyr.

Even if she constantly avoids translating *little* by one and the same term, and sometimes loses its hypocoristic meaning altogether, Archip is nevertheless a champion of diminutives, among her many other ways of achieving intensification. Thus, the Reed in *The Happy Prince* / *Prințul Fericit* is *Trestioara* [the little Reed] in her version, whereas *rainy weather* is *ploaică* [diminutive form of *plouă* [rain]]; Hans's face, in *The Devoted Friend* / *Prietenul credincios*, is *fețișoara* [little face], whereas his cottage is *căsuța micșoară* [double diminutive]; the little frog's daughters in *The Remarkable Rocket* / *Un foc-de-artificii fără pereche* are *fetițe* or *fetișoare* [little girls] a.s.o.

Diminutives are equally abundant in Bezerian's translation: the little match-girl in *The Happy Prince*, who has *no shoes or stockings*, appears to be without *ghetuțe* [little boots] in Bezerian's version; the nightingale's heart in *The Nightingale and the Rose* is *inimioara* [little heart]; even the rather dislikable Water-rat in *The Devoted Friend* is warmly introduced by means of diminutives (e.g., put his *head* out of his hole / își scoase *căpșorul* [little head] din vizuină). Here, too, for the sake of intensification and contrast, adjective *big* (as in *big Hugh the Miller*) becomes an exaggerated *uriaș* [huge, gigantic] (e.g., *uriașul Hugh, Morarul*).

Ștefanovici-Svensk has his share of hypocorisms, too, but more moderate than his fellow-translators:

Oscar Wilde's *The Happy Prince*: The boy was tossing feverishly on his *bed* ...

Olimpiu Ștefanovici-Svensk's *Prințul Fericit*: Băiețașul tușia înfrigurat în *pătucul* lui ... [emphasis added];

lit. *The little boy* was coughing, helplessly cold, in his *little bed*.

Oscar Wilde's *The Nightingale and The Rose*: She will dance so lightly that her *feet* will not touch the floor ...

Olimpiu Ștefanovici-Svensk's *Trandafirul și Privighetoarea*: Dansul ei va fi atât de ușor încât *piciorușele*-i nu vor atinge pardoseala ... [emphasis added];

lit. Her dance will be so delicate that her *little feet* will not touch the floor.

The very same solution (including the diminutive *piciorușele*) for the previous extract from *The Nightingale and the Rose* is preferred by Bantaș in his version of the story published in 2005, 76 years after Ștefanovici-Svensk's. In Bantaș's texts, any reference to the Swallow's or the Nightingale's wing is *aripioară* [little wing]; any bird is *păsăruică* [little bird]; any reference to somebody's head is rendered by *căpșorul* [little head]; the flowers in the selfish Giant's garden are always *floricele* [little flowers]; eyes are often referred to by *ochișorii* [little eyes]; sometimes he uses three diminutives in a row, in one and the same sentence, as in the following example, even if his version is the only one not addressed to children:

Oscar Wilde's *The Devoted Friend*: The little ducks were swimming about in the pond, looking just like a lot of yellow *canaries*, and their *mother*, who was pure white with real red *legs*, was trying to teach them how to stand on their heads in the water.

Andrei Bantaș's *Prietenul credincios*: Bobocii de rață înotau de încolo și înoace pe iaz arătând ca un stol de *cănărași* galbeni, iar *mămica* lor, albă ca laptele, dar cu *piciorușele* roșii ca focul, încerca să-i învețe să stea în apă cu capul în jos [emphasis added];

lit. The ducklings were swimming about in the pond looking like a flock of *little yellow canaries*, and their *mummy*, as white as milk, but with *little legs* as red as fire, was trying to teach them how to stand in the water on their heads.

An interesting choice Bantaș makes has to do with the titles of Wilde's tales which he transposes non-literally, creatively, in Romanian; *The Young King*, for instance, is translated by a diminutive, *Regișorul* [the little king], which establishes from the very beginning a new (affectionwise) line of interpretation for the entire story. All these instances of intensification, however, are also meant to compensate for omitting various subjective adjectives from the text. The *little dwarf* in *The Birthday of the Infanta* is always simply *piticul* [the dwarf] in Romanian, so as to avoid a pleonastic combination of words (other translators, like Poantă, for instance, use a heart-warming diminutive: *piticuțul*). Another remarkable omission is that of *big* in *big Hugh the Miller*: in Bantaș's version of the story of the *Devoted Friend*, *big Hugh the Miller* is simply *Morarul Hugh* [Hugh the Miller].

Two versions of Wilde's tales that are intriguing for their unusual treatment of terms of endearment, at least when compared with the other seven included in our corpus, are the ones signed by Boureanu (1945) and by Teodorescu (2000), respectively. The two translators do not seem to be very fond of diminutives; what is more, they sometimes accentuate the negative connotations of subjective words. In *The Star-Child*, for example, the mother of the eponymous character is often

referred to either as *the woman* or as *this poor woman*, which Eugen Boureanu sees as *bătrâna* [the old woman] and *nevolnica asta* [this weakling, this good-for-nothing woman], respectively. Similarly, the duck trying to teach her ducklings to stand on their heads, at the beginning of *The Devoted Friend*, is *rața cea bătrână* [the old duck].

As for Teodorescu, she omits on a constant and consistent basis not only words like *poor*, *little*, or *big*, but also *beautiful*, *great* or *fine*. Thus, *the poor little Swallow* is, in her version, *micul Rândunel* [the little Swallow]; *the poor children* in *The Selfish Giant* are simply *copiii* [the children], and *that poor little boy* in the same story is *băiețelul* [the little boy]; *an honest little fellow named Hans* becomes *un tip onest, pe care-l chema Hans* [an honest fellow, whose name was Hans]; *big Hugh the Miller* is just *Hugh, Morarul* [Hugh, the Miller]; *the great lateen sail* in *The Young King* is *vela latină* [the lateen sail], and the *fine red dust* is *praf roșu* [red dust]; the *beautiful white rose* depicted in *The Birthday of the Infanta* is simply *o roză albă* [a white rose] etc.

Finally, on a more humorous note, if we were to register here not only emotions as they appear in the source text and as they were transferred to the target texts, but also as a matter of feeling on the part of the receptor (either reader or translation critic) of the target texts, we might add a shocking example in terms of register, which definitely moved us as readers of Teodorescu's (otherwise acceptable) version, which omits *fair* but accentuates *foul*, *ugly*, *ill-favoured*, in a sort of aesthetics of ugliness:

Oscar Wilde's *The Star-Child*: See! There sitteth a *foul* beggar-woman under that *fair* and green-leaved tree. Come, let us drive her hence, for she is *ugly and ill-favoured*.

Magda Teodorescu's *Copilul-din-Stea*: Vedeti! O cerșetoare *împuțită* stă sub crengile verzi ale copacului aceleuia. Veniți, haideți s-o alungăm, că e *urâtă și slută* [emphasis added];

lit. See! A *stinky* beggarwoman is sitting under the green branches of that tree. Come, let us chase her away, for she is *ugly and hideous*.

But this last example, too, is only meant to underline the one common technique all nine translators used, irrespective of the date of their translation (1922, 1929, 1937, 1945, 1967, 2000, 2005 and 2015), irrespective of their professional background (writers, medical doctors, lawyers, diplomats etc.), and irrespective of the public they were addressing (children, the public at large, or Wilde aficionados): namely, accentuation or intensification (especially when it comes to subjective adjectives like the ones discussed here). According to Berman (1991), accentuation is a good thing, because it helps establish a translation's heteronomy (its loyalty to the original) and at the same time its autonomy. Translating emotion with emotion has, as emphasized by Hewson (2013), its dangers, but also an immense potential that all translators of Wilde's tales seem to have been fully aware of:

The dangers are paramount, with the temptation to “outdo” the source-text author by indulging in original writing, or simply by allowing oneself to translate mechanically or lazily, using well-worn formulae and well-trying solutions. But all is not negative, for the possibilities are indeed exciting for the translator who wishes to explore the creative potential that any act of translation may exploit (p. 13).

Conclusion

Statistically and quantitatively, the strategies used by the nine retranslators of Wilde's tales in order to deal with the many emotionally imbued terms could be grouped into three main categories:

1. intensification, ranking first, usually achieved by:
 - a. additional diminutives
 - b. additional terms of endearment, other than diminutives
 - c. additional augmentatives
2. occasional omission, meant either to:
 - a. bypass pleonastic expression, or
 - b. downplay what was possibly considered as overly emotional
3. compensation, either
 - a. in place, or
 - b. in kind.

If the emotional quality of the nine Romanian versions analysed were represented as a cline, then we would have at one end Floru's (1922) version, Bezerian's (2000) version and Bantaş's 2015 version (as clearly set to emphasize emotion), and Boureanu's (1945) version, as well as Teodorescu's (2000) version, at the other end (as clearly set to deemphasize emotion). This not only shows the fluctuation of the interest taken in emotion along time, but also that translating it is more than ever(ything) a matter of personal style.

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