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**DOCTORAL THESIS**

**ABSTRACT**

***ROMANIAN TRANSLATIONS FROM ARTHUR  
SCHOPENHAUER’S APHORISMS. A DIACHRONIC  
ANALYSIS***

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**The topic** of the present doctoral thesis concentrates around one of the late works of Arthur Schopenhauer, *Aphorisms on the Wisdom of Life* (hereinafter called *Aphorisms*), and its Romanian translation, with the purpose of contrastively and diachronically analysing the various existent versions of the translation and their influence on the development of the target-language (Romanian).

The choice of this specific topic was motivated by two facts: the first of them is that translating has always been one of my constant preoccupations, as both an authorised translator and a reader of universal literature, who, faced with various translated versions of the same literary work, was determined to acknowledge the problems of translations and translators, the fidelity challenges of a translated text toward its original and the difficulties of finding an adequate solution in untranslatable cases which were present in texts I worked with and which were not few. The second reason for choosing the specific topic of the present doctoral thesis resided in the observation that, although other works of Schopenhauer have been reinterpreted by contemporary translators in the recent years, the *Aphorisms* are still being published in the present day in their 1912 version authored by Titu Maiorescu. It is here worth mentioning that even this work of A. Schopenhauer is not his *magnum opus*, it still is the one that gained him access as a renowned thinker into the world of German (and universal) philosophy. In addition, it was through the agency of Titu Maiorescu's translation of these *Aphorisms*, published only two decades after their first appearance within the German cultural world, that the Romanian readers - whose interest in the great German thinker was triggered by the influence he had on the works of Mihai Eminescu, promoted by T. Maiorescu in the same period of time - first had the opportunity of becoming acquainted with the works of this great German philosopher.

In terms of structural differences between the two languages involved in translation and going beyond translators' creativity, the very contrasting of two texts (original and translation) seemed extremely interesting and productive with regard to examining the possibilities that the target-language (Romanian) possess in order to produce a text which adequately corresponds to the one that had been written in a language of a great culture and of many philosophical writings, as well (German). From the perspective of philosophical language, Romanian was at the beginning of its development at the time T. Maiorescu's translated version of the *Aphorisms* was published. Consequently, noticing and analysing the various compensation means the translator had to employ - when no equivalents were available in the target-language to cover the conceptual

semantics of the source-language - becomes relevant for the study of the target-language evolution, especially when the reference is made to such a particular and special language as the philosophical one.

The general objective of the present thesis was, therefore, to examine the various versions of a translation that was completed more than a century ago. The pursue of this general objective involved an analysis that has been carried out among two directions: on one hand, the examination of the relationship between the original text and its Romanian translation and, on the other, the contrastive analysis of the various versions of the Romanian translation, which have been written by the same translator in different moments of his creation. More specifically, the aim of this research was to identify the translation methods and strategies used in several Romanian versions of A. Schopenhauer's *Aphorisms* and to verify their validity and applicability by analysing the translator's solutions of equivalence in untranslatable cases. Furthermore, taking into consideration the present-day stage of development of Romanian language, including its philosophical terminology, several new translation solutions have been proposed in those occasions when the message in the target-text seemed somehow distorted in relation to the original one.

As already known, the research in the field of Translation Studies is very advanced, so that the first chapter of the present doctoral thesis consists of an overview of the most important and interesting approaches in this study area - with regard to the concept of translation and translating studies - and of the main strategies and methods of equivalence as they have been presented by the literature, for which specific examples regarding German and Romanian languages have been given. A grid of analysis necessary for the intended contrastive investigation has thus been established. In addition, various studies on the philosophy of language with direct applicability to the translation phenomenon have been capitalized, especially in regard with philosophical texts, which are extremely difficult to be placed under a specific category of texts (literary vs technical) and, consequently, extremely difficult to standardize, as far as the translating process is concerned.

It is here worth noticing that, even there are numerous research studies on Arthur Schopenhauer, both biographical and philosophical, neither an inventory nor an analysis of Romanian translations from his works have been made so far, that should be capable of determining the evolution of the target-language (Romanian).

**The corpus** consists, for the source-text, of a scholar edition of the German National Library, which according to its editors reproduces the original text that has been approved by the author himself. This text was corroborated with Julius Frauenstädt's edition of complete works of Arthur Schopenhauer (Julius Frauenstädt was Schopenhauer's personal editor and his literary executor). For the target-text, the present research was based on three successive editions of Titu Maiorescu's translations, as well as on several contemporary scholar reissues.

**The types of analysis** which have been used in our research are description and contrastive typology, in accordance with the two directions of analysis established as a general objective. Various versions of the Romanian translation of *Aphorisms* have been compared with the original text, in order to thoroughly analyse the translation methods and strategies that have been used in the process of transposing the German original text into an adequate Romanian one. Specifically, we have examined the similarities and differences between various translation solutions and we have identified and analysed the translation methods and strategies, in order to determine the extent to which the respective translation fulfilled its purpose of transferring into the target-text the meanings and the logical and emotional structures present in the source-text. Moreover, we have contrastively and diachronically examined the translator's interventions in his own text in different moments of his work. Two levels of analysis have been chosen for this contrastive and diachronic investigation: the first one, that of the macro-text, included a pragmatic-linguistic examination of lexical, grammatical, syntactic and stylistic structures from the source-text, in order to determine the way the semantic-stylistic mechanisms function at that specific level and how they have been transferred into the target-text, in accordance with the pragmatic intentions of the original author. The second level of analysis is that of grammatical classes of words and it had the purpose of understanding the way each class corresponds with their Romanian equivalents and of drawing conclusions regarding a possible typology of translation strategies used for each of them.

The present doctoral thesis consists of five chapters. The first two include an examination of the literature on the theoretical and critical apparatus concerning translations in general and philosophical translations in particular, as well as an overview of the most important Romanian translations from German texts, with emphasis on the philosophical ones, that circulated in two historical periods of time which have been defining for the development of Romanian culture and language (those of *Școala Ardelenă* and of *Junimea*). The third chapter concisely presents the most important stylistic features of Arthur Schopenhauer's writings, while the last two chapters

represent the contrastive-diachronic analysis of the various versions of the Romanian translation of the *Aphorisms*. This type of linguistic analysis carried out on the translation of a philosophical text on two levels (pragma-linguistic and the grammatical classes of words) has not only been useful for our research, but it could also guide the future translators of the *Aphorisms*, who intend to adapt the discourse of Titu Maiorescu's Romanian version to our contemporary language, taking into account its obvious evolution, especially with regard to its philosophical terminology.

Some of the conclusions we have been able to draw at the end of our research are, as follows:

1. The version that has been mostly modified in relation to its previous one is A<sub>90</sub>, i.e. the one firstly published in a volume in 1890. The previous version (A<sub>72/76</sub>) is, in fact, the first of a series of five that Titu Maiorescu published during his life, and appeared in the literary magazine *Convorbiri literare* in the period 1872 -1876. The subsequent versions (1891, 1892 and 1912) also include adjustments, but they are minor and very few. One can easily state that A<sub>90</sub> is approximately identical with that of 1912 (A<sub>12</sub>), which is considered to be the final and definitive version and which is still being published today by the Romanian printing houses;
2. In relation to A<sub>72/76</sub>, A<sub>90</sub> is less faithful to the source-text, but more appropriate to its readers expectations. In other words, T. Maiorescu decided to adjust his text by paying more attention to the structure and stylistics of Romanian language, as he admitted himself in his *Preface* of the 1890 volume; thus, a series of phrases that have been translated literally in A<sub>72/76</sub> have been improved and refined in A<sub>90</sub>;
3. As far as translations strategies are concerned, the first version (A<sub>72/76</sub>) prevailingly exhibits the literal equivalence of the source-text, though there are instances in which modalisation is used, along some situations of *undertranslation* or *overtranslation* (cf. P. Newmark, 1995, 39). There are several cases in which these strategies are all used in the same sentence;
4. When the lexical and etymological aspects are taken into account, one can easily notice T. Maiorescu's resistance against the assault of neologisms, especially in his A<sub>90</sub> version. Thus, within the context of the literal translation strategy that he consistently applied in his previous version (A<sub>72/76</sub>), T. Maiorescu made use of a series of neological borrowings of Latin origin. Subsequent versions, beginning with the 1890 one, exhibit

vernacular words, most of them of Turkish or Slavic origin, which were probably considered more familiar to the readers at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Therefore, in his attempt of remaining faithful to the German text, the translator did not hesitate to use words which were not necessarily of Latin origin, but represented equivalents that seemed more adequate to both the source-text and the readers of the respective period of time; there are also situations in which Titu Maiorescu, while trying to avoid neologisms, used loan translations that seem somehow inadequate in the respective contexts;

5. Great translation difficulties were determined by the fact that several German lexical, morphological or syntactic structures have no direct equivalent in Romanian language: compound nouns (by juxtaposition), the verbal mode *Konjunktiv I* or the gerundive construction with attributive function. In many of those cases, Titu Maiorescu creatively succeeded in finding the most adequate translation solutions for his text;
6. Additional translation difficulties resulted from the incipient development stage of Romanian philosophical language at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. As it has been often stated along the present thesis, Titu Maiorescu tried and often succeeded in simultaneously remaining faithful to the source-text and being understood by most of his readers;
7. The reception of the source-text seemed somehow distorted in several places within the target-text, therefore a revision of the translation solutions was considered necessary. In this respect, we proposed our own version of translation (for those specific places) as one of the many alternate possibilities for improving the Romanian version of the *Aphorisms*.

The importance of launching on the Romanian cultural scene of A. Schopenhauer's *Aphorisms* at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century - only two decades after their emergence within German cultural environment - is undeniable.

In the context in which the language used by A. Schopenhauer is sometimes quite difficult even for German scholars, and Romanian language at the time the *Aphorisms* have been translated had not yet reached the level of development to enable it to include high-level philosophical terminology as its German counterpart, Titu Maiorescu proved to be a highly creative translator, whose employment of various translation methods and strategies are worth studying by those who

want to observe and use, at their turn, the compensating possibilities of the Romanian language in translating German philosophical texts.

As already known, a translation is never perfect, but always perfectible. Several studies in the field placed the equivalence in translation under the sign of the target audience and their expectation horizon. One can probably say that a translation is good if it adequately addresses the needs of its target public and of the period of time in which it has been executed. The specific analysis of the various versions of the Romanian translation of A. Schopenhauer's *Aphorisms* proved that Titu Maiorescu's obvious aspiration, as a translator, was to permanently adapt his text to the possibilities of the target-language and to its readers of the time the translation has been made. These facts confirm over again the validity of the respective translation as a cultural enterprise of major importance. That does not exclude the possibility of improving by adapting it to the needs of contemporary audience.

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