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- SUMMARY -

EQUIVALENCE OF CONTENT, FORM AND STYLE, AS WELL AS THE POSSIBILITY OF TRANSLATING WORDPLAY IN THE HUNGARIAN TRANSLATIONS OF NICHITA STĂNESCU'S POEMS

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SUMMARY

Several authors have attempted to translate his works, including: Domokos Szilágyi, Péter Demény, Zsuzsánna Kiss, Imre József Balázs, Péter Zirkuli, Zsolt Karácsonyi, János Ráduly, József Balogh, Erzsébet Kántor, Géza Páskándi, Béla Jánky and many others.

These numerous translators, with their individual linguistic tools, poetic skills and personal interests, have managed to present only a part of Stănescu’s vast and varied corpus. For this reason, a completely different picture may appear in the reader's mind, depending on whether they read Stănescu translated by József Balogh, János Ráduly, or Domokos Szilágyi. It might be interesting to observe how the poetic tools of each translator are able to reproduce the specific qualities of Stănescu's poetry and to what extent they dared to venture into the use of tenses and language play, and whether the internal system of free verse was successfully recognized and reproduced in the target language version.

In my study I seek to answer the question: what faces does Nichita Stănescu present in the light of various Hungarian translations? What methods of translation does each translator prefer, what poetic challenges do they dare to face in their translations, how bold are they in their choice of source text, and to what extent do they have the courage to deviate from the literal meaning of the source text in order to achieve stylistic, poetic and aesthetic equivalence? Depending on the period, aesthetics, linguistic skills and poetic competences of each translator, each volume of translations reveals different faces of Stănescu's poetry. I am interested in how the lyrical tone that emerges from the volumes of translations relates to the source language texts: do certain texts with a specific tone or poetics dominate, revealing unique aspects of Stănescu’s heterogeneous poetry, or do the translators attempt to select from all parts to present a more colorful and nuanced picture of the author? Which aspect is more important to translators in source poems: playfulness, seriousness, or linguistic creativity? As literary translators, are they able to create a text in the target language that at least approaches the literary value of the original? Furthermore: how is the Hungarian language shaped by Stănescu's translations?

Nichita Stănescu's literary activity was already remarkable in the 1960s, so the influences of the period and of his contemporaries are present in his poems. Numerous translations of his poetry have been made; cataloging and systematizing them would be a serious and separate philological work, but I am primarily interested in the problematics of translation and the attitudes of the translators. . Therefore, this work mainly focuses on the work of four translators contemporary with

Stănescu: I analyze the volumes of translations by Domokos Szilágyi, Péter Zirkuli, József Balogh and János Ráduly. Szilágyi's and Zirkuli's volumes of translations were published during Stănescu's lifetime, Balogh József's a year after the poet's death. Ráduly János only collected his translations into a volume in 2012, but he has regularly published translations in various journals since the 1970s, making him worthy of study as well.

Currently, my objective is to observe the specific attitudes and patterns of translators that characterize complete volumes of translations, since from a larger corpus of translations one can deduce the workings of individual preferences, styles and skills: I analyze the translation volumes of the four translators. I will compare the characteristics of each translator and comparatively examine several translated versions of poems. Additionally, I will focus on the Hungarian translations of three poems, each translated by different translators, and a comparative reading will highlight the peculiarities of certain translation practices. The research method is mainly qualitative, closely following the transfer operations of the translations of specific poems, but also comparing them with the full-text material of the translation volumes.

In the first chapter I discuss the main issues of translation studies, presenting the literary and linguistic perspectives of translation practice, addressing a series of aspects. I will elaborate the issues of translation and untranslatability, within which I also discuss the ethics of translation, as well as various categories of modes of equivalence, drawing on the theories of Eugene Nida, Alice Leal, Henrik Gottlieb, Kinga Klaudy and Andrew Chesterman.

In the second chapter I briefly outline the expectations of translators and translation researchers, listing the views of different theorists, concisely presenting numerous prescriptive and descriptive theories of translation theory, and mentioning the role and responsibility of the literary translator based on the work of Fritz Paepcke, Andrew Jenkins, Cay Dollerup.

In the third chapter, I present Walter Benjamin's perspective on translation according to his essay *The Task of the Translator*, discussing also its various commentaries and criticisms. . Additionally, drawing partly from this essay, I discuss the relationship between deconstruction and hermeneutics in relation to translation, mainly based on the essays and studies of Paul de Man and Éva Gálosi, Annette Lindegaard, and Hans Georg-Gadamer, respectively, mentioning also the postmodern principle of reading and translation as misreading (misreading), highlighting Jacques Derrida's theory of the relevance of translation.

In the fourth chapter I briefly discuss the context and history of Hungarian literary translation, from the Enlightenment to the 20th century, based on the works of György Rába, Mihály Babits, Lőrinc Szabó and other writings on the methodology of Hungarian literary translation. I then analyze in detail György Somlyó's complex observations on the practice and theory of literary translation, noting the semantic developments of the concepts of 'literary translation' and 'poetry translation'.

In the fifth chapter, I will focus on the presentation of Nichita Stănescu, offering a brief biographical summary, after which I will illustrate his lyrical universe and critical reception, emphasizing his indispensable role in Romanian literature. I will discuss his reception in Hungary and the translations of his poetry into Hungarian.

Stănescu's poetry is visionary, seeking for the cracks and fissures from which his complex and symbolically charged visions emerge. This is accompanied by a spectacular originality: stadiums soaring into the sky, angels enclosed between blocks, a new world of love, folk traditions and literary references that all come together with remarkable ease. Stănescu's work is dominated by reality and referentiality, the distance between language and objects, and a linguistic worldview following the Wittgensteinian turn. Embodiing the perspectives and results of structuralism (but in a way also of poststructuralism and deconstruction), for him, the blending and separation of semantic fields, the removal of meanings attached to certain concepts and the redefinition of connotations were some of the important objectives of poetry. To eliminate content beyond form and to open up a level of perception, of instincts that can adequately represent cognitive processes beyond rationality. All these observations I will elaborate based on the insights of renowned literary critics such as Nina Cassian, Corin Braga, Matei Călinescu, George Munteanu, Fănuș Băileșteanu, József Balogh, János Szász, János Ráduly and many others.

In the sixth chapter I will discuss the translation practices of individual translators through a close reading and examination of poetry translations. In this chapter, I will examine the translation methods of Domokos Szilágyi in his volume of translations of Stănescu's poetry entitled *Víziorgona (Water Organ)*, paying special attention to the analysis of the transfer procedures applied in the translation of poetic form and wordplay, as well as on the use of rhetorical devices to capture the musicality and acoustic level of the text. I present the context and reception of the volume. Additionally, I will address solutions to the challenges of ungrammatical poetic translation. Furthermore, I will provide a concrete analysis of certain poems and then illustrate and discuss in-depth the translation solutions through various examples.

Szilágyi's translations reflect the translator's creativity and original linguistic solutions.

Although there are sometimes significant deviations from the meaning, these are made in favor of sonority, but the meaning, intention and key words of the source text are preserved in the Hungarian version without major distortions. The translator does not fall into the trap of exaggerating the text in order to showcase his talent, but always works with an appropriate sense of proportion.

He does not excessively stylize translations, but finds productive connections and allows them to create the referential network. He strongly senses changes in content, which is why he uses the term "rewriting" for his translations, indicating that the possibilities of play in the form motivated him in creating the translations. His aim is not to transfer denotative meaning, but to preserve connotative nuances, associative moods, rhyme, and layers of emotional and intellectual meaning created through allusion. In translating linguistic play and motifs, Szilágyi compensates for linguistic, semantic, content and sonority losses not only in a single text, but also in translating several poems. His translations rhyme precisely and poetically.

In the free verse Szilágyi retains playfulness, lightness, humor and irony, while the harmony of the magical world and expressive imagination prevents it from becoming parodic. His characteristic methods are fidelity to form, striving to recreate sonority and preserve meaning, but he introduces or omits elements where fidelity to the text would affect the poetic quality or intelligibility of the text. Szilágyi recognizes Stănescu's intention and considers the efficient reproduction of the linguistic play more important than semantic fidelity. He creates a linguistically coherent target text, preferring linguistic solutions closer to common language, but he also frequently uses symbolically charged concepts that elevate the lyricism of the poem.

Stylistic and rhetorical equivalence is prioritized by Szilágyi, not semantic-lexical equivalence. He freely rewrites and interprets the text when necessary, but only where literal translation becomes impossible. His translations are characterized by musical experience, acoustic sensitivity and poetic precision, often rewriting them to make them living, pulsating texts.

In the seventh chapter, I will examine the translation methods used by Zirkuli Péter in *Nichita Stănescu versei (Nichita Stănescu's Poems)*. After the presentation of the volume and its reception by the audience, I will analyze concrete translations to determine the specific procedures of the translator. Additionally, I will pay special attention to the translation methods applied in the case of linguistic deviations and fixed forms. The analysis of the concrete texts will be complemented by numerous examples from the volume, and finally, I will make a comparative analysis of two poems translated by both Zirkuli and Domokos Szilágyi.

Zirkuli's translations faithfully reflect the content of Stănescu's poetry, concision and precision. For the Romanian poet, the unity between sonority and meaning is crucial, and Zirkuli reproduces it precisely, often preserving polysemy. In the case of free verse, he prioritizes fidelity to the content, following the source text exactly, and his transfer procedures reflect creativity. However, in the case of fixed form poems, he is less firm, and Zirkuli's transfer of metric and rhythmic structures is sometimes problematic. His translation work attempts to reproduce the stylistic economy and visual power of Stănescu's verse, although it sometimes falls short regarding musicality and acoustics. He occasionally makes compromises regarding poetic form to remain faithful to the content but strives to preserve the layers of meaning. The translator approximates the texts to the target language culture, being less experimental in translating wordplay and ungrammatical phrases, rarely focusing on rhyme, paying less attention to meter, resulting in sometimes fragmented texts.

Compared to Domokos Szilágyi's translations, Zirkuli is more restrained in terms of acoustics and linguistic play. Szilágyi clearly prioritizes stylistic equivalence and musical effect, while Zirkuli prioritizes literary meaning, trying to preserve all the concepts in the original text. Zirkuli often manages to find creative, poetically productive solutions as well, but his rigid fidelity to the content makes meter, rhyme and musicality less important to him.

In chapter eight I analyze the volume of translations entitled *A szavak ellenében. Nichita Stănescu versei (Against words. Poems by Nichita Stănescu)* translated by Balogh József. I present the reception of the volume and describe the practice of the translator Balogh József by analyzing specific poems. After examining the translations in this volume, I compare Balogh's translation methods with those of Szilágyi and Zirkuli, by means of some verses translated from the same source text.

As a translator, József Balogh focuses on the free verse of Nichita Stănescu. As a result, he presents a more homogeneous, contemplative and therefore somewhat one-sided image of Stănescu, but also offers a more unified and purified linguistic universe. Although these texts are less playful in terms of grammar and form, their tone and ideas range from ironic and humorous to more somber and elegiac.

In terms of form, Balogh's translations show less variability, but thematically they are extremely diverse. They include love poems, ontological reflections, meditations on the philosophy of language, issues of poetry, as well as social and public questions, the relationship between the individual and society, and between the individual and nature. These themes often overlap and complement each other within the same poem. Balogh’s translations are linguistically precise and faithful to the content, building on expressive poetic imagery and rhetorical figures (e.g. enumeration, counterpoint, tautology, repetition).

Balogh often translates poems with accuracy and sensitivity, but sometimes they can seem too literal and dry, lacking the exploitation of the possibilities offered by the target language. In such cases, the translation follows the source text but does not become a worthy partner, while in others it successfully conveys the tone and meaning of the original. Alliteration occurs less frequently, but is present, for example, in the translation of the poem *Against Words (A szavak ellen).* The translations faithfully follow the original text in both content and syntax. Balogh frequently uses either concretization or generalization, thus creating new possibilities of connotation in the target language.

Balogh avoids complicated and vague formulations, which sometimes implies giving up the essential polysemy and ambiguity crucial in Stănescu's poetry. Balogh's simplifying approach reduces some of the poetic tension, but the text remains clear and intelligible, coming as close as possible to the original meaning. He follows the text word for word, even preserving word order, without compromising comprehensibility. Tone is accurately rendered and word choice fine-tunes the text. He reconstructs sentences and phrases verbatim in the target language, recognizing the message the linguistic codes carry. Rarely introduces additions, trying to preserve the concepts of the source text. Although he creates less ornate variants than Szilágyi or Zirkuli, he uses interesting linguistic solutions and creative translation practices. In Szilágyi's translations, musicality can sometimes suppress the meaning, which may seem exaggerated. In contrast, Zirkuli and Balogh dispense with the strident presence of musicality, conveying the conceptual level of the original texts more accurately and often adhering to the principle of fidelity to content with a high degree of rigor, without becoming unintelligible or uninteresting.

In the ninth chapter, I present János Ráduly's volume of translations entitled *Szomorú ének a szerelemről* (*Trist cântec de dragoste – Sad Song of Love*), detail its characteristics and discuss the particularities of specific texts, with special emphasis on the translation of the poem entitled *Necuvintele (Nonwords).* Ráduly's translation practice is defined by formal and content fidelity. Although he prefers the translation of free verse, he sometimes also engages in the translation of verse in fixed form. In his translation methods, he tries to preserve the original meter and rhyme, although their variety and refinement may vary. Therefore, the balance between formal and content fidelity is important to Ráduly. Although translating free verse allows him to focus on content, preserving elements of poetic form, such as word order or linguistic specificity, is also important. In addition, although he does not abundantly emphasize alliteration and musicality, he tries to preserve them to some extent. His translations avoid excessive compression of the text or excessive rewriting of linguistic structures, while preserving the original articles and expressions.

In the tenth chapter, I give a comparative reading of the Hungarian translations of the poem *Autoportret [Eu nu sunt decât...] (Self-portrait [I am nothing but...])* by five translators, László Csiki, József Balogh, János Ráduly, Zsuzsánna Kiss and János Ritóók. And in the eleventh chapter I compare the translations of the poem *Poem [Spune-mi dacă te-aș prinde într-o zi... – Tell me, if I should catch you one day]* by four translators, Péter Demény, Péter Zirkuli, Zsuzsánna Kiss and László Csiki.

Through the analysis of these these two short poems' translations, it became evident that equivalence is not the same as equity: each text variant is acceptable as a relevant translation, while representing different permutations of meanings in the source text. For example, the differences between the translations of the poem *Autoportret (Self-portrait)* are mainly reflected in stylistic approaches. József Balogh's translation emphasizes the lighter tone of the poem, while Zsuzsánna Kiss retains the negation, prolonging the first line. János Ritóók and László Csiki's translations depart from the original word order and concision, while Ráduly János emphasizes the poem's internal dynamics and special possibilities of understanding by using the word "megszólaló". This diversity of translations illustrates how a translator can transform the meaning and tone of the text according to the cultural and linguistic specificities of the target language.

The situation is similar with the translation of the poem *Poem*: although the lyrical voice varies in the different versions of the translation, there are no radical differences, all four versions being relevant and adequate translations.

While both poems are short, each of the translations exhibits considerable variations, even though the translators have focused on fidelity of content and stylistic fidelity in their work. It is particularly interesting how small linguistic differences between the translations can generate profound differences in meaning. These differences depend on the order of the words used, whether the personal pronoun is explicit or not, etc. None of the translators tried to add musicality or wordplay to the text, which features in Stănescu's universe. They used no additions, only subtle omissions in a few cases. This example illustrates the complexity of the concept of equivalence and how important it is to be applied contextually. The poetic variety resulting from translations is also present in the original texts, so there are no significant stylistic differences. There are simultaneously several acceptable variants of the text that can be considered equivalent to the source language text, despite the obvious differences.

In the twelfth chapter, I compare the translations of the poem *Să ningă peste noi (Let It Snow Over Us)* by three young translators, Imre József Balázs, Péter Demény and Zsolt Karácsonyi, with a particular emphasis on the solutions applied in translating the form of the poem and the rhyme. Zsolt Karácsonyi emphasizes fidelity to content while remaining flexible in terms of the constraints of form. He retains rhymes and word repetitions, but omits phonetic games and internal rhymes, resulting in a translation that is less ornamented but clearly conveys the meaning field of the source text.

Péter Demény pursues stylistic and poetic equivalence. He boldly modifies the original meaning to preserve musicality and playfulness. He closely follows the rhyme scheme of the source text, rendering wordplays, alliterations and internal rhymes. He also emphasizes biblical references and integrates them organically into the tradition of Hungarian poetry.

Imre József Balázs incorporates the mystical and and romanticism in his translations, placing less emphasis on Christian mythological elements. He pays attention to musicality and linguistic creativity, using his own solutions. He is freer stylistically and formally, often changing rhyming verses and expressions in the spirit of the Hungarian poetic tradition.

All three translations are acceptable and can be considered equivalent to the original text, as they preserve the most important conceptual layers and metaphorical connections. The stylistic differences result from the specific strategies of each translator, which emphasize differently the constraints of form and the fidelity of content. Atmosphere and linguistic play, which are predominant in Stănescu's poetry, are best reflected in Demény's translation - he does not create a new poetic language, but rather effectively continues the poetics initiated by Domokos Szilágyi in his translations of *Víziorgona (Water Organ)*. The translations by Karácsonyi and Balázs also connect, though less closely, to this language.

In the conclusion of the paper, I summarize the findings of each sub-chapter, indicating the particularities of each translator's procedures. I also discuss how the question of equivalence should be put in the context of specific text variants and how translation practice relates to the question of translatability. The analysis of poetry translations shows that, regardless of whether form or content fidelity is prioritized, individual translations, which are very different from each other, can be perceived as equally appropriate, depending on the context. Translators who prioritize the reproduction of the conceptual level have to apply numerous creative linguistic solutions, flexibility and complex conversion procedures. It is clear, however, that reception favors Domokos Szilágyi's "rewritings" over the works of other translators, whose methods are more faithful to content but less elaborate in form, so that in the case of poetic translations, the abandonment of fidelity to content is perceived as less problematic than the failure to accurately reproduce form, play and musicality. We also find in Stănescu's poetry numerous original lexical inventions, word-compounds or disintegrations, ungrammatical linguistic procedures, formal consonances and games of homophony and homonymy, which raise the question of translatability. Nevertheless, we find that translators find solutions and translate these linguistic deviations, perceiving connotative and contextual semantic functions and trying to find appropriate equivalents in the target language. Thus, they do not paradigmatically interpret a particular concept in the source language, but interpret the specific linguistic statement in the context of the poem and try to recreate its complex structural network in the target language.

The different ways in which translators approach the question of translatability are remarkable. Some, like Balogh, completely avoid translating texts with intense puns and fixed form, while others, like Zirkuli and Ráduly, rarely venture into translating more complex texts. In the practice of these translators, though to varying degrees, the effort to maintain fidelity of content clearly dominates. In the case of poems that require significant sacrifices in equivalence of form in order to maintain equivalence of content, they generally avoid them.

In contrast, Domokos Szilágyi favors recreation of form and stylistic equivalence over fidelity of content, often abandoning the preservation of literal meaning altogether in favor of wordplay, rhyme, alliteration, and figura etymologica. While Ráduly, Balogh and Zirkuli try to reproduce the meaning of the poems mainly through the prism of conceptual meaning, for Szilágyi Domokos, play and musicality are at least equally important significant layers, which he tries to reproduce in the target language. It is obvious that Szilágyi Domokos's translations have a more pronounced poetic impact and show linguistic creativity more intensely than those of other translators. For this reason, the reception considers them more poetic and more successful, as these text versions create a more complex and original poetic effect in Hungarian than those of the other three translators.

It should be noted, however, that in this case we are discussing translations of poetry, so this assessment reflects expectations about the functioning of the poetic text and preconceptions associated with poetic texts, as can be deduced from the writings of László Bogdán, János Szász and

Vince Fekete. It is clear that free verse, especially short texts, often have multiple versions, indicating that translators are more likely to choose poems that seem more translatable to them. At the same time, it is evident that poetic challenge also plays a role in their choices: thus, they often try to translate poems that present difficulties due to the accumulation of hapaxes and puns. The analyzed translations of Péter Demény, Zsolt Karácsonyi and Imre Balázs József also indicate that they saw a challenge in translating the poem *Să ningă peste noi (Let It Snow Over Us)* into Hungarian, which is why they chose this text.

From all this, it appears that for some translators, translatability is a challenge, and they deliberately experiment with translating texts in which many different poetic concepts and processes appear. Others, however, in their quest for accuracy, turn to source texts that present fewer difficulties in finding equivalents in the target language. It can also be said that the majority of translators perceive the linguistic play in Stănescu's poetry, and it is rare that no attempt is made at all to translate or compensate for a pun or rhetorical device elsewhere in the text.

The examination of Hungarian translations of Nichita Stănescu's poems shows that through the means of the Hungarian language, the poetic practices that characterize the Romanian poet's art of writing can be valid in different ways, which the creativity of each translator demonstrates in numerous examples. The issue of untranslatability deserves further examination - analyzing in detail the translations and volumes of poems by Zsuzsánna Kiss and Sándor Goron, assessing the reception of Stănescu's poetry in the 21st century Additionally, cataloging Hungarian translations published in journals and comparing texts with multiple translation variants would be an important research endeavor, as this could more clearly outline the poetic procedures preferred by different translators. From the perspective of linguistic creativity, the use of word order, articles and verbal particles would merit separate research, in addition to analyzing the more obvious rhetorical procedures, perhaps involving the digital humanities. It is clear that Stănescu's poetry and his Hungarian translations are sufficiently rich and complex to justify further investigation in this field.

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