CANADIAN IMAGERY IN ROMANIAN (PARA)TEXTS

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Abstract: *The purpose of this paper is to tackle Canadian imagery through the looking glass of Romanian receivers from the beginnings of Canadian letters on Romanian soil to present day. Our approach is both synchronic and diachronic as we will focus on images and stereotypes for each historical period, in general and on the shifts in viewpoints from the pre-communist period to communist and post-communist times, in particular. Our theoretical framework mainly draws on Translation Studies and Reception Studies, Polysystem Theory and manipulation of literary fame, as understood by Andre Lefevere (1992), included. Our investigations rarely go beyond critics', annotators', prefacers', reviewers' and last, but not least Canadianists' opinions, not to mention the intersections or even overlaps between the categories above.*

Keywords: *Canadian literary reception, Romanian rewriters, impressionistic criticism.*

1. Pre-Communist Romania

Canadian fiction occupies a peripheral position in the Romanian cultural and literary polysystem[1] although the first translations from Canadian literature date as back as 1915 when W.H. Drummond, an early imitator of pre-Chaucerian literature was translated in the Romanian literary review *Convorbiri literare (Literary Talks)* with a short bibliographical presentation taken from *La Revue Geneviève Biaugnis*. Moreover, the great Romanian historian and cultural figure Nicolae Iorga translated Canadian verse from "Standard", Montreal and *Drum Drept (The Right Path)* review published it as poems by unknown poets in 1918 and 1919 (1997a: 207). The context of the first translations from Canadian literature could be also related to the presence in Romania of Joseph W. Boyle, the Canadian businessman and entrepreneur who became a close friend of Queen Marie and was awarded important distinctions for his aid given to our country (Marsh, 2011).

The inter-war and World War II period is richer in translations from Canadian fiction than the previous period which marked the first translations from this literature. However, apart from Mazo de la Roche's first novels of the *Jalna* series which were published in separate volumes by the same publishing house (Remus Cioflec Publishing House), all the other works or fragments (mainly poetry or short stories) came out in

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[1] According to the Polysystem Theory as developed by the Israeli scholar Itamar Even-Zohar in the 1970s and enriched by Gideon Toury, a Translation Studies scholar from the same area, a literary polysystem can be reduced to a number of contrasting pairs that illustrate the status of translated literature according to its position in the host literary polysystem: canonized literary forms vs. non-canonized ones, a polysystem's centre vs. its periphery, and primary (innovatory) literary forms vs. secondary (conservative) ones. In Itamar Even-Zohar's view, translated literature can occupy both a primary position and a secondary one in the literary polysystem; the scholar distinguishes three cases in which a translated literary text may turn into a canonized literary work in the receiving culture and literature: "(a) when a polysystem has not yet been crystallized, that is to say, when a literature is "young," in the process of being established; (b) when a literature is either "peripheral" (within a large group of correlated literatures) or "weak," or both; and (c) when there are turning points, crises, or literary vacuums in a literature." (Even-Zohar 2000, 193-194)

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periodicals. Since the early 1920's, critics publishing in periodicals were pleading for a "literature of translations" to be developed alongside with our national literature following the model of Western European countries. Translations were meant to enrich the Romanian cultural inheritance and enlarge our horizon[1] (Lăcătușu, 2000: 70).

The most important bibliography for this period, i.e. *The Bibliography of Romanian Literature and Its Relations with Foreign Literatures in Periodicals* (1997b: 209) mentions several translations from Canadian authors, alongside with short critical studies of Romanian critics. Stephen Leacock is by far the most translated author in the literary publications of the time. Hailed as Canada's Mark Twain, Leacock has his short stories published in periodicals such as *Adevărul literar şi artistic (The Literary and Artistic Truth)*, *Preocupări Literare (Literary Concerns)*, *Orizontul (The Horizon)* or *Gazeta de duminică (The Sunday Gazette)*. Some of the articles include (fragments of) short stories that are now introduced to the Romanian public, either accompanied by short critical introductions or not. Still, most of the titles were changed or simplified for commercial purposes. Some articles – usually no longer than a page or two functioning as prefaces or short introductory passages – contain only critical remarks on the Canadian authors and their works and make no reference to their translation. Leacock was taken for an "American humorist", his book, *Winsome Winnie* being a series of "pastiches and imitations" (idem). His "humour is 'extremely transatlantic'combining with the craziest fantasy and the grotesque with infinite happiness" in his works (Lupu and Ștefănescu 1997b: 209). The poet Bliss Carman was also mentioned as a "sorcerer of words" and, in a note published in the periodical *Neamul românesc (The Romanian People)*, his life and works are briefly presented. It was argued that despite the influence of Whitman, Emerson, Wordsworth Browning, his poetry remained an essentially Canadian one (Lupu and Ștefănescu, 1997b: *ibidem*).

1.1. Mazo de la Roche and Stephen Leacock as Seen by Romanian Rewriters of Pre-communist Periodicals

During the Inter-War and WWII years the criticism published in periodicals does not go beyond an impressionistic, historical-biographical stance as understood by the nineteenth-century French tradition (and articulated by Hippolyte A. Taine, cited by Guerin, 2004: 51 and Sainte-Beuve). This type of criticism was aggressively attacked by Proust who expressed his exasperation with biographical anecdote, widely practiced in France by such distinguished literary critics as Sainte-Beuve. Apart from the fragments of translations from Stephen Leacock's short stories which have no critical introductions, the few articles that introduce Canadian literature to the Romanian readership resemble pre-critical reappraisals of literary works undertaken by more or less professional rewriters[2]. Such is the case of the article *O scriitoare canadiană/ A Canadian Woman Writer* whose author is not even mentioned by the literary periodical *Adevărul literar și artistic (ALA)/ The Literary and Artistic Truth* in 1933. The unknown critic (1933: 8) argues that Miss Mazo de la Roche is known to the European literary public by means of the French translation of her novel, *Finch's Fortune* which marks the end of the 'subtle', 'complicated' and 'thorough' studies of the Canadian

[1] All translations mine unless stated otherwise.

[2] The term is used in the sense coined by the Translation Studies scholar Andre Lefevere who refers to the agents that manipulate a text (be they translators, critics, commentators or annotators).

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family as can also be seen from *The Master of Jalna* that had been published in London. Moreover, the Romanian rewriter lays emphasis on *Finch's Fortune* as part of the (Jalna) 'series' (along with *Jalna* and *Whiteoaks*), arguing that it still looks 'complete' in its literary dimensions, even if considered separately. The reviewer focuses on the main character, the 'hero' Renny and his intricacies. He is the 'cruel', 'rude', 'brave' and 'fierce' husband who cheats on his wife and deceives her; he has no notion of honour, whatsoever, as he opens and burns a letter that was not addressed to him. He is 'ocasionally' good, generous and brave so he may inspire affection and show authority through his violent character. The author also gives an account of the entire family as seen by Alayne, Renny's wife regards them as 'neurotic': 'they see the world upside down', they all had 'inappropriate' marriages that ended in adultery or divorce as a consequence of their greed. Despite the characters' bad behaviour ('we all have our own flaws, after all'), 'a touching purity of the soul' can be sensed throughout the entire novel. The Romanian reviewer gives the example of young Pauline and her 'pure' feelings for Renny, her relationship with the novelist Wakefield, on the one hand and the ironic passion between Renny and his wife, Alayne, on the other. The anonymous critic concludes that, in general, the narrator (identified with the Canadian author) makes use of 'skilful irony' in depicting the characters of the novel; furthermore, de la Roche's skilful writing is shown by 'the passages of a nice lyrical prose', and her 'sensitiveness', reflected in the entire work, is a mark of her reputation (idem).

As can be seen from the critical summary above, the Romanian reviewer operates a clear-cut distinction of characters in the Forsterian manner of the late 1920s, when fictional characters were divided into round and flat: "flat characters (…) are sometimes called types, and sometimes caricatures. In their purest form, they are constructed round a single idea or quality: when there is more than one factor in them, we get the beginning of the curve towards the round" (Forster, 1955: 67) Thus, the rewriter opposes Renny, the round character to the world of flat characters (uncle, poet, brother, musician, etc.). Renny is cruel, rude, fierce, violent and authoritative but he can 'ocasionally' be good, generous, brave and may inspire affection, while the others are just 'neurotic'. Impressionisic critical judgements are also passed on de la Roche's writing: 'skilful irony' is detected in the 'passages of a nice lyrical prose', along with an overall authorial 'sensitiveness' that guaranteed the novelist's international success. Mention of an indirect reception (via the French channel) is also made, a proof of the strong influence that the French cultural model had on the taste and preference of the Romanian public.

As far as the articles on Leacock are concerned, there are Romanian critics that do not even regard the humorist as a Canadian author and take him for an American one; this is a mistake which occurs twice in *Adevărul literar și artistic/ The Literary and Artistic Truth* (1921 and 1927). First, a fragment from *Winsome Winnie* came out and its anonymous rewriter took Leacock for an 'American humorist', his book being a series of 'pastiches and imitations' (1921: 4). According to the commentator, one of the benefits of such a reputation (of an American humorist, that is) guarantees a reading public that is willing to accept any new work for amusement. He further assesses the writings of the volume as belonging to the 'usual pattern' (without any further explanation of what this pattern consists of), arguing that Leacock tries to ridicule 'the systems employed by authors that take pride in their originality'. Second, Al. N. Biaz (a pen-name of Henri B. Blazian) who translated a fragment from *Nonsense Novels*, namely "Sorrows of a Super Soul: or, The Memoirs of Marie Mushenough" (rendered into Romanian as "Jurnalul intim al Mariei Mașineff") also takes Leacock for an

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American humorist, arguing that he became 'a new king of American humorists after the death of Mark Twain' (1927: 4). The American author (sic!) is praised for his humour that combines 'spontaneous joy' with 'forgiving irony', 'the grotesque' and 'the unexpected', 'comic situations' and 'the absurdity of a funny vocabulary' in naïve characters. His art, i.e. the memoirs introduced to the Romanian public, is a parody of the famous diary in which 'Maria Bașchirceft' analyses her feelings and troubles.

As a general remark, it can be said that pre-communist readers were somehow misled by Romanian (un)professional rewriters into taking Canadian classics for American ones (as in Leacock's case). Moreover, the image of a Canadian family built for our inter-war and WWII readers could appear as distorted, if we were to refer to the interpretations given to Mazo de la Roche's *Finch's Fortune*. Preference for a certain type of fiction could also be regarded as part of the horizon of expectations of the interwar and WWII readership. This is either the case of popular fiction for women (Mazo de la Roche's *Jalna* series) or of sentimental novels that came as fictional diaries or epistolary novels rendering the main character's love affections (Stephen Leacock's "Sorrows of a Super Soul: or, The Memoirs of Marie Mushenough" from *Nonsense Novels*) in the tradition of the 19th century French and German Romanticism. The Romanian commentators of Canadian literature do not acknowledge the influence of 19th century French biographical criticism on their approaches, yet classics of Romanian criticism of the period (such as Vladimir Streinu, Al. Philippide, Garabet Ibrăileanu, to name only a few) follow Sainte-Beuveian precepts in literary value.

1.2. Canadian Literature Published in Volumes. Mazo de la Roche's Jalna Series

Romanian rewriters as represented by critics, commentators or translator(s) of the *Jalna* series are not very elaborate in their considerations. No comparisons are made with other writers, be they Canadian or international. The discussion of characters is impressionistic (as seen above, it centers on Renny and his intricacies). However, it is worth mentioning that not all the volumes of the series had come out in Canada when *Jalna* was being discussed and translated in Romania (be it in periodicals or in volumes) in the 1930s and 1940s. As a matter of fact, no more studies will be devoted to Mazo de la Roche and her works in the communist and post-communist years. To put it in the words of the Romanian theorists on reading (i.e. Cornis-Pope and Călinescu, quoted by Bennet, 1995), there are no signs of rereading De la Roche's works during the following years[1].

The Romanian edition of *Jalna*, the first volume of the series, came out in 1935 at Remus Cioflec and was reedited in 1990 by Venus Publishing House. It is a translation from the original edition of the book that came out at MacMilan & Co. Limited, London in 1935 (the first edition of the novel was published in 1927). The

[1] Only the post-commnist rewriter Margareta Petruț devotes an entry to de la Roche in her *Dicționar de scriitori canadieni/ Dictionary of Canadian Authors*, arguing that even from her youth, she created her own fictional world, "The Play". She mentions the Atlantic Monthly award for the novel *Jalna* and makes a few considerations on the entire series. These come mainly as rewordings of international rewriters: the sixteen novels are a saga of the Whiteoaks portrayed between 1854 and 1954; the novels are not chronologically disposed, yet each may be read as a whole; the novel *Jalna* was adapted for screen in 1935 and in 1972 CBC broadcast a series based on her novels; the novels in the *Jalna* series reflect the colonial mentality and the support of British institutions and customs pertaining to the Loyalist myth on Canada (2006: 72-73).

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preface has an anonymous author and contains biographical data and some considerations on the novel. The anonymous paratext (1990: 7-8) reads that despite her celebrity in the USA, Mazo de la Roche remained almost unknown to the Romanian public. The prefacer is uninformed and is not aware of De la Roche's legendary tendency to invent details of her past to impress the public and increase her audience. Thus, the author of the 'preface' takes the name, De la Roche, for granted and claims that she is the descendant of a French family and one of her ancestors was guillotined during the French revolution. The rewriter rightly assesses the Canadian novelist's English and Irish descendancy and her Torontonian childhood in the middle of nature. She is depicted as a "sensitive", "shy", "city unfriendly" nature that started to write when she was young. Details to reach a (pre-commnist and post-communist) Romanian audience of women are provided: her unsual surname is Spanish and masculine. It was chosen by her father in the memory of a friend. The rewriter informs us that her first call was to make drawings for books so she took drawing lessons at the University of Toronto but gave up her artistic inclinations in order to write literature. She kept the habit of writing on her knees and draw fantastic characters. The Romanian prefacer correctly identifies *Jalna* as De la Roche's third novel who brought her international fame and the Atlantic Monthly Prize. The novel was selected from 1100 manuscripts and the jury's choice was justified by the success of the book. The success was so great that the editors asked for more novels of the same kind. In this way the *Jalna* series, the famous chronicle of the Whiteoaks in sixteen volumes was born. In the last paragraph, readers are told that, in this chronicle, Mazo de la Roche portrays the life of an English family that came to Canada. De la Roche is said to have the talent of 'giving life to her characters'. The Whiteoaks are unforgettable as they come into our lives in a 'true to life' manner. Renny, Wakefield and the amazing grandmother whose tyrannical and seductive personality rules over her entire family are mentioned. The Romanian rewriter finally argues, in an impressionistic manner, that what makes *Jalna* a pleasant and original book, and an agreeable reading are: the 'limpid atmosphere' of the long story, the strong characters 'colorfully depicted' and a certain type of humour.

In spite of the scarcity of critical studies on the Jalna series for the period under discussion – no other article came out besides the one in *Adevărul literar și artistic* (*The Literary and Artistic Truth*) already discussed above – Mazo de la Roche was one of the most popular writers of the time. Six of her volumes of the *Jalna* series were translated by Jul. Giurgea and published by Remus Cioflec Publishing House in the 1930's and 1940's; most of them are no longer available today in their original edition. Strangely enough, the main bibliography in the field, i.e. *The Chronological Dictionary of the Translated Novel in Romania from Origins to 1989* (2005) does not mention Mazo de la Roche among the translated authors for the period discussed above or for the communist years. On the other hand, Giurgea's translations were republished at Venus Publishing House in the 1990s, along with the rest of the series.

To conclude, the first decades of the 20th century mark the true beginning of the reception (mainly via translations) of Canadian literature in Romania. In terms of literary genre, these are mainly translations from English Canadian prose, usually (fragments of) short stories and novels. Poems or critical studies devoted to Canadian poets are few. The favorite authors of the period were Stephen Leacock and Mazo de la Roche. The former was probably selected for his sharp sense of humour, the latter for the accessibility of her novels. As a general remark, very few Canadian authors were discussed or translated in the periodicals of those years whereas most of the important

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writers (Lucy Maud Montgomery, Thomas Chandler Haliburton or Susanna Moodie) were not mentioned at all.

2. Communist Romania

2.1. Ideologically Purposeful Literature

The translations from Dyson Carter, a minor literary figure hardly mentioned by literary histories, come as an ideological response to the requirements of mainstream ideology which aimed at defeating 'the class enemy'. The prefaces to his two novels translated into Romanian are especially marked by Marxist grids. As Troncotă (2006: 24) notes, the basic idea of communist propaganda was to neutralize the 'catastrophic effects of American imperialism' by means of the 'class war'. According to Marx's theory, in communist visions of propaganda, the liberal professions are not social classes; the working class alone holds the power and it has to struggle and fight unceasingly because 'the class enemy never sleeps'. Furthermore, the individuals that have not adjusted to the new realities are still embedded in a 'bourgeois mentality' and need correction (idem, p. 38). The 'crisis of bourgeois culture' was also a communist favorite cliché in the context of a socialist ideology for the working class that needed to replace the creation of intellectuals. M. Roller's works on the history of Romania and the history of philosophy should be regarded as an ideological victory against American imperialism that tried to poison socialist ideals with the rotten capitalist ideology (idem, p. 77-78). 'The class war' is against cosmopolitism, the opposite of nationalism. This is the era when 'homo comunistus' came to life. According to Lucian Boia (1998: 46), this 'new man' is a force of nature, strongly influenced by the Soviet model in the 1950s and comes in six shapes: the Stahanovist worker – a superworker comparable to the modern superhero; the Soviet woman who is as hard-working and as powerful as a man and fulfils the triple role of mother, soldier and worker; the Soviet child who is a privileged figure in communist mythology as a symbol of its future; the soldier; the man of science who revolutionised the filed of knowledge and technology like no other capitalist fellow and the party activist.

Dyson Carter's works were published by ESPLA (The State Publishing House for Literature and the Arts) in the 1950s, the Stalinist period when censorship was more active than in the years to come. The politically-'progressive' features of Dyson Carter's *Fatherless Sons* (originally published in 1955 by Progress Books, Toronto) can also be noticed in the Romanian translation and the best testimony is A. Cernea's foreword to the 1958 edition. Everything in this preface is 'progressive': the Canadian author of the book, the characters (i.e. "Rupert is an honest intellectual, a true friend of the workers, a visionary of the bright and progressive future of mankind" (1958: V)) and even a trade union that was set up during the war in the fictional town of Deep Rock. Its counterpart is a dissenting yellow trade union which, according to the instructions received from the US is trying to induce hate against the Soviet Union, Popular China and the entire socialist world. The characters of this progressive novel are either capitalists, i.e. social class enemies and atomic war instigators, (the American imperialists as represented by the owners of the nickel mines) or socialists, i.e. fighters for peace, guardians of communist values and friends of the masses (the exploited mine workers and their poor families). In his preface, A. Cernea also makes reference to Carter's previous novel, *Tomorrow Is with Us*, translated into Romanian in 1954, thus showing that the Romanian public was already acquainted with the work of this highly talented progressive novelist. According to Cernea, the Canadian writer had described

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in his previous novel "the McCarthyism debauchery in Canada" (idem, p. X) and his work reflects Canada's economic, political and military submission to the American imperialism. Moreover, Cernea claims that the novel is also referring to the increasing economic problems (doubled by a high unemployment rate and strikes) further to the US crisis.

The image of Canada portrayed in Cernea's preface to the Romanian edition is that of a weak country lying in the shadow of a stronger neighbor, The United States, which dragged it into several wars that Canada was not necessarily interested in. Due to its geographical position, Canada is seen as a Switzerland of the North American continent, a country which should have remained politically neutral:

> "The entire population of the country (Canada) is threatened by a new war, a war that will be even more terrible than the previous ones, i.e. the atomic war prepared by the American imperialists (…). It is well known that Canada is an active participant in the atomic arming conducted by the USA. It is one of the pylons of the aggressive Atlantic coalition. It set 'volunteers' that fought under the American commandment in the Korean war (…). Canada is a wealthy country and its favorable geographical position could have been its guard against the torrent of great historical conflicts, i.e. it could have been an American Switzerland, a neutral country, spared from the burden and sacrifices of war (…). Yet Canada did not follow Switzerland's example. Its membership to the British Commonwealth and, in the previous decades, the stronger dominance of American imperialism determined Canada's involvement both in England's colonial war against African negroes between 1901 and 1902 and in the two World Wars." (idem, p. VI)

Furthermore, A. Cernea believes that Dyson Carter's novel helps Romanian readers understand the changes that occurred in the public opinion and political orientation of Canada in the 1960's. As a socialist and communist partisan, he is convinced that the elections that took place in 1958 in Canada, when the Liberal Party was defeated after twenty years of government, is actually a bigger victory against the pro-American line in foreign policy. In Cernea's opinion, *Fatherless Sons* encapsulates the anatomy and problematic nature of capitalist society on a larger scale as "not only in Canada, but also in other countries of the world are the fight of working people against the harder and harder exploitation of monopolist capital and the threat of the atomic war planned by American imperialists, central and vital problems" (idem, p. XI).

In his "On Canada, McCarthyism and Dyson Carter's Novel" – the preface to *Tomorrow Is with Us*, Horia Liman adopts a more historically-oriented position than his fellow rewriter, A. Cernea. The paratext includes some critical considerations on the literary work as such ["Dyson Carter's novel has the merit of showing how elements against McCarthyist methods employed by Canadian instigators succeed in mobilizing large masses of population in the patriotic fight against fascist debauchery and war hysteria" (1954: 13)] and its characters [professor Sommerville, a tool in the hands of McCarthyist fascism, "unscrupulously joins the conspiracy against progressive elements; he signs without hesitation…the declaration meant to justify the persecution of the communists Kirby and Langner, of the student Calvin Finley and the worker Patty Dunn" (1954: 14)]. However, the prefacer's main intention is to give a negative historical and cultural account of Canada by means of interpretations marked by Marxist grids. From the very beginning of the text, irony can be sensed as the author argues that Canada is said to be "a great Western democracy" (1958: 7) and makes reference to episodes from the early history of the land when Anglo-Saxon and French

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"civilizers" massacred the Aboriginal population whose followers were banished to the frozen North or isolated in the dirty reservation-colonies of the South. "The great Western democracy" which deprived its Aboriginal peoples of their basic human rights is compared, by the Romanian rewriter, with greedy Crusaders in their work of extermination. Liman further argues that Canada was said to be the 49th state of the United States and, although "*de jure* it continues to be part of the British Commonwealth; it is actually an American semi-colony under American occupation governed by Washington (sic!)" (1958: 10). The author supports his assertions by quoting Pearson, the Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1953 who feared that sooner or later Canada would unavoidably join the United States and it was useless to resist.

Carter is praised by the Romanian rewriter for revealing the mechanism of anti-communist trials, and the nothingness of fascist tricks meant to compromise the fighters for peace and social freedom and discourage them in their enterprises (idem, p. 13). The exploitation of the working class is a recurrent theme. McCarthyism is defined as the American version of Hitlerist debauchery and is meant to bring the death sentence to noble peace fighters such as the Rosenbergs in the novel. Further on, Liman makes considerations on the Canadian media, "the daughter of the British and American media". The Canadian Press is said to be an ultra-reactionary institution which broadcasts American and British news which lies and manipulates people. McCarthyism aims at spreading terror and is best impersonated by professor Sommerville in the novel, a character in the novel who is a humble sevant of monopolists and a supporter of the imperialists' criminal plans (idem, p. 14).

As a general remark, such types of paratextual elements under the form of prefaces are the mark of the interpretive community of the first period of communism (i.e. the Stalinist one) whose aim is to manipulate the target readership into adopting active ideological positions against harmful capitalist/ imperialist elements and the class enemy. Published by ESPLA a publishing house which focused on this type of literature in its early days, Carter's two novels were the perfect choice for communist rewriters since their aim was to change the horizon of expectations of the Romanian readers; from escape literature, popular and humorist fiction (e.g. Mazo de la Roche and Stephen Leacock for the pre-communist period) that defined the horizon of expectations of the Inter-War and WWII readers, new literary socialist themes were introduced such as the fight for peace of the working class, best represented by Carter's miners in *Fatherless Sons*.

2.2. Canonical Novels

Hugh MacLennan's *Barometer Rising* (literally rendered into Romanian as *Barometru în urcare*) translated by Livia Deac, is a very important canonical novel and it was published in the early 1970s by 'Univers' Publishing House. In her course on Canadian fiction in English, the Romanian rewriter M. Bottez quotes the author himself when he confessed that he had written his book in an era when Canadian letters were still under construction, to put it in rough terms:

> "When I first thought of writing this novel [*Barometer Rising*, published in 1941] Canada was virtually an uncharacterized country. It seemed to me then that if our literature was to be anything but purely regional, it must be directed to at least two audiences. One was the Canadian public, which took the Canadian scene for granted but

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> never defined its particular essence. The other was the international public, which had never thought about Canada at all, and knew nothing whatever about us." (2004: 60)

The importance of *Barometer Rising* is also underlined in the Romanian 'Note on the volume' the anonymous preface to the communist translation. Here, the tone is marked by a Marxist grid, especially in the image of Canada (and its involvement in the war just for the sake of British purposes) it creates for the Romanian readers:

> "The publishing of the novel in 1941 is a landmark in the cultural history of Canada, i.e. the beginning of a modern national literature, freed from the calques of English models, a literature that aimed at acquainting the entire world with the existence of Canadians as a nation having its own traditions, and was not just a mere hybrid between England and the United States (…). Halifax, the natural setting of the book is a traditional colonial town which is very sensible to the cliché of Great Britain, the mother from which it was separated too long ago to remember. In the author's vision, the life in Halifax becomes the microcosm of the entire Canada, with its harsh conflicts between the arrogant descendants of the former English colonists and the followers of the American natives; MacLennan also makes reference to the absurdity of dragging Canada into a war that was destined to serve England's interests and did not concern Canada at all." (1971: 5-6)

Callaghan's *They Shall Inherit the Earth* (1986) comes with a short biographical note. The author's works are listed for the Romanian reader's general information: his first novel, *Strange Fugitive (Ciudata fugară)*, was published in 1928 in the USA. However, the subsequent novels brought him international fame. The rewriter lists the most important ones: *They Shall Inherit the Earth (Ei vor moșteni pământul)* – 1935, *The Loved and the Lost (Cei iubiți și cei pierduți – 1951)* that granted him the Governor General Award, *A Passion in Rome (Patimi în cetatea eternă)* – 1961, *A Fine and Private Place (Un loc frumos și singuratic)* – 1975, and *A Time for Judas (Vremea lui Iuda)* – 1983. In a quotation from Edmund Wilson at the end of the short presentation, he is compared to Chekhov and Turgenev. This claim is also made by Pădureleanu in an article of criticism on Callaghan in *România Literară (Literary Romania)*. Margaret Atwood's *The Edible Woman*, in its 1989 version via a short note on the back cover. *O femeie obișnuită* (1969) is said to be Atwood's first novel, a modern novel that spreads 'authenticity' and 'humour' addressing, in an apparently minor register, the psychological frailty of the human being caught in the inexorable context of the subtle determinism of a consumerist society.

2.3. Critical Studies Published in Periodicals

During the communist years Romanian periodicals dealing with foreign literature (*România literară/ Literary Romania*, *Secolul XX/ The 20th Century*) focused on: canonical novelists that enjoyed book-length treatment in the 1970s and 1980s (Hugh MacLennnan, Morley Callaghan), English and French Canadian poets, either commented upon or not and special attention was given to the publication of poetry anthologies, Canada and the arts (e.g.: "What is new in Canadian Culture"). As far as the image of Canada is concerned, little can be said, in the sense that most (impressionistic) criticism is dealing with the works of Canadian novelists and poets. Only articles such as "Ce e nou în cultura canadiană" ("What is new in Canadian Culture") by Ion Caraion built a cultural (and not just literary) image of the country and its peculiarities. Thus, the Romanian rewriter gives an account of Montreal to the

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Romanian readers (taken from an issue of the Francophone review *Liberté*) as the cultural centre of Québec. Moreover, our critic admires the initiative of Nicholas Catanoy – "a poet born in Romania who lives in Canada" (1970: 20) – supported by other Canadian authors (M. Avison, M. Atwood, G. Bowering, John Robert Colombo, Lionel Kearns, Irving Layton, etc.) to publish an anthology of (72) Romanian poets in English translation.

A stereotypical image of Canada in Romania is given in *Lumile canadiene/ Canadian Worlds* by Radu Șerban at the end of Virgil Teodorescu and Petronela Negoșanu's study on English Canadian poetry published in *Secolul XX/ The 20th Century*. The author (1975: 29, *passim*) argues that Canadian letters are little known to the European in general and, in our country, authors such as Mazo de La Roche and Louis Hémon received indirectly via translations have quickly been forgotten. Moreover, seminal works like Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism* did not go beyond philologists' circles. In our understanding of Canada, we seem to be guided by misconceptions; thus, one of the most representative images we have on Canada is that of the legendary lonely hunter wandering through the eternal woods that lie from the US border to the North Pole. Șerban further argues that for us, the image of Canada is that of a hibernating North blurred by fogs whose inhabitants escape the type of classifications practiced by monolithic cultures, be they modern or primitive. The impossibility to define a dominant behavioral feature such as French bonhomie, English sobriety, Scottish obstinacy or Indian and Eskimo ancestral silence prevents us from grasping any symbolic image of the Canadian.

A more objective and neutral tone can be sensed in Al. Andrițoiu and Ursula Șchiopu's foreword that accompanies *The Anthology of French Canadian Poetry* (1976). Here Canada is seen as mosaic or salad bowl whose nations are living in a "rich, modern and extremely well developed country that has a civilization to be proud of and where culture takes various shapes" (1976: V). The authors also speak about a distinct Canadian culture with American influences commonly shared by Anglophones and Francophones, irrespective of their historical disputes.

Interestingly enough, unlike the rewriters (mainly prefacers) of ideologically purposeful literary pieces (Dyson Carter's fiction) or canonical novels (Hugh MacLennan's *Barometer Rising*), the authors of the articles in periodicals are rather neutral in their tone when in comes to Canada and its authors. The latter focus less on influencing the Romanian public in its negative perception of Western capitalism, and more on introducing Canadian writers and culture.

3. English Canadian Fiction in Post-Communist Romania

3.1. Critical Studies on English Canadian Literature in Post-communist Periodicals

The post-communist years are the most intense for the reception of Canadian literature in Romania. Canadian Studies Centers were founded in major universities of the country, undergraduate and master programmes on Canadian-related issues were established and the first doctoral theses and academic papers on Canadian Studies were published. An increasing interest in Canadian Studies and Canadian literature was also reflected at the level of translations from English Canadian authors and the critical studies devoted to them. The first decade after 1989 mainly saw the publishing of works that were unavailable during the communist years (e.g. the translations from William Gibson's SF novels in the first decade after the fall of the communist regime and cheap

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sensational novels). However, after 2000 many novels by important Canadian authors were translated, not to mention the critical pieces devoted to them (not only in periodicals, but also in academic writings where Margaret Atwood, Leonard Cohen and Michael Ondaatje are usually discussed in individual chapters). The translations from postmodern authors are usually outstanding, being carried out by the Romanian Canadianists that contributed to the field or other prominent literary figures. There was a single exception, namely Gianina Chirazi's poor translator of Atwood's *Negotiating with the Dead. A Writer on Writing*, sharply criticized in periodicals. Moreover, the post-communist years also saw the rise of new media of reception, i.e. film adaptations of Canadian novels and the distribution of literature with daily papers at lower prices. In the latter case, translations were usually carried out by young inexperienced translators at the beginning of their career and show less accuracy.

In terms of literary criticism as well, the number of critical references exceeds by far the previous reception periods and comparisons between figures are quite impressive. Over 100 articles on English Canadian authors came out in the important (on-line and printed) Romanian periodicals as compared to (about) 50 in the pre-communist and communist years. Articles refer either to the original work when it came out in Canada or to the translated version, not to mention the critical pieces devoted to the film adaptations of Canadian works (*The English Patient*). Interpretations range from biographical, to impressionistic, psychological and postmodern (sometimes with mythological influences). International critics are also quoted and numerous parallels are made with other authors, works and characters (be they Romanian or international). Except for two articles discussing the poor translation of Margaret Atwood's *Negotiating with the Dead. A Writer on Writing*, there are few reflections pertaining to translation criticism, usually no more than a line on the novel's good quality or a translation strategy.

3.2. Post-communist Views on Major Postmodern Authors. The Case of Leonard Cohen

More than a third of the number of articles on Canadian authors is devoted to Leonard Cohen (42 of 129). However, most of the critical pieces focus on his music and poetry and only few of them discuss his novels. Mircea Mihăieş's articles on the songs of Leonard Cohen published in *Idei în dialog* are included in his biographical volume on Cohen which came out at Polirom Publishing House. The articles discussing Cohen's novels refer either to the first edition of *Beautiful Losers* and *The Favourite Game* in 2003, when the two novels came out in separate volumes, or to the hard-covered copy of 2008 when the works were gathered in a single volume by the same Polirom Publishing House. The first critical article on Cohen's work published in postcommunist Romania is Irimia's *Lumi în schimbare/ Changing Worlds* which came out in 2000, before any of the Canadian author's works received book-length treatment in our country. The critic (Irimia, 2000) starts by making a distinction between the less known younger Canadian novelist Matt Cohen and the renowned novelist, poet and musician Leonard Cohen who "along with Margaret Atwood and Michael Ondaatje, managed to free the Canadian novel and poetry from the pre-modern canon of the 1960s". The Romanian Canadianist aims at 'making an inventory'of the theoretical assumptions in the criticism of the past decades and apply them to the 'emblematic' work of the Canadian writer, i.e. the novel *Beautiful Losers* which by 1998 had come to its third edition. In a sample of academic criticism, he cites Leslie Fiedler and his

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blurring of the boundary between high and popular culture in the postmodernist spirit of *Cross the Border, Close the Gap* (1969), only to relate it to the *Beautiful Losers* (1966) as a reflection of Fiedler's assumptions on literature. He further mentions Linda Hutcheon who analyzed Cohen's novel twenty years later employing Fiedler's dichotomy between high and popular culture as the central theme of Cohen's work. This was done "from a Bakhtinian dialogic perspective to a social-cultural hermeneutics" (*ibidem*), making use of the concept of carnivalesque in Rabelais that was reshaped by Cohen in the context of the fear and discomfort he felt in the wake of the technological society of his novel. Such a frustrating universe can be dealt with by means of obscenity, sexuality, comic strips, cinema, music and pop culture in general, passing through Mircea Eliade's "terror of history" as understood by the Joycean nightmare of violently exerted action of the illogical, sinous event. The young scholar disagrees with Hutcheon's vision which draws more on structuralist tendencies and less on postmodern criticism and Cultural Studies in spite of her major contributions to the latter fields. As a response to Hutcheon's claims, Irimia feels that, in *Beautiful Losers*, we are not witnessing the "terror of history", but its end, as in postmodernism the distinction between high and popular culture is no longer perceived. He also speaks about the novel's intertextuality and Cohen's anticipation of reader-response criticism as the writer turns his reader into a co-creator of the literary text. Referring to the line at the end of the novel, "Welcome to you, who read me today!", he quotes Hutcheon who claims that "the intertext is pretty obvious but there is none of the hostility of 'Hypocrite lecteur, mon semblable, mon frère' – Baudelaire's famous Prologue in his *Fleurs du mal;* nor is there none of the aggression of Eliot's modernist recalling of it in *The Waste Land*. The writer of postmodern metafiction wants to lure readers into the act of meaning-making, to tantalize us with our own expectations – if only then ironically to thwart them." (1988: 42)

Another critic who examines Cohen's prose is Boris Marian in *România literară/ Literary Romania*. The article was written as a result of Romanian publication, in 1998, of a book on Leonard Cohen in Budapest, signed by Vlad Arghir, with a preface by Mircea Florian. Marian argues that Cohen is better known for his songs than for his literary works (2003: 13). Marian adopts an impressionistic stance which is quite different from Irimia's postmodern academic approaches in *Observator cultural/ The Cultural Observer*. He argues that Cohen's *Beautiful Losers* was as successful in 1966, when it came out, as in 1993, when it was reedited. Like his poetry, the novel reveals Cohen as a nostalgic character, who resembles a minstrel of the early Middle Ages. Cohen's refusal of modernity shown in the excessive sexuality displayed in the novel, and his 'greed for novelty', make him comparable to Horia Roman Patapievici and his *Omul recent* (2001). Marian believes that, as a poet, Cohen can condense, in one line, the essence of evil in human society, an issue which philosophers or theorists such as Patapievici could only explore in longer passages.

Alice Popescu's *Călătorie prin lumile suspendate ale lui Leonard Cohen/ Traveling in the Hanging Worlds of Leonard Cohen* (2008) published in *Dilema veche/ The Old Dilemma* deals with Cohen's two novels in their second edition. The author emphasizes the aesthetics of the ugly in Cohen's prose which, in her opinion, can only be attributed to the miracle of male characters and never to that of female ones; this is because "as in arts or music, ugly women may be interesting, attractive or expressive, sensual and aesthetic but never beautiful" (Popescu, 2008). However, there are ugly books and men that ended in a breathtaking beauty and such is the instance of Leonard Cohen and his work, notes Popescu, in an impressionistic manner. She supports her

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statement by a line in “Book One, The History of Them All” from *Beautiful Losers*, “I am an old scholar, better-looking now than when I was young” (1993: 7). The reviewer argues that *Beautiful Losers* are people in their personal development, who want more from themselves and are exposed to temporal and social erosion (in the 1960s, the time of the Beatniks, the flower-power movement and sexual revolution). She quotes from Mircea Mihăieș’s preface to the novel who claims that the values represented by the characters are dangerous for them in the first place as they are deemed to fall prey to the pleasure principle which is close to the instinct and premonition of death. In discussing the female character and narrator Edith, the critic arguess that her image seems to rewrite the degradation of a Buzzatian love in Cohen’s prose. Popescu also claims that the author subjected Edith to all the stages of the ugliness, humiliation and deliberate disguise in two ‘challenging’ and ‘intelligent’ novels at the level of technique by means of postmodern instruments such as ‘narrative manipulations’, ‘stylistic cuts’, intertextuality and ‘allusive, playful, comic refinement’, etc. Alice Popescu compares Edith to ‘a much more sophisticated Justine’, probably alluding to the female character in Sade’s *Justine or The Misfortunes of Virtue*. She concludes that Cohen’s writing, in its apparent pornographic, scatologic, religious, Joycean, biographical, nostalgic, dramatic, ironical, cynical, scholarly dimension remains timeless in its attempt to escape the anxiety of the world as Breavman’s love for Shell in yet another favourite game.

Thus, most of the articles focusing on Cohen’s novels either draw on postmodern interpretations and Cultural Studies (i.e. Irimia’s critical views presented above) or are predominantly impressionistic in nature (e.g.: Boris Marian). Intertextual instances are a general feature of such short criticism, hence the allusions to other authors and characters in their works, not to mention the comparisons of Cohen to other writers. It is generally assumed that Cohen’s work was received in Romania later than in other countries since the translations of his novels only came out in 2003, almost 40 years after they had been originally published in Canada. Moreover, the only book-length critical attempt at discussing Cohen’s work in Romania (namely Mircea Mihăieș’s volume) has been well received in postcommunist periodicals and inscribed to the sphere of lyricism and traditional impressionism (Irimia, 2006: 42). There are no articles devoted to translation criticism as far as Cohen’s works are concerned but the good quality of the translations has been mentioned (Irimia, 2003).

To conclude, most of the articles focusing on Cohen’s novels either draw on postmodern interpretations and Cultural Studies (i.e. Irimia’s critical views presented above) or are predominantly impressionistic in nature (e.g.: Boris Marian). Intertextual instances are a general feature of such short criticism, hence the allusions to other authors and characters in their works, not to mention the comparisons of Cohen to other writers. It is generally assumed that Cohen’s work was received in Romania later than in other countries since the translations of his novels only came out in 2003, almost 40 years after they had been originally published in Canada. Moreover, the only book-length critical attempt at discussing Cohen’s work in Romania (namely Mircea Mihăieș’s volume) has been well received in postcommunist periodicals and inscribed to the sphere of lyricism and traditional impressionism (Irimia, 2006: 42). There are no articles devoted to translation criticism as far as Cohen’s works are concerned but the good quality of the translations has been mentioned (Irimia, 2003).

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Conclusions

English Canadian literature moved from the peripheral place it occupied in the Romanian cultural and literary polysystem during pre-communist and communist Romania to a central place in the post-communist years. Canadian literature was almost unnoticed in the period between the two world wars when literary periodicals mainly published fragments from the work of Stephen Leacock either accompanied by short critical comments or not. The only author that benefited from book-length treatment was Mazo de la Roche, writer of popular fiction for women. The former was probably chosen for his sharp sense of humour and the latter, for commercial criteria. Very few Canadian authors were mentioned in the periodicals of those years and in some cases they were taken for American writers (e.g.: Stephen Leacock in *Adevărul literar și artistic/ The Literary and Artistic Truth*). The articles in periodicals adopt a historical-biographical approach and the critics' considerations rely on impressionistic considerations as our analyses of the reviews on Mazo de la Roche and Stephen Leacock have shown. Since the communist years marked a shift of perspective with respect to translations and the translator's status, the most renowned publishing houses were founded and the unprofessional translators of the period between the two world wars were replaced with professionals (remarkable Romanian philologists and professors of foreign languages), the number of translations from Canadian authors and the articles published in periodicals increased. The translations concerned both ideologically purposeful authors (as illustrated by Dyson Carter's novels) published in the first years of the regime and canonical novelists. Our analysis of the paratextual elements revealed that not only prefaces to the works of progressive authors such as Dyson Carter were marked by Marxist grids, but also those to the translations from canonical novels (as in the case of Hugh MacLennan's *Barometer Rising*). The image on Canada and the Canadians created to the Romanian public was generally an unfavourable one. Canadians were portrayed as partisans of the American imperialists, social class enemies, representatives of the exploiting bourgeoisie and atomic war instigators having socialists, i.e. fighters for peace, guardians of communist values and friends of the masses as their opponents. Stereotypical images Romanian rewriters showed about Canada and the Canadians in the communist years also include: a hibernating North blurred by fogs and the figure of the lonely hunter wandering through the eternal woods that lie from the US border to the North Pole. The articles on novelists in periodicals were more elaborated than those in the pre-communist years, showing a keen awareness of Canadian letters. Although the critical considerations did not go beyond an impressionistic stance, opinions from international critics were also brought into play to support Romanian ones (as in the case of Callaghan compared to Chekhov and Turgenev). Marking the most dynamic period of literary reception, the post-communist years refine the reception process via new media (film adaptations of Canadian novels and literature sold with papers at special prices). In our analysis of Canadian literature during this period, we focused on the postmodern figure of Leonard Cohen as rendered by our periodicals during the last two decades. The critics' approaches are either postmodern and draw on Cultural Studies or are predominantly impressionistic in nature. Finally, we could argue that this highly dynamic period of popularising Canadian literary and cultural values has not come to an end. In the near future further translations from Canadian literature and other forms of rewriting it are highly predictable. It would be no exaggeration to say that now, in Romania, after

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almost a century of cultural dialogue, and in the era of globalisation, Canada has turned from a faraway exotic space into an increasingly familiar 'other'.

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