



## Research Article

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# Transferring knowledge to/from the market – still building the polysystem? The translation of Australian fiction in Romania

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**Abstract:** The *Polysystem Hypothesis*, bringing together language, literature, culture and society, has hall-marked Translation Studies, while heralding the cultural turn, subsequently attributed to the study of Bassnett and Lefevere. Without a shadow of doubt, this conceptual and methodological framework continues to spark interdisciplinary research interests, allowing for recasts. In this context, the current article sets out to investigate the translation of Australian writers in Romania, from a diachronic and synchronic perspective alike. The main aims are related to featuring quantitative aspects – number of translated authors, number of translated works, etc., and qualitative dimensions – translation policies, the role of translators in the interlinguistic and intercultural transfer of texts, other controlling factors. Furthermore, the affordability, portability and ownership of literary translation underlie shifting patterns of translation knowledge creation and transfer and of translation effective practice.

**Keywords:** literary translation, Australian fiction, polysystem, descriptive studies

## 1 Introduction

More than four decades ago, Even-Zohar (1979) postulated the *Polysystem theory*, which he intended to be referenced or used as a theoretical model for the descriptive study of literature and language within the broader socio-cultural context, going beyond the confines of the literary field. The project was designed to be a long-term collaborative endeavour, being “improved, then shared, advanced, enlarged, and experimented with by a number of scholars in various countries” (Even-Zohar 1990, 1). According to Even-Zohar (1990), the polysystem should be envisaged as undergoing constant change and shifts (it is functionally dynamic), allowing for both inputs (of new elements) and outputs (some elements will inevitably leave the system), for transfers as well as for internal reconfigurations. The polysystem is multilayered and based on a complex network of interdependent, competing phenomena and concurring options, enabling connections and disconnections; furthermore, the polysystem make-up is heterogenous due to the fact that “the idea of structuredness and systemicity needs no longer be identified with homogeneity” (Even-Zohar 1990, 1), i.e. it integrates masterpieces or texts in the canon, complying with the dominant ideology and part of the historical heritage, with non-canonized, previously unnoticed literature (to say the least), and it embeds literary and non-literary systems. The question of the canonization of literary texts or of “the power dynamics of canon formation” (Fishelov 2010) can be addressed within the polysystem theory and explained in terms of consequence of the support a particular text or writer receives from a dominant

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(intellectual) group, publishers and institutions (Torresi 2013, 218). It is within the polysystem that translated literature would not be isolated from original literature, and mass literary production (best sellers) would not be discarded as “non-literature”. On the other hand, “the canon of western literature, and by extension that of world literature, makes constant use of translations, albeit often surreptitiously” (Brems 2020, 53). According to *Index Translationum – World Bibliography of Translation*, the top ten most translated authors are Agatha Christie, Jules Verne, William Shakespeare, Enid Blyton, Barbara Cartland, Danielle Steel, Vladimir Ilič Lenin, Hans Christian Andersen, Stephen King and Jacob Grimm (<https://www.unesco.org/xtrans/bsstatexp.aspx?crit1L=5&nTyp=min&topN=50>). Needless to say, this ranking cannot be explained if we rely solely on the positions they occupy in the world literature, the need for canon expansion, renewal and re-formation being self-evident.

Four major phenomena shape the polysystem: selection, manipulation, amplification and deletion; with reference to literary translation, selection concerns (allegedly well-informed) choices of the works to be translated, and manipulation of the literary fame is to be equated with ideological affiliation or patronage (Hermans 1985, Lefevere 1992). Hermans (1985, 8), focusing on the scope and role of literary translation, complains about the marginal role of Translation Studies, which seems to reflect the prejudice that “translations are not only second-hand, but also generally second-rate,” an idea earlier highlighted by Lefevere (1982, 4) in the programmatic statement that Translation Studies have little relevance for the “theoretical thinking of literature.”

Within the Descriptive Translation Studies “disciplinary matrix” (Hermans 1999, 11; see also Holmes 1988, Bassnett and Lefevere 1990, Toury 1995/2012, 1999, Chesterman 1993, 1997, Schaffner 1999), the genuine interest in the role and place of translation (more particularly in literary translation) is motivated by its being part of cultural history, and by the provision of *norms* governing the production and reception of translations that are integrated in a complex system of texts and target readership expectations. Admittedly, this culture/literature-oriented approach to translation conceptualizes *function* as abstract value of an item in the “network of relations” it establishes within a (poly)system (Toury 1995, 12), and cultural and political/ideological values contribute to ascertaining “the place and role of translation both within a given literature and in the interaction between literatures” (Hermans 1985, 10) and to developing translation practice and research.

The following questions call for an answer, even if not a definitive one: How does translated literature impact a literature (as a whole) or what is its place within that literature? How can literary texts become detached from their home culture? Is translated literature a standalone literary system? Even-Zohar (1990, 46) provides the answer(s) when further promoting the interconnection between translated literature and the literary polysystem – “a most active system within it,” translation upgrading its status from occupying a peripheral position to a (more) central position, depending on the literary polysystem itself. It is also our firm belief that translation has the power to consecrate, deconsecrate and reconsecrate literature, the distinction between the translated literary text and the original being blurred, especially when translations are performed by well-known writers, literary critics, scholars, etc.

## 2 Regulated behaviour or regularities of behaviour?

Toury (1995/2012, 267ff.) enforces two types of *laws* of translational behaviour, i.e., theoretical formulations that state the relations observed between a set of relevant variables. Nevertheless, such laws are probabilistic in nature, predicting that a particular behaviour will occur under specified conditions. The former type refers to *the law of interference*, showing source text orientation, and being likely to result in negative transfers of the source text linguistic features to the target text. The latter designates *the law of growing standardisation*: “in translation, source text *textemes* tend to be converted into target text *repertoremes*” (Toury 1995/2012, 268), i.e., target-text orientation, preference being shown to naturalness and idiomaticity of (vernacular) language use beyond structural considerations.

Toury (1995/2012, 57ff.) also provides *translation norms*, based on the regularities in the translators' behaviour in the process (of *translating*), in the (end) product of such behaviour (*translation*) and in the way translations are received, as detached from their home culture, and attempting to gain a similar position in the host culture. In line with Katan (2020, 135), we believe that “the translator's focus of interest moves from encyclopedic knowledge to culture-specific discourse preferences,” and we include literary knowledge into the all-encompassing encyclopaedic knowledge.

Norms can be said to underpin a sociological perspective, besides the linguistic one, being equated to a “learned social activity” (Brownlie 1999), and acquiring a dynamic value as societies change in time; they represent “general values or ideas shared by a community – as to what would count as right or wrong, adequate or inadequate” (Toury 1995/2012, 63). It should also be noted that norms may vary not only across cultures but also within one and the same cultural matrix, and that competing norms may co-exist: “mainstream norms, previous sets of norms, and the rudiments of new ones” (Toury 1995/2012, 62). The three main categories of norms include *preliminary norms*, *initial norms* and *operational norms*. Preliminary norms are related to the directness of translation, to decision making – whether to translate a given text or not, and determine what global strategy to adopt at the level of the text. Initial norms reflect the translator's orientation to either the source text (*adequacy*) or to the target culture (*acceptability*), whereas operational norms apply to translation in the making, governing translator's choices at the level of translation units (textual segmentation), the distribution and reshaping/rewording of the translated material. Accordingly, translation performance instructions are supplied via this third category of norms and should be identified with restricting or directing choices, showing preference to either the source language or target language text.

The preoccupation with translation norms is not exclusively attributed to Toury (1995/2012) although his conceptual model is the most widely adopted. Nord (1991, 100) uses the term *conventions* to designate regularities of translational behaviour rather than binding rules – the scholar distinguishes between *constitutive translational conventions* (what is expected and accepted as a translation, understood as a form of intercultural transfer) and *regulative translational conventions* (the translator's solutions to translation problems, below the level of the text), the former type determining the latter.

From a more function-oriented perspective, Chesterman (1993, 1997) operates with both *expectancy norms*, raising awareness of the target readers' expectations since expectancy norms eventually determine what counts as a translation for a particular audience design (Vilceanu 2017), and *professional norms*, i.e. the methods and strategies required in the translation process to demonstrate professional and ethical behaviour – we also relate these norms to accountability. Professional norms are said to govern expectancy norms; besides, professional norms are subordinated to *accountability norms* (divided loyalties to the original writer, the commissioner and the target text readership), *communication norms* (the translator acts as a communicator and mediator between the original writer and/or commissioner and the readership) and *relation norms* (the target text and source text should remain interconnected) (Chesterman 1993, 8–9).

Questioning the nature and value of norms, Schaffner (1999) directs attention to the translators' intentionality, power of agency and authority; her keen interest lies in identifying how norms appear in texts (and how they can be recovered from translated texts), how translators become aware of norms and how they can make sure that they observe norms, who are the change agents of translation norms, and if translators have their say in replacing norms. If regularities and patterns are to be identified, they should be located in the performance of “individual translators and within genres, periods and groups of translators” (Hermans 2020, 145) as observing active and effective norms.

### 3 The literary translation market as norm setting

A survey of the literary translation market in Romania has enabled us to spot several translation agencies providing not only literary translation services but also broad guidelines meant to (em)power translators. For instance, AS Traduceri (<https://www.astraduceri.ro/ro/servicii/traduceri-literare.php>), Eurolexic

(<https://www.eurolexic.ro/traduceri-literare/>), Traduceria.ro (<https://traduceria.ro/traduceri-literare/>) and Transl8 (<https://www.transl8.ro/domenii-traduceri/traduceri-literare-din-domeniul-literar/>) strongly advise the literary translator to show the highest degree of faithfulness to the source text, to be author-centred, even if adaptation strategies (which we understand as accommodation work and stylistic approximation) and a certain degree of flexibility are recommended to secure the linguistic transfers across space and time. Under the circumstances, the target text is imposed on the target culture rather than smoothly inserted, and literary translation appears to be doomed to failure, on account of the Romantic conception of the “aesthetic excellence” of the author in the canon, which is impossible to be reproduced exactly.

The interplay of the translator’s creativity (as innovative writing skills) and his/her language mastery are not excluded, although somehow downgraded in significance – as hinted at by Almi Traduceri (<http://almi-traduceri.ro/traduceri.php>). The translator’s creativity deriving from the skilful manipulation of the literary language largely remains within the confines of the source text, while the translator is invested to be the ambassador of the source language culture. Consultia Traduceri Brasov (<http://www.traduceribrasov.ro/servicii/traduceri/traduceri-literare/>) suggests that literary translators should go beyond the mere transfer of information by recreating the atmosphere and local colour of the original text.

AQuality (<https://www.aqualitytranslation.ro/traduceri-beletristica/>), Power Quality Tradox (<https://powerqualitytradox.com/traduceri-carti/traduceri-literare/>) and Viatrad (<https://viatrad.ro/traduceri-literare/>) go further and equate literary translation to *creative translation* to secure engagement with local audiences and a good understanding of the social norms and of the target culture, as well as familiarization with the writer’s work and style. There is no explicit identification of creative translation with content transcreation (i.e., by using innovative wording/renderings while preserving the essence of the original text) as resulting in an equally worthy copy of the source text, resonating with the target readership.

Taking a different stance, Traduceri10.ro (<http://www.traduceri10.ro/>) and TraduceriPro (<https://traduceriopro.com/#!/sectoare-de-activitate/literar>) emphasize the translator’s active role and decision-making skills, which nevertheless should be put to the service of the readers so as to meet their expectations. It is noteworthy that TraduceriPro puts faith in the literary translator’s capacity to build the polysystem – quoting the famous Portuguese novelist José Saramago, who was awarded the Nobel prize for literature in 1998, and whose works have been translated into dozens of languages: “Writers create national literature with their language, but world literature is written by translators.” In a similar vein, AHR Translations (<http://www.ahrtraduceri.ro/traduceri-literare>) points to the etymology of the word *literary*: from the Latin word *litterarius*, deriving from *littera* “letter of the alphabet”; in the plural form, the word signifies “epistle, literature, culture.” Therefore, literary translation is associated with knowledge of literature and with cultural immersion, on a par with the translator’s commitment to a certain type of reading (text interpretation skills).

Translation agencies (as exemplified above) can be rightly assimilated with norm-setting authorities (alongside professional associations, publishing houses, editors, etc.), and the purpose of norm-setting metatexts is to inform practice or to shape appropriate practices, to gear novice translators and professionals alike towards authorship and source text-centred models, or, on the contrary, towards readership and target text-centred frameworks, involving social considerations concerning the translator’s role and the translation environment.

## 4 Twentieth and twenty-first century Australian literature in Romanian translation

Before embarking upon the journey of translated twentieth and twenty-first century Australian literature into Romanian, it is important, in our opinion, to attempt to clarify doubtful points of interest regarding the notion of *Australian literature*. Geographically speaking, Australian literature is located in Australia, and it comprises the body of oral aboriginal narratives and written literary works produced here. However, from

the perspective of the writers, readers and translators, the borders of Australian literature, like all modern and contemporary literature, are open, and it would be unrealistic (and unreasonable) to think of it as a mere home-grown product.

In what follows, we shall present some relevant data with regard to the size and shape of the phenomenon of translating Australian fiction into Romanian. We cover a timeframe of more than 70 years, from the early days of the communist regime in Romania to the present date. We envisage three major dimensions, namely the Australian writers and works that were selected for translation, the translators involved in getting Australian literature to the Romanian readers (as mediating agents) and the publishers as policy makers.

Table 1 presents the “imported” writers and their most referenced works, as well as the Romanian titles of the translated books.

In Table 2, we provide the list of the Romanian translators, in alphabetical order.

Table 3 displays the names of the publishing houses involved in the translation (and promotion) of the Australian literature in Romania.

Figure 1 correlates the number of published (re)translations with the corresponding period of time – we have divided the periods by decades as they also bear particular historical and cultural significance in the Romanian context.

The timeframe and the corresponding number of (re)published translations are broken down into:

Timeframe 7 = 2011–2022: 26 translations, out of which 2 are retranslations.

Timeframe 6 = 2001–2010: 18 translations, out of which 3 are retranslations.

Timeframe 5 = 1991–2000: 19 translations, out of which 4 are retranslations.

During the communist regime:

Timeframe 4 = 1981–1990: 1 translation.

Timeframe 3 = 1971–1980: 3 translations.

Timeframe 2 = 1961–1970: 7 translations.

Timeframe 1 = 1950–1960: 4 translations, out of which 1 is a retranslation.

Furthermore, other variables need to be taken into consideration, which we shall list and discuss in what follows:

- Number of translated books: 63. The data indicate that during the communist regime (lasting for four decades) the translation of Australian fiction was weakly represented on the market, the lowest value being recorded in the last decade of this period (one single translation) and the highest value in the 1960s (seven translated works). After the fall of the communist regime, Australian literature is a more visible presence on the literary translation market, displaying similar values during 1991–2000 and 2001–2010 and showing an increase in the past decade. This might be explained in terms of power and resistance to external politics and domestic policies and ideologies of translation – in Cotter’s words (2008, 841), we have to oppose “the *internationalist* Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej period (1948 to 1965)” to “the nationalist, *maverick* period of better-known Nicolae Ceaușescu” (1965 to 1989). Furthermore, the early communist period, as compared to the late communist period, is “a Golden Age of Romanian translation” in which translation should be regarded “as a metaphor for transformation or translation as a mechanism of political rhetoric” (Cotter 2008, 846), the communist state being “the fundamental patronage source in the Romanian cultural space” (Tamba 2013, 261).

Statistically, during 1950–1960, the number of published translations amounts to 1,688, which, not surprisingly, exceeds the number of original literary works in Romanian – 1,598. It is obvious that during the Stalinization period, we can speak of Russified Romanian language, literature and translation projects, with translations from Russian becoming iconic and having the largest share (about one third – 1,007) in the upsurge of translation production. Other literary texts are translated from French, English and German, these high-culture literature remaining, nevertheless, less represented. It is a time when the discourse of translation theory in Romania promotes a foreignizing strategy (to use Venuti’s (1995) term), as claimed by Vianu (1956, 275): “translation should not only bring great foreign writers closer to us, but it should also bring us closer to their world.”

Table 1: List of translated authors

Writer	Novel (publication year)	Translation (publication year)
James Aldridge (1917–2015)	<i>The Hunter</i> (1950)	<i>Vânătorul</i> (1961)
	<i>Gold and sand</i> (1960)	<i>Aur și nisip</i> (1962)
Ralph De Boissière (1907–2008)	<i>Crown Jewel</i> (1952)	<i>Giuvaerul coroanei</i> (1955)
Geraldine Brooks (1955–)	<i>March</i> (2006)	<i>Domnul March</i> (2013)
	<i>People of the Book</i> (2008)	<i>Oamenii cărții</i> (2009)/ <i>Poporul cărții</i> (2017)
Peter Carey (1943–)	<i>Oscar and Lucinda</i> (1998)	<i>Oscar și Lucinda</i> (2013)
Nick Cave (1957–)	<i>And the Ass Saw the Angel</i> (1989)	<i>Și a văzut asina pe înger</i> (2010)
Dymphna Cusack (1902–1981)	<i>Say no to death</i> (1951)	<i>Spune morții nu!</i> (1965/1994)
	<i>Heatwave in Berlin</i> (1961)	<i>Arșiță la Berlin</i> (1964)
	<i>Black Lightning</i> (1964)	<i>Fulgerul negru</i> (1975)
Joyce Dingwell (1908–1997)	<i>Will you surrender?</i> (1957)	<i>Te vei preda?</i> (1996)
Greg Egan (1961–)	<i>Quarantine</i> (1992)	<i>Carantina</i> (1997/2007)
	<i>Axiomatic</i> (1995)	<i>Axiomatic</i> (1998)
	<i>Distress</i> (1995)	<i>Distres</i> (1997)
	<i>Luminous</i> (1998)	<i>Luminescent</i> (2000)
	<i>Schild's Ladder</i> (2004)	<i>Scara lui Schild</i> (2007)
Colin Falconer (1953–)	<i>Deathwatch</i> (1991)	<i>Ceasul morții</i> (1993)
Richard Flanagan (1961–)	<i>The Sound of One Hand Clapping</i> (1997)	<i>Să bați din palme cu o singură mână</i> (2016)
	<i>Death of a River Guide</i> (2004)	<i>Moartea unei călăuze pe râu</i> (2017)
	<i>The Unknown Terrorist</i> (2006)	<i>Teroristul necunoscut</i> (2009)
	<i>Wanting</i> (2008)	<i>Dorință</i> (2019)
	<i>The Narrow Road to the Deep North</i> (2013)	<i>O cale îngustă spre nordul îndepărtat</i> (2015)
	<i>Gould's Book of Fish</i> (2001)	<i>Cartea cu pești a lui Gould</i> (2011)
	<i>First person</i> (2017)	<i>Persoana întâi</i> (2018)
Miles Franklin (1879–1954)	<i>My Brilliant Career</i> (1901)	<i>Strălucita mea carieră</i> (1991)
Germaine Greer (1939–)	<i>The Female Eunuch</i> (1970)	<i>Femeia eunuc</i> (2007)
Traci Harding (1964–)	<i>Gene of Isis</i> (2005)	<i>Gena lui Isus</i> (2010)
	<i>The Dragon Queens</i> (2007)	<i>Reginele-dragon</i> (2011)
Frank Hardy (1917–1994)	<i>Power Without Glory</i> (1950/1975)	<i>Putere fără glorie</i> (1954/1993)
	<i>Legends from Benson's Valley</i> (1963)	<i>Legende din Valea lui Benson</i> (1965)
Thomas Keneally (1935–)	<i>Schindler's Ark</i> (1982) / <i>Schindler's list</i> (1994)	<i>Lista lui Schindler</i> (1995/2006)
David Malouf (1934–)	<i>Remembering Babylon</i> (1993/1999)	<i>Amintirea Babilonului</i> (2005)
Alan Marshall (1902–1984)	<i>I Can Jump Puddles</i> (1955)	<i>Sar peste băltoace</i> (1963/1992)
Tamara McKinley (1948–)	<i>Matilda's Last Waltz</i> (1999)	<i>Ultimul vals al Matildei</i> (1999)
Colleen McCullough (1937–2015)	<i>The Thorn Birds</i> (1977)	<i>Pasărea spin</i> (1994/1995/1999/2009/2012)
	<i>An Indecent Obsession</i> (1981)	<i>Obsesie indecentă</i> (1994)
	<i>The Ladies of Missalonghi</i> (1987)	<i>Doamnele din Missalonghi</i> (1994)
Liane Moriarty (1966–)	<i>The Last Anniversary</i> (2005)	<i>Ultima aniversare</i> (2014)
	<i>What Alice Forgot</i> (2009)	<i>Am uitat să fim fericiți</i> (2016)
	<i>The Hypnotist's Love Story</i> (2011)	<i>Idila hipnotizatoarei</i> (2021)
	<i>The Husband's Secret</i> (2013)	<i>Secretul soțului</i> (2014)
	<i>Big Little Lies</i> (2014)	<i>Marile minciuni nevinovate</i> (2018)
	<i>Truly Madly Guilty</i> (2016)	<i>Când vina ne desparte</i> (2017)
	<i>Nine Perfect Strangers</i> (2018)	<i>Nouă străini</i> (2020)
Garth Nix (1963–)	<i>Sabriel</i> (1995)	<i>Sabriel</i> (2007)
Katharine Susannah Prichard (1883–1969)	<i>Golden Miles</i> (1948)	<i>Țara aurului</i> (1955 / 1956)
Mathew Reilly (1974–)	<i>Temple</i> (1999)	<i>Stația polară</i> (2010)
	<i>Ice Station</i> (2000)	<i>Zona 7</i> (2012)
	<i>Area 7</i> (2003)	<i>Templu</i> (2011)

(Continued)

Table 1: Continued

Writer	Novel (publication year)	Translation (publication year)
Nevil Shute (1899–1960)	<i>On the Beach</i> (1957)	<i>Ultimul țărniș</i> (1997)
P. L. Travers (1899–1996)	<i>Mary Poppins</i> (1934)	<i>Mary Poppins</i> (2007)
	<i>Mary Poppins comes back</i> (1935)	<i>Mary Poppins se întoarce</i> (1971)
	<i>Mary Poppins Opens the Door</i> (1943)	<i>Mary Poppins deschide ușa</i> (2005)
	<i>Mary Poppins in the Park</i> (1952)	<i>Mary Poppins în parc</i> (2016)
	<i>Mary Poppins in the kitchen</i> (1975)	<i>Mary Poppins în bucătărie</i> (2016)
	<i>Mary Poppins in the Cherry Tree Lane</i> (1982)	<i>Mary Poppins pe aleea cireșilor</i> (2016)
	<i>Mary Poppins and the House Next Door</i> (1988)	<i>Mary Poppins și casa de alături</i> (2016)
Lucy Walker (1907–1987)	<i>The Other Girl</i> (1965)	<i>Cealaltă fată</i> (2002/2003)
Judah Waten (1911–1985)	<i>Shares in murder</i> (1957)	<i>Părtași la crimă</i> (1964)
Morris West (1916–1999)	<i>The Second Victory</i> (1958)	<i>A doua victorie</i> (1975/1993)
Patrick White (1912–1990)	<i>The Tree of Man</i> (1955/1994)	<i>Copacul omului</i> (1981)
	<i>The Eye of the Storm</i> (1973/1988)	<i>Ochiul furtunii</i> (2016/2017)
Tim Winton (1960–)	<i>Breath</i> (2008)	<i>Respirația</i> (2009)

Table 2: List of Romanian translators

Faur Agachi	Marcel Gafton	Gicuța Nistor
Ruxandra Ana	Luminița Gavrilă	Mihai Dan Pavelescu
Sanda Aronescu	Andreea Gheorghioiu	Ioana Patrichi
Larisa Avram	Mihnea Gheorghiu	Margareta Petruț
Oana-Marina Badea	Iulia Gorzo	Mariana Piroteală
Emma Beniuc	Constantin Husti-Răduleț	Alexandra Petrea
Ana Canarache	Adriana Claudia Iacob	Florin Pitea
Ligia Caranfil	Petru Iamandi	Lucian Popa
Valeria Coja	Tereza Macovescu	Corina Popescu
Alexandra Coliban	D. Manu	Cristina Popescu
Mihaela Cosac	Eugen B. Marian	Madeleine Scarlat
Maura Cotfas	Cornelia Marinescu	Florin Slapac
Cristina Damian	Liviu Mateescu	Margareta Sterian
Ioana Maria Diaconu	Leontina Moga	Ion Tamis
E. Farca	Sorana Munteanu	Monica Vlad

Table 3: List of publishing houses

Alcris	Editura de Stat pentru Literatură și Artă	Orizonturi
ALL	Editura Tineretului	Paralela 45
Anymar	Iulia	Polirom
Arena	LEDA	Pygmalion
ART	Lider	RAO
Corint	Litera	Savas Press
Curtea Veche	Litera Internațional	Teora
Editura Ion Creangă	Miron	Trei
Editura pentru Literatură Universală	Nemira	Univers

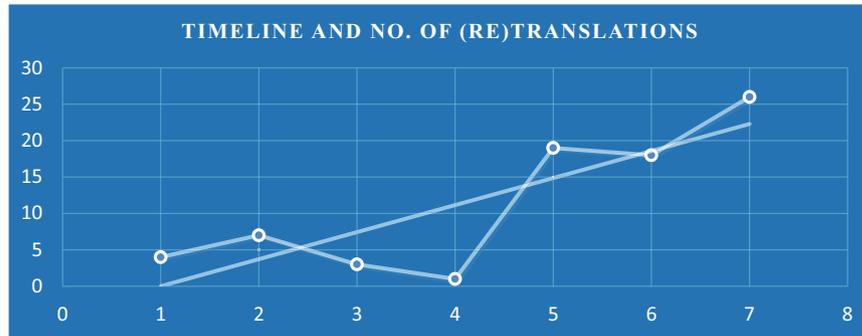


Figure 1: Dynamics of translated twentieth and twenty-first century Australian literature.

The qualitative analysis of our data equally requires investigating the reasons for which the (economic and aesthetic) interest in literature translated from English (in our case, Australian fiction) in the age of globalization, when English is the *lingua franca* and it is here to stay in the foreseeable future, is on the increase. According to the large-scale CSA Research (<https://insights.csa-research.com/reportaction/305013126/Marketing>) on consumer language preferences and behaviour, the majority of the consumers prefer content in their own language (“Can’t Read, Won’t Buy”). It seems that the need to overcome linguistic and cultural barriers for commercial purposes has amplified the demand for translation services – translated literature can be seen as a more or less localized product.

- Number of translated authors: 30. If we calculate the ratio *no. of translated books: no. of authors*, we obtain the value 2.1, but if we closely follow the distribution, the number of translated works/authors ranges from 1 to 7, the highest value (7) being assigned to Richard Flanagan, Liane Moriarty and P.L. Travers, followed by Greg Evan (5), whereas 18 Australian authors (33.33%) count 1 single translated book. Walkowitz (2015, 3–4) has coined the phrase *born-translated literature* to refer to “translation as medium and origin rather than afterthought,” translation no longer being a secondary, incidental or a second-rate activity, but a condition of text production. Taking into consideration the huge sales figures of some of the works produced by Australian writers, as well as the international prizes awarded to them, we can rightly proclaim that at least part of the Australian fiction falls within the category of born-translated literature, aiming to reach wide international audiences. We illustrate this in Table 4.
- Number of translators: 45. On the one hand, the ratio *no. of translated books: no. of translators* = 1.4 is indicative of the increased interest in the practice of literary translation, and, on the other hand, it showcases the heterogeneous nature of the translator’s profile. In other words, with a few notable exceptions when the translators are academics and/or visible presences in the literary world (critics, writers), they are not leading figures, nor is there any supporting evidence about their academic background, vested interests and experience.

Delving into the status and prestige of the literary translator in Romania, it is important to mention that during the communist regime, it was a question of the best (professional) translators responding to the challenge while preserving their ontological invisibility, as well as a matter of the translators’ performance being monitored and assessed by the editors and members of editorial boards (Dimitriu 1999, 2000) – in this respect, we add another dimension to Toury’s *preliminary norms*, i.e. the translator’s status. In the majority of the cases, the translation of the selected novel belonging to Australian fiction is an individual (ad) venture, whereas in three instances, the translation of the novel is based on the collaboration between pairs of translators, namely, E. Farca and D. Manu – *Putere fără glorie* (1954), Marcel Gafton and Valeria Coja – *Părtași la crimă* (1964), Mihai-Dan Pavelescu and Florin Pitea – *Axiomatic* (1998).

- Number of publishing houses: 27 – it is quite a large number in the Romanian context; many publishers across Romania (high and low profile translation houses alike) seem to pay attention to Australian literature, albeit not extensively. Likewise, the very fact that these publishers have literary translation

Table 4: Proofs of translated-born literature

Writer	Prizes, awards and distinctions	Impact (book industry, translation market)
Geraldine Brooks (1955–) ( <a href="http://geraldinebrooks.com/people-of-the-book/">http://geraldinebrooks.com/people-of-the-book/</a> )	The Pulitzer Prize in fiction (2006) for the novel <i>March</i> (published in the same year).	<i>People of the Book</i> (2008) was acknowledged as the New York Times Bestseller.
Peter Carey (1943–)  ( <a href="https://literature.britishcouncil.org/writer/peter-carey">https://literature.britishcouncil.org/writer/peter-carey</a> )	He is among the only five writers in history to have been awarded the Man Booker Prize twice: for <i>Oscar and Lucinda</i> in 1998 (which is also the publication year) and <i>True History of the Kelly Gang</i> in 2001 (1 year after its release).	
Joyce Dingwell (1908–1997)  ( <a href="https://www.fictiondb.com/author/kate-starr~7043.htm">https://www.fictiondb.com/author/kate-starr~7043.htm</a> )	He is a highly productive writer, having authored 80 romance novels.	He published at Mills & Boon between 1931 and 1986, being the first Australian writer to work with this UK-based undisputed market leader in romance fiction.
Colin Falconer (1953–)  ( <a href="https://www.hachette.com.au/colin-falconer/">https://www.hachette.com.au/colin-falconer/</a> )		His novels have been published in 19 countries and translated in 23 languages.
Richard Flanagan (1961–)  ( <a href="https://www.britannica.com/biography/Richard-Flanagan">https://www.britannica.com/biography/Richard-Flanagan</a> , <a href="https://www.austlit.edu.au/austlit/page/A10641">https://www.austlit.edu.au/austlit/page/A10641</a> )	<i>Gould's Book of Fish</i> (2001) was awarded the Commonwealth Writers Prize in 2001 while <i>The Narrow Road to the Deep North</i> (2013) was the winner of the 2014 Man Booker Prize.	Flanagan's novels have been published in no less than 42 countries; see also Birns' (2015) survey of the role that length played in the reception of Australian fiction in the USA and the UK from 1980 to 2014.
Traci Harding (1964–)  ( <a href="https://www.traciharding.com/">https://www.traciharding.com/</a> )		Best-selling Australian science-fiction author: "over 50 reprints, 3 editions and was released as an omnibus in 2014."
Thomas Keneally (1935–)	<i>Schindler's Ark</i> (the US edition was entitled <i>Schindler's List</i> ) was awarded the Booker Prize in 1982 (the same year in which it was published), and the Los Angeles Times Book Award for Fiction 1 year later. Also, in 1983, Thomas Keneally was made an Officer of the Order of Australia. The book was made into the Academy Award and Oscar-winning film: <i>Schindler's List</i> .	The novel inspired "a legacy that includes a foundation to record testimonies of witnesses and survivors of the genocide." ( <a href="https://thebookerprizes.com/the-booker-library/authors/thomas-keneally">https://thebookerprizes.com/the-booker-library/authors/thomas-keneally</a> )
This multi-award-winning author of more than 30 literary works is recognized as one of the best known and prolific Australian novelists (Birch and Hooper 2012 999).		
David Malouf (1934–)  ( <a href="https://www.austlit.edu.au/austlit/page/A11306">https://www.austlit.edu.au/austlit/page/A11306</a> ; <a href="https://literature.britishcouncil.org/writer/david-malouf">https://literature.britishcouncil.org/writer/david-malouf</a> )	He received 18 awards, among which the Booker Prize for fiction in 1994.	
Colleen McCullough (1937–2015) ( <a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/30/books/colleen-mccullough-author-of-the-thorn-birds-dies-at-77.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2015/01/30/books/colleen-mccullough-author-of-the-thorn-birds-dies-at-77.html</a> )	<i>The Thorn Birds</i> (1977) spawned an award-winning TV series.	<i>The Thorn Birds</i> sold 30 million copies worldwide and was translated in 20 languages.
Liane Moriarty (1966–)  ( <a href="https://lianemoriarty.com.au/">https://lianemoriarty.com.au/</a> )		"A global sensation," her books sold 20 million copies and inspired an HBO series.
Garth Nix (1963–)  ( <a href="https://garthnix.com/about/">https://garthnix.com/about/</a> )	He has won multiple Aurealis Awards, the Ditmar Award, the Mythopoeic Award, CBCA Honour Book, etc.	His novels have sold more than 6 million copies worldwide, and have been translated into 42 languages.
Katharine Susannah Prichard (1883–1969)	<i>The Pioneers</i> won The Hodder and Stoughton All Empire Literature Prize for Australasia (1915).	She was the first Australian novelist to gain international recognition. Her works have been translated into 13 languages.

(Continued)

Table 4: Continued

Writer	Prizes, awards and distinctions	Impact (book industry, translation market)
( <a href="https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/prichard-katharine-susannah-8112">https://adb.anu.edu.au/biography/prichard-katharine-susannah-8112</a> , <a href="https://www.curtisbrown.com.au/prichard-ks">https://www.curtisbrown.com.au/prichard-ks</a> )	The author was nominated for the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1951.	
Mathew Reilly (1974–)		His novels have been translated in over 20 languages, the sales figure amounting to over 8 million copies.
( <a href="https://www.panmacmillan.com.au/author/matthew-reilly/">https://www.panmacmillan.com.au/author/matthew-reilly/</a> )		
P. L. Travers (1899–1996)	The internationally famous children's book series <i>Mary Poppins</i> inspired the musical film produced in 1964 that won 5 Academy Awards.	
( <a href="https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/blue-plaques/pl-travers/">https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/blue-plaques/pl-travers/</a> )		
Morris West (1916–1999)	He was a Fellow of the World Academy of Art and Science, and was made an Officer of the Order of Australia in 1997.	His books sold more than 60 million copies and have been translated into 27 languages.
( <a href="https://www.harpercollins.com.au/cr-108939/morris-west/">https://www.harpercollins.com.au/cr-108939/morris-west/</a> )		
Patrick White (1912–1990)	He was awarded the 1973 Nobel Literature Prize “for an epic and psychological narrative art which has introduced a new continent into literature.”	
( <a href="https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/1973/press-release/">https://www.nobelprize.org/prizes/literature/1973/press-release/</a> )		

in their portfolio of services provision reveals that this type of translation (the oldest and, allegedly, the most prestigious) continues holding a share of the market.

- Number of retranslated novels: 10. Actually, two main phenomena are identified:
  1. Re-translations by the same translator (totalling eight titles), including re-translations with the same publisher (five titles) and retranslations with a different publisher (three titles). In the former category, we have *Carantina* – author: Greg Egan, translator – Mihai Dan Pavelescu, Nemira Publishing House; *Lista lui Schindler* – author: Thomas Keneally; translator – Faur Agachi, the first translation was published in 1995, the second in 2003 with Orizonturi Publishing House; *Cealaltă fată* – author: Lucy Walker; translator – Ioana Patrichi, the first translation was launched on the market in 2002, and shortly reprinted in 2003 at Alcris Publishing House; *A doua victorie* – author: Morris West, translator – Ioan Tamis, the first translation was published in 1975, the second in 1993 (almost 20 years later) at Univers Publishing House; *Ochiul furtunii* – author: Patrick White, translator – Oana Marina Badea, the first translation was published in 2016, and immediately reprinted in 2017 at ALL Publishing House. The latter category is made up of *Putere fără glorie* – author: Frank Hardy, translators – E. Farca and D. Manu, Editura de Stat pentru Literatură și Artă and Anymar Publishing House, respectively; *Spune morții nu!* – author: Dymphna Cusack, translator – Eugen B. Marian, Tineretului and Iulia Publishing House, respectively; *Sar peste băltoace* – author: Allan Marshall, translator – Emma Beniuc, Tineretului and Arena Publishing House, respectively.
  2. Re-translations (of two novels) by different translators, with a different publisher: *Oamenii cărții* – author: Geraldine Brooks, translator – Sorana Munteanu, Leda Publishing House, publication year: 2009; the title was modified in the second translation – *Poporul cărții*, translator – Cornelia Marinescu, Polirom Publishing House, publication year: 2017; *Pasărea spin* – author: Colleen McCullough, two translators and three publishing houses are involved – Miron, Lider and Orizonturi; Gicuța Nistor (with Miron publishing house in 1991, 1994 and 1995 and with Orizonturi in 1994 and 2012) and Liviu Mateescu (with Lider publishing house in 1999 and 2009).

More than anything else, the retranslation of Australian literature into Romanian seems to be a temporal phenomenon, “a multiplicative event” (Deane-Cox 2014, 1), evading any discernible rhythm or

periodicity, with different time spans. Admittedly, the dynamics of retranslation is not straightforward, and it underpins not only the relation between the source text and the target text, but also that between the retranslated (target) texts as multiples of one in the complex configuration of patronage, ideology, economics and poetics controlling translation as rewriting (see Lefevere's four-dimensional model, 1998).

As noticed, the re-translations spread from the 1990s to the present date, which, coupled with the fact that the vast majority of the translated Australian fiction in Romania spans over these last three decades, indicates the growing and steady interest in Australian literature as part of world literature. Axiomatically, the study of literature and of translated literature engages a multiplicity of external factors featuring the context in which the book release on the market occurs: the national and international trends, the status and outreach of the publisher (including the profile of the dedicated collection, where applicable), the reputation or visibility of the translator, the target readership profile, the (favourable) reception of the original text in the home culture and the critical acclaim, and the sociology of literary celebrity (notably, Robinson 2019).

## 5 Conclusions

In line with Pym (1989, 693), we believe that “the first problem with translating Australian literature” “is the notable lack of precedents” and the lack of a clear import-oriented policy. Even more importantly, no framework for the reception of Australian literature in Romania has been established so far, the only apparent criterion for the selection of the books to be translated being their global assessment among experts (literary critics, etc.) and on the market as a mass consumption phenomenon (in relation to prolific writers and best sellers, even those not in the canon). Whether we like to admit it or not, the history of translated Australian literature in Romania demonstrates that the market impetus is not driven by translation policies, and that it may have been enhanced by the international (and national) recognition that some Australian writers enjoy, more particularly, the Nobel and Booker prize awards as hierarchies of legitimacy. We are optimistic about the future of (translated) Australian literature in Romania and elsewhere as we believe in its resilience. The arguments would be the following: it is a young literature, which, however, has managed to be chartered on the world map due to both quantity and quality; it did not only import well-established canons but has also created legacies; it continues to grow and to explore controlling alternatives as “a world not dead yet” (Birns 2015).

In terms of the Polysystem theory, our hypothesis has been validated: it is a comprehensive (meta) theoretical and methodological framework allowing for case studies focusing on various aspects of translation practices in their historical, cultural and linguistic settings. Thus, from today's vantage point, the Polysystem is able to describe and explain the evolution of the literary system and of translated literature, while re-asserting the importance of translation practice(s), and lending more credibility to translation, especially when dealing with “peripheral” literature such as the Australian one (in correlation with other English literature) and their translation into minor languages (Romanian, in our case). Taking onboard the challenge, the right question becomes “Why not Romania as a second natural home to Australian literature?.” Richard Lea (2008), pleading for the *New York Times Book Review* publication into Romanian, claims that “Romania is one of those countries where it seems that every literate person has written a novel, a book of essays, or at least a play” (<https://www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2008/feb/05/cometoromaniareaders>), which suggests a huge potential for reading literature and translated literature and for playing an active role in building the polysystem. Unfortunately, the gap between the theory and practice of (literary) translation has not been bridged yet, and further efforts need to be made to fully align theoretical frameworks to real life scenarios and translators' lines of action. To put it in a nutshell, translation knowledge, intersecting and interacting with other field-related knowledge (literary, social, cultural, etc.) across time and space, is required to replace “the current subservient view on translation knowledge by a more autonomous one” (D'hulst and Gambier 2018, 7).

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