Translation Studies

PARERGONALITY, PARATRANSLATION, AND TEXT-AS-HOUSE IMAGERY: SIX ROMANIAN-LANGUAGE EDITIONS OF OSCAR WILDE'S FAIRY-TALES

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Abstract: *This paper focuses on the mediating role paratexts perform in the transmission of a text from one culture to another. Our case in point is a series of (re)translations of Oscar Wilde's fairy tales into Romanian (published between 1911 and 2018), with their respective allographic paratextuality (prefaces, postfaces, translator's foreword, introduction, glossaries, author biographies, dedications etc.). The paratexts are examined with a view to distinguishing between those which allocate authority to the translated text and those which undermine it. Architectural metaphorics will be resorted to, for a better illustration of the relation between text and paratext. If, according to Kant (1987[1781]),* pareregon *is to* ergon *what columns are to buildings, and if, when it comes to books,* parergon *is a (near-) synonym for* paratext*, the text-as-house imagery proposed here is meant to encapsulate the way books assemble their (para)textual contents for the reading public.*

Keywords: *parergon*/ paratext; (para)translation; Oscar Wilde; (sub)liminality; discourse; translator's visibility/ voice.

Preliminary Remarks

The in-depth analysis of Oscar Wilde's fairy tales in Romanian translation, which we undertook a few years ago in an attempt to anatomize the main stages of (Wilde's) retranslation history (see Hăisan, 2022), may have been, in the beginning, concerned with texts mainly, but soon enough, as is often the case, it inevitably led to investigating a sum of extratextual issues as well. The very fact that the Romanian versions of Wilde's tales happen to come in all shapes (vertical rectangular, horizontal rectangular, or square), sizes (very large or very small, with copious illustration and commentary or none at all), is, in itself, an argument in favour of reconsidering this translational continuum from the point of view of what

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Danielle Risterucci-Roudnicky likes to call "peritextual hybridity" (Risterucci-Roudnicky, 2008: 15).

It is, therefore, the peri-/ paratextual side of the translations that we will examine in what follows, drawing on a corpus of six Romanian editions of Wilde's stories published between 1911 and 2018. For symmetry's sake, we selected three versions published before and three published after 1989 (but this is not strictly a matter of "before and after the fall of Communism" – two of the versions being published when Romania was still a kingdom, namely in 1911 and 1937). The contribution essentially discusses the extent to which these translations are acknowledged in peritexts (implicitly touching upon the translators' *visibility*, in Venuti's 1995 terms), as well as the extent to which the peritext may influence the reception or interpretation of the text. A qualitative, descriptive analysis of peritextual material will thus be carried out. Central to the approach is Genette's 1997 theory of paratextuality applied to translated texts – a conjunction which, thanks to a research group at the University of Vigo, bears the name of *paratranslation* (see Yuste Frías, 2012) – but, in actual practice, we will rely on an eclectic translatological model encompassing an assortment of allegedly disparate elements.

While we can no longer speak of an actual shortage of studies on paratexts in translation (see, among others, Watts (2000), Tahir-Gürçaglar (2002), Pellatt (2013), and an entire issue of *Palimpsestes* discussing "préfaces et paratextes traductifs"), this is a matter still (or forever) worth debating, if only for the fact that, as Theo Hermans puts it, "[i]n any given translation there is a latent gesturing towards additional possibilities and alternative renderings" (Hermans, 2007: 61). It is the intrinsic ancillarity of translation that spawns supplemental, collateral annotations or exegesis.

What the present paper aims to do is built upon text-as-house imagery in order to make sense of the allographic paratexts under scrutiny. To this end, *paratext*, *peritext*, and *parergon* will be used (sometimes interchangeably) throughout the paper, although Genette (1997) sees the peritext as a specific kind of paratext, while *parergon* is a complex enough concept to be dismissed as a mere synonym of *paratext*. After all, albeit different, the three terms do share an important semantic core. If, according to Kant (1987[1781]), *parergon* is to *ergon* what columns are to buildings, and if, when it comes to books, *parergon* has come to designate the paratextual elements accompanying a given text, we propose to extend Kant's analogy by applying architectural metaphorics to editorial parerga. Genette himself (1997) likened paratexts to *seuils* [thresholds], and Borges (q. in Genette, 1997: 4) to vestibules, so clearly this kind of imagery encapsulates most vividly the way a physical book organizes and mediates its contents for the reading public.

The importance of analysing paratextual elements should never be underestimated, as they always provide "useful clues about the conditions under which translations were produced and consumed" which, in turn, unveil "the general socio-cultural forces giving shape to translation" (Tahir-Gürçalar, 2002: 58, 59).

After outlining the conceptual framework and the corpus, in the former part of the paper, we will analyse, in the latter, the relation between text and paratext in six Romanian versions of Oscar Wilde's tales (among the few which contain a paratext worth considering, paratranslation-wise). Architectural terms such as *tympanum*, *(crypto)portico* or *stoa* will be resorted to, if purely metaphorically, for a better illustration of the said relation.

Back-translation (from Romanian to English), either written between brackets or as footnotes, is always mine.

From Liminality to *Parergon*. From Paratext to Paratranslation

There are important semantic shifts in the evolution of *liminality*. At first (Lat. *limen*, *liminis*), it designated as concrete a thing as the entrance to a house (and by extension the house itself). When it started to be used figuratively, it also took a temporal sense (namely, the beginning or the ending of a process or activity). Little by little, it came to denote barriers between two fields or spheres: a blockage in the middle stage of a rite of passage (in anthropology), or a threshold for conscious perception (in psychology). With time, "modern language has retained the sense of indeterminacy and in-betweenness rather than the clear-cut notion of separation or demarcation. The liminal is basically unascribable, undescribable, neither here nor there." (Gadoin & Ramel, 2013: 5).

The concept of *parergon*, construed from the prefix *par-* and the root *-ergon* (Greek for "work"), had a similar progression, and is now equally described as "neither here nor there." The literal meaning of the ancient Greek term ("beside, or additional to the work") gradually changed from "supplementary issue" to "embellishment" or mere ornament. In literature and philosophy, *parergon* is often used to refer to secondary works of a given author (see, for instance, Arthur Schopenhauer's 1851 volume entitled *Parerga und Paralipomena* – in layman's terms, "appendices and omissions" – meant as additional readings offered to experts and neophytes alike). In visual arts, *parerga* are secondary elements in artworks.

It was Immanuel Kant, however, who ironically brought *parergon* back into spotlight by mentioning it in a sort of footnote ("elucidation by means of examples") in his *Critique of Judgement* (1987[1781]):

> "Even what we call *ornaments* (parerga), i.e., what does not belong to the whole presentation of the object as an intrinsic constituent, but [is] only an extrinsic addition, does indeed increase our taste's liking, and yet it too does so only by its form, as in the case of picture frames, or drapery on statues, or colonnades around magnificent buildings." (Kant, 1987: 57)

If Kant assimilated *parerga* with those ornaments which appeal primarily to the senses, Derrida, on the other hand, cited them when describing a relation of the essence in his wider theory of deconstruction: namely that between the frame and the framed, the core and the periphery, the inside and the outside. As pointed out by K. Malcolm Richards, "[n]either inside the work nor outside the work, the *parergon* follows a logic of "both/ and/ neither/ nor" that complicates the "either/ or" logic of Western metaphysics that Derrida criticises for its reliance on static structures that crumble because of their rigidity." (Richards, 2008: 32). For Richards himself, *parergon* (whether in texts or in visual culture) is inherently parasitic, as it corrupts the purity of the *ergon*:

> "Corrupting the façade of purity covering the *ergon*, the *parergon* reveals the subjective interests vested in the time-bound structures we more commonly think of as works of art and literature. [...] Labels are one such *parergonal* agent. Outside the work and the frame of the work, they often give a viewer information concerning the work. They help to identify who the artist is, what the title of the work is and what the medium of the work is, as well as often the dimensions, who the work belongs to and when the work was made. While not internal to the work, information gleaned from labels often frame part of our experience of the work. [...] The signature is another *parergon*. Neither inside the work, nor outside the work, the signature offers another phenomenon resistant to the everyday ordering of the world by inside and outside." (Richards, 2008: 36, 37, 42)

While Richards does not refer specifically to books, the implication is readily apparent. He may well discuss labels and signatures, while other authors address titles (see Pirinen, 2013), forewords, epigraphs and prefaces (see Trotter, 2013: 258-259), but ultimately it all comes down to and draws on Genette's groundbreaking work on paratexts. Although the French literary theorist confined his research to literature, it is equally relevant when it comes to other types of text, whether translated or not. Liminality as in-betweenness and leverage of the *parergon*/ paratext over the *ergon*/ text, as implied by Genette, show us there is an important red thread uniting these concepts, to the point of near-synonymy:

"It is an 'undefined zone' between the inside and the outside, a zone without any hard and fast boundary on either the inward side (turned toward the text) or the outward side (turned toward the world's discourse about the text), an edge..." (Genette, 1997: 2)

A zone not only of transition, but also of transaction, the paratext is the place where strategy is put into practice. Having "spatial, temporal, substantial, pragmatic and functional characteristics" (Genette, 1997: 4), it is bound to have a profound influence on the reader. Genette lists four functions of paratext (93): to designate or identify, to describe the work (in terms of content and genre), and to lure the reader into reading more (more than the text says or more texts like the one advertised) – none of the functions being completely innocent, irrespective of whether we deal with authorial or "allographic" (264) paratext. The latter ostensibly allows a greater variety of co-authorship (translators, critics, specialists etc.), but it still cannot escape the publisher's overrule or last word: what remains is for the paratext to negotiate the "otherness" (see Watts, 2000) signalled by the translated status of the text.

Both illocutionary and perlocutionary, the *pararegon*/ paratext is thus a locus of abeyance, of indecision, of expectancy and expectation. Formally, it is supposed, much like the translator, to serve two masters: the source text/ author/ culture (thus ensuring a better reception) and the readers (thus contributing to a more pertinent reading of the source text/ author/ culture). What Genette says about the original assumptive authorial preface, that it should do two things: "to get the book read" and "to get the book read properly" (Genette, 1997: 197), is no less true when it comes to allographic paratexts. Some para-/ peritextual items, however, are more connotative than others. For Valerie Pellatt, for instance, the prefaces and introductions appear to be the least impartial, the least denotative, yet they are also the ones meant to "prime" (Pellatt, 2013: 3) or guide the reader.

Although not all the editions analysed here contain prefaces, there is no doubt they generally stand out as the peritextual element par excellence. Prefaces frame and acknowledge, suggest and explain. For Rodica Dimitriu, there are three specific roles translators' prefaces play: explanatory, normative/ prescriptive, and informative/ descriptive (Dimitriu, 2009: 195). For Marella Feltrin-Morris, there are only two:

"Translators' prefaces are posited here as spaces of individuality, which, much like the interiors of a house, offer countless design possibilities, to the point that translators, unaccustomed to such largesse, are often tempted to reduce the range of options to two basic floor plans: a) a confession booth; b) a bunker. The former

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collects all admissions of guilt and inadequacy with respect to an unmatchable original text. [...] The latter is hardly more appealing, as it implies that an invitation for a translator to speak is equivalent to a need to defend one's choices, and therefore, a need to turn an otherwise attractive setting into a shelter against possible attacks. It becomes obvious that the persuasive attempt on the part of the translator is based on the assumption that the reader is a priori hostile to, or in the very least skeptical about, the translator's methods and possibly even their credentials." (Feltrin-Morris, 2016: 39-40)

Whether it is a site of valorisation (*captatio benevolentiae*) or of its opposite (*excusation propter infirmitatem*) (see Letawe, 2018: 39), the translator's preface or notes will (almost) always be an invaluable source of information and illumination.

The Corpus and the Context

Oscar Wilde's fairy-tales, translated and re-translated ever since 1911, can currently be found in Romania in a variety of forms and shapes: hardcopy, digital copy, online versions, vinyl records, e-books, CDs or audio-books (as far as the channel is concerned), in thematic collections or anthologies, as single-tale books or complete editions, in monolingual or bilingual volumes, and, as stated above, in vertical rectangular, horizontal rectangular, square, very large, medium or pocket-book form.

Given the dual nature of Wilde's tales, which are commonly classified as *children's literature* but actually target a much wider range of public, few of the Romanian editions are transparently aimed at very young readers (except when recommended, on the front cover or the title page, as part of the school bibliography). Most of the editions after 1989 came out for purely commercial reasons, which is why they do not contain any relevant paratext (no prefaces, no footnotes, no illustrations). From this point of view, if we were to anticipate the text-as-house imagery we aim to rely on, they all resemble the rather austere Bauhaus architecture[74], which privileges functionality of design and the "less is more" ethos.

In selecting our corpus, we took into account such classic criteria as representativeness (see Charaudeau, 2009), pertinence, availability, and variety. The six editions under scrutiny belong to two different ages (three being published before, and three after 1989) and to different stages in the evolution of the Romanian language, culture, and mentality. They are the

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[74] *Bauhaus architecture* is the product of an influential German school founded by Walter Gropius (1883-1969) in the early twentieth century, meant to help reconstruction after World War I.

only ones (of a total over 30 Romanian versions) with a relevant *parergon*/ paratext (prefaces, postfaces, translator's notes etc.), analysable in terms of translator visibility. The list contains:

▪ Dimitrie Anghel's 1911 version of *The Fisherman and His Soul*, with a destabilizing postface by C. Stere;

▪ Al. T. Stamatiad's 1937 (indirect) translation of a selection of Wildean tales, with a *parergon*/ paratext which not only encompasses, but practically overwhelms the *ergon*/ text;

▪ Ticu Archip's 1967 edition, with a heavily indoctrinating preface by Vladimir Colin;

▪ Agop Bezerian's 2000 bilingual edition, with a "confession booth" introduction (we rely here on Feltrin-Morris' 2016 label);

▪ Laura Poantă's complete 2015 edition, with an important paratextual side (foreword, translator's notes, a.s.o.);

▪ Magda Teodorescu's 2018 translation, fitted with a composite paratext which clearly aims at an adult reader.

When examining them, we took into account the different linguistic norms as well as the historical context. If up until the end of the Second World War there was a constant preoccupation with diffusing the classics and making books available to the masses, in socialist and then communist Romania (1947-1989), it is common knowledge that classic (translated) books were often subject to censorship.

However, books were not only "purged" but also infused with flamboyant propaganda. In this respect, Ioana Popa (2010) speaks of a "bipolarisation" of concerns, while Brian James Bauer suggests a vacillation between extremes: "Translation under communism was largely shaped by the tension between xenophobia and internationalism. [...] The regime exercised censorship at virtually every stage of the publication process." (Bauer, 2011: 9). On the other hand, after 1990, the Romanian editorial landscape changed dramatically and a lot of new publishing houses appeared, many of which launching children's collections or simply providing affordable editions of the books listed in pupils' bibliographies. Each edition of Oscar Wilde's tales will thus be considered in its respective context.

1911: D. Anghel/ C. Stere

Pescarul şi sufletul său (literal rendering of Wilde's title, *The Fisherman and His Soul*) was published in 1911[75] by Minerva, a publishing house of some repute. The title page reads „Biblioteca Minervei" [Minerva's Library] and provides minute details on the publishing house, including the

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[75] The first Wildean text ever translated into Romanian is, in all probability, *Salomé*, a play originally written in French. The translator's name is Zaharia Bârsan.

address, after the fashion of the time („Institutul de Arte Grafice şi Editură, Bulevardul Academiei 3, Str. Edgar Quinet 4, Bucureşti"). If, according to Gérard Genette, "on the cover the author's name may be printed in varying sizes, depending on the author's reputation" (Genette, 1997: 38), the fact that this edition practically flaunts the translator's name (allowing it to be written in letters of comparable size to those of the author's) shows the fact that Dimitrie Anghel (now seen as a minor Symbolist poet) enjoyed the necessary popularity and credibility to be placed side by side with Wilde. It also shows the ways in which translators were treated at the time: if already famous, their names competed with the authors' (though decidedly not all of them were explicitly mentioned on the cover); if not (yet) famous, they were simply not mentioned anywhere.

This very small pocketbook (10 x 16 cm), with front and back covers so thin that it is hard to call it a paperback, contains just the story the title announces and no illustrations. There is, however, a substantial postface (79-105) signed by C. [Constantin] Stere (Romanian writer, jurist, and politician). In order to draw his readers in, Stere uses courtroom rhetorical strategies, in sharp contrast to the poeticity and delicacy of Anghel's translation. First, he avoids and delays naming Wilde directly, the antonomasia in the title („Petroniu veacului al XIX-lea" [Nineteenth-Century Petronius]) being preserved as such in the former part of the postface (although the postface begins on page 79, it is barely on page 84 that Wilde's name is explicitly mentioned). Secondly, he uses a lot of rhetorical questions, plenty of exclamations and suspension marks (for instance: „Vă aduceţi aminte de *Petroniu* din romanul *Quo vadis* al lui *Sienkiewicz*?" [Do you remember Petronius, from Sienkiewicy's novel, *Quo Vadis*? – original italics emphasis]; „Mustrări de cuget?" [Any remorse?]; „Şi deodată un groaznic crach!..." [And all of a sudden, a terrible crash!]). The meaningful pauses he creates by means of punctuation, as well as the gradual, deductive reasoning, make up an oratory redolent of Caţavencu's from Caragiale's *O scrisoare pierdută*[76] [A Lost Letter].

Once the identity of his nineteenth-century Petronius is revealed, Stere proceeds to seemingly glorify Wilde's achievements, aesthetics and

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[76] I(on) L(uca) Caragiale (1852-1912) was a Romanian playwright, short story writer, theatre manager and journalist who left behind an important cultural legacy. His most famous plays (three comedies – *O noapte furtunoasă* [A Stormy Night], *O scrisoare pierdută* [A Lost Letter], and *Conu' Leonida faţă cu reacţiunea* [Master Leonida Facing the Reaction] – and a tragedy – *Năpasta* [The Misfortune]) are considered a classic, timeless expression of Romanian drama as their bitter criticism of Romanian society is stilll relevant today. Nae Caţavencu, one of the characters of *O scrisoare pierdută* (1884), is a politician who tries to get ahead by blackmailing the city's prefect and his (married) mistress with the publication of a compromising love letter. His demagogic, highly affected political speeches contain one humour-engendering (thus memorable) line after another.

philosophy. To this end, he offers profuse quotations from *De Profundis* and a number of other Wildean essays. After this falsely defensive part, he continues more and more offensively. The demagogic diatribe finally comes to an end when all the previous adulation is overthrown with a disarmingly simple argument (namely, that of divine retribution). The scandalous trial, the abominable accusation of crime "against nature," the chains, the imprisonment, the utter poverty (having to sell his false teeth to survive and borrow clothes) were nothing but comeuppance that Wilde got in the end (says Stere) for his bohemian life, for "his selfish and spiteful theories"[77] and his concept of "cultivated idleness"[78]. A twist at the end of the postface finds Stere half-heartedly recommending Wilde as a great poet and a "victim of life's hardships"[79] who somehow earned some literary recognition (above all, it is suggested, by way of repentance).

As suggested elsewhere (Hăisan, 2022), the two pieces making up the small volume presented here (namely Dimitrie Anghel's translation and Constantin Stere's postface) send mixed messages to the reader: on the one hand, Anghel's earnest rendition of *The Fisherman...* can be considered a (further) reading incentive; on the other, Stere's postface, while certainly informative, is sermonic enough to discourage the reader from ever reading anything written by Wilde. By disparaging the author, Stere forges a specific (unattractive, distorted) image of the source culture.

It should come as no surprise that Stere's text was placed after the translation (like a *granny flat* – a slightly smaller, self-contained apartment built at the back of the main house) and not before. Genette mentions the "curative, or corrective function" of the postface (Genette, 1997: 239) and the fact that it addresses a reader "who is no longer potential but actual" (Genette, 1997: 238); it is precisely this postposition of the text which makes it more relevant and more effective for the reader. Like some kind of Cerberus, Stere prevents the readers from leaving Wilde's text until they have understood the author properly. The informative side of the *parergon*/ paratext, though considerable, is outweighed by the normative/ prescriptive side, which is too ostentatious to be subliminal and is therefore downright liminal.

Philosophically and tonally, the *framed* (Wilde's text in Anghel's translation) and the *frame* (Stere's postface) are like addorsed elements commonly seen in heraldic decorations found on capitals or decorative sculptures: symmetrically placed back to back. The disproportionate amount

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[77] The original text: „teoriile lui egoiste şi duşmănoase".
[78] The original text: „trândăvie elegantă".
[79] The original text: „victimă a vieţii".

of space Stere's postface occupies as compared to the actual text is highly evocative of *saltbox houses*[80], one-storey high at the rear and two at the front.

1937: Al.T. Stamatiad

Pagini din Oscar Wilde (Povestiri feerice şi morale) [Pages from Oscar Wilde. Enchanting and Moral Stories] is a book which was built step by step, with successive revisions and enlargements, by Al.T. Stamatiad[81], until obtaining the so-called "final" version. We thus have a 1919 version (*Poeme în proză* [Poems in Prose], published by H. Steinberg in Bucharest), then a revised edition published by Cultura Românească, in 1927, then the one we analyse here, "reviewed and enlarged for the second time"[82] – which came out with the same publishers in 1937 – and another, in 1946, (*Cântecul din urmă: Poeme în proză; Balada Temniţei din Reading*, Casa Şcoalelor) which, however, falls beyond the scope of our paper, as it leaves Wilde's tales aside to focus on poetry instead.

The volume in question is a tripartite assembly, containing first the poems in prose, then four of Wilde's fairy tales, and ending with a prose version of *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*. Even though Genette (1997) makes a distinction between paratextual elements within the book (peritext) and outside it (epitext), in this particular case, the editor seems to be folding *parergon* back into *ergon*. The book has reviews, recommendations, lists of prizes (which are normally a part of the epitext), astutely sprinkled throughout, making up a blatantly translator-oriented paratext. Here are a few examples:

- the back of the flyleaf and the fourth cover present a list of Stamatiad's previous writings (five volumes of poetry, two of prose, his one-act play, and four other translations, as well as the monthly magazine *Salonul literar* [The Literary Salon] he was directing at the time), but also a forthcoming anthology of Chinese poetry that he was planning;
- the two previous editions of the book are also highlighted at the beginning of the book, as well as at the end of it;
- the last pages of the book invite the reader to consult eight reviews of Stamatiad's works signed by major literary figures (Nicolae Davidescu, Perpessicius, Dragoş Protopopescu, Tudor Vianu etc.), together with some

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[80] "A colonial wooden-framed house with a sloping, pitched roof that originates from New England, USA. [...] This house style was popular in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and acquired its name from the resemblance to the inlaid wooden box in which salt was stored." (Ambrose *et al.*, 2008: 222).

[81] Born Alexandru Teodor Maria Stamatiade (1885-1956), the Romanian Symbolist poet, short-story writer, dramatist, and translator was set on popularizing foreign literature, and he received several awards for attempting it (like the Ion Heliade Rădulescu Award, in 1944).

[82] The original text: „revăzută şi mărită pentru a doua oară".

critical notes by Mihail Sadoveanu on *Peisagii sentimentale* [Sentimental Landscapes], and Stamatiad's 1936 prize-winning book;

▪ almost all the pieces included in this volume are dedicated to some more or less influential personality of the time (the poems in prose, to Nicolae Petrescu, Perpessicius, A. Dominic, and Ioan I. Mărculescu, respectively; the Ballad, to N. Davidescu; as for the fairy-tales, they are dedicated to George A. Petre (a largely unknown name today), Al. Negură (poet and journalist), Șt. Șoimescu (a fellow-poet), and Mihail Sadoveanu, "the maestro," as he is called).

All these elements are obviously meant to powerfully reinforce the translator's authority and shamelessly advertise his other writings when, in point of fact, his translations from Wilde show he only had a scanty knowledge of English, and even if he resorted to a French intermediate version (as shown in the *Note și lămuriri* [Notes and Explanations] section of the 1946 edition), the result only shows his French was not very good either. In short, Stamatiad's paratext is a far too overwrought presentation for such a modest achievement as his translations from Wilde.

Stamatiad seems very much at ease with "the cynical charge of self-promotion" (Venuti, 2003: 257), being, in Paloposki's (2015) words, an efficient, *avant-la-lettre* "extratextual agent". There are therefore at least three facts which point to the similarity between Stamatiad's book and a *terraced house*:

▪ he dedicated the translated texts to influential people of the time, in carefully wrought out cameos which separate the parts (terraced houses are rows of adjoining buildings, with each building having a wall built at every line of juncture);

▪ he repeatedly enlarged and revised the volume (terraced houses are often built that way, gradually, out of necessity);

▪ he paid equal attention to the front and the back cover (terraced buildings usually have a front façade and a rear façade).

What is more, Stamatiad's "front façade" (as it were) has an impactful "cornice": the fact that the front cover spotlights the translator's name, which is placed before the author's, on top of the page (as if it were a privilege for Wilde to have been translated by such a luminary as Stamatiad pretended to be) reminds one of the *tympanum* (from Greek and Latin words meaning "drum"), the semi-circular or triangular decorative wall surface placed over an entrance, often containing pedimental sculpture, imagery or (plasterwork) ornamentation. Beating the drum for the translator was probably necessary, to make up for the quality of the translation, yet this is a good example of excessive (undeserved) visibility on the part of the translator.

1967: Ticu Archip/ Vladimir Colin

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The second edition of Ticu Archip's *Prinţul fericit şi alte poveşti* [The Happy Prince and Other Stories], was published in 1967 (Editura Tineretului, Bucharest), with black-and-white illustrations by Angi Petrescu-Tipărescu. The Happy Prince's unhappy, haunting face covers the entire first cover (B5 format). A first version had come out in 1960, with no preface and no illustrations.

The 1967 preface (5-8) signed by Vladimir Colin (1921-1991), a well-known children's author as well as science fiction and fantasy writer, begins very cheerfully, as it (initially) addresses children: "I am glad, dear children, that you will read Oscar Wilde's famous tales."[83] Soon after, the tone changes, as Colin reveals that neither the Happy Prince, nor Wilde, was ever happy, and we realize he suddenly stopped addressing children.

The preface relies on bio-bibliographical data: we are given Oscar Wilde's full name (Oscar Fingel [sic!] O'Flahertie Wills Wilde) and a few details of his life (such as being framed by enemies and ending in prison for two years). After enumerating a few other works by Wilde (*A Woman of No Importance*, *An Ideal Husband*, *The Portrait of Dorian Gray*, *A House of Pomegranates*, and *The Soul of Man under Socialism* – in this particular order), Colin proceeds to glorify socialist values, while vituperating Wilde's characters (even the Happy Prince, for his behaviour which mirrors the author's misconception that philanthropy can make the world a better place). The awfully propagandistic final conclusion comes as a mild shock:

> "The great merit of Oscar Wilde's tales is that they make us better realize the happiness of living in a world that is free from millers, chamberlains, councillors of the kind that decide the melting of the statue of the Happy Prince, in other words the happiness of living in socialism." (Colin, in Wilde, 1967: 7)[84]

Colin's preface perfectly illustrates the subtle yet tremendous role paratext plays: "a fringe of the printed text which in reality controls one's whole reading of the text." (Lejeune, 1975: 45) It is like a *parergon*/ frame employed to "frame" readers (either into "socialist values" or into growing tired of them). On the one hand, perhaps the only way to have Wilde's subversive texts printed in Romania in the 1960s was by patching them up with equally subversive paratexts. On the other hand, this edition appeared at a time (1955-1970) described in terms of "ouverture contrôlée" [controlled opening] (Popa, 2010), and „multilateralitate şi echilibru" [multilaterality and

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[83] The original text: „Mă bucur, copii, că veţi citi vestitele poveşti ale lui Oscar Wilde".
[84] The original text: „Marele merit al poveştilor lui Oscar Wilde e acela de a ne face să preţuim fericirea de a trăi în lumea scăpată de morari, de şambelani, de consilieri de teapa celor ce hotărăsc să topească statuia Prinţului Fericit, fericirea de a trăi în socialism.".

balance] (Pruteanu, 1984 – referring to 1965-1984); instead, the ideological gap between text and paratext makes us believe otherwise.

Though blatantly dogmatic and clearly normative, Colin's (para)text is probably too far-fetched to be entirely believable. Not everything is as straightforward as it seems, half-hidden meanings lurk around every corner and paragraph. Like a *cryptoportico*, a semi-subterranean gallery which characterized the ancient Roman palazzo, designed to provide shade or used for storage of perishables, this preface might have been written to shelter Wilde's tales from the blade of censorship.

2000: Agop Bezerian

After 1989, and probably even more so after 2000, the translators' involvement in the paratextual side of their translations (along with their visibility) has significantly progressed. The bilingual volume *The Happy Prince and Other Tales/ Prinţul fericit şi alte povestiri* was published by Vestala in Bucharest in 2000, with illustrations by Liliana Jigău, a painter and freelance illustrator from Chişinău [Kishinev] (Moldova). This edition coordinated by Agop Bezerian contains all five stories in *The Happy Prince and Other Tales* (*Prinţul cel Fericit/ The Happy Prince*, *Privighetoarea şi Trandafirul/ The Nightingale and the Rose*, *Uriaşul cel Egoist/ The Selfish Giant*, *Prietenul cel Credincios/ The Devoted Friend*, and *Nemaipomenita Rachetă/ The Remarkable Rocket*). The sizeable paratext is made up of an Introduction, a text on Oscar Wilde, a bio-bibliographical sketch of Oscar Wilde and a "Vocabulary" list, with each tale being followed by a section of *Expresii şi sintagme* [Expressions and Syntagms]. On the fourth cover of the book, a few lines are meant to persuade the reader of the difficulty of Wilde's text, presented as a touchstone for any translator, but at the same time one of the best ways one could improve one's English.

In the line of the "confession booth" preface Feltrin-Morris (2016) speaks about, the introduction insists upon the "extreme" degree of difficulty Wilde poses in translation. The translator/ editor then proceeds to justify his option for a bilingual edition, meant as a working instrument for pupils and as a guide for literary translators. The text on Oscar Wilde details upon the author's origins (his father's medical profession, the 1864 accusation of indecent assault, and his mother's literary career), his colourful outfits, the over 80 conferences in USA and Canada, his marriage to Constance Lloyd, his job as a reviewer at the *Pall Mall Gazette*, his plays, his relationship with lord Alfred Douglas, his arrest and conviction, his exile in France (under the name Sebastian Melmoth), *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*, *De Profundis*, his death and burial in Père Lachaise, and his legacy to posterity (charm, humour, sensitivity, erudition, irony, and style). Bezerian also raises the issue

of the target public of Wilde's tales, underlining that they should be taken as cautionary stories for grown-ups rather than as children's tales.

Unfortunately, the paratextual apparatus is not entirely useful (didactically speaking), nor is it fully practical: the section of *Expresii şi sintagme* [Expressions and Syntagms] is not necessarily a relevant selection of phrases (for instance, "the King's son was going to be married," or "but it is no matter now," or "then, he put on his hat," etc., phrases that are not illustrative of Wilde's style and could very easily be found in any dictionary).

The highly informative, all-pervasive paratext, designed specifically for didactic (and mercantile) purposes, resembles a *stoa* – "a long open building, its roof supported by one or more rows of columns parallel to the rear wall [...] which surrounded marketplaces and formed places of business and public promenade" (*Chisholm, 1911, n.p.). Stoae were the places where* Stoics gathered, taught and discussed their philosophy (Bezerian's edition, too, offers quite a lot to incite reflection on translation philosophy).

2015: Laura Poantă

Laura Poantă's 2015 version contains all nine of Wilde's tales gathered under the title of the first tale (*Prinţul fericit* [The Happy Prince]), but separately, some of the stories had been printed before (in 2003 and 2004, in bilingual editions). The large-format book (20 x 26 cm) with a glossy cover, in a cold shade of green, was issued by Paralela 45 (Piteşti). The colophon provides information regarding the book, including the originals which were used for the translation and the illustrations: drawings by Charles Robinson (1870-1937) and Jessie M. King (1875-1949) – something of a novelty, as none of the previous versions included such information.

There is also a two-page "Translator's Note" which first presents the author of the tales as a major Irish playwright whose intelligence, nonconformism, irony, humour, and permanent search for beauty are as obvious in his children's tales as in anything else he ever wrote. The foreword also draws attention to the double addressee of the nine tales originally making up two separate volumes, and to their fable quality. In the latter part of the text, the translator complains upon the difficulties she encountered in transposing Wilde's text into Romanian. The main challenges she mentions are Wilde's lush descriptions, the affected turns of phrase, the abundance of names of jewels, precious stones, furniture or fashion items, and other various linguistic traps. The translator justifies her choices (avoiding neologisms and using instead old-fashioned words, without being overly archaic) and expresses her concern about having somehow betrayed the original text as well as her hope that readers of all ages will enjoy reading her version of Wilde's tales. Again, the translator's paratext functions as a "confession booth" but equally as a "bunker".

While we can speak of a slightly ingratiating trait of the "Translator's Note", we also need to be aware of the fact that historically, as stated by Theo Hermans, "[p]refaces and dedications tend to a posture of self-deprecation and to understating the translator's personal sense of achievement" (Hermans, 1993: 96). An essentially *explanatory* (in Rodica Dimitriu's terms) preface, Laura Poantă's text functions like a bonafide *portico* (a colonnaded porch or roofed entrance to an ancient Greek temple) to her splendid translation of Wilde's fairy-tales.

2018: Magda Teodorescu

Included in the collection „Clasicii Literaturii Universale" [World Literature Classics], Magda Teodorescu's translation is accompanied by a preface, a "chronological table" and footnotes, all of which being the translator's allographic contributions.

The preface, entitled so as to paraphrase one of Wilde's most successful plays (in Romania, at least), namely „Importanţa de a fi copil" [The Importance of Being a Child], is a 16-page long text which begins with a rhetorical question on the virtual (im)possibility that a dandy such as Wilde, who advocated artificiality above anything else, should have ever written fairy tales. It then indicates his main incentives and sources of inspiration: William Morris' The Story of Sigurd the Volsung and the Fall of the Niblungs, the Celtic legends gathered by Wilde's father, the Grimms' fairy tales, Andersen, Greek and Norse mythology, the Bible etc.

The translator/ editor also presents the context in which The Happy Prince and Other Tales was created and published, with Wilde begging for his old mentor John Ruskin's approval. An extract from a letter Wilde sent to Amélie Rives Chanler shows that Wilde meant his stories to be read by children and (childlike) men alike, from 18 to 80 years old. Teodorescu then offers a wide range of clues on how to interpret the tales, some of which in relation to the author's biography.

By far, the most academic of all prefaces ever written to Wilde's tales in Romanian translation, this paratext analyses each tale with competence and charm. Vulgar factuality (*The Happy Prince*), reverse utopia (*The Selfish Giant*), and Victorian manners (*The Devoted Friend*) are but a few concepts she juggles with, in trying to guide a mature, cultured target public. Various interesting details taken from *De Profundis şi alte scrisori* [De Profundis and Other Letters], which Teodorescu translated in 2003, are put to good account in this preface. The genesis of *A House of Pomegranates* is also discussed, along with the symbolism of the pomegranate, which serves as a unifying metaphor tying up all the stories in the volume.

A thorough and well-documented study of Wilde's works, the preface also contains some explanations for this or that translational choice (for

example, the fact that she chose *Copilul-din-Stea* [The Child from a Star] to render *The Star-Child*, rather than the well-established *Copilul Stelelor* [The Stars' Child]) – which means it equally functions as a demarcation zone. The translator uses her persuasive skills to engage in the battle of defending whatever path she took in order to break away with traditional solutions.

Oscar Wilde's life and works are discussed in another text, which presents significant events in the author's biography (the year of birth, his studies, his first poems, his USA conferences, his marriage to Constance Lloyd, the birth of his sons, his activity at the *Pall Mall Gazette*, the publication of the tales and of his only novel, his imprisonment, self-exile and ultimately death).

Magda Teodorescu's paratext could be likened to a foyer (an intermediate area between the exterior and interior of a theatre or an opera house). Three types of foyers were apparently to be found in older French opera houses: one for the public, another for the ballet, and yet another for the singers. The foyers (see the Latin etymology: *focus* – "fire, domestic hearth") *were the only rooms where people gathered to warm up between the acts.* The great amount of information gathered and synthesized by Teodorescu is also bound to warm the reader up.

Concluding Remarks

Table 1 below presents synoptically the functions fulfilled by the paratexts of the six editions of Wilde's tales we analysed.

Year	Translator	Functions of the Paratext/ Original Preface (as suggested[85] by G. Genette, 1997)	Functions of Translators' Prefaces (as pointed out by R. Dimitriu, 2009)	Architectural Metaphor	Bolstering [+]/ Undermining [-] Translation Authority
1911	Dimitrie Anghel	indicative/ denotative + persuasive	normative/ prescriptive	granny flat, saltbox house, addorsed elements	[-]
1937	Al.T. Stamatiad	persuasive	normative/ prescriptive	terraced building (front façade, rear	[+]

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[85] While these terms may not have been used as such in the English translation of Genette's *Seuils* (1997), we use them so as to mirror Rodica Dimitriu's 2009 terms. We thus employ *indicative/ denotative* for the function which deals with designating and identifying, *descriptive* (for describing the work, content, and genre), and *persuasive* (for luring the reader into reading more).

				façade), tympanum	
1967	Ticu Archip	descriptive/ connotative + persuasive	normative + informative	cryptoportico	[-]
2000	Agop Bezerian	indicative/ denotative + descriptive/ connotative + persuasive	explanatory + informative	stoa	[+]/ [-]
2015	Laura Poantă	indicative/ denotative + persuasive	explanatory	portico	[+]/ [-]
2018	Magda Teodorescu	indicative denotative + descriptive/ connotative	informative	foyer	[+]

Table 1. The Paratext of Oscar Wilde's Tales in Romanian: Functions and Metaphors

As can be seen, the function of the *parergon*/ paratext relating to the translation of Wilde's fairy tales got more and more complex as the years went by. The *parergon* of the earlier books under discussion seems to engulf the text; separate peritextual pieces, are sometimes artificially glued to the main text/ building, as in the case of the granny flat or saltbox house (see the 1911 edition of Wilde's tales), often undermining the stability of the whole. By contrast, the more recent versions display their paratextual sides in a complementary (not strictly decorative) sense (see the 2015 and 2018 editions, and the analogy with the functional, aesthetic, yet optional portico and foyer, respectively).

The translators' visibility also changed from strictly textual (1911, 1967) to paratextual (2000, 2015, 2018) and sometimes also extratextual agency (1937, and 2000, in part). If during the first decades of the twentieth century, the writers-translators used their symbolic capital to persuade readers, nowadays, even if translation continues to be a side activity, translators have taken important steps towards professionalisation.

In the 1911 and 1967 editions analysed here, the *parergon*/ paratext vigorously undermined the authority of the translated text (implicitly, too, the authority of the translator as an agent who facilitates the reception of a text into a given target culture).

The 1937 edition is paradoxical, in that it decorously (if overstated) puts a spotlight on the figure of the translator (namely, Al.T. Stamatiad), but

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in doing so, it actually helps validate a text which is nothing short of worthless. It is not the fact that Stamatiad's text was translated via French which counts (after all, direct and indirect translations of one and the same text were still in competition on the Romanian book market up until the 1940s); it has to do with the quality of Stamatiad's translation as a (literary) text in itself. As a matter of fact, in a review of Stamatiad's 1937 translation, literary critic Romulus Demetrescu found many of Stamatiad's translatorial choices "intolerable," "too stylized," and "inexact" (Demetrescu, 1938: 141, translation mine).

The 2000 Romanian version of Wilde's tales pays homage (be it somehow clumsily) to the difficult task fulfilled by a translator/ editor, whereas the 2015 and 2018 editions testify to the tremendous evolution over the years of the translator's status and agency from subservience to assertiveness.

There is also a clear progression of the *parergon*/ paratext from prescriptiveness and indoctrination to informativeness, and, as the analogy with architecture was meant to illustrate, there is balance in the relation between text and paratext in the more recent versions, unlike in the older ones. Far from being purely ornamental or downright (ideologically) destructive, their *parergon*/ paratext is a true keystone, locking all the textual "stones" into position.

If, before 1989, allographic prefaces only rarely referred to translations or translators, after the 1990s, translators started to take charge of prefaces, to grab hold of the paratext. They are no longer translators only, but often editors as well. And although, in doing so, they contribute to demystifying the "illusion of transparency" (Venuti, 1995), and to further destabilizing liminal spaces, it was high time they made their voices heard after a rather long period of silence.

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