

## The translation theory of the Nitra School and contemporary communication models of literary translation: a case study\*

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### KEY QUESTIONS

This study seeks to provide answers to several essential questions: can the systemic theory of translation (of the Nitra School) motivated mainly by Czech structuralism and built on binary oppositions cover new notions and react to phenomena non-existent in literary style at the time of the formation of the theory? Is its ideological background and terminological apparatus likely to cope with, for example, the wiles of postmodern prose? Can translators rely on this theory and find it inspirational for their translation solutions? Or is this theory on the verge of being outworn, obsolete and unfit for effective work? The theory of meta-text is being further developed, e. g. by André Lefevere, Erich Prunč, Steven Tötösy de Zepetnek.

The theory of shifts of expression and changes of expression remains relatively out of the focus of the international community. The possible reason is that it was primarily based on literary translation, which provided the material for Anton Popovič and his colleagues to test their assumptions. In this respect, the theory of shifts could still (even nowadays) satisfy at least the methodological needs of literary translation. Postmodern texts, however, put more emphasis on playfulness, intertextuality, hide and seek, irony, verification of new ways of thematic and formal text construction, genre, style, language and authorship mixing. The application potential of the categories of expression will be demonstrated on the Slovak translations of the texts by the Hungarian prose writer Péter Esterházy.

### COMMENTS ON THE NOTIONS: EXPRESSION – CHANGES OF EXPRESSION, SHIFTS OF EXPRESSION, VALUE OF EXPRESSION, CATEGORY OF EXPRESSION

The whole system of changes and shifts of expression is not to be presented here. As for the focus of the paper, what really matters are the individual shifts of expression, as they demonstrate the translator's poetics. They also reveal the translator's style, his/her relationship to the original text, to its author, to both languages and expression schemes, to contemporary poetics etc. The translator's idiolect disrupts, innovates or, on the contrary, fosters and reinforces contemporary literary canon. Therefore

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we speak of a sensible subjective shift resulting from the application of the translator's individual tendencies, demonstration of his/her poetics and idiolect. This view is also held by Theo Hermans (1997), the representative of the Manipulation School of Translation Studies: he regards the translator as an active and determining subject in the process of translation.

The individual shift is the most valuable element of Popovič's classification which translation scholars can refer to in their ideas on literary translation. It is most easily identified at the microstylistic level (manifested by various changes of expression) because the expression portfolio is the most noticeable way it is demonstrated in. The expressional qualities of the text, synonymically called the categories of expression, do not only exist at the language level. In fact, they really come to life at the intersection of the topic, characters, narrator, composition, time and space – i. e. at the intersection of the micro- and macro- stylistic levels. The author's style is presented through these perceptually evident categories of expression. It is a matter of text (plus its author), reader, and – referring to František Miko's view of text – context (Popovič also considered sending and receiving context in his work). The language elements *comprehensively* (i. e. their phonic organization, lexical selection and language registers, syntactic construction, extralingual background – images, font type, size, colour, atypical punctuation, text arrangement, etc.), together with macrostylistic parameters, evoke some experience, feeling, mood or knowledge in a reader. And that is the moment when particular categories of expression and their transfer options enter the game.

As for the further stratification of the individual shift of expression, I can see great research potential in different approaches, either from the aspect of a universal, developmental view of translation, or specific case studies. As indicated below, Popovič's (1975) division based on over-interpretation or under-interpretation of the original and the two distinguishing types of an individual shift – simplification and explication – is insufficient; that is to say these phenomena can only be rated as negative. The individual shift in the analysed works of the Nitra School really showed that the preference of the translator's poetics disrupted the author's idiolect (cf. Vilikovský 1984, Gromová – Müglová 2015). However, it will be proven further on that the individual shift of expression is not just a negative phenomenon. The intervention of the translator's idiolect can take place in compliance with the author's strategy. Therefore the individual shift is the core of this study.

The system of expressional categories in Popovič's *Teória umeleckého prekladu* (1975, Theory of Artistic Translation) stems from F. Miko's (1970) model. The model of binary oppositions in categories of expression is simple, systemic, open and usable during the interpretation, as well as the conception, realization and evaluation phases. The categories of expression, defined as full and independent units by Miko, are realized in a particular text as inequitable, interdependent elements. In general, the arrangement system of these categories, involved in the overall aesthetic and communicative effect of the text, cannot be preserved in the translation in the same configuration, the same proportion of mutual arrangement and the same hierarchy of elements. An ideological, aesthetic and communication potential can also be

achieved by the combination of different categories, by highlighting of their different features and by the contrast which accepts the target environment.

Decomposition of the text into expressional constructs is supposed to help the interpretation phase of the translator's preparation and to disclose the expressional qualities determining the aesthetics of a given text. Thus the author's style is simultaneously identified. The categories of expression are not just the register of linguistic potentialities in a language, by any means. They inherently project both the compositional and thematic elements of the text. Yet all the components are inevitably projected in the language level of the text, so they seem to be purely linguistic means. The analyses of the applied categories of expression (at the syntagmatic level) are important in the process of translation (the interpretation and conception phases), but they can also be used for evaluation of translation as a final product. At any rate, the translators (at least subconsciously) build their strategy upon them and reach for them in order to find the best translation solutions.

The greatest advantage of the categories of expression system is its flexibility, response to the market and audience needs and, last but not least, interdisciplinarity. It interconnects several fields and, at the same time, it can be used in many of them (mainly in art). Clear evidence can be found in *Tezaurus estetických výrazových kvalít* (2011, Thesaurus of the Aesthetic Expression Qualities) compiled by a collective of authors – Miko's followers working at the University of Nitra under the guidance of Plesník. Miko's classic model, frequently renewed and corrected by the author himself, was diversified with yet more categories. The authors treated them with regard to the arts – literature, painting, sculpture, photography, dancing, mass media forms etc. Let us mention at least those we are to tackle in the study: intertextuality, allusiveness, expression amusement, "cool" as an expression category, sensuality, eroticism and pornography of expression, vulgarity of expression etc.

## DESCRIPTIVE TRANSLATION STUDIES AND POSTMODERN LITERATURE

The Nitra School of Translation operated with a trinomial communication scheme (later augmented by the translation phase of production and reception): author/expedient – text/work – reader/recipient/translator – text in a target language – reader/recipient (or further processing of the text by the recipient). The text was considered an essential component; the translation issues stemmed from its characteristics, which had to be preserved by an adequate translation and conveyed to the new readers.

However, postmodern literature is not built on just three essential communication components: what it pushes forward is *context*. It is the context and its relation to the other communication components that become the key factors in the creation of the value the text acquires.<sup>1</sup>

Should translators convey the context? Yes, in a way. They translate their own contexts in which the text acquires this or that value. The situation may arise, however, that the translated text acquires different values in a new social, historical, political, ideological, material, medial etc. reception context. So while the Nitra School mainly

employed the observation of the translation process and analysis of the expressional values of the source and target texts, contemporary translation studies turns its interest from the text towards context and its relations to the expedient and recipient, together with a whole range of determining factors.<sup>2</sup> What we also mean by the expedient is the translated text expedient, i. e. the translator who had stood in the background for centuries. He/she had been expected to be invisible in the text, to smother their own style. The different developmental stages may show some variations but, in general, Czecho-Slovak translation studies paid no attention at all to the translator's identity. It is true Popovič considered also a sociological dimension, the need to study the functioning of translation and its translator in society, but in Slovakia such research, mainly that which is focused on the translator's identity, only started in the last decade. This changing focus also manifests itself in a switch from literary translation towards market demand: generally it covers the translators of non-literary texts (Djovčoš 2012).

### A CASE STUDY: *HARMONIA CAELESTIS* – LANGUAGE RELATIVITY AND CULTURAL HYBRIDITY

Postmodernism enjoys attacking the reader's clichés and time-tested security.<sup>3</sup> This also applies to the translations of the novels by the famous Hungarian writer Péter Esterházy (1950–2016). The author manifests himself as a language liberator (cf. Kulcsár Szabó 1996), a great language hedonist, perfectly mastering various language registers. He enjoys playing with language and style, as well as with form.

Esterházy's style is known for its borrowings (of his and foreign stories, whole paragraphs, motifs and characters). The author picks them, repeatedly involves them in the new text-meaning relations and thus revives them. The relativity of the source text identity underlines a hybridity which the author does not avoid. On the contrary, hybridity is part of the author's idiolect. When critics reproach him for an excessive number of adoptions from other authors and question his own authorship, he arrogantly begins to list all the real, potential, true and misleading references to his own resources. This comical citation (let's call it "starring") method becomes the foundation of the playfulness of his short prose *Egyszerű történet, vessző, száz oldal – a kardozós változat*, translated into Slovak by Renáta Deáková as *Jednoduchý príbeh, čiarka sto strán – šermovacia verzia* (A Simple Story Comma One Hundred Pages – The Sword-Brandishing Version), which shows, alongside his most famous novel, *Harmonia caelestis* (Celestial Harmonies), the development of the genre potential of a historic novel. That is to say Esterházy perceives history explicitly through the question of identity (cf. Görözdi 2014).

Esterházy's most famous and most translated novel was published in 2000. The author refers to his previous texts and simply develops his favourite theme and genre of the family novel in yet another way. He writes a novel about his family, the aristocratic Esterházy's, who have been involved in the creation of the history of Hungary since the 16th century. The family chronicle, however, is significantly abstracted from reality. The author casually adds motifs, develops and completes what he indicated elsewhere, and swaggers from fiction to history and back, which confuses his reader.

The author's strong inspiration was a short story by Danilo Kiš *Slavno je za otadžbinu mreti* (1987, To Die for One's Country Is Glorious). Esterházy does not conceal the fact he "appropriated" the story; he even wrote an open letter to Kiš. For instance, the book *Bevezetés a szépirodalomba* (2003, Introduction to Belles-Lettres) also contains the story concerned, with a citation reference to Danilo Kiš. In the novel *Harmonia caelestis* there is a whole short story rewritten in its 24th "Numbered Sentence" – this time without any reference to its real author. Sigfrid Gauch from Germany accused him of plagiarism, claiming that Esterházy borrowed a whole chapter from his novel *Vaterspuren* (1979, Traces of My Father). Therefore the German translator Terézia Mora simply took Gauch's novel and literally copied the text, with no need to translate it by herself. There were even more accusations. Working with his own texts or other authors' texts is the key element of Esterházy's creative strategy.

The novel is divided into two parts and its theme and method are most clearly articulated in the very first sentence: *Kutya nehéz úgy hazudni, ha az ember nem ösmeri az igazságot* (It's damn hard to lie when one doesn't know the naked truth; translation P.S.). The first part of the book (*Számozott mondatok az Esterházy-család életéből* – Numbered Sentences from the Lives of the Esterházy Family) outlines potential historic alternatives. Long sentence units (even mini-stories) are marked with numbers. The second part of the book (*Egy Esterházy-család vallomásai* – The Confession of the Esterházy Family) is more firmly linked to the Hungarian historical details of the 20th century (world wars, the commune, German occupation, displacement, revolution of 1956, Kádár's government etc.) through longer stories of three generations of the Esterházy family (Móric, Máttyás and Péter). The first part is more objective, the second one – with the family anecdotes and own experience – more subjective. In spite of this, the first part is more interesting for the majority of readers (mainly translation recipients), perhaps because of the author's distance from the history and his questioning of the historians' assertions, its adventurous here-and-there, even story-book nature, as well as an exotic distance from historic Hungary – especially for culturally distant recipients. It was also endorsed by Iván Sanders (2007) who included the English translation of the novel (the paperback edition numbers almost 900 pages) in the syllabus of a course on Central European postmodernism at New York University.

The English translation (2004) was completed by Judit Szöllősy who concentrated on the varied language registers applied in the novel (and typical of the author's style). Lingual and stylistic mastery is conveyed with real virtuosity, juicy idioms are substituted by functional equivalents, offering an extraordinarily rich and multiform everyday language of an American city. Witty, sometimes even ingenious translation solutions convey Esterházy's playfulness, humour and levity to the readers. However, Sanders states that the mixture of historical facts, allusions and references to the cultural memory of Hungarian readers is off-putting to Anglophone recipients.

The Czech translation (by Robert Svoboda) has received very positive reviews. Jan M. Heller (2013) even calls it a "cultural translation". He highlights many necessary, sensitive compensations stemming not only from the differences between the stylistic and semantic systems of the two languages but mainly from Esterházy's favourite cultural connotations used in his work.

The Slovak translation (2005) was done by Renáta Deáková. She played with a large number of historicisms, archaisms, marked lexis and syntax and authentic contemporary stylistics, sporadically disrupted by mocking or the author's confusing questions in brackets (in the middle of the text); in general, all that gathered patina the historians love dusting off so much in the archives in order to disclose, with bated breath, connections and secrets which were never meant to come to light. She also plays with registers and layers of style which often happen to occur, in all their finery, in the same sentence – from philosophical, theological or statesmanlike locutions, up to the most offensive vulgarism or an absolutely unexpected dialectal variant – and also the author's favourite language potions such as: *Vulevu egy kis hleb?* (Sentence 172). French as a conversation language of the aristocracy (high society) usually occurs only in banal “poses” and memorized expressions. Therefore it is unnecessary to use the right spelling, and translation is also easy – mere copying suffices. In most cases the author writes simply the pronunciation, the meaning to be guessed with the help of the context (e. g. *sré vizaví*, Sentence 75), plus native Hungarian and distorted Slovak, as Hungarians do not know the phoneme ch [x] (*hleb*, correct spelling: *chlieb*, Eng.: *bread*). The expressions in German, to make them comprehensible to the contemporary reader, must often be explained by the author himself through intertextual explication – e. g. *na obed sa zjavil jeho lokaj leibdíner v kuchyni* – at lunchtime his **footman leibdíner** appeared in the kitchen – *ebédkor megjelent az inasa, leibdíner, a konyhában* (Sentence 64; time-restricted marked expression *lokaj* – Eng. footman). Exclamations in Italian are also translated by the author *Oh, che dolce cosa è questa prospettiva! Mily édes szerető a perspektíva!* – *How sweet is this perspective!* (Sentence 88). It is, however, possible that sometimes the translator has to mix a new language cocktail for her reader by herself, from her own resources. Supposedly, an example of such a translator's solution is her original “neologism” *mamzelka*, something between *mademoiselle* (Miss in French), *milenka* (fem. lover in Slovak) and *manželka* (wife in Slovak) (Sentence 66), or the expression addressing the main hero: *pán otec* (Master/Lord Father), translated as a new formation *panotec* (in original *Édesapám*). The Hungarian word is obsolete and expresses respect, love, kinship, pathos and courtesy. Contemporary Slovak has no equivalent that could fully substitute this title. There is only a descriptive solution, unsuitable for a recurrent, key concept (and a central theme). The “neologism” attracts the reader's attention. On the other hand, it should be mentioned that the character of *panotec* is “occupied” by several of Esterházy's ancestors (his father, grandfather, great-grandfather), and even literary characters. The character is reduplicated many times from the aspect of meaning as well: sometimes he is a hero, sometimes a notable and comical figure in the course of history, sometimes an important politician, a legend, a prime minister, a proud and broken man, a kind and authoritative father, an alcoholic etc. Obviously, overlapping of fiction and reality makes narrative reading difficult.

Shortly after publication of the award-winning novel (e. g. Peace Prize of the German Book Trade 2004) the author found out that this father Mátyás Esterházy had cooperated with the state security service, i. e. he was an agent of the Hungarian secret police. Esterházy coped with this unexpected information in his own way; he

wrote an appendix to the previous edition and highlighted the citations from his father's file in red: one can feel the author's helplessness, grief, anger, sarcasm, disillusion and shame. A book with the title *Javított kiadás: Melléklet a Harmonia Caelestishez* (Revised Edition: Appendix to Celestial Harmonies) was published in 2002. The Slovak translation *Opravené vydanie* was published in 2006, translated by Renáta Deáková.

## DOMESTICATION

In his 100-page novel (although in reality it has more pages) *Egyszerű történet vessző száz oldal – a kardozös változat* (hereinafter referred to as *Egyszerű történet...*), Esterházy presents a short history of Hungary in the late 17th century. Loyal to his style and postmodern approach, he does so with deliberate levity, sometimes ironically, satirically, from a distance; he casually clarifies the motifs of “making great history”, often trivial or comical, and faded over time. He builds the text on a main story about the search for a murderer, but in the course of the story many digressions vary with transgressive sexist or culinary passages and little historical arabesques cause that the model of historicity created by the novel (cf. Görözdí 2014) appears in the foreground. Hybridity of authorship is enhanced by multiple historic facts and half facts, gastronomic excursions, sexual innuendo, ideological discussions, references to literature, philosophical digressions etc. Some characters come from previous Esterházy novels, including the reappearance of his father. The stories and their settings reveal two dominant, historically determined types of Hungarian mentality: *kuruc* (autonomous, even revolutionary) and *labanc* (cooperative, even loyal). In Central Europe positive connotations are assigned more to the *kuruc* type with combative, brave, revolutionary attitudes. “Not only does Esterházy's history lack fame, it also lacks any direction, erases heroic acts, makes causalities fail, even their key designator, passing time, fades from it” (Görözdí 2014, 47). A serious component of this prose is also the above-mentioned work with the Hungarians' national cultural memory and the multitude of facts related to this phenomenon that are close, or well known to a Hungarian reader.<sup>4</sup>

The positives also include the ample “starring” system (i. e. the footnotes), where the author adds his initials (P. E.). He refers not only to real sources but also to those he remembers having seen “somewhere”; or he misleads the reader by revisions of his own notes and multiple authorship corrections of this or that idea. Despite this, the footnotes are perceived as inventive and attractive by readers. Moreover, this component has also become the Slovak translator's instrument for delivery of the aesthetic expressional value of the source text to the target reader of the translation.

The Slovak translator responded to the challenge adequately and supported the strategy of authorship erasure. In her translation she even multiplied the number of the (starred) references (i. e. footnotes) and added her own (*sic!*) initials (R. D.) while the majority of them were written or authorized by the author at the instigation of the translator. “It is a gesture giving the translated book an autonomy similar to the original and helps it communicate with the receiving Slovak environment” (Görözdí 2013). This approach to translation, however, cannot by any means be considered

common, traditional or standard. On the other hand, it must be admitted that the translator reinforces the identity (in Popovič's words "invariant") of the source text based on hybridity by her approach and translation solutions.

For greater clarity, the individual translation solutions are divided into several subtypes. The given subtypes comply with the author's concept, i. e. they follow the coefficients of the source text and represent characteristic features of his style:

1. The author's effort to present himself – in the translation the translator's effort to present herself (through her own footnotes).

2. Domestication – mainly those parts, references, extracts, allusions etc., which are related to the cultural memory of the Hungarians.

3. Explicativeness (deceptive/misleading/fake).

The first type is materialized also as the expression of the translator's opinion, or as teasing the author. At first the reader of the translation is taken by surprise. Who is R. D.? After a while they realize those are the translator's initials. But why does she add so many footnotes? Is she allowed to interfere with the text so freely? Subsequently this teasing/joshing with the author becomes the funniest aspect of the reading. Several examples to illustrate this: somewhere in the text the author uses an obsolete dialect collocation *matató menkő* and explains it to the reader in a footnote – "it is an old euphemism for a ball lightning; I heard it in the National Theatre, during the performance of *We Only Live Once*, directed by János Mohácsi. P. E." The Slovak translator takes inspiration from the footnote and boldly adds: "So nice, it sounds good even in Slovak. R. D." – and leaves it in the text as an exotic element.<sup>5</sup> In a different place, the author refers to an interview with Julio Cortazár in *Le Monde*, but he says he cannot find out when exactly it was issued. And since the sentence is in Hungarian, he adds it is "his own translation". The translator is not idle and writes up: "No. Mine. – R. D."<sup>6</sup>

On yet another occasion, the author considers omission of a footnote. The translator enters her considerations and asks: "\*So, what now? Is there a footnote or not? Should I put it there or not? – R. D."<sup>7</sup> The translator also enters the text when the vulgarisms, so much liked by Esterházy, occur. She literally apologizes to the audience, and the text simply swarms with such interferences in authorship.

Domestication is a more demanding translation strategy. Apart from identification in the text, it requires a sensitive approach and the kind of solution that takes substantial knowledge of the target reader audience's cultural memory into account. It interferes with time and space. Popovič, probably inspired by James S. Holmes, reflects historization – modernization on the time axis, and exotization – naturalization on the spatial (cultural) axis. However, here I intentionally ignore Popovič's concepts of naturalization and modernization. Instead, I use the concept of domestication (Lawrence Venuti, 2000). The reason is I do not deal with the time or space factors in a simple line, i. e. neither with particulars (e. g. typical national dishes, clothes, habits etc., which are usually solved by adaptation to the target environment); what I really deal with are the thought units interfering with the nation's history, ideology, politics and culture in general, which provide a compositional base for the whole prosaic form. Translation solutions do not have their source in language elements; they



are only demonstrated through them (very much like cultural memory is presented in the original). The language is not the main translation material here. This is the translation concept principle thoroughly applied by a translator in the whole text. According to my analyses, the translator prefers domestication or also naturalization procedures and solutions in all her translations of postmodern Hungarian prose. To defend her from being accused of arbitrariness, it should be said that she consulted her strategy with the author and he often adjusted the source text (i. e. wrote a quasi-new text) for a new reading audience. To illustrate this, she substitutes an allusion to a famous Hungarian poet Dezső Kosztolányi with the (Slovak) Ladislav Ballek and his novel *Agáty* (The Locust Trees); the Hungarian language reformer Ferenc Kazinczy's lexis is changed into the obsolete lexis of the Slovak writer Margita Figuli. When falcons are mentioned, she cleverly addresses the Slovak reader with a well-known verse by Laco Novomeský that each high school graduate knows by heart. A flintlock pistol with wrought copper decoration from the master gunsmith János Németh's workshops is compared to the gun of Andrej Sládkovič's *Detvan* (a famous Slovak epos).<sup>8</sup>

Explicativeness (of a fake/deceptive/misleading nature) is the third tendency I have identified as a component of the author's idiolect. This third key component significantly collaborates with the previous two procedures, both in the author's and the translator's texts. The efforts to explain, finish, complete the information is, in a way, making advances to a reader. From the aspect of Popovič's stratification, explication/explicativeness is linked to over-interpretation, i. e. an individual shift of expression. This, however, is not a case of "ordinary" explanation. Making advances to the reader by a certain amount of explicative and additive information is deceptive, often misleading and leads back to the first strategy (self-presentation). This explication strategy does not come from the translator, it is already incorporated into the source text and that is why it cannot be judged as over-interpretation. It is also necessary to mention that undue explicativeness characterizes several Esterházy's texts. With the explicative strategy the author tries to actualize the context in which the given sequence consequently acquires a completely different value – he often changes a serious utterance into a comical, even absurd one. So his goal is not to preach to the reader, or to make advances towards them. In fact, he relativizes the world, words, history, himself and reality. Digressions like references, side texts, intertexts, subtexts and hypertexts, which determine the meaning of the (basic) story (also non-story) line, are part of the author's idiolect. This technique is demonstrated most representatively in *Kis Magyar Pornográfia* (A Little Hungarian Pornography).

Explicativeness is also demonstrated in *Egyszerű történet...*, only in a gentler, more self-representative form. Although the context is not clarified here, the explicativeness is equally misleading. To illustrate this, Esterházy puts a star next to the word *choice* (231) with an (explicative) reference asserting it as an allusion to Goethe, but it has no meaning. Naturally, the translator does not fall short – she supports the explication and adds another remark that Goethe's novel in question is "*Wahlverwandtschaften*, but in Slovak it not only has no meaning, it also makes no sense".<sup>9</sup>

## SUMMARY ON ESTERHÁZY

The translator expressively describes the whole range of values that represent the essence of the aesthetics of Esterházy's novels. Apart from the obvious iconicity and experienceness as the basic expression categories of the literary texts, the new, frequently mentioned, interpretationally substantial and expressively representative categories of Esterházy's texts appear here: *hybridity*, *intertextuality*, *allusiveness*, *wittiness of expression*, *fragmentariness of expression*, *vulgarity of expression*, which is so typical for the author, *cool as a category of expression*, *provocativeness*, *sensuality*, *eroticism or even pornography of expression*<sup>10</sup> (these are most expressively manifested in the novel *Egy nő* (1995; *She Loves Me*, 2000). In *Javított kiadás* (2002, Revised Edition) there is also *documentariness of expression* (transcriptions of reports, with exact dates), which supports operativeness (the counterpart of iconicity) and thus evokes an aesthetic tension. While some of them, e. g. *vulgarity of expression*, "coolness", *sensuality*, have clearer connection to the language level, the others, e. g. *intertextuality*, *allusiveness*, *fragmentariness of expression*, push the language level into the background. This is also caused by the fact that the first group enhances the so-called experienceness of expression and is primarily linked with expressivity. The second group includes categories which directly develop iconicity of expression.

I suggest a new category, *hybridity of expression*, as the bridge and fundamental category, acting at all levels of both text and perception, overreaching even towards the author's idiolect. In *Thesaurus of the Aesthetic Expression Qualities* it is not included as a special category, but there are sporadic references to it in connection with e. g. *fragmentariness*,<sup>11</sup> or *bizarreness* of expression. The point is that hybridity as a category of expression cannot be flattened and placed in just one subcategory (e. g. strength of expression, or peculiarity of expression, or comicality of expression etc.). It can neither be expressly judged as a positive, nor adjudged as a negative attribute. *Fragmentariness*, fragments of information, incompleteness referring to the absence of the whole which, however, can indicate and evoke an appropriate experience through correctly chosen aspects (a hint of colour, shape, place, setting, goal, title etc.) perhaps even a greater one than in the case of acceptance of the whole. A blindfolded man can have more intense sensations, e. g. touch (and it is like that with other senses, too). Therefore in Esterházy's texts this feature is often interconnected with *sensuality*. *Fragmentariness* is linked to the fragments of thoughts, events and characters. One of the forms of its realization is *collage*. Above, *intertextuality of expression* was mentioned almost as often as hybridity; similarly *allusiveness*, i. e. hidden hint. During the interpretation phase it is important for a translator to find out whether the relationship is affirmative or negative, controversial, or whether it is a parody or not. To define rewriting of the existing texts, the term *palimpsest* can be used. *Allusiveness of expression* is one of the author's favourite forms of hint to the historic political system, state representatives and contemporary ideology. It can be found in almost all Esterházy's prose in very large quantity and in various shapes. In prose, *show as a category of expression* can be defined as the author's effort to provoke an external effect at any cost, to entertain, to attract (the reader's) attention. Primarily it is realized at the language level, through equivoques, puns, witticisms, an exces-

sive number of unexpected linguistic devices etc. Contrarily, it can also affect the formal aspect of texts, or composition (e. g. a non-linear reading which causes that a reader of *Egyszerű történet...* learns who the murderer is on the first pages, although the murder takes place somewhere at the end of the book). Esterházy likes show. And he is “cool”. Typically, the Category of “coolness” follows the newest “trends”. What everyone does/wears/eats/reads... and writes (!) cannot be “cool”. The specialness, “coolness”, of Esterházy’s style was repeatedly appreciated and awarded. After some time, however, this feature was not sufficiently innovated and some of his later prose is perceived as unnatural (exaggeratedly funny, witty at any cost, forced, linguistically and formally overcomplicated). An accompanying category is *provocativeness of expression*. It is identifiable on both language and thematic levels: unconventional language, unconventional topics, motives, themes, compositions, adaptation, opinions, etc. “Provocativeness is related to rejection of traditions and crushing of cliché” (Plesník 2011, 235). In this sense, Esterházy crushes traditionalized legends, traditional reading, reaches for new motifs (e. g. the adaptation of Hungarian national history through family identity) etc. One of its representative forms is vulgarity; *vulgarity of expression* is another characteristic of Esterházy’s style. At times the author’s coarse vocabulary takes the reader by surprise (the effect is the purpose!), at others it provokes, causes laughter, lightens a serious situation, reveals male vulnerability (especially in relation to the physical, erotic or even pornographic characteristics in *Egy nő*), or just relieves the author from a difficult situation (in *Javított kiadás*).

Esterházy’s texts obviously possess qualities characteristic of postmodern prose in general (cf. Žilka 2015, 43). The first one is a brilliant story that often disrupts linearity; then there is cultural hybridization, the overlapping of fictive and real elements, and interpretation of authentic feelings, mainly crude, negative, unprocessed ones, because authentic feelings are often animal and blunt. In Esterházy’s prose this authenticity occurs mostly in the female characters, especially his mother (*A szív segédigéi* – Helping Verbs of the Heart) and wife (*Egy nő*). Paradoxically, authenticity is also demonstrated by the erasing of time and space boundaries and connections.

What results from the notes above is that one of the basic principles of Esterházy’s (postmodern) work is *subversion*. It is manifested through the preference of the inner view to the outer one and the expression of authentic feelings to generally expected ones or behaviour dictated by society (and tradition) as a norm. It is a “questioning of both the ideological and text structures through playing with the language” (Žilka 2015, 55). The result is the deconstruction of a compact structure and its decomposition to fragments. This is the key moment in Esterházy’s prose. Subversion of the genre system is built on parodied classic genres, or interference with their compositional elements. It happens through some kind of “pla(y)giarism” (Federman 1977), a concept obviously derived from play and plagiarism. Plagiarism, however, has no negative connotations here – it is no less a valuable process; on the contrary, it is an effective form of parody. Since Esterházy also works with his own texts, he uses so-called (auto)biographical subversion which reports the subject’s situation in the process of creation, and prides itself in questioning what was previously said and in

imitation, repetition and parody. For Esterházy, intertextuality is an essential component of playing with readers. Nevertheless, searching for all the texts would be both impossible and useless. The texts do not convey their original meaning. They are newly defined in the context. They acquire a new meaning, new connotations, new emotions. To sum up, it would be inappropriate to speak of plagiarism – it is rather a playing with texts, ideas and feelings.

Esterházy uses a kind of historic prose subversion as well by altering history (mainly in the novels *Harmonia caelestis* and *Egyszerű történet...*, partially also in *Kis Magyar Pornográfia*). He questions the official versions of events, outlines possibilities of their potentially different course and creates a Central-European farce out of serious, nationally appreciated and celebrated events (especially battles and heroes).

## CONCLUSION

It is an illusion to believe that any of the translation theories can exhaust the issue completely and make all those who are involved satisfied. It is an illusion to believe that the translator can take all existing factors into account – to prefer both the source text and the requirements of the target environment. Each theory, all approaches and concepts can accept several aspects – but not all of them. The translator can reckon on several factors, but cannot prefer all of them. This is not pessimism: this is reality. This fact is also reflected in developmental paradigms of thought about translation (see Kusá – Čejková 2010), so the innovative development in translation studies is substantiated.

Gentzler (2014) shares this opinion in his reflections on translation studies – a post-discipline where he indicates that the reality of the world of communication is hybridity related to the rapid movement of people, rapid communication (via the internet and various technologies), multiplication of existing interdisciplinarity, and often creating new communication forms (the author mentions e. g. the new literary form of the Indian and Persian novel which has become a genre through British translations but consequently dresses in its specific-culture form).

In the Nitra School primary sources of translation studies are linguistics, stylistics and literary science. Gentzler (2014) indicates that progress in these fields is undoubtedly significant but its efficiency is limited by focusing on the major languages and certain petrification of prescribed methodology. Work with a text, however, clearly requires creativity. It is a stepping stone for theoretical reflections on translation, especially literary: nothing too revelatory, an essential feature of the translator's work. Creativity is the foundation of all translation strategies. A similar conclusion is also reached by Judit Görözdi who emphasizes that “language is not a reliable medium for re-presentation, and it is not the guarantee of meaning as it reduces and deforms *re-presented* contents. [...] That means the texts do not contain the meaning, they rather activate the *meaning construction* in perception” (2007, 387). “In order to transfer such texts [...] from the aspect of translation, secondary models offered by the target literature are not sufficient; the substance of translation lies in the fact that it provokes these secondary models – similarly to the original in the source culture” (399). It can deny them completely, it can polemicize them, it can

disrupt them – that is the discourse dimension of translation. On all accounts, the model of categories of expression is very helpful even in translation of postmodern prose.

TRANSLATED FROM SLOVAK BY PETRA STRNÁDOVÁ

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> Context is understood in a wider sense. I agree with its definition by Kusá (2005, 16–17) who asserts that, “Translation and translated literature are shaped by: 1. National political system [...]; 2. Socio-cultural system [...]; 3. Literary system [...].” These components make up the context – the essential part of the translation communication chain. As I have mentioned above, Popovič was inspired by Bühler’s and Jakobson’s communication model so he also worked with context. However, he understood it in a more narrow sense.
- <sup>2</sup> The focus on context can be observed after the cultural turn of the 1980s and the focus on the target culture introduced by Toury mainly in the 1990s. In Slovakia Suwara (2003), Ferencík (1982), Vajdová (2009) etc. dealt with the shift from text to context in translation studies.
- <sup>3</sup> For instance, the author/narrator/character’s identity is often questioned or deliberately hidden. It can even be mysterious, so both the translator and the reader can easily identify with it. The prose by Alfonz Talamon (1998): *Samuel Borkopf: Barátaimnak, egy Trianon előtti kocsmából* (Samuel Borkopf: To My Friends from the Pre-Trianon Pub), a product of Hungarian literature in Slovakia, an original opus written in the Hungarian language, constitutes a representative example (for more details see Huťková 2014a): thus hybridity (of authorship, language, topic, space, time) enters postmodern literature as its canonized attribute. The relation between the written (alias sacred) text and the interpretations of its open reading is reinforced by the fact that the text is not finished, closed, and that it can (?) be re-entered. Renáta Deáková, the translator, has also succumbed to this illusion. She has not done it in secret, however, confessing in the first lines of the “smuggled” part, emphasizing her motive and copying the author’s style. Another “letter” written by her is included in the contents under the heading *Translator’s Note*; but not quite like that in the text itself. The extra chapter bears a title stylistically very similar to the previous ones. The strategy similar to the one used by Deáková was applied by Kantúrek in his translations of Terry Pratchett’s novels into Czech. Despite the genre differences, comparison of their translation strategies could produce some interesting results.  
The novel *Jadviġa párnáġa* (Jadviġa’s Pillow, Pál Závada 1997) also bears the above-mentioned characteristics of postmodern texts. The classic translation approach relying on language code substitution is simply useless here. The reason is in these texts “validity of the language construct is relative, momentary, being created in the course of reception, i. e. not predetermined” (Görözdi 2007, 387). Even the interference with the text story line (so called *thematic shift*) was needed here. The translator Renáta Deáková consulted all explanatory notes and new commentaries (absent in the original) with the author who then wrote several new notes for Slovak readers. Categories of expression of the original and translation are analysed elsewhere (Huťková 2014b).
- <sup>4</sup> The typical Esterházy style, highly esteemed especially in the novel *Harmonia caelestis*, can be found here too, although not in such convincing form. Text comprehension is hindered deliberately, and the author tries to make the most of the text, language, story and his own style. Esterházy’s originality is also manifested in the numbering of pages, which are not in a proper order, and he plays with them like with cards. The need to disrupt linear reading is common with the author and typical for postmodernism. Esterházy works with languages in a similar way. German, English, French, Latin, Italian, Dutch, Turkish, along with his native Hungarian: a multiplicity of peculiar vulgarisms and mixing of communication registers are typical.
- <sup>5</sup> In original: “\*A gömbvillám régi szép neve; a Nemzeti Színház előadásán hallottam, a Mohácsi János rendezte Egyszer élünkön. – E. P.” (2013b, 32). In Slovak translation: “\*Matató menkő je dávnym pekným pomenovaním pre guľový blesk; počul som ho na predstavení v Národnom divadle, na pred-

- stavení Žijeme len raz (Egyszer élünk), ktoré režíroval János Mohácsi. – P. E. Takým pekným, že aj po slovensky znie dobre. – R. D.” (2013a, 33).
- <sup>6</sup> In original: “Julio Cortazar interjújából, Le Monde, ez biztos, de hogy pontosan mikori, azt nem találok; saját fordításom. P. E.” (2013b, 27). In Slovak translation: “\*Z rozhovoru s Juliom Cortazárom, Le Monde, to je isté, no kedy presne vyšiel, vypátrať neviem; môj vlastný preklad. – P. E. Nie. Mój. – R. D.” (2013a, 28).
- <sup>7</sup> “\*Poznámku pod čiarou vynecháme. – Medzinárodný spolok prekladateľov, Miami (alebo Mamaia, pečiatka nečitateľná.) (Tak teraz ako? Je tu poznámka, či nie je? Pišem ju, či nepišem? – R. D.)” (2013a, 84).
- <sup>8</sup> For more details on the topic of domestication and naturalization, see Hutková (2014a, 2014b).
- <sup>9</sup> Original: “\*Laza Goethe-utalás, az égdta világon semmi jelentősége. Vanni azért van. (nevetés a karzaton) – E. P.” (2013b, 231). Translation: “\*Jemná narážka na maďarský názov Goetheho románu Wahlverwandschaften (Výberové príbuzenstvá), no v slovenčine to nielenže nemá význam, ale ani nijaký zmysel. (smiech z druhej lôže) – R. D.” (2013a, 226).
- <sup>10</sup> Because of text length limitation, I do not list all the resources and primary literature that inspired the authors of *Tezaurus* entries related to the above-mentioned categories. Altogether they are notions firmly established among the general public.
- <sup>11</sup> Herein fragmentariness as a category of expression is understood in a wider sense than presented in *Tezaurus*.

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## **The translation theory of the Nitra School and contemporary communication models of literary translation: a case study**

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Shifts of expression. Literary translation. Changes of expression. Hybridity. Nitra School. Theory of translation.

The study answers the essential question whether the Nitra School can stand its ground in the contemporary communication models of literary translation. The author works with postmodern texts translated from Hungarian into Slovak (mainly prose by Peter Esterházy). Through the individual shift she reveals different options for translation of many parameters, such as questioning authorship identity, hybridity, relativity of language, cultural memory of a nation, misleading explicativeness as a popular postmodern strategy, etc. The study shows the potential of the new categories of expression (e. g. coolness, allusiveness, fragmentariness of expression, provocativeness, sensuality of expression, etc.).

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