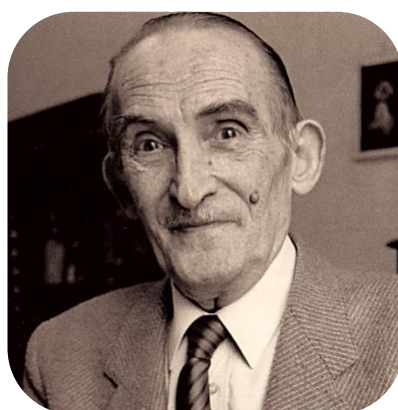


Leon Levițchi – Archive. 15

Emisiuni Radio

Ediție facsimil în 4 volume
Volumul 1

Editat de
C. George Sandulescu
și
Lidia Vianu



Speaker. Our guest to-night is Prof. Dr. Leon Levitchi, head of the department of English literature at the Faculty of Germanic languages and literatures University of Bucharest. He has recently finished his Course in Mediaeval and Renaissance English Literature -

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Emisiuni Radio

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Editat de C. George Sandulescu și Lidia Vianu

Anul acesta se împlinesc 100 de ani bătuti pe muchie de la nașterea Profesorului de limbă și literatură engleză Leon D. Levițchi. ESTE CENTENARUL LEVIȚCHI.

*

Nu există gramatic mai însemnat decât Leon Levițchi pentru profesorul de limba engleză din România. A scris gramatici din care toți urmașii lui au învățat structura limbii engleze, și cum poate ea fi predată vorbitorului de limba română. A făcut cele mai bune dicționare dintre câte avem. A tradus integral William Shakespeare. A predat lexicologie. A scris „Învățați limba engleză fără profesor”. A scris istoria literaturii engleze și americane.

Leon Levițchi [Radio România, 1973]

“Well – you see – quite, quite accidentally, I belong to an older generation; and quite, quite accidentally, for twenty years on end I taught English grammar to our students; and I taught them in the spirit of Charles Bally and Harold Palmer, not in that of Chomsky.... I do not in the least believe in the idea that the history of linguistics should be divided into two: the pre- and the post-Chomsky period. I should rather say: I believe in things that can be demonstrated and I do not believe in things that cannot be demonstrated. If – if! – the new achievements of linguistics can prove that we have been in the wrong, and the new achievements are in the right, all the better – we shall surrender to them: but, if they cannot justify themselves, all the worse – we

shall not surrender, and we shall go on saying that it is much much better to speak of subject and predicate than of subject and predicate group (SG, or PG)."

Leon Levițchi [Radio România, 1972]

L.L: "...an Austrian professor invited me to join an international society of lexicographers."

Announcer: "Does that imply practical or theoretical activity?"

L.L: I don't know yet; I only hope it will be applied linguistics – a discipline which I personally like very much. Of course, I like theory as well, but only if it is based on applied linguistics."

C. George Sandulescu

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Lidia Vianu
Director

C. George Săndulescu
Executive Advisor



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40 languages
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Limba engl za

A COURSE IN MEDIAEVAL AND RENAISSANCE ENGLISH LITERATURE

Speaker. Our guest to-night is Prof.Dr.Leon Levitchi,head of the department of English literature at the Faculty of Germanic languages and literatures University of Bucharest.Hé has recently finished his Course in Mediaeval and Renaissance English Literature -

Lev. I'm sorry to interrupt you,but "finished " isn't the proper word,or, rather,it can only be applied to the first two volumes of a three-volume work.I am still working at the third part,which will cover the period from Shakespeare to Milton.

Speaker. Which means that what is actually "ready" is the history of English literature from the first Anglo-Saxon poems up to Shakespeare - Shakespeare included.

Lev. That's right : the period of Anglo-Saxon literature,Middle English literature (the Anglo-Norman period,the Age of Chaucer,the 15th century), then Early Modern English literature and Elizabethan literature.All these chapters are in print now and will probably come out in a fortnight.

Speaker. Is this a special course ~~that~~ of lectures that you are delivering at the Faculty?

Lev. No,it isn't a special course - it's my ordinary course which,for a couple of years I have been delivering to the first-year students.There's nothing "special" about it,excepting its size (the 2 volumes have about 700 pages),~~and~~ the more or less consistent linguistic approach to the various literary problems,and,of course,quite a few original interpretations and suggestions.Original,that is at least in ~~th~~ so far as I have not found them anywhere else,in the rather sizeable bibliography which, you can easily imagine,I had to go through.

Speaker. This linguistic approach -

Lev. - or method,or starting-point,or whatever else it may be,what a simple and how much,to my mind,it is neglected and well-known thing it is!

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in the general histories of this or that literature! I may be wrong, but my deep-rooted conviction is that the proper study of literary history must lay much store by language, by the particular way in which an author expresses his ideas, feelings, attitudes, and so on - of course, with no disregard of the content! On the contrary, I should say for the sake of content! In other words, proper linguistic analyses are conducive to the proper understanding of the content, leaving barren or gratuitous speculation to those who think that language or a language should solely be the concern of linguists. On the other hand, it goes without saying, I have never omitted such information as is absolutely necessary by the side of linguistic information: biography (usually very short), background, influences, message, parallels, sources, etc. But, I repeat, language - that is phonetics, vocabulary, grammar, and style, are the main thing. It is only through it, through its analysis as to organization, repetitions, peculiarities, etc. that the real, sometimes not very obvious intentions of a writer can be disclosed and the real, often not very obvious beauties of a written work can be brought to light. And, as the aim of literature should be, as the ancients constantly reiterated, to teach (to instruct), to move, and to delight, is it not imperative ~~is~~ for the literary historian to show what and how a writer teaches, whom and how a writer moves, or whom and why he delights?

Speaker. May I ^{say that} ~~ask you~~ present-day young people are chiefly interested in modern literature, *aren't they?*

Lev. I know. It is a truism.

Speaker. If so, one may infer that "older" English literature - your province - does not very much appeal to them...

Lev. Unfortunately. But that is only because they do not know it. When they come to know it (I should have said to know it properly, which is by no means an easy thing to do!), they begin to love it: for it is intrinsically beautiful and interesting, and, after all, so very modern. They are surprised to find traces of black humour in The Vision of Piers Plowman, instances of the theatre of the absurd in Troilus and Cressida or of the stream of con-

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sciousness in The Tempest, in which, by the way, the young generation is represented by Miranda and the generation of those who are acquainted with "older" English literature is embodied by Prospero. Allow me to paraphrase:

Miranda. O brave new older English literature!

Prospero. 'Tis new to thee.

As you see, it is as simple as that: before appreciating or criticizing something, one has got to know that something. And, let me add that to know "older English literature" is an extremely hard job: quantitatively it is downright vast, and qualitatively it is difficult to fully understand because of the language. Language again, you see... I must confess that in view of all this, my Course is very unequal; I think I have analysed properly the morality Everyman or Piers Plowman or Doctor Faustus, but I've just skimmed Chaucer or Thomas Malory or Philip Sidney.

Speaker. And yet, the first two volumes have about 700 pages...

Lev. That means very little. Had I treated all the writers and all the works as I did Marlowe or A Woman Kill'd with Kindness, 3000 pages would have hardly been enough.

Speaker. Will you kindly say something about your own contributions?

Lev. With pleasure, yet once more emphasizing that they may be questionable. It sometimes happens like that. You have an impression that you've hit upon a discovery, only to find out later on that it was just a poor and regrettable re-discovery: the only satisfaction in such cases is that your point of view has been ... confirmed. Well, what shall I mention? Perhaps the idea that Dr Faustus' thirst for knowledge is not Luciferic (as shown by many a critic) but Adamic; that punishment ~~through~~ or revenge through pity and forgiveness was clearly brought out by Thomas Heywood, seven ~~xxxxxx~~ years or so before Shakespeare was to do the same thing in The Tempest; that there are extremely interesting linguistic analogies between Ben Jonson and Shakespeare - analogies which I did not find mentioned even in the great Shakespeare Allusion Book; that many interesting parallels may be drawn between English and Romanian popular ballads; that Everyman influenced both

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Volpone and Timon of Athens...I can almost see Prospero rising menacingly: "All this is new to thee..." Forgive me, Prospero; I am not omniscient like you. But I can only say that I hate borrowing others' ideas and that my points of view are original at least in the sense that they are Romanian points of view."

Speaker. One more question, please.

Lev. Of course.

Speaker. How do you manage to squeeze the bulky material you have at your disposal in a limited number of lectures - 2 hours a week in only one semester?

Lev. Well, I am not repeating orally what I have written. I hate unjustified repetition as much as I love stylistic, say Shakespeare's kind of repetition. For their June examination my students will have the printed course - let them learn it, let them study it, let them select whatever seems essential to them, let them pay heed to what I tell them weekly as to the easiest method of learning without incurring the risk of head-aches. In the class-room I teach them altogether different things. My topic this year is "English Humour in the Making".

Speaker. Oh - would you mind telling our listeners something about it - I mean in another, special talk?

Lev. Not at all - you're very kind. Thank you very much.

Speaker. Thank you, professor.





Limba engleza

ENGLISH HUMOUR IN THE MAKING

Speaker. Our guest to-night is Prof. Dr. Leon Leviṭchi, head of the department of English literature at the Faculty of Germanic languages and literatures, University of Bucharest. In accordance with the promise he made during his last talk - on A Course in Mediaeval and Renaissance English literature - he will tell us about his actual course, that is the course he delivers orally to the first-year students of the English department.

Lev. Thank you. Shall we make it a question-answer talk?

Speaker. As you wish.

Lev. All right. May I ask you a question? ~~{Notianxthat~~

Speaker. By your leave, professor, that was a question, wasn't it?

Lev. And your answer too was a question, a disjunctive one in grammatical terms. So we are quits and I ask my question: Do you want to know the exact title of my course of lectures?

Speaker. Yes.

Lev. It's "English Humour in the Making". Do you want to know why I have chosen this particular topic?

Speaker. Yes, I do. First,

Lev. For two reasons. I think it is interesting to know how and why people belonging to far-off ages laughed or smiled; and secondly, it is interesting ^{to see/} how the present-day generation reacts to the humour of Wodehouse's ancestors. Oh yes, there is a third reason as well. I have never studied the problem so far, and, I must confess, I very much like new things, especially if they are both difficult and fascinating. ~~Tuttttttttt~~ Do you admit that it is difficult?

Speaker. I think I ought to. Possibly because humorous passages are very hard to find - obviously, I'm referring to the Dark Ages, to Caedmon and Cynewulf, NOT to Chaucer or the Renaissance comedy...

Lev. I'm sorry to say that you are wrong. There are too many humorous passages in all those dusty and mouldy manuscripts, so that the difficulty lies

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in the choice rather than in a toilsome hunting. It goes without saying that we should suspect little humour in the lyrical poems The Ruin or Deor's Lament or The Wanderer. Yet even Cynewulf can be humorous at times, for example in his Riddles, of which three seem to be the earliest samples of humour. I'll reproduce one: "The other day, at a meeting of men, I saw a strange creature. It had one eye, one nose, two ears, twelve hundred heads, two arms, two legs. What was it?" I bet no contemporary of ours will ever know the answer without previous knowledge. It's "A One-Eyed Man Selling Garlic in a Market-Place."

Speaker. Pretty complicated the riddle... But there is humour in it, definitely. To my mind, however, this kind of humour is not exactly characteristic of the English people.

Lev. You are perfectly right - although there is something in the riddle which very much smacks of 'paradox' and especially 'unexpectedness'...

Speaker. ...which, of course, are characteristic ingredients.

Lev. Far more promising is a passage in Baeda - the one describing the way Pope Gregory punned when in Rome he came into contact with some English slaves. "Oh, they are Angles, therefore angels... and their king is Aella - then 'Hallelujah'" etc. Well, in all ages humour based on puns and conundrums has been much in fashion with the English.

Speaker. It is very much in fashion today. You find it both in their everyday jokes and in their humorous writers, for example Ogden Nash...

Lev. Certainly. Let me add that after 1100 the difficulty of choice becomes almost unbearable, so that the only solution I could find was to resort to the help of my students - I ask them to read certain books, they underline what they think is humorous, I pretend to accept their pinpoints discoveries, and so everybody is happy, and we cooperate closely, and the course becomes humorous in itself. Very much in brackets, let me tell you that I sometimes ~~may~~ make use of an old witty remark or joke to serve my own purposes, for example that of holding up to ridicule dodecaphonic music or absurd poetry. The pretext is a sentence in



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The Owl and the Nightingale, in which the owl reproaches the nightingale with the words:

Nothing positive, it seems,
You bring, but demontial screams.

Speaker. To the best of my remembrance, the nightingale represents the "new" French poetry.

Lev. Yes indeed, while the owl may stand for Anglo-Saxon (I would call it "classical" poetry - say Shakespeare, or Goethe, or Eminescu...) Now, what I should like to point out is that older English humour is extremely variegated, full of nuances. Take Piers Plowman for example...

Speaker. Piers Plowman??

Lev. Yes. If you read it carefully, it is a world of merriment! Just one instance. When Piers puts everybody to work, they comply with the request, and a passage follows in which Langland describes how they worked. The humour is present in one concluding line which shows that they "overdid" it: "And some even plucked up weeds."

Speaker. Excellent!

Lev. Yes - absolutely fascinating, for everybody considers Piers to be a mediaeval-theological-dry-as-dust-boring poem. It isn't. At times it is merrier than Chaucer's Canterbury Tales. Fascinating, the whole problem of English humour is fascinating, for it discloses the character of a people. Goethe said once: "The character of a man is best revealed by what he finds laughable." And he was right. When a grown-up man laughs when an old woman falls down from a chair, we may class him as a mentally underprivileged. By the way, when I started my course of lectures, I drew up a scheme of possible responses on the basis of the recipients, namely in a hierarchic order: the idiots, the stupid, the dullards, the clever, the intelligent, and the wise. It so happened that after my drawing up the scheme, a student coughed a bit too loudly. And the class laughed. But I am sure they laughed from reasons different from those which usually make them laugh in such cases... Well, let us conclude on a note of gaiety. That is, let us conclude our talk...

Speaker. Thank you, professor. Lev. Thank you.

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Limba engleza

A HANDBOOK FOR TRANSLATORS

Speaker. Our guest to-night is Prof.Br. Leon Levitchi, head of the Department of English literature at the Faculty of Germanic languages and literatures, University of Bucharest. He is also the translator of quite a few books, chiefly from English into Romanian, but also from Romanian into English

.... - most of the latter aren't exactly books -

Lev. ~~xxxxxxastlyxxbooksxxx~~ just poems, short stories, fragments from novels -

Speaker. Prof. Graur's History of the Romanian Language IS a book -

Lev. Well - it's rather a booklet.

Speaker. But how about the Anthology of Modern Romanian Poetry?

Lev. It is a book, but my contribution there hardly represents a third part. And so, it's just another 'booklet'...

Speaker. Anyhow, it is precisely in the capacity of a translator that we have invited prof. Levitchi to our studio...

Lev. I am sorry, you told me it was a matter of theory, not a survey of what I have translated in my lifetime.

Speaker. Of theory, exactly - YOUR theory of translation... The theoretic al ~~xxlaryx~~ generalizations you have come to as a result of your translation experiences....

Lev. Theory is a very pretentious word. I have no theory of my own concerning translations, that must be quite clear.

Speaker. I apologize, professor, but the other day you told us that a translation must be a translation, not an adaptation, that it must neither add to nor subtract from the original text, that - you remember? - as long as there are so many languages in the world and, on the other hand, so many people who do not know any foreign languages, translations are necessary, and, if well done, useful.... Don't all these statements form part of a theory?

Lev. Certainly, they do - but then they are utterances dictated by common sense and are no inventions of mine and, after all, there is hardly any

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theory behind them. The fact that what we call a day begins in the morning and ends after sunset - would you call the acceptance of it a theory?

Speaker. No - of course not.

Lev. Then it follows of necessity that a translation should be a translation and nothing more or less than a translation; ^{and this is/} is NO theory. Ah! if some very modern linguist says that translations are impossible, or that they do not exist, that is a theory, and it has to be defended (fortunately it can't be defended, excepting in an untranslatable language). I have nothing to defend in the definition of translations, and so I have no theory about it. But I do have something to say as far as technicalities are concerned...

Speaker. I see: that is your theory.

Lev. Because technicalities have to be defended. And the best hope I have is that the technicalities I'm going to talk about are defensible.

Speaker. Have you mapped out certain rules?

Lev. No - I think I've just mapped out a number of linguistic compartments or departments or provinces which the translator must always take into account when doing translation work. Province one: denotation, that is the exact meaning or meanings of words, word-groups and sentences. A house is a house and a spade is a spade, and the translator is in duty bound to preserve ~~his~~ these notions in his version. Province two: accentuation - accentuation in a very broad sense, that is emphasis of any kind (phonetic, lexical, grammatical, stylistic). Let me give just one example. The words in the sentence "He gave me the book yesterday" may be stressed differently, with a change of meaning: He gave me the book yesterday; he gave me the book yesterday; he gave me the book yesterday; he gave me the book yesterday; he gave me the book yesterday. Everybody will see the difference, won't they?

Speaker. I should think so.

Lev. Province 3: Modality, that is the attitude of the speaker towards what is said in the sentence. "John, give me a helping hand!" That was an attitude of request. "Go away, John!" (order, dismissal). "John may come later on" (possibility) - and so on. Province 4: Connotation, that is whatever is not said about a word in the dictionary - associations, musicality or lack of musicality,

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etc. Province 5: Logical-grammatical connection between sentences. You know, there are authors who sometimes forget that they are addressing somebody when they write, and the poor reader may be at a loss what to do with a he or a she or an it for none of them refers to anybody or anything specified previously. Others, on the contrary, insist very much on the known elements, as in fairy-tales: There lived once an old man and an old woman. And the old man had a cock, and the old woman had a hen. And the ~~xxxxxx~~ hen of the old woman..." etc.

Speaker. Many modern writers, especially poets, seem to avoid a clear system of references...

Lev. Indeed, they do. What comes next? Province 5, the last: Style, which is the sum total of whatever I mentioned before, plus stylistic values and functional styles: journalese, scientific language, colloquial language, slang, etc.

Speaker. As I understand, these six "provinces" as you call them will probably be the six main chapters of the book you intend to publish - at which, in fact, you are working now -

Lev. That's right. Of course, there'll be an introduction, very many examples and exercises in profusion.

Speaker. Exercises?

Lev. Yes. This handbook, if I may call it like that, is meant for beginners - for "translators in the making".

Speaker. I'm sure it will be useful....

Lev. I hope it will be. But - there will be very little theory in it, I can assure you!

Speaker. Well, thank you ever so much.

Lev. Thank you.

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L. Levițchi

"Literatura Umanismului și Renasterii"

Sp. Quite recently, Dr. Cornelia Comorovski, Reader in world literature, University of Bucharest, published a three-volume book entitled Literatura Umanismului și Renasterii, i.e. "The Literature of Humanism and the Renaissance". This work deals with the respective period in Italy, The Netherlands, Germany, France, Portugal, Spain, Central and South-Eastern Europe, Romania included; and it is destined both to the reading public at large and the specialists. Well, professor dr. Leon Levițchi, head of the Department of English Literature, University of Bucharest, has kindly accepted our invitation to give his opinion about this book and -

Lev. May I state my position clearly from the outset: I ~~cannot~~ ^{won't} judge the book as a whole, although I must say that my general impression is excellent. I'll only go into some details ~~on~~ in connection with ~~some~~ part of volume 2 (about 200 pages), dealing with English literature. Like the rest of the work, this part ~~too~~ ^{too} is largely anthological with, on the other hand, short but pithy and cogent introductions to authors and works.

Mrs Comorovski's aim, ~~clearly~~ ^{clearly} in publishing this book is ~~clearly~~ ^{clearly} stated in a very comprehensive and interesting preface (130 pages). "In the presentation of writers," she points out, "the biobibliographical data have been singled out in the sense of laying stress on the elements of Renaissance literature - to a certain extent, on the elements of Renaissance thinking too... In order to complete the image of the works and phenomena I have chiefly made use of commentaries written during the Renaissance. For instance, I consider that what Giordano Bruno wrote about Philip Sidney is more important than Shelley's romantic vision explicated in verse.... The space I have allotted to the selected texts as well as to the examples contained in the introductory study, all of them meant to illustrate the motifs, the structures and the literary genres, shows that the literary expression of the age reaches a climax in Shakespeare, who uses whatever tradition offers to him, modifying in his works both senses and significations with the result that his contribution is the supreme creation of the Renaissance."

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How this "programmed" table of contents has been translated into life may be seen from even the sketchiest presentation of the English section: John Colet, The Statutes of St. Paul's School, William Grocyn, A Letter to Aldo Manuzio, fragments from Thomas More's Utopia, from Philip Sidney's An Apologie for Poetrie, from Spenser's Amoretti, Walter Raleigh's The Lie, excerpts from Marlowe's Tamburlaine and Doctor Faustus. Shakespeare is present with a number of Sonnets and with a couple of excerpts from Richard III, Henry IV, As You Like It, Hamlet, King Lear, and The Tempest. Thomas Dekker, John Webster, Ben Jonson, and Francis Bacon are also on the list.

Special mention, to my mind, should be made of the fact that quite a number of translations are new - I mean, the texts are published in Romanian for the first time. It goes without saying, this does not refer to Shakespeare, whose works have been translated into Romanian in a complete series. ~~With the exception of the Sonnets~~ But the excerpts from Colet, Grocyn, Richard Fox, Henry Howard, Walter Raleigh and others / are novelties in our country. And this, as I take it, when the number of studies on the Renaissance in general and on the English Renaissance in particular ~~xxxx~~ is ever on the increase, should be hailed as it marks a kind of new stage in the Romanian approach to that far-off yet extremely interesting age in the history of literature.

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TABLE TALK

Crainic: Tonight our guests for our table-talk series are Andrei Bantaș, Dan Duțescu and Leon Levițchi, members of the English Department of Bucharest University and also members of the Romanian Writers' Union, section of world literature and literary translations. Translations from Romanian poetry into English is precisely the topic we have chosen for tonight, and will Mr. Bantaș kindly introduce it.

Bantaș:

We are perfectly aware of the fact that in the Anglo-Saxon world people have heard very little of Romanian poetry which, although having made its first timid steps as late as the end of the 17th century, has covered within less than three hundred years all phases of development, from religious to modern verse. Now when our people have enjoyed the sweet music of many great poets, including Eminescu and Arghezi who are slowly gaining recognition also among readers abroad, we realize that our love of them is not borne out of patriotic feelings alone, that these poets deserve ^{world} ~~well~~-wide ^{recognition} knowledge and that their main drawback lies in the poor spreading of the Romanian language. ~~So~~ That is why translations, and especially fine ones - faithful to the original in contents and form - are acutely needed in order to bridge this gap. ^{though far from enough} ~~Something - not enough~~ - has been done in this respect : our literary quarterly Romanian Review, has regularly carried an average of ten Romanian poems in each issue for the last 20 years. ^{or so.} ~~The Literary Review~~ ^{brought out} published by the Dickinson University of New Jersey and other English and American publications have helped us a lot ; a few volumes of Romanian poetry have appeared, including a selection of verse by Eminescu, with a preface by George Bernard Shaw praising the translators - the famous Sylvia Pankhurst and the Romanian scholar Ștefanovici Svensk.

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Crainic: Mr. Duțescu, translating poetry into English must be a ~~xxx~~ pretty hard job.

Duțescu: Well, you see, before starting to translate poetry from Romanian into English we had ⁴acquired some experience in the reverse process, i.e. translating tens of thousands of lines from English into Romanian, covering the whole range of English poetry, from Beowulf, Chaucer and Shakespeare, through Burns, Byron and Shelley, down to present-day English and American poets. It is especially in the translation process that one can become familiar with both the spirit and the artistic devices of the poetry of a nation. But lots of experience alone will never make a poet. A vivid proof of that is that a number of our undergraduates in English have tried their hands at translations of poetry from Romanian into English with some very remarkable results.

Crainic: Mr. Levițchi, have the historical relations between English and Romanian poetry stimulated this activity in the field of translations?

Levițchi:

It is ³matter of common knowledge that English pre-romantic writers (especially the graveyard school), to say nothing of romantic writers (such as Byron, above all) influenced ~~En~~ continental literature to a great extent - Romanian literature included (thus Cîrlova or Alexandrescu). But what is most interesting from a translator's point of view is that imitation was not confined to subject matter or tone; it also had a say in matters of form, of versification.

Yet - leaving aside the traceable influences (which, I am sorry to say, were not of the most felicitous kind), it may be interesting to note that formal coincidences that are very difficult to identify in point of origin have been and are still there - in the two literatures; ~~and~~ consequently, that quite frequently the translator from English into Romanian or viceversa is aided in his otherwise monstrously hard work by patterns that are known, nay, familiar to both languages. Here is an example from Eminescu's Poor Dionis's Reflections:

Breath, like steam, warms up the coolness, and my fur cap is
pull'd tighter

Open my eyes

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Poor Dionis's Reflections:

Breath, like steam, warms up the coolness, and my fur cap is
pull'd tighter

O'er my eyes - as to my elbows, much indeed for them I care!
Like the fingers of a gipsy fumbling through the meshes rare
Of a net, they ^{probe} ~~try~~ the weather - isn't it going to get
brighter?

I hope everybody will agree that is something ~~extra~~ in it
of the pattern of Poe's The Raven.

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Duțescu: I would add here the influence of Shakespeare's sonnets on one of our outstanding modern poets, Voiculescu. So much was he imbued with the spirit of Shakespeare's sonnets that he wrote a number of sonnets as a continuation of those written by the Great Will. Let me quote a stanza from Voiculescu's 178th sonnet:

But there was love, and love came to take the place of all,
And with enchanted fetters and chains has bound me fast:
Here have I cast my anchor and now, a happy thrall,
Have but one wish - to live here up to my very last.

Bantas:

I should ~~also~~ like to mention that the contemporary master of Romanian descriptive prose, Geo Bogza, also tends occasionally to writing modern verse, of a kind which is rather ~~unusual~~ surprising in Romanian but is probably much more familiar to Americans, as it owes ^{a lot} much to Walt Whitman. In fact Bogza acknowledged his admiration for the American master in a poem devoted to the master. I am quoting a few lines from the summer 1967 issue of The Literary Review, New Jersey :

It is a hundred years since Walt Whitman made the sky of
poetry boom with his voice,
since the immortal Leaves of Grass rushed with unstemmed force
from the old and ancient crust of the earth,
covering with its brilliance and freshness the expanse of the
five continents, rejoicing millions of people and
making them prouder, more confident in themselves as
well as in the future of the human race.

For those who nowadays go together, along the same road,
springing from their very number of millions, from the
aspirations of their huge continental masses,
Walt Whitman is a friend and a good comrade, an old and
experienced guide,

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Crainic: Well, what exactly are the difficulties in translating poetry from Romanian into English?

Levițchi:

However strange it may seem, although Romanian and English differ structurally very much (English is a highly analytical language, Romanian is both analytical and synthetical, English is Germanic and Romanian is Romance, etc.), in both languages there are lexical-stylistic strata of a great variety which can be easily paralleled, hence imitated: familiar style, archaic, elevated, etc. Note for example how our great Romanian poet Alfred Margul Sperber could make use of the archaic-popular vocabulary and grammar characteristic of the E. language when he ~~renew~~ translated the famous Romanian popular ballad Miorița:

L-L.

Wedded I have been
To a gentle queen,
Bride of the world in sheen;
In the wedding night
Fell a star most bright;
Moon and Sun were then
Bridesmaid and bridesman....

*Stagile si luna
Au dat
cununie*

Gheorghe Coșbuc, one of our ~~great~~ great classics, wrote very much in the popular-peasant style. Quite often his verses are like those of Burns - let me quote:

A three hours' talk and she's away,
While I pretend to go, yet stay
And watch her plodding on her way
Till I see her no more.
She's very poor, but, on my life,
I'll take her for my wedded wife
Though wicked men, with love at strife,
About our love feel sore !

(Second to None)

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Duțescu: Of course, the task is "monstrously hard", as my colleague said just now. But there is always a silver lining. Fortunately, English and Romanian, though wide apart as regards structure and vocabulary, have much in common in point of rhythm. With word stress varying so much in both languages, no difficulty arises in rendering no matter what rhythm from one language into the other. Moreover, the iambic meter, into which most of the English poetry up to the 19th century was written fits the Romanian language like a glove. And then there is the same richness of vocabulary and of possible rhymes in both languages.

Crainic: You have mentioned so far only classical and folk poetry. May I ask you if the interest of you, translators also goes to new fashions in poetry, so much in favour with the contemporary public everywhere?

Bantas:

Of course among our translations there are scores of examples of modern, "new" poetry by authors belonging even to the youngest and boldest generation. But, as translators seem to be more stimulated by the challenges of rigorous rhythm, ~~times~~ rhyme and other ~~harshnesses~~ ^{harshness}, we prefer modern matter in ~~all~~ ^{older} their form. ~~For instance~~ I should like to illustrate this by an esoteric, abstract poem by the great mathematician and poet Ion Barbu who like Coleridge in Kubla Khan spoke cryptically about the mission of poetry : :

Mirrored Play

From times releasrd, the bottom of this calm crest, unstirred
Through lokking-glassses has entered the azure's leisured sway
To cut , upon the drowning of the agrestiv herd
In sets and groups of watesr - a mirrored, purer play.

A latent nadir ! The poet enhances the summation
Of outspread harps - whose music your backward flight dispels -
His throes gives birth to singing. secretive as the nation
Of billows driving jellyfish under greenish bells.

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Crainic: How much of the Romanian poetry has been translated so far?

Levițchi: Well, I'm afraid we can't give you ~~an~~ the exact figure, but considering that every issue of the quarterly Romanian Review has published quite a lot of poems for the last 20 years or so, and considering also the translations from Eminescu by Sylvia Panhurst, Stefanovici-Svensk and Petre Grimm, the figure must come up to about one thousand poems. By the way, a comprehensive selection of Romanian poetry from its beginnings to this day, translated into English, will be published in a volume in the next year or two.

Crainic: Thank you, etc.





Dickens and Romanian Readers

That Dickens has long been a favourite with Romanian readers is a commonplace and the best that can be done with a commonplace is either to repeat it or not; and as I have already had the opportunity to insist on it here, on the radio, I can only reiterate it, and I do reiterate ~~here~~ it here, on the radio again, for the benefit of those listeners who, for one reason or another, are not acquainted not only with our partiality for this great English writer, but also with the ~~wide~~ wide diffusion of English cultural values in Romania as a whole! This, by way of introduction to the anniversary of one hundred years since the death of our old friend and, at the same time, our very, very young, everlastingly young life-companion. Will you kindly excuse me for trying to sum up things in a more radio-like manner, that is in the form of an imaginary dialogue between a radio-speaker and myself:

Speaker: Tell me, please - in what way have you celebrated the anniversary?

I: You probably mean the English Department of the Faculty of Germanic languages and literatures of the Bucharest University.

Speaker: Yes, that's right.

I: Well, we've tried to do our best. For about two weeks running there was a Dickens exhibition at the Faculty - that is, quite a few photos spotlighting ~~important~~ significant moments from Dickens' life - for example, Dickens acting as Captain Brobadil in Jonson's Every Man in His Humour by Ben Jonson.... Also, a Dickens commemoration, organized by the members of our staff, with a remarkable lecture on Dickens' humanistic message - held ~~before a~~ before a pretty large audience (teachers and students). Or, our participation in a UNESCO programme at the Bucharest People's University...

Speaker: Do you really like Dickens?

I: The question is not so very unexpected as you meant it to be; you haven't caught me unawares. Yes. I do like Dickens. I like him





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very much, indeed.

Speaker: May I ask you: why?

I: A most pertinent question, I assure you. And my answer cannot but be somewhat impertinent: because he is so very human and humane; above all, because he is so very childish - in the best sense of the word. Leaving aside the demerits of his literary legacy (there are some, of course), the rest is pure gold. And pure music - in the words of an American poet, music, which is love in search of a word... I'm sure you ~~can~~ understand what I mean. Dickens' rhythm and melody ~~is~~ are for all age, like Shakespeare's. And if some people belonging to the younger generations, ~~cannot~~ mad about the maddening rhythms of ultra-modern music and literature, fail to feel and understand them, so much the worse for these representatives of the younger generations. I Dickens is a very great artist, provided ~~you~~ one reads him as a child, I mean ~~through the eyes~~ with the innocence and the inquisitiveness of a child.

Speaker: I'm sorry I can't follow you very well.

I: Shall I exemplify? Well - think of little Paul in "Dombey and Son". "Papa, what is money?" ~~HE EXPLAINS~~ "Mr Dombey looked askance." "Money? Well, it's copper and silver and gold..." But the child wanted to know. "No, Papa, what's money after all?.. Why could it not save my mamma for me..?" and so on. Now isn't that pure gold in the soul of man? The rest is silence. Excepting Shakespeare, I don't know of another writer who laid so much emphasis on humaneness. And ~~that~~ word humaneness speaks volumes to any man proud of the epithet; doesn't it?

Speaker: Well - yes - I think it does. I'm afraid our time is up.

I: Never mind. O.K. I'll see you soon.

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Emisiunea engleză RADIO

Dictionarul roman-englez, editia a III-a

Crainic. Our guest to-night is prof.dr.Leon Levițchi, from the Faculty of Germanic languages and literatures, Although a member of the literary department of the English section of the Faculty, prof. Levițchi has published quite a number of ~~linguistic~~ works on linguistics...

L.L. Sorry to interrupt - not on linguistics in general - on English linguistics, chiefly on what, definitely and positively, may be called English-Romanian and Romanian-English linguistics. With yet another qualification: mostly English-Romanian and Romanian-English APPLIED linguistics, that is dictionaries, and handbooks, and grammar-books of a pronounced practical character. You know, despite my practically boundless belief in the possibilities of theoretical linguistics, I believe even more - at least, theoretically speaking - in the virtues of practical or applied linguistics! For, as Roger Bacon used to say, "Practice without theory is blind, theory without practice is useless. And my point of view is this: practice comes first, and when practice is, statistically, sufficient, generalize and theorize, and apply the theory resulted from practice to practice and everything will be all right. In other words, practice and theory are interdependent, helping each other forward -

Crainic. Excuse me, professor, is the third edition of your Romanian-English Dictionary ("revised and augmented by the author and by Andrei Bantaș") - bound to come out very soon, possibly in ~~January~~ January 1974 -

L.L. - possibly in December 1973 -

Crainic. - is this third edition of the Romanian-English Dictionary in agreement with Roger Bacon's theory...?

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L.L. Of course it isn't. A lexicographer can never perform, he can only aspire! Every new edition of a dictionary is better than the last, but even the latest one is old enough to be looked upon as new, for a language is always on the move, enriching and modifying its vocabulary and all that, and the ~~printing~~^{compilation/} time is a long time, and while you are trying to ascertain the superadded meanings of, say, "thing", outside your writing-desk people manage to throw into the river of oblivion the classical meaning of such a word as, say, classicism. A lexicographer has to adjust and readjust himself all the time!

Grainic. Still, the "theoretical" gains are real, aren't they?

L.L. Yes, they are; but there is something funny about them. The more the theoretical gains in matters of lexicography, the fewer the practical acquirements. Stop and consider - to use Keats' verse. The first edition of the Romanian-English Dictionary, that of 1960, big-gish enough for the ^{im}mediate needs of a translator or of a student or of a pupil, rested largely in point of organization and technique on a number of theoretical generalizations ~~whixx~~ of which I was perfectly aware as a result of my work at a very big English-Romanian Dictionary. The second edition (1965) should have been an altogether different dictionary, taking into account the new theoretical gains acquired after 1960; but that would have been impossible; and the same may be said about the new 1973 or 1974 edition. Let me be very frank with you: if I were to start the whole work again, I should do it now very, very differently; for very completely.

Grainic. As I understand, you would very much increase the number of entries.

L.L. Not only the number of entries, ~~and not only the number of entries~~, but also the number of specific characterisations! I must admit that only after very many years of dictionary work I have come to the conclusion that any entry and any meaning of an entry must

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have its own identity card, and that this identity card must be actually complete; that it is not enough to say that casă is a feminine noun and that its most general translation is house. That it is also imperative to specify that the plural of casă is case, that the plural casei is a regionalism, that the genitive is casei, and so on.

Crainic. May I ask whether you have introduced such modifications in the third edition?

L.L. No. I have only enriched the number of entries and meanings - and that, only here and there. The identity card of each of my Romanian words is still woefully incomplete - and that is to be regretted for in the light of this dictionary someone might think of the scarcity of our language, a viewpoint which runs counter to reality. The best hope I have is that some day a very, very big collective of Romanian-English lexicographers will do what has long been the really important thing to do: an encyclopaedic dictionary of Romanian for the benefit of English readers. Some attempt has already been made: a team of students from our Faculty, under the guidance of a couple of specialists, are now working at what may prove the biggest and most reliable Romanian-English Dictionary ever printed in this country. The third edition of the portable Romanian-Dictionary is no more than a transitional, although necessary, stage.

Crainic. Thank you ever so much, Mr Levițchi.

L.L. Thank you ever so much. Regretfully yours.

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Emisiunea engleză RADIOPractica productivă a studenților de la facultatea de
limbi și literaturi germanice

Crainic. Besides his professional and scientific activity, professor doctor Leon Levițchi, from the Faculty of Germanic languages and literatures, University of Bucharest, is also involved in the supervision of the practical activities (productive practice) of the students belonging to that faculty. As far as we know, the results of this kind of activity have ~~been~~ proved to be fruitful in the last few years -

L.L. It isn't a yet a very long period of experiment; it has only covered a span of about two years. The first year was fraught with difficulties, with attempts, with successes mixed up with failures -

Crainic. But, of course, the second year was an improvement -

L.L. Yes and no - it is only in this, third year that we really know what we must do in order to turn to good account the practical activities of our students. As most of them are going to become teachers, the fundamental question must be asked: what must a teacher know besides his professional skills? Thus: must he be able to teach, that is, must he be able to make good use of methodology? Of course; consequently, he must develop his skill as a teacher and pedagogue. Hence, the imperative requirement that he should know some essential rules of pedagogy and methodology: and, indeed, out of the four years' training at the faculty, two years, the third and the fourth, are devoted to his pedagogical training in lycées and general-culture schools (about 4 hours a week).

Crainic. And - is this "productive practice"?

L.L. Certainly it is. We train our students ~~for~~ ^{in view of/} becoming teachers.

Teachers! A very complex word through its implications. Must a teacher know the art or profession of typing? Of course he must. That is why we have a kind of "workshop" which trains ~~them~~ our stu-





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dents, or, rather, a number of our students, in typing. Next: must a future teacher know anything about the art of profession of translator? To be sure. Consequently, a great number of our first and second-year students ~~MM~~ - during their ~~productive~~ productive work period - are sent to publishing houses and institutions where they do translation work (from English into Romanian and viceversa). Must they know anything about library work? Certainly; that is why they go to ~~libraries~~ libraries, our own seminar library included, where they learn not only how to consult books properly, but also how to fill in library tickets, how to keep a general catalogue up-to-date, etc. Proof-reading? It is as important a concern; many of our present-day students will be authors of textbooks, grammar-books, etc. Proof-reading, obviously, is not a profession, yet it does require some kind of specialization; hence it is but meet and proper that they should go and work with publishing-house specialists.

Crainic. Are there many institutes and institutions with which you have signed contracts for the "productive practice" of your students?

L.L. Yes - more than thirty. Very much in brackets, let me tell you that whenever we are not very much satisfied with the type of work which our students perform, we cancel the contract; and we change the institution. Although, roughly speaking, most of the students' places of work have proved useful and interesting.

Crainic. Will you kindly mention some institutions whose cooperation has proved most useful?

L.L. Well - a few publishing-houses, a number of faculties for which our students do translation-work (sometimes very difficult as it is highly specialized translation work, for example at the Faculty of Chemistry - just fancy our humanists doing that sort of job!), the





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Institute of Linguistics (for the benefit of which they do preparatory work for a future big-sized Romanian-English and Romanian-German Dictionary), the Institute for Literature, etc.

Crainic. May I ask you - do your students like this kind of activity?

L.L. Well, some of them do not like it at all, but their number is extremely small; perhaps, one or two per cent (these are the students who would never be able to say why they are called like that). The great majority, on the other hand, accept this kind of activity not only as a necessity, but also as a possible field of future development. And they like it; and I am sure that they will do very, very good work.

Crainic. Thank you very much, Mr Levițchi.

L.L. Not at all - it has been a pleasure. All the more so as I have had the opportunity to point out some aspects of a teacher's work which we, of the older generation, have been obliged to learn with ~~xxx~~ very little guidance from elsewhere !



Emisiunea engleză

Leon D. Levițchi

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Crainic. The subject of our interview^{to-night/} Prof./ with/ Dr. Leon Levițchi, Head of the Department of English Literature at the University of Bucharest, is "Percy Bysshe Shelley in Romania". It is one hundred and fifty years since ~~hardly~~ the great romantic poet died and it is meet and proper that we should say ^a word or two about him on the occasion...

Lev. Yes indeed. Shelley has always been a revered name in the history of Romanian culture, although, in contrast with Byron ~~W/ W/ W/ W/~~ or Dickens, he has not had a direct bearing on it. He has only been a presence through translations - some of them traceable as far back as the 19th century, and most of them the asset of the post-war period (I am thinking particularly of the pretty sizeable volume representing the very successful translations of Petre Solomon) - ; also, through studies, of which I should like to mention ~~the~~ another sizeable book, a monograph signed by Dan Grigorescu and published a few years ago.

Crainic. You, too, have translated a couple of lines...

Lev. Mmm - yes, about fifteen years ago I tried my hand at The Cloud. The translation is still among my Old Curiosity Papers, but I have never published it. How shall I put it? It doesn't rejoice me - I mean the translation. Of course, the original is very great...

I am the daughter of earth and water,
And the nursling of the sky;
I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores,
I change but I cannot die....

There is Shelley all along - his belief in the mutability of matter, his belief in his immortality as a poet, his ambiguity, his rhythm... The rhythm which made my translation a failure...

Crainic. The rhythm?

Lev. Yes. The rhythm. Literary history says that Shelley built up the

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rhythmical structure of The Cloud on a Swiss lake - that the beating of the oars suggested to him a sort of ternary measure. Not very regular, I must confess. But it was exactly what I could NOT render in my translation, roughly correct from the point of view of vocabulary and grammar.

Crainic. You don't owe Shelley a grudge on account of what you ~~seem~~ seem to consider to be your abortive attempt...

Lev. No, no, no - I can't say that I love him wholesale, but there are poems that I treasure ~~dearly~~ dearly - The Cloud, To Night, The Sensitive Plant, Ode to the West Wind, Prometheus Unbound. And many others. He's so very sensitive, you know - like a fairy treading on the tips of geraniums and gilly-flowers. And, on the other hand, he is so very human, dynamic, radical, ~~sufficing~~, paradoxical, concrete, as in his address to the West Wind:

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy!

May I add that our younger generations of students in English love him greatly too. In the June session of state-exams two or three papers out of about eighty were devoted to Shelley.

Crainic. Will you kindly mention their titles?

Lev. Well, one of them was "Shelley and External Nature"; another - I'm sorry I can't remember the exact title - has attempted to prove that whatever Shelley wrote theoretically in his Defence of Poetry was illustrated practically in his poetry. Like Shakespeare, he believed in the force of concrete words and images - let me quote from A Midsummer Night's Dream. Poets, we are told there,

...give to airy nothing

A local habitation and a name....

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Another interesting commentary of our candidate was in connection with Shelley's idea that, I quote, "Poets are trumpets which sing to battle".

Grainic. The metaphor dovetails very well with what Shelley wrote.

Lev. A metaphor? Yes, certainly, ninety per cent ~~is~~^{are} a metaphor. In Shelley's conception poets are an active, a mobilizing, a prophetic force - they look into the future, or, rather, should look into the future; they should rouse ~~in~~ men's consciences and urge them to fight for a better life, for a better future. They should do so, for, in the history of literature, there have also been poets looking back into the past, for example Wordsworth or Southey ~~of~~///.

But ten per cent are not a metaphor, but just a revival of a very, very old reality. The ancient Celtic bards actually went - like trumpets, if you want - at the head of armies and by their songs, incited soldiers to battle....

This is exactly the image which, in this country, has been formed about Shelley: a trumpet which sings to battle. He is like a fairy treading on the tips of geraniums and gilly-flowers, but his is the voice of thunder. Addressing his contemporaries from Italy - on the occasion of the massacre at Manchester (1819) - he wrote the well-known lines:

Rise like lions after slumber

In unvanquishable number....

He wanted a better future for the England of his time - and the Chartists looked upon him as upon one of their own.

Grainic. - A poet-citizen...Or a citizen-poet....

Lev. That's right. Every great poet has also been a great citizen; and so has Shelley.....

Grainic. Thank you, etc.

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Selected Verse by Robert Browning - Romanian translation

Crainic: Professor Dr. Leon Levițchi's translation of Selected Verse by Robert Browning has just come out; which has suggested to us a talk with the translator....

L.L.: A translator who has been at very great pains, you'll admit... It is far easier to speak about transformational or generative grammar than to translate Robert Browning into Romanian or any other language....
in England/

Crainic: As far as I know, there is a Browning Society which, for years and decades on end, has been trying to interpret and reinterpret Browning's texts... non-English/

L.L.: Exactly - for the benefit of both English readers and ~~foreign~~ translators ~~possibly~~ I'm sure that the incentive for/ the foundation of such a society started with Mme ~~Eliza~~ Carlyle, who, after watching the performance of Sordello, and after congratulating Browning on the great success of his dramatic poem, asked him whether Sordello was the name of a poet, of a town, or of a ~~river~~ river....

Crainic: Still, excuse me, there's a point I can't very well understand. As Shakespeare lived as far back as the English Renaissance, it is but natural to have Shakespeare societies and Shakespeare lexicons; for we are people of the 20-th century, aren't we? But Browning belongs to a very closely neighbouring age, the 19-th century - he is so very modern....

L.L.: Without being modernistic, he is very modern indeed - so very modern that he is sometimes unintelligible! It has been said that he often thought so quickly that he did not succeed in jotting down his thoughts, that he thought far too rapidly for words. For he was not only a very sensitive soul, but also a very associative philosopher, or thinker... But the difficulty of understanding Browning - with or without special dictionaries or reference books - is only part of the picture. The second difficulty lay in ~~Browning's~~ the correct rendering of his musicality....

Crainic: Musicality?

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L.L. Yes - musicality: rhythm, rhymes, and all that. Judge for yourself:

Oh, what a dawn of day!
How the March sun feels like May!

That was from A LOVER'S QUARREL!

The year's at the spring
And day's at the morn:
Morning's at seven....

That was from PIPPA PASSES.

The gulf rolls like a meadow-swell, o'erstrewn
With ravaged boughs and remnants of the shore...

That was from PARACELSUS.

I sprang to the stirrup, and Jorjis, and he;
I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped all three....

That was from HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS FROM GHENT TO AIX .Am-
phibrach - in technical terms:

Saltai, dar, în sea, apoi Jorjis - și dinsul - și-alei!
Porniram galop - și Dirck nebunește - tustrei...

Browning was a great innovator in verse technique. The poor trans-
lator's choice is Hobson's choice: to ~~imitate~~ ^{imitate} Browning's verse technique!

Crainic: Don't take it amiss, but I'm pretty certain that Browning was your
own choice; and you chose him from a multitude of other English or American
~~xxxx~~ poets for the simple reason that ~~xxxx~~ you liked him....

L.L. Yes, I must confess I like him immensely. His views on life and men are
so broad, he is so much on the side of the spiritual health, he is so ~~xxxxxx~~
wise, so musical, so difficult....

Crainic: Did you say.... difficult?

L.L. Yes.

Crainic: Was difficulty... a point of special attraction for you?

L.L. It was. Difficulty implies work; in poetic creation, many a finishing ~~xxxx~~
stroke. Consequently, does not translation work imply some competition
with the effort of the creator? And is it not worth while? The greater
the difficulties, the greater the satisfactions whenever they are moti-
vated....





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Crainic: translated/
Your selection from Browning's poetry is a kind of pioneer work-
~~translation~~ I take it....

L.L. Yes and no. I could claim the title of trail-blazer only as far as a more or less compact selection of Browning's poetry is concerned. Antecedent isolated/ attempts - many of them highly successful - do not fail in the history of Romanian translations; say, an earlier translation of The Pied Piper of Hamelin (which I have not reiterated, for I found it an extremely difficult ~~kind~~ enterprise, despite my propensity for difficult things...)

Crainic: May I ask you - what are your favourite pieces of Browning's poetry which you have or not have translated?

L.L. Two poems which I have translated (but don't ask me what was the price I had to pay in efforts and time): The Worst of It and A Grammarian's Funeral. Both of them - I mean the original texts, not the translation! - are great, very great! The best hope I have is that, to a certain extent at least, I have succeeded in rendering them correctly - not only as to denotation, but also as to fundamental modality or attitude: in The Worst of It, a human and humane understanding of a fault; in A Grammarian's Funeral, the praise which is due to a scholar who devoted his whole life to the scientific explanation of one or two grammatical particles - ~~I don't think there was much to laugh at in the enterprise~~. Augustus did his bit - to ~~use~~ paraphrase ~~display~~ the title of a play by Bernard Shaw. We all of us should do what Augustus or the grammarian did.... OUR BIT....

Crainic: You seem to hint that your translation is "your bit"...

L.L. Part of it - yes. If I have done it properly or not - well, that is for the readers to judge. If my Browning version does not stir up emotion, if it does not appeal to the heart or mind, it will not be Browning's fault, anyhow....

Crainic: Excuse me, aren't you a bit too self-critical?

L.L. No, no - I have my ~~misgivings~~ perfectly justifiable misgivings. Let us just hope for the best....

Crainic: Thank you, Mr Levițchi....

L. Thank you....

L.





A Scientific Session: LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING

Bucharest ,October 28-29,1972

Crainic. A few days ago, on October the 28th and October the 29th, a scientific session was organized in Bucharest by the Group of Applied Linguistics and the Laboratory of Psycholinguistics of the Bucharest University. It dealt with problems connected with Language Teaching and Learning, so that its character was pre-eminently practical... - in accordance with the sponsorship: the Group of Applied Linguistics...

L.L. "Pre-eminently" may be a misleading epithet: for the session was also concerned with numerous theoretical aspects. And with good reason, too. May I mention Roger Bacon as a witness? He lived as far back as the 13th century, but his maxim holds good today and will hold good to-morrow: "Theory without practice is useless, practice without theory is blind." Good old Roger Bacon, the forerunner of another, more famous humanist, Francis Bacon... He knew a lot about the interdependence of practice and theory....

Crainic. That was Dr. Leon Leviṭchi, Professor of English Literature, in fact, Head of the Department of English Literature at the Faculty of Germanic languages and literatures, University of Bucharest...

L.L. Thank you for the understatement implied in the emphasis. I was not among linguists, but rather amidst them - a kind of black sheep... That is perfectly true.

Crainic. I'm sure you felt quite at home at the session. For years on end you have compiled dictionaries, written grammar-books, done translation work...

L.L. Yeas - a black sheep twice ! For my own paper was about the importance of translation in the process of language teaching and learning and, you know, the modern viewpoint is that translation - at least translation from the target into the native language should be ~~considered as the main task~~





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avoided to the utmost... They maintain that if someone wants to learn how to swim, he must be thrown into the sea off the coast, where the water is at the deepest. As to my own theory ^{of} ~~about~~ swimming, it is quite different... I believe in a gradual approach - from known to unknown, from EMINIA simple to complex, from the native to the target language

Crainic. I must confess, I didn't know that translation isn't very much in fashion / ~~in~~ schools and universities...

L.L. It is very much out of fashion. Although - between me and you and the pillar-post - it has never ceased doing its honourable and beneficial work: and even those who do not believe in its virtues have learnt a foreign language largely on a translation basis. Translation ^{part of the} ~~is xxxxxxxx~~ scaffolding - it is not the final building - but when the building is ready, it is ungraceful to forget the scaffolding.

Crainic. Didn't the audience subscribe to your points of view?

L.L. Oh, they did - they even clapped their hands. But I I'm sure they won't ~~xxxxxxx~~ return to the translation method ~~xxxx~~ just because I insisted on it...

Crainic. Translation is a very difficult thing -

L.L. Precisely. Very difficult. Of course, there were other papers at the session which tackled difficult problems, say - The Contrastive Analysis in the Appropriation of a Language by Prof. Chitso-ran; Changes in psycholinguistics: implications for language teaching, by ~~lex~~ the English lecturer M. Croghan; The teaching of Romanian without an intermediate language, by assistant lecturer Maria Alexe; and so on.

Crainic. Dr. Leviṭchi, what is your general impression about the session? I mean - was it interesting - useful - "up to the mark"?

L.L. Yes, definitely. First, it has covered a very wide range of problems - all of them, naturally, connected with the aim of the session. Among the participants and speakers there have also been

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people belonging to professions that, seemingly, have little connection with our philological preoccupations - for example, Prof. Dr. V. Săhleanu from the Centre of Anthropological Investigations. What I want to point out is that our session has not been 'parochial' - on the contrary... Secondly, each and every participant or speaker has been conscious of the importance of the ~~px~~ main problems and aims of the session, so that every contribution - written or oral - has chimed with them. Thirdly, there has been much quarrelling....

Crainic. Quarrelling?...

L.L. ~~Erminic~~ Yes, quarrelling. At an academic level, it goes without saying... We have fought for our points of view, we have weighed and considered our arguments, we have made recourse to a rich arsenal of figures of speech, chiefly intellectual: irony, bathos, persuasion, sarcasm. In a word, we have been rhetorical and frank. All this in the service of a noble cause: the best ways and means ^{for the acquisition} ~~towards the acquisition~~ ~~and the efficient mastery~~ of a foreign language.

Crainic. In a word, you are satisfied with the result of the debates....

L.L. Yes, I am. The papers, plus the discussions, will be printed in a voluminous volume, which, I am sure, will once more stimulate people into thinking of very important problems in the field of applied linguistics. APPLIED linguistics. I must say I rather fancy the term - it is promising, for thought-engendering. By the side of structuralism, generative grammar, transformationalism and the like, it occupies a prominent place; it even enjoys a vantage ground....

Crainic. Thank you, Mr. Leviṭchi....

L.L. Thank you.

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Emisiunea de limbă engleză

Leon Levițchi

ELEMENTS OF STRUCTURAL SEMANTICS

(by Dumitru Chițoran)

Speaker. Our guest to-night is professor dr. Leon Levițchi, head of the Department of English Literature at the Faculty of Germanic Languages and Literatures, University of Bucharest - and he is going to tell us something about the recent book of Dumitru Chițoran, Dean of the Faculty, dealing with "Elements of English Structural Semantics", Bucharest, 1973 -

L.L. ^{may} Shall I add that he is the head of the Department of English at our Faculty - that he is the great promoter of whatever is new and modern in the field of linguistics, chiefly, of English linguistics?

Speaker. Does that ^{is approach} inconvenience you ² greatly?

L.L. Well - you see - quite, quite accidentally, I belong to an older generation; and, quite, quite accidentally, ~~ix~~ for twenty years on end I taught English grammar to our students; and I taught them ~~them~~ in the spirit of Charles Bally and Harold Palmer, not in that of Chomsky.... I do not in the least believe in the idea that the history of linguistics^{is} should be divided into two: the pre- and the post-Chomsky period. I should rather say: I believe in things that can be demonstrated and I do not believe that can ^{in things/} not be demonstrated. If - if! - the new achievements of linguistics can prove that we have been in the wrong, and the new achievements are in the right, all the better - we shall surrender to them; but, if they cannot justify themselves, all the worse - we shall not surrender, and we shall go on saying that ~~is much~~ ^{is much} better to speak of subject and predicate than of subject and predicate group (NG, or PG).

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~~Speaker. Will you kindly say something about the contents of~~
~~Mr Chitoran's book?~~

it is much better to speak of subject and predicate and so on
than of "nominal" or "verbal" groups (NG, VG).

Speaker. It very much depends on what you mean to, ^{do/} isn't it?
It is one thing to teach (students or pupils) and quite another
to do scientific work -

I.L. Certainly, the separation is possible, and very, very often
indeed it is real. But, on the other hand, a happy marriage between
teaching and scientific investigation is highly desirable. And, as
we started ~~with~~ ^{by} saying a couple of words about Mr Chitoran's book,
well, ~~this~~ book is a quite good example in this sense; and a quite
good example of what a university professor should do within the
general framework of Romanian university requirements today, that
is : integration of education, investigation, and production. Mr
Chitoran's book is both a university course of lectures and a
scientific treatise and a guide for non-specialists. The main pro-
blems dealt with are of great importance for anyone interested in
language: Meaning, Semantic relations and lexical categories, Para-
digms in lexic, The Distributional Analysis of meaning, Semantic
theory within the framework of generative-transformational gram-
mar .

Speaker. All these titles sound very theoretical.

I.L. One cannot do without theory. Ralph Waldo Emerson once
said that, sometimes, the most abstract theory may prove to be
a most practical thing. I, for one, appreciate the "Elements of
English Structural Semantics" as a remarkable theoretical approach
to a number of practical issues, such as the making of textbooks
or of dictionaries.

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Of course, the book does not aim at presenting an integrated theory covering all aspects of the semantic theory of English. Despite its limited scope, however, it is a very good synthetic-al work, also enjoying the quality of being systematic, logical, and well written. In addition, it tries to be fair or impartial in the linguistic quarrel between the ancients and the moderns", as may be seen from the very first lines of chapter I:

"It has often been pointed out, and for obvious reasons, that semantics is the youngest branch of linguistics. Yet, interest in what we call today 'problems of semantics' was quite alive already in ancient times. In ancient Greece, for instance, philosophers spent much time debating the problem of the way in which words acquired their meaning." Well, such an approach is to be applauded. In the domain of Anglistics, anyhow, it is just another valuable contribution to what may be called the Romanian viewpoint.

Speaker. Thank you very much -


L.L. Thank you.

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Holograph list
of the
40 languages
used by James
Joyce
in writing
*Finnegans
Wake*

Director
Lidia Vianu

Executive Advisor
C. George Sandulescu

