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Thoughts on Untranslatability Occasioned by Mihai Eminescu's Poetry

Abstract: The present paper is a theoretical attempt at grasping the translatability issues that Mihai Eminescu's poetry has the potential of raising. Looking at the age-long debate underpinning translation studies and the process of translation itself that polarizes the field into apparently the two viable options of possibility and impossibility, we will try to circumscribe those vulnerable areas that appear problematic to Eminescu's translators and critics in terms of a successful rendition to the target-language. In doing so, we will navigate questions such as the cultural imprint of a language, the language-thought hypothesis, the ineffable nature of lyrical musicality as well as the poet's particular style. After the introductory segment which elaborates on the binomial nature of translation (fidelity/infidelity, naturalizing/foreignizing, equivalence/adequacy, etc.) we dive into the specific nature of Eminescu's lyrical work in terms of its deep cultural, autochthonous resonances that seem to be "so Romanian" that they are deemed impossible to translate, its ineffable nature that reveals itself intuitively rather than rationally, its particular and immanent bond between the layers of the creative product (prosodic, morpho-syntactic, ideational) as well as its revolutionary nature of reshaping Romanian language. We analyze each of the aforementioned elements in relationship with their potential to pose problems to the translation process.

Keywords: Mihai Eminescu, translation studies, untranslatability, language, culture;

Introduction

Often viewed as an act of betrayal, translation appears to be an eminently imperfect process, where perfection is understood as complete equivalence between two languages, between two literary creations. Constantly oscillating between the option of maintaining the inherent "foreignness" of the source text (the "foreignizing translation" which preserves *tale quale*, the untranslatable elements of the original culture) or equating it with similar elements in the target culture (the "naturalizing translation" through which the untranslatable elements are negotiated at the level of local alternatives), translation essentially reveals a negotiation between identity and otherness that we often find as pivotal in discourses on the configuration of national

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identity. Far from manifesting itself, however, only as an identity conflict, a struggle to “defend and illustrate” cultural specificity, the act of translation represents the first moment of contact, of initiating a dialogue with otherness as well as the actual form in which a literary work circulates beyond the boundaries of its emergence.

For a long time, translation discourse was based on the impossibility/possibility dialectic. The impossibility of translation was famously theorized by B. Lee Whorf (Whorf 1997) and E. Sapir (Sapir 1921) and also discussed, among many others, by Humboldt (Humboldt 1999) and du Bellay (du Bellay 1878). It essentially consists of the premise that there are different divisions within linguistic systems, impossible to overlap, divisions that are found at the phonological, conceptual, and syntactic levels. Therefore, each language implies a different version of reality, being closely related to the human being and the world. As Humboldt's conception of the language/culture monolith shows, saying “cheval” is not the same as saying “horse” or “cavallo”. This would seem to suggest a fundamental incompatibility between linguistically filtered worldviews and, hence, the flawed possibility of transfer: texts, as components of cultural ensembles through which different ways of perceiving the world are expressed, are theoretically impossible to translate, also taking into account that beyond these cultural-linguistic “gaps”, each language treats differently the relationship between referent and meaning, between expressing the real and expressing something other than what is real, by which we mean the ineffable, the mysterious, what is hidden and what cannot be said. Similar to Sapir and Whorf's perspective, according to which the impossibility of translation actually reveals the failure to superimpose the different cutouts of reality (be they phonological, conceptual, or syntactic), is du Bellay's response in the well-known *Défense et Illustration de la Langue Française* (du Bellay 1914) on the act of translation, considered an ineffective means of enriching the French language and also an unprofitable occupation. After reading du Bellay's theories, Georges Mounin (Mounin 2016, 13-26) proposes a classification of his arguments in favor of the impossibility of translation. From a semantic point of view, translation is not possible given the specific semantic characteristics of the lexemes of each language. At the morphological level, the impediment lies in the different nature of grammatical constructions. Phonetic arguments highlight the musical and harmonic particularities of words and lexical combinations, while stylistic arguments postulate the impossibility of transposing the system of metaphors, allegories, and comparisons specific to a language. We thus see the formulation of the theory of complete resistance, manifested at all levels, according to which the impossibility of translation is a consequence of the lack of cultural and linguistic permeability.

If translation is considered to be an imperfect transfer, but nevertheless a transfer that does take place, we can talk about types of text and their resistance to translation. Therefore, from a translation studies perspective, the challenges lie in texts that are composed of various types of distortions of linguistic signifiers: philosophical texts, psychoanalytic texts, and poetic texts. Our analysis will focus on the latter type of text, noting that the main challenge in translating a poetic text is the inseparable union between signified and signifier, between sound and meaning.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, theorists such as Ricoeur (Ricoeur 2006), Schleiermacher (Schleiermacher 1813), Benjamin (Benjamin 1966), Ladmiral (Ladmiral 1972, 3-7), and Jakobson (Jakobson 1959) argue that translation is possible, but conditional on linguistic diversity and plurality. Translation therefore exists. It is the very result of this plurality and diversity of idioms. In his analysis of the act of translation and the translator's experience in his "struggle" with the original text, Ricoeur suggests abandoning the ideal of absolute identity between two languages and negotiating translation as an act that oscillates between fidelity and "betrayal". In turn, the translator's struggle with the text is meant to oscillate between disappointment and acceptance, as he moves from one level of textual resistance to another: starting from the presumption of untranslatability, passing through the fantasy of the perfect translation and then through the fear that translation, not being the original, is bound to be weak, and ending with the actual act of translation, seen as a gamble.

Theorizing these stages in his book, *On Translation*, Ricoeur mentions an initial phase marked by the translator's disappointment towards what he calls "equivalence without adequacy" (Ricoeur 2006, 7), on which the paradox of translation is based in the absence of a *tertium comparationis* that can be formulated in a perfect language, that is, a third text to which the success of a translation could be compared. Disappointment thus appears as a result of the impact of the translatable/untranslatable dichotomy that has always obsessed both translation theorists, fueling their anxieties (when they invoke the fact that each language has its own way of organizing and interpreting the world, semantic structures not being superimposable from one language to another, nor syntaxes equivalent to each other), and translators themselves (when they regret that their version has failed to capture the full expressiveness of the source-language). In the early stages of the translation process, the translator is haunted by the specter of imperfect translation, the subsequent struggle with a text peppered with untranslatable elements, and the dissatisfaction that comes with this realization. Gradually, the translator moves from this initial stage of disappointment to what Ricoeur calls acceptance, an immanent experience of mourning for the desire for perfection, by virtue of which the translator's commitment is forged, a translator who, in the end, takes on the task of translating with complete austerity. The act of translation is accompanied by a

dissatisfaction caused by the lack of complete equivalence, a dissatisfaction that stems from the acceptance of imperfection as a congenital principle of the act of translation. Thus, the dichotomy of translatable/untranslatable is replaced by the binomial equivalence/adequacy, the latter essentially implying the loss of the absolute nature of language and the overcoming of the two types of resistance (to translation) mentioned by Ricoeur: the resistance of the original and that of the language into which it is translated. Once the idea of translation as a gamble has been accepted and the experience of mourning has been felt, a second form of negotiation intervenes, this time linked to the relationship between Self(hood) and Otherness. Seen as the impossibility of serving two “masters”, namely the author of the original text and the target audience, translation is essentially a choice between bringing the author closer to the audience or bringing the audience closer to the author. These are the two tendencies of naturalizing and foreignizing, often summarily presented as fidelity and betrayal. Any act of translation involves, or rather reveals, the struggle that has always existed on a cultural level between the Self and the Other, between the specific and the foreign, a constant negotiation of the acceptable level of “foreignness” as long as it does not become harmful. Where the goal is to preserve the specificity of the target culture, translation is ethnocentric, annexationist, a refusal to open up to the Other, a mark of the sacralization of the mother tongue, sometimes even of fear or hatred of the foreign, perceived as a threat to linguistic identity. An example of this is the ethnocentric translation of Shakespeare's work in classical France, a movement well known precisely for its refusal to yield to foreignness, under the name of “belles infidèles”. On the other hand, so-called cosmopolitan, exoticizing translations reflect the ideal of contact with Otherness, which stems not only from respect for the Other, but also from the perspective that, in essence, self-knowledge can benefit from knowledge of the other. This ideal is found in the concept of *Bildung* theorized by Antoine Berman in his book *L'épreuve de l'étranger* (Berman 1995, 72-86) and reflects not so much a belief in the hospitality of language but a dual ambition to reveal the hidden depths of the source-language and to deprovincialize the mother tongue.

This brings us to the thesis of the possibility of translation, especially through Ricoeur's theory of equivalence without adequacy, a possibility theorized, on the one hand, as the result of the existence, beyond the plurality of languages, of hidden structures that bear the traces of a lost original language, a language that reflects, in turn, the existence of universals that the act of translation is intended to reconstruct. By replacing the hypothesis of those fundamental differences between idioms with the postulate of a universal lexicon of simple ideas, translation becomes possible and, from a certain point of view, perfectible, to the extent that it succeeds in illustrating those universals as faithfully as possible. Just as it is possible, within a language, for the same aspect to be formulated differently,

a similar reasoning can also apply to the transfer from one language to another. Jakobson, in turn, believes that regardless of the grammatical particularities, for example, of the language into which the translation is made, the total transfer of the conceptual information contained in the original is undoubtedly possible. Of course, a successful transfer does not mean perfect identity between the original and the translation, but what the theorist calls the result of the process of “creative transposition” (Jakobson 1959, 238), through which the translator identifies the most appropriate means to illustrate, in a similar manner, the information content of the original.

In the absence of a perfect translation, the challenge seems to be to construct comparable equivalences without identity, which the translator must discover. At this point, we can talk about the transition from craft to art, about the risk of creatively betraying the original, and finally, about the age-old imperfection of translation.

1. “Fields” of untranslatability in Eminescu’s poetry

In the paradigm of world literature, understood either as a network of text circulation, a hierarchy of literary canons, or a republic of letters, in the sense theorized by Casanova (Casanova 2016), translation is, through its eminently dialogical functionality, an essential element. Noting, based on patterns illustrated throughout Eastern Europe, that a small culture attempts to enter the arena of world literature by illustrating a specific voice, often personified by its national poet through whom that culture samples and displays its specificity, we can conclude that the main way for this “voice” to enter the international arena, in the hierarchy of world literary values, is undoubtedly through translation. Referring to Romanian culture and its declared national poet *par excellence*, an analysis of Eminescu's presence (if we can call it that) in the spectrum of what Casanova calls the World Republic of Letters presupposes, predominantly, an analysis of the efforts that have been made to translate the poet into languages of international circulation. Of course, universality (seen here as an attribute of value granted to Eminescu’s persona and creation) can be considered the prerogative of a vast ideation, irrigated by diverse cultural matrices, or as a creative revelation of those human universals, but universalization, understood here not as the potential to be universal, but as the process of introducing a work into the universal literary network, is achieved, at the most basic level, through translation, especially in the case of nations whose language does not benefit from a wide circulation.

We note, in the accounts of the translators of Eminescu's poetry, the same struggle with the text that Ricoeur talks about, the same game of deception and acceptance by virtue of which Eminescu is declared untranslatable and yet translated. In a previous analysis dedicated to the

translation of Eminescu's work into English and French (Lionte 2019, 122-137) which, even though is not the object of the present paper, sheds light on its arguments, the nuances of the negotiation between the original text and the target culture, the nature of the sacrifices made, and the translators' inclination towards an ethnocentric or exoticizing approach are revealed. We will limit ourselves here to noting, in short, the apologetic tone of most of the prefaces accompanying the translations, the translators' confessions about the difficulties they encountered and their efforts to preserve, in translation, either the essence of the idea or the metrical particularities of the original. We note, in particular, the frequency with which the attributes of untranslatability are used in connection with the challenge of Eminescu's text, as a way of explaining any shortcomings in the linguistic transfer. At this point, we may ask ourselves whether, both at the level of the translation process and at the level of the subsequent reception of the translation and prefaces, lamenting the untranslatable nature of Eminescu's work does not essentially lead to a cloistering, a confinement of the poet within the straitjacket of his language and culture. In other words, how can an untranslatable poet hope to become universal? In the following section, we will attempt to get to the root of the "untranslatability" problem of Eminescu's work based on the assumptions made in the exegesis.

2. The language-culture monolith

Considering the arguments put forward by Sapir, Whorf, Humboldt, and du Bellay to explain the impossibility of translation, we observe that they are similarly reiterated by Eminescu's translators to explain those "fields" of untranslatability in the poet's work. In this context, there are also semantic, morphological, and phonetic considerations that constitute obstacles to the translation of Eminescu's work. Before analyzing them, we can note how even a reductive point of view such as that of the language/culture monolith (similar to the idea of the incompatibility of different perspectives on reality) supports the thesis of the untranslatability of Eminescu's work by the fact that, as the national poet *par excellence*, Eminescu is destined to produce a work that reflects, embodies, and crowns the national specificity, namely the Romanian culture and people's view of the world. Let us return, however, to the three levels described above, on the basis of which the argument of the untranslatability of Eminescu's poetry was constructed.

When it comes to the influence of the indigenous elements in Eminescu's thinking and work, we note the title of innovator granted to the poet for his creative success in exploring and processing the Romanian language in all its virtualities. His poetry is appreciated precisely for the naturalness with which it incorporates the mixture of elements from the old Romanian language, its regional dialects, the cultured, neological richness of contemporaneity, and aspects of popular and familiar speech, a pre-existing

background which is in turn enriched by the creative intuition of the Romanian language's potentialities. Another essential aspect through which Eminescu's poetry claims its uniqueness is that of phonetic symbolism, of varied musicality that illustrates the imprint of an original style. There is, therefore, a style unique to Eminescu whose strength comes from what Frédéric Paulhan calls "langage-suggestion" (Paulhan 1929, 57), or, as M. Dragomirescu calls it, an almost ineffable emanation that arises from "the word structure, the turn of phrase, the breadth of periods, the internal and significant modulation that is felt in the sentence structure" and which, crystallized in an intertwining of rhythm, musicality, and suggestion with the ideational background, creates a unique harmony.

Nichita Stănescu speaks about this ineffable quality that influences on a harmonic, sonic level in *The Book of Rereading*, in which he declares Eminescu "the most difficult Romanian poet and the most incomprehensible" (Stănescu 1972, 111). This incomprehensibility, as an attribute of Eminescu's work, seems to materialize in a kind of declared fear on the part of the poet of misinterpretation. It is no less true, however, that Stănescu's confession reveals an alternative connection with the text, on a subjective, inner level, as a form of almost atavistic resonance with the sonic depths of Eminescu's work, a resonance which is, in essence, also a form of understanding, of personal interpretation. Because, even though it "seems incomprehensible" (*Ibidem*), Eminescu's poem is "full of meaning" (*Ibidem*), it touches, fascinates, and reaches the reader through an indescribable charm that makes Stănescu declare that "Eminescu was as intimate as a heart" (*Ibidem*). We can note prematurely, based on these observations, that it is precisely these attributes that place the poet at the forefront of the Romanian literary canon, namely the complex expression of a national specificity, the creative intuition of the processing of the virtualities of language, and the ineffable complexity of harmony, that may constitute critical points in the act of translation. Based on Nichita Stănescu's statements, we may ask ourselves to what extent Eminescu can be translated if he appears to be misunderstood even by his fellow countrymen?

In the debate on the possibility/impossibility of translating Eminescu, there are firm opinions and also attempts to reconcile the extremes. In the first category, we find Tudor Arghezi's well-known and seemingly paradoxical statement: "Being very Romanian, Eminescu is universal" (Arghezi 1983, 97). Of course, by this, the poet does not support the universal character (through translation) of Eminescu's work, but refers to the power of representation, on a universal level, of the Romanian culture through the voice of the writer. Our statement is based on the fact that Arghezi laments, in the lines that follow, the imperfect nature of the translations of Eminescu's poems up to that point, which he considers "honest, didactic attempts" (*Ibidem*). Believing that "the lock of languages cannot be unlocked with foreign keys" (*Ibidem*), the writer refers in

particular to poetry, as a creative expression much closer to the intimate underpinnings of language, through those ambiguous games and mechanisms that render “vocabularies powerless” (*Ibidem*). Similar to Nichita Stănescu's statements regarding the “incomprehensibility” of Eminescu's poems, Arghezi's discourse reveals the same hermeneutic complexity encountered when approaching the poet's work, by virtue of which “Eminescu cannot be translated even into Romanian” (*Ibidem*).

Vladimir Streinu also focuses on the issue of transfer. Although he acknowledges the limited circulation of the Romanian language in the realm of universal culture, he nevertheless considers Eminescu to be the greatest post-Romantic poet in the world. Unlike Arghezi, whose opinions seem to derive from his own conception regarding the possibilities of translation, Streinu supports his argument by reviewing the key moments in which, up until 1940, the Romanian poet penetrated the European consciousness, mentioning some of the translations into French, German, or Italian by authors such as M. Miller-Verghe, Carmen Sylva, and Ramiro Ortiz. What the critic seems to suggest in his analysis is that, even during those times, that “European consciousness” inevitably placed him among the universal poets. Of course, where the transfer is flawed and the reception imperfect (as in the case of Thibaudet, who sees Eminescu as a “chansonnetist”), the fault lies with the translations (and thus with the translators) who, as Streinu says, “partial in their selection, surpassed by the aesthetics of the time, preferred, based on the harsh principle of any translation to be either “faithful and ugly” or “unfaithful and beautiful” (Croce), the most serious risk of ugly fidelity” (Streinu 1989, 241-242). However, regardless of the limited circulation of the Romanian language, seen as an obstacle to the poet's universality, Streinu's argument is unequivocal: the obstacle is, in the end, an outdated concern, since the authors of Eminescu studies in Italian, Russian, or French have learned Romanian in order to fully understand Eminescu's text, and “their students, in considerable numbers, learn to read the poet in the original language, generation after generation” (*Ibidem*, 243). The universality of Eminescu's poetry is thus confirmed by the efforts of world-class specialists to make known “the spellbinding power and cosmic scope of his genius” (*Ibidem*). As universal as Eminescu is, Streinu asserts, he can be considered just as unique in the Goethean paradigm of universal literature. The uniqueness of Eminescu's work lies in the lyrical synthesis of romantic aspirations, which were later entrusted to classical patterns. On the one hand, it is natural that the international public (the “foreigners”) should not be familiar with this new form of romanticism through the poet, precisely because of the language “of only eighteen million people, in which Eminescu expressed himself” (*Ibidem*, 245-246), just as it is natural that not all foreign philologists who could recognize his true value have the ability or determination to learn the language in which the poet writes. And language, Streinu regretfully asserts, is precisely the element that grants Eminescu's

work its unique value, to the same extent that it limits it to the restricted and insufficient circle of compatriots. Nevertheless, even though “the unnatural begins with the belief that only what we can each know exists and, unfortunately, foreigners belonging to great cultures are very inclined towards this unnaturalness” (*Ibidem*), remarkable studies have appeared and continue to appear abroad, bringing Eminescu ever closer to being selected and integrated into world literature.

3. Language as the “flesh” of the idea

Another challenge that the poet is facing is that of the language's potential as a system of signs to fully express the inner world, as well as the question of the relationship between content and form. Eminescu doubts the ability of language to express the truths of the inner self: “Ah! What is the word, what is color, sound/ What is marble to us who feel?” („Ah! Ce-i cuvântul, ce-i culoare, sunet/ Marmura ce-i pentru noi ce simțim?”. Our translation) (Eminescu 1952, 489). As for form, Eminescu's conception imagines content as already having its own form, independent of language, the poet's task being to discover this pre-existing form precisely through language: “An idea must be realized [in] a way that does not allow for the possibility of being otherwise, but only in this way” (Irimia 1989, 82). The tension between content (as inner form, as image) and form, expression (outer form, the word) lies in the ability of the form to encompass the substance of the content, as the holder of an essential, raw truth. Therefore, in Eminescu's view, “mastering” language requires the poetic ability and intuition to make form “grow” alongside the idea to the point where the two become consubstantial. This consubstantialisation occurs, at the level of poetic language, through harmony, through the laws of musicality by virtue of which poetic language becomes song.

Another moment of tension in the poetic act that marks Eminescu's vision is the reader's potential to decipher the deep meanings hidden in the symbol. Just as the poet questions the world in an attempt to find its fundamental, hidden truths, so too does the reader find himself faced with the poetic text as if it were a mystery to be deciphered.

Given the nature of the poet's struggle with language seen as a cutout of reality and the creative efforts to discover and illustrate the natural forms of a pre-existing and preeminent content, the process of translation is marked or, rather, threatened in its integrity by multiple obstacles. On the one hand, Eminescu's translator must attain an intimate insight not only of the text, but also of the particular vision of language that marks, subsidiarily, his poetic creation, in order to understand and then render it, afterwards, as a form of consubstantiality with the original content. If the creative act involves a process of working with the native language, translation is marked by a double effort. At this point, we may ask ourselves how a

language, seen as the intimate existential framework of a nation and a culture, can be transposed into the fullness of the creative resources and virtualities of the original.

Focusing almost exclusively on Eminescu's poetry, translation initiatives have encountered even more difficulties due to the very complexity that a poetic text entails. In this sense, debates range from postulating a need for spiritual kinship between translator and author (for a successful translation, the two must have similar temperaments, or the former must at least be able to simulate a certain temperamental affinity), to translation techniques that aim to abandon the “false lure of rhyme, which is all the more false because it is unnatural” (Perpessicius 1983, 519) in order to achieve a clear and faithful rendering of the spirit of the translated work, or those that focus on preserving the metrical elements, which are themselves considered to be carriers of meaning. The translation of poetry in general, and of Eminescu's poetry in particular, is therefore marked by a loss of value, because of which the resulting text is only a “pale imitation” (Munteanu 1983, 320) compared to the original. Eminescu's poetic work is sprinkled with those untranslatable elements that circumscribe the Romanian spiritual horizon (the most frequent example being the Romanian “dor” (longing) and the limited range of alternatives) and with phrases specific to Eminescu such as “jale” (grief), “dureros de dulce” (painfully sweet) and “desmărginire” (unraveling) for which, says George Munteanu, “no translator and no translation have yet been found anywhere that offer equivalents commensurate with their resonance in the original text” (*Ibidem*, 321). The central question of many analyses dedicated to Eminescu's work therefore remains the haunting problem of his universality or, rather, his potential for universality. In this regard, we note that the lack of confidence in the possibility of a translation that would render Eminescu's text at its true value does not, however, in any way shake the critics' certainty in the poet's universality. Even if the moment when that “ideal” translator will be found or when the number of those learning Romanian in order to have access to the original text will increase remains distant or inaccessible, Eminescu's poetry is considered one of the most brilliant creations ever written in Romanian and in other languages.

4. Musicality and language reform

Returning, however, to the question of the untranslatable, we can note the centrality of the sound element, of that harmony specific to Eminescu and that represents as the preeminent source of the translation “drama”. Essentially, it is a question of rendering one of the essential characteristics of Eminescu's poetry, simplified to the concept of “musicality” and understood in the sense of Paulhan's “langage-suggèstion”, which is generated at the synesthetic level of the consubstantiality between form and

content. As this imprint of expressiveness is defined precisely as immanence, as the absence of the concrete, as the ineffable that resonates intuitively rather than cerebrally (let us recall here Nichita Stănescu's statements about Eminescu's poetry), the lyrical flow seems to reject translation, or, at best, to make it difficult. Beyond the quantifiable aspects of rhythm and rhyme, easily detected through metrical analysis, there is a content whose meanings are revealed in the sonorities of the work. Perceiving Eminescu's poetry as a continuous rocking, as a "harmony that lulls the spirit to sleep" (Streinu 1989, 84), Vladimir Streinu evokes the qualities of obscurity through which the lyrical act is formulated as a dream of the elements of nature and the cosmos, which are not evoked, but felt consubstantially. In the critic's view, the reader is drawn into a kind of trance that softens and "clouds" their gaze, a trance in which the transfer of the imaginary through the act of reading occurs beyond logical understanding, at the level of the intellectual function of the soul: "A spell-like dizziness encompasses everything, and what remains to be heard is a true incantation" (*Ibidem*, 85). Perceived as a spell, Eminescu's poetry constitutes a sonic transcendence, beyond the possibilities of logical discernment to internalize its content.

Another aspect of the potential for resilience in translation is the revelation, in Eminescu's work, of syntactic functions that grammar had not yet defined. Seen as a balance between content and form, Eminescu's harmony is notable for the phonetic modeling of the lexicon to meet the needs of form. Given the elements listed above, the translation challenge remains uncertain, as it depends fundamentally on the entire movement of variables by virtue of which the lyrical text is constructed. Essentially rejecting standardization, poetry is assimilated like a living organism which, once amputated (either by preference for content over form, or by predilection for prosodic elements at the cost of losing internal harmony), will lose its balance.

Conclusion

We have seen in the aforementioned arguments the main ways in which Eminescu's poetry constitutes an intimate revelation of an ineffable whole, perceived more sensually than rationally, illustrated, as Nichita Stănescu states, as the "heart" and not as the body. Ideally, the act of translation should be preceded by a complete resonance between the translator's inner structure and the folds of Eminescu's poetry, but even in this case, the alternations of culture, personality, and lyrical predisposition must be taken into account. What happens in the case of those translators who come into contact with Eminescu's text indirectly, through another language? How can the transfer take place in the absence of complex internalization? Above all, how can an author who remains a mystery to his compatriots, whose

creations exert a fascination that goes beyond the capacity for rationalization be translated?

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