

## TRANSLATION AND IMAGE MANIPULATION IN TRAVEL WRITING: A CASE STUDY ON SACHEVERELL SITWELL'S *ROUMANIAN JOURNEY* (1938) AND ITS ROMANIAN TRANSLATION (2011)

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### Abstract

My studies on the images of Romania in English travel writing have led me to the conclusion that, especially in periods of important historical evolutions (such as the current tendency towards globalization and enhanced cultural exchange), people become growingly interested in the way they are regarded by members of countries and cultures that they consider referential (mainly the major Western democracies). This has resulted, paradoxically for some, in the translation of travel books dealing with less known countries into the language of those countries, with the purpose of showing the readers how they had been regarded by foreign authors and, consequently, presented to the initial (foreign) readership. While the authors of source texts may have their own political agenda, translation policies also differ and the strategies vary from domestication to foreignization, a fact which can be problematic in terms of ethics. In some cases, the ethnic images provided in the source text can be slightly manipulated in the target text, so as to meet the readers' expectations, as will be shown in the following case study on Sacheverell Sitwell's *Roumanian Journey* (1938) and its Romanian translation (2011).

**Keywords:** *cultural mediation, image, manipulation, translation, travel*

Schäffner (2003: 85) shows that postmodernist theories demonstrate the asymmetrical cultural exchanges that often interfere in translation. Viewed as a socio-political practice which regulates transformation, this kind of exchange allows translators to actively engage, through strategies such as *foreignization*<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Venuti (1995) also refers to foreignization as resistant translation against the tradition of domestication, a strategy to which he occasionally refers as naturalisation.

or *domestication*, in shaping the representation of *the Other*. Venuti defines foreignization as a method that poses ethnographic pressure on the cultural values of the target language to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad, whereas domestication consists in an ethnographic reduction of those values, bringing the author back home (1993: 210).

Schäffner's perspective on translation as a form of political action contradicts the traditional idea of translator invisibility, making him/her a (more or less) visible interventionist. The following case study aims at illustrating the extent to which the translator's intervention can be regarded as manipulation. Of course, in order to do so, it is important to analyze all the background information that might be relevant, besides the actual texts. First of all, however, I will approach several definitions of manipulation and extract those features that I regard as pertinent to my own analyses. The Cambridge Dictionary defines it as "controlling someone or something to one's own advantage, often unfairly or dishonestly", while the Oxford Dictionary mentions "clever **or** unscrupulous control and influence over a person". The Merriam Webster Dictionary defines manipulation as "change by artful **or** unfair means as to serve one's purpose", while the definition of the Romanian Explanatory Dictionary refers to "influencing, through different means, someone's way of thinking and acting". As we can see, the manner in which change is achieved through manipulation is not necessarily dishonest/unscrupulous (although it might be), and the achievement of change in people's thinking/behaviour prevails. Moreover, communication theory links manipulation to social influencing, an action exerted by a social entity (person, group etc.) aiming at modifying the actions and manifestations of another (Tran & Stanciugelu, 2003: 104). As the two communication theorists argue, social influence is related to power relations and persuasion is its main resource. Its impact strongly depends on context; its initiator must possess a fair degree of competence and information and his/her intentions should be considered as benevolent by the receiver. The influencing relation has to be based on a tacit consensus between the entities involved. Manipulation is, according to the two theorists, a form of social influencing which determines a social actor to think and act in keeping with the initiator's interest using persuasive techniques which distort the truth, often appealing to emotions and false arguments (2003: 105). The Romanian journalism theorist Sorin Preda defines manipulation as a form of influencing meant to change ideas, actions and beliefs in such a way that the subjects of manipulation are not aware of the manipulator's intention (2006: 207). Preda mentions that manipulation can take different forms, such as misinformation, mystification or diversion.

According to Tymoczko (2003: 215), the ideology of a translation is determined only partially by the content of the source text, even though this

content may itself be overtly political. This statement also means that source texts may very well have overtly political features impacting considerably on translation. Sitwell's *Roumanian Journey* represents an example of such texts which provide sensitive political content.

Despite the numerous travel books on Romania that had been published before Sitwell's, the country's image was still rather obscure to the western reader in the period between the Two World Wars. By checking, for instance, a British broadsheet of the time, such as *The Catholic Herald*, one could grasp the general picture of the country:

The general Western Europe (with the exception of France) displays little knowledge of or interest in Rumania. It is frequently regarded as a semi-savage and lawless Balkan state with an unhealthy moral tone. (18.09.1936)

Sir Sacheverell Sitwell's *Roumanian Journey* (1938) came to fill this knowledge gap, and his work became probably the most famous travel book on Romania, being constantly cited by critics, historians and travel writers (e.g. Kaplan 1993; Ogden 2000 etc.) ever since<sup>2</sup>. It became necessary to grant Romania positive exposure among the British, as the newly founded kingdom was developing significant cultural relations with Britain. Mention should thus be made of the foundation of English departments in Romanian universities, as well as of the setting up of the British Council (1934); of the research activity on British – Romanian relations carried out by Nicolae Iorga or of the translations of Romanian literary works into English. Moreover, economic relations were also developing significantly between Britain and Romania, especially in the form of considerable trade of crops and oil. Nevertheless, it would be legitimate to ask, the way Fawcett & Munday do when referring to translation (2009: 137): is all human activity ideologically motivated? When is something 'ideology' rather than just 'culture'? Would Sitwell address his readers' expectations? To what extent would he want to influence his readers?

The book is the result of a personal arrangement between Sacheverell Sitwell and the Callimachi family of boyars. The author himself admits that

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<sup>2</sup> Quoting previous travel books on the same country is by no means unusual, for the purpose of achieving a more solid authority: "many travelers find themselves saying of an experience in a new country that it wasn't what they expected, meaning that it wasn't what a book said it would be. And of course many writers of travel books or guidebooks compose them in order to say that a country *is* like this, or better, that it *is* colorful, expensive, interesting, and so forth. The idea in either case is that people, places, and experiences can always be described by a book, so much so that the book (or text) acquires a greater authority, and use, even than the actuality it describes." (Said 1977: 93).

Romania is one of the least known countries in Europe and assumes that an Englishman's knowledge of the country is limited to Bucharest, Sinaia and the oil wells. The arrangement seems to be an act of Romanian foreign policy, to which it is said that the Government contributed financially, with five hundred pounds (see Goldsworthy, 1998: 194). Sitwell spent four weeks in Romania, a time during which he personally met Queen Marie, an ardent promoter of the Romanian culture.

As Jauss shows, "a literary work, even when it appears to be new, does not present itself as something absolutely new in an informational vacuum, but predisposes its audience to a very specific kind of reception by announcements, overt and covert signals, familiar characteristics, or implicit allusions. It awakens memories of that which was already read, brings the reader to a specific emotional attitude, and with its beginning arouses expectations for the "middle and end," which can then be maintained intact or altered, reoriented, or even fulfilled ironically in the course of the reading according to specific rules of the genre or type of text." (1982: 23). If we refer once more to the same article from *The Catholic Herald*, we notice that, despite the lack of knowledge concerning Romania, the general picture of the country that was projected on the British reader was not a positive one:

This land of Latin and Roman culture surrounded by Slavs on all sides might be expected to set a high standard. But alas! Bribery and corruption are more than usually rife. Minority rights are all too often disregarded. The standard of living is appallingly low. Communications, particularly roads, are very bad. And national finances are chaotic, while the example set by the crown is hardly inspiring. (18.09.1936)

Of course, it is just an article published in a newspaper with a fairly modest circulation to this day, yet we have enough reason to believe in its relevance, on the one hand, as well as in the accuracy of the information presented, on the other. For instance, bribery was also noticed during that period by Benedict (2001: 35), who claimed that it was quite common among most of the Romanian bureaucrats. That state of affairs was confirmed by writers such as Newman (*That Blue Danube*, 1935) and, diachronically, by scholars such as Deletant (2007: 223-227). Therefore, it is not difficult to imagine that the British readers' horizon of expectations when approaching a text that presents Romania and its people would be filled with negative images such as poverty, corruption and (Oriental) laziness.

Holliday, Hyde and Kullman (2011) speak about the 'demonized Other' characteristic of literary texts in the early twentieth century, a feature which was perpetuated by the Western press as an extreme form of 'otherization'. Obviously, Sitwell's book contradicts the expectations that we assume the

British readership would have had. The author tackles almost each of the deficiencies that were mentioned in *The Catholic Herald*, with the exception of everyday corruption - a topic which Sitwell did not even mention in the book. Instead, one of Sitwell's intentions is to engage in intercultural contacts with people belonging to different minorities. Minority rights are dealt with, in the most favourable terms:

[...] the separate existence, side by side, of so many different races – Roumanian, Saxon, Szeckler and Hungarian – gives a fascinating diversity to the population. (1938: 32);

Roumania, by this time, it must be evident, is most tolerant with its minorities. (1938: 93);

If they have performed their military service, paid their taxes, more still, if they have married and had children, there seems no valid reason for interfering with the liberty of their lives. It is, at least, the strongest possible argument that Roumania is the land in which minorities are treated with the most consideration and allowed the fullest freedom (1938: 101).

While considering all the ethnic minorities, Sitwell pays special attention to the Gypsies. Although he rightfully acknowledges their musical talents and their handycraft work, he is extremely critical of those who lived outside the social norms and often committed crimes. However, the author appreciates the way in which Romania deals with this particular minority:

Roumania, then, which may suffer in a sense from their presence has, it could be said, a special obligation to the Tzigane population. (1938: 34);

Roumania may claim, perhaps, to be the country the most favourable to Gypsies (idem).

The rights and integration of Romanian Gypsies became an extremely controversial topic, especially in the media, both inside and outside Romania, starting with the 1990s and up to this day. Sitwell's attitude could well be regarded as an argument in favour of the way this particular book was translated. The other argument consists in the idealized image which Romanians still have about the history of their country in the period between the Two World Wars. Another aspect mentioned refers to the Romanians' living standard. Although the author does not particularly refer to the standard of living of the average Romanian, he does speak of considerable developments in this respect:

Immense progress has been made in every direction. Roumania has never before known such prosperity, and this, it is immediately obvious, is the result of wise rule (1938: 8).

As for the roads,

It is no longer necessary to go by train. The last short stretch of road is nearing completion, or may be finished by the time these lines appear in print, and then there will be uninterrupted road communication between Romania and Western Europe (1938: 5).

Of course, the Crown was not forgotten:

Every Roumanian will tell you that King Carol is their ideal ruler. ‘He is just the King we want’ was said to me by innumerable persons; his son has been educated, according to a system specially devised by his father, with a group of children taken from every class of the community, including the Hungarian minorities (1938: 8).

It is true (and many sources confirm) that, in the 1930s, Romania had reached a standard of living superior to that of the neighboring countries, and that King Carol II was occasionally enjoying a certain popularity among his people. Boia (2012: 47) admits that the years under Carol II’s rule were the best in terms of economic growth and investments, although the period was very short. However, he was a controversial figure (an aspect which is repeatedly highlighted, for instance, by R. G. Waldeck in *Athenae Palace*, 1942) and Sitwell exaggerates in excessively idealizing this king.

All in all, the book is very appreciative of the Romanian people, its traditions and its urban areas, strikingly contradicting the generally negative image that, ironically, the country still had abroad at a time which is conventionally regarded as one of the most prosperous in Romanian history. We should be able to notice that there is a difference in the ‘framing’ of Romania – a corrupt and poor country in *The Catholic Herald* and an enchantingly exotic land in *Roumanian Journey*. The book became famous enough to cross the Atlantic, and it was reviewed (in rather negative terms) in the American *Saturday Review of Literature* (1938: 22). The reviewer considers that the photographs are the major attraction of the book, as the text itself contains too many descriptions of rich people’s houses which could not be regarded as ‘typical’ of the country’s general architecture. What is considered to be really interesting instead are the references to oil wells and Gypsies, a thing which must be related to the Americans’ own business-related and ‘exotic’ interests and expectations.

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These background considerations are important, as they enable us to have an overall view of the translation of *Roumanian Journey* into Romanian. According to Durieux (cited in Dimitriu, 2002: 49), the context of communication, the conditions under which [the translation] is produced, as well as the additional information such as general knowledge and experiences shared between the author and the readers justify translation decisions. Moreover, as Tymocsko mentions, the ideological value of the source text is in turn complemented by the fact that translation is a metastatement, i.e. a statement about the source text that constitutes an interpretation of the source text (2003: 215).

The book was immediately reviewed by Petru Comarnescu (1938)<sup>3</sup>. Even in those years, the reviewer recommended that the books from that period be translated into Romanian “due to their educational value”. However, it was only 73 years later, in 2011, that the translation of this book was published under the title *Călătorie în România [A Journey to Romania]*. The book was released by Humanitas Publishing House, within the *Memoirs – Vintage* series, which mainly promotes Romanian authors. The huge gap between the time when the original was published and the time when its translation was released has several possible explanations. While the outbreak of the Second World War may have had a negative impact on the publication of (translated) travel writings, to the newly instituted communist regime which, in the beginning, made use of the most brutal forms of repression, a book evoking a (relatively recent) prosperous past was utterly unacceptable. On the other hand, after the collapse of Communism, Romania enjoyed massive coverage in the western media, and many times the presented images were/still are strongly negative. Therefore, it is in the post-communist years that Romanians have become more aware of westerners’ opinions. Since both in the 1990s and in the 2000s, Romania faced severe economic crises and social convulsions, while the negative impact of the communist regime is still vivid in the collective mentality, many Romanians have the tendency to evoke the period between the Two World Wars in an idealized manner. However, the Romanian inter-war democracy, which was not deprived of its own serious socio-economic problems, was strongly criticized even by well-reputed personalities of those times. Still, the present-day nostalgia for the inter-war Greater Romania is somehow justifiable: the cultural effervescence of those years, a ‘golden generation’ of world famous intellectuals and an unprecedented economic growth, especially if compared with what

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<sup>3</sup> In *Doi călători englezi, Hall și Sitwell, despre România de azi* (“Two English travellers, Hall and Sitwell, about today’s Romania”, in *Revista Fundațiilor Regale* [Review of Royal Foundations], Anul V, No. 10, 1938, pp.211-218. Hall is the author of *Romanian Furrow*, 1933, A/N.)

followed in the Communist era, are undeniable facts. The Romanians' idea of a 'Golden Era' in the period between the Two World Wars, is explained by Boia as being a mythological amplification, after 1989 (2012: 54). The Romanian historian explains that Romanians have felt the need to anchor themselves in another period than Communism (which they came to repudiate), and there was no better time than the Inter-War years.

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We can now compare the two books with reference to their *patronage* (Lefevere, 1992) as well as with regard to their functional purpose. As Vermeer (cited in Dimitriu, 2002: 55) explains, any human activity, translation included, can be assigned a *skopos*, and the *skopos* of the TT determines the translation strategies. In order to accomplish its *skopos*, the ST must be transferred functionally, taking the expectations of the target audience into account (Reiss & Vermeer, 2013: 92). The main concern of this paper is to highlight the political and ideological purposes of these translations rather than issues of translation acceptability. On the one hand, there is the author in the context of the developing British – Romanian relations, on the other - there are the Romanian *patrons* of Sitwell's journey. It is quite obvious that the author had the intention of presenting an improved general image of Romania, an image that would contradict the rather negative British coverage of the country - the article in the *Catholic Herald* is eloquent in this respect. Therefore, Sitwell's book runs counter to the expectations of his readership, as its author tries to influence the British public in order to make them more sympathetic to Romania. He might also have wanted to compliment a (potential) Romanian readership, which he anticipated and mentioned<sup>4</sup>: "the picturesque elements of the land may be the first things that strike a stranger; but, may I say to Roumanian readers that it is some of these first impressions that endure" (1938: 7).

On the other hand, *Călătorie în România* addresses a generation of Romanian readers who anticipate a strongly positive representation of their country, as long as the book was originally issued in a period that they regard as one of the most prosperous in their history.<sup>5</sup> The positive reception of the translation was not only expected but also encouraged by the Romanian publishing house ("the system of patronage"), a fact which is obvious from the very selection of an attractive cover for the Romanian edition.

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<sup>4</sup> Indeed, as Polezzi (2006: 170) mentions, travel writers are increasingly aware that their narratives may circulate among their subjects

<sup>5</sup> This popular belief is only partially accurate. According to Boia (2012: 46), Romania was among the important nations of Europe in terms of surface and with a GDP higher than Bulgaria and Yugoslavia, but lower than Hungary and Poland and way below the Western average.

As can be seen in Fig. 1 below, the source book cover was framed either around the travel motif (as suggested by the wind rose on the cover of the first edition) or around that of Orthodoxy, a strong symbol for the Romanian culture. Instead, the cover of the translation shows an old, sepia picture, which sets the book within the *Vintage* collection and appeals to the nostalgia of a prosperous past<sup>6</sup>:

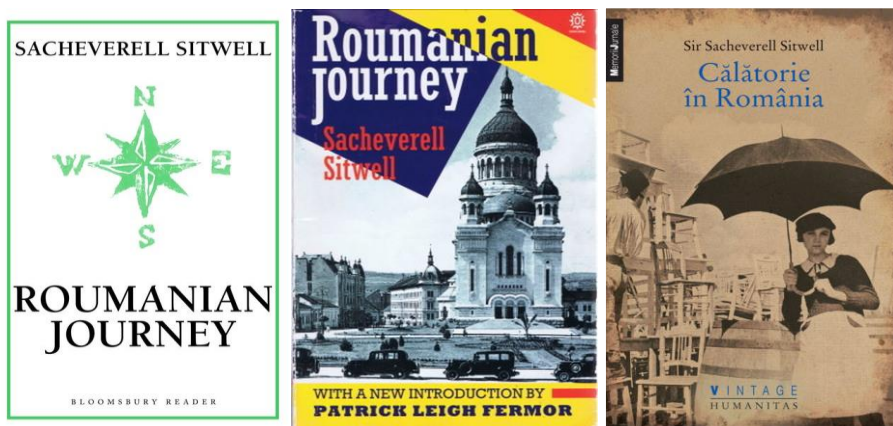


Figure 1. Covers of ‘Romanian Journey’ and its Romanian translation

The book was translated by Maria Berza, a graduate of the Foreign Language Faculty of the University of Bucharest and a member of the Writers’ Union of Romania. Berza’s expertise covers history and literary translations from English, French and Spanish. Among her translated works are *Histoire de la vie privée*; *De l’Europe féodale a la Renaissance* (Philippe Aries, Georges Duby) and *La Historia verdadera de la conquista de la Nueva España* (Bernal Diaz del Castillo). The translator herself, who also wrote the book’s preface, corroborates the above mentioned expectations. In the preface she claims that the author is one of the last cultural witnesses of a flourishing Romania in a period of “sustained modernization, a country with a brilliant intellectual life which had kept unaltered, however, its traditions and patriarchal lifestyle, which were soon to vanish forever” (2011: 7). Moreover, the translated version boosts the readers’ self-confidence, and they develop a feeling of retribution. It was at

<sup>6</sup> Here we may draw a parallel between travel writing and journalism, and associate the book covers with the frontpages of the newspapers, in which, according to Kress and van Leeuwen (cited in Valdeón, 2016: 226), “the photograph presents itself as a naturalistic, unmediated, uncoded representation of reality”, although “photographs are rarely published unmediated and can be subjected to many technological transformations; the frontpage photograph has a clearly persuasive function; it is about establishing a relationship with the reader”.

the time of the translation's publication that the western media frequently associated Romania with systemic corruption, poverty and minority (Gypsy) discrimination, emphasizing the possibility that Romanians carry all these three aspects with them freely within the European Union.

Thus, unlike in the original book, *patronage* (identified, in this case, with the publishing house) provides the readers with what they expect (or *want*) to read. While a possible attempt at re-kindling patriotic feelings among the readers should not be totally ignored, the reason for deciding to publish a translation of *Roumanian Journey* in 2011 is, of course, mainly commercial. Besides the Romanian readers' expectations to encounter a positive image of their country, the fact that this image is provided by a British author stands in sharp contrast to the other contemporary stereotypes projected by the post-1990 British/foreign media. Therefore, the TT is coherent with the target receivers' expectations and performs a different function than the ST. Polezzi (2006: 180) mentions that travel texts may find a large audience among the people they purport to represent (or *their descendants*, italics mine), whether out of curiosity or in an attempt to harness the prestige which can be bestowed by the gaze of a powerful outsider.

Venuti (cited in Schäffner, 2003: 85) argues in favour of foreignisation as a translation method which allows translators to signify difference, and thus allows the reader to discover and appreciate the cultural *other*. However, surprisingly enough, the main tendency in the translation of *Roumanian Journey* is *domestication*. The reader might, consequently, lose sight of the fact that he/she is reading a translation, as the author seems to have a(n almost native-like) familiarity with the Romanian *modus vivendi*.<sup>7</sup>

ST: Women cowed and coiffed, all starting for the fields. Their houses were wooden, and with wooden porches, or lych-gates, standing on the road. (1938: 1)

TT: Țărănci cu basmale pe cap, îndreptându-se spre câmp. Casele erau din lemn, la fel și pridvoarele, cu fața spre uliță. (2011: 23)

While the neutral 'women' was replaced by *țărănci* (peasant women), the two adjectives 'cowed and coiffed' were transposed into the construction *cu basmale pe cap* (with kerchiefs on their heads), whereas *basmale* designs the traditional kerchiefs that women from the Romanian countryside usually wear. Furthermore, two nouns, 'porches or lych-gates' were modulated into *pridvor*, a word which specifically describes the extra-space common to the Romanian countryside house architecture. Even the use of *uliță* (a narrow passage through

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<sup>7</sup> This is indeed suggested by the book's original title, *Roumanian Journey*, which was, however, translated into Romanian as *Călătorie în România* (literally – *A Journey to Romania*).

a village, rarely a town, with houses on each of its sides) for road, instead of some more neutral Romanian words, such as *șosea*, describes the Romanian countryside in the way a Romanian would do.

Let us consider the following (possible) alternative:

TT2: Femei cu capul acoperit cu eșarfe, îndreptându-se spre câmp.  
Casele erau din lemn, având verande sau porți *cu acoperiș, cu fața la șosea*.

This highly literal translation, which has the advantage of showing to the Romanian readers how the author *culturally explicitated* the Romanian countryside to his (British) readers, is achieved through ‘further-foreignization’ (Dimitriu, 2012), a strategy through which culture-bound lexical items which had been explicitated in the foreign travel text, were once again explicitated for the target readership. Had the translator made use of this strategy, it would have led to her *deculturation* (i.e. she would have abandoned her own cultural background), thus obtaining effects of strangeness and defamiliarization, as the readers, who are well-acquainted with their own cultural and geographical environment, suddenly see themselves becoming the out-group.

A similar strategy could have been used in order to translate the following sentence:

ST: Many home-made liqueurs are distilled upon country properties; good cherry brandy, particularly. (1938: 70).

The translator once again adopts strategies of domestication,

TT: Pe proprietățile de la țară se fac și multe băuturi de casă, în special o vișinată excelentă (2011: 134).

The use of the specific word *vișinată* for the culturally explicit *cherry brandy* fails to defamiliarize the Romanian readers with aspects that they know very well. The use, for instance, of *un coniac de vișine* would have had the opposite effect, but then the effect of such a translation would have been strange indeed.

Sitwell’s wrongly transcribed toponyms (e.g. *Cotnar* instead of *Cotnari*) would have deepened the cultural distance between the author and the Romanian readers, had the translator decided to preserve them in translation, which she did not. The only instance of ‘further-foreignization’ is the use of *miles* instead of *kilometres* in the translated text.

Other instances of domestication are those in which the TT makes use of Romanian – specific linguistic clichés:

[Anne Marie Callimachi’s] *love* of her country (1938: 1) / iubirii pe care o *nutrește* pentru țara ei (2011: 23);

By now we were fairly in *the centre* of Roumania (1938: 2) / Acum ne aflam chiar în *inima* României (2011: 23);

The way led through Brasov, *the Saxon Kronstadt* (1938: 24) / Drumul trecea prin Braşov, *pe numele lui german Kronstadt* (2011: 64);

The gypsies number no less than 285,000 (1938: 34) / Țiganii numără nu mai puțin de 285000 *de suflete* (2011: 87) - all italics mine

The TT contains some slight alterations of meaning which enhance the favourable image of Romania which the author had already purposely presented in the ST. The following examples show how social influence is exerted through translation, while the back translations that I have provided should provide an even better picture:

ST: Greater Roumania has a *steadily growing* patriotic sense (1938: 2)  
 TT: România Mare cunoaște o *puternică dezvoltare* a simțului patriotic (2011: 24);

[Back translation]: Greater Romania shows a **strong development** of patriotic sense.

ST: *Many* towers and gateways, with roofs of coloured tiles, and a Protestant church, empty and bare (...), such are the antiquities of Sighisoara (1938: 2)

TT: *Nenumărate* turnuri și porți de intrare, cu acoperișuri cu țigle colorate și o biserică protestantă, goală și austeră (...) așa arată partea veche a orașului Sighișoara. (2011: 24);

[Back translation]: **Innumerable** towers.....

ST: Cernăuți has its qualities. The women are so well dressed. Often, the small children are beautiful (1938: 107)

TT: Cernăuțiul are calitățile și meritele lui. Femeile sunt splendid îmbrăcate. Adeseori, copiii sunt superbi (2011: 194)

[Back translation]: Chernivtsi has its own qualities **and merits**. The women are **splendidly** dressed. Often, the children are **superb**.

According to Jauss (1982: 23), “the new text evokes for the reader the horizon of expectations and rules familiar from earlier texts, which are then varied, corrected, altered, or even just reproduced”. The overall view of the two texts, alongside with the acknowledgement that their skopoi differ, explains the translation procedures (and translation manipulation) previously illustrated.

As Jauss (1982: 25) further points out “the horizon of expectations of a work allows one to determine its artistic character by the kind and the degree of

its influence on a presupposed audience. If one characterizes as aesthetic distance the disparity between the given horizon of expectations and the appearance of a new work, whose reception can result in a ‘change of horizons’ through negation of familiar experiences or through raising newly articulated experiences to the level of consciousness, then this aesthetic distance can be objectified historically along the spectrum of the audience's reactions and criticism's judgment (spontaneous success, rejection or shock, scattered approval, gradual or belated understanding)”. Judging from the aesthetics of the reception perspective, the original book has a more profoundly artistic character than its translation. This is due to the fact that it managed to alter the British readers’ initial horizon of expectations (that of poverty, corruption, Orientalism) and to exert a high degree of influence on its audience, the authors that have been quoting the book ever since standing as vivid proof in this respect.

To conclude, I believe that the Romanian translation only amplified the newly generated horizon, providing the public with what they wanted and expected to read. In order to do so, the translator, while exerting her role of a cultural mediator<sup>8</sup>, replaced unfamiliar elements with domestic alternatives in order to facilitate the readers’ approach to the text. Through the domestic language that the translator used, she also suggested that the author had a higher degree of *enculturation*, of competence in the Romanian culture, than he actually had. At the beginning of the book, the author admitted that his knowledge of Romania was scarce so his visit was necessary in order to cure this deficiency. The translator supports and, occasionally, enhances the author’s positive attitudes towards Romania, which, undoubtedly, has an impact on the Romanian readers’ positive reception of the (translated) book.

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<sup>8</sup> She also adopts the role of a *community agent*, i.e. a supporter of the dominated culture (Katan, 2013), as she provided an improved version of already positive images of Romania

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