STUDIA UBB PHILOLOGIA, LXIV, 4, 2019, p. 169 - 184
(RECOMMENDED CITATION)
DOI:10.24193/subbphilo.2019.4.10

INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL REFERENCE IN THE ROMANIAN TRANSLATIONS OF SOME OF AGATHA CHRISTIE'S TITLES

LOREDANA PUNGĂ[1], DANA PERCEC[2]

ABSTRACT. ***Internal and External Reference in the Romanian Translations of Some of Agatha Christie's Titles.*** The paper investigates the translation into Romanian of several of Agatha Christie's detective novel titles which contain fascinating examples of literary as well as non-literary – cultural or historical – allusions. In doing this, it looks, comparatively, into both the source and the target language, at the relation between the titles and the content of the novels, by resorting to two complementary taxonomies: that of title reference and that of title functions. The final aim of the analysis is to make use of this comparison in order to outline a classification of the translated titles based on their rapport with the titles they stem from.

Keywords*: allusion, detective novel, external reference, literary title, internal reference, intertextuality, title function, title reference, title translation.*

REZUMAT. ***Referinţă internă şi externă în traducerile în limba română ale unor titluri ale romanelor Agathei Christie.*** Articolul cuprinde analiza traducerilor în limba română ale titlurilor unor romane poliţiste ale Agathei Christie, constituind exemple fascinante de aluzii atât literare, cât şi non-literare – culturale şi istorice. Analiza ia în considerare, comparativ, legătura dintre titlurile originale şi, respectiv, cele traduse şi conţinutul romanelor, recurgând la două clasificări complementare: cea a tipurilor de referinţă prezentată de titluri şi cea a funcţiilor acestora. Scopul final al investigaţiei este acela de a folosi această comparaţie pentru a furniza o clasificare a titlurilor traduse, pe baza raportului lor cu titlurile originale.

Cuvinte cheie: *aluzie, roman poliţist, referinţă externă, titlu de operă literară, referinţă internă, intertextualitate, funcţia titlului, referinţa titlului, traducerea titlului.*

---

[1] **Loredana PUNGĂ**, PhD, is Associate Professor at the Faculty of Letters, History and Theology, West University of Timişoara, Romania. Her expertise is in the fields of translation studies, cogntive and applied linguistics. E-mail: loredana.punga@e-uvt.ro.

[2] **Dana PERCEC**, PhD, is Professor of British literature at the Faculty of Letters, History and Theology, West University of Timişoara, Romania. E-mail: dana.percec@e-uvt.ro.

1. Introduction

A literary title, like the body of the text, includes various historical, cultural, biographical, literary and styilistic signs. It may be termed the collection point or the melting pot of different types of raw materials. It processes, improves and reproduces these raw materials in a certain dosage, which the author tries to adjust to the needs of both text and reader (Taha, 2009: 1).

It being a complex construct that bears so diverse and intricate connections with the whole that it identifies, as well as with the audience this whole (of which the title is un undetachable part) targets, translating it may not always be as straightforward and easy a process as it may seem. The intricacies of rendering literary titles from one language into another has prompted us to take a closer look at the Romanian variants of some of Agatha Christie's detective fiction titles that go beyond naming a piece of literature for mere identification purposes and convey literary or culture and history-related allusions.

2. Agatha Christie and cultural allusion

In a study published in *British and American Studies*, Percec and Pungă (2019: 247-256) looked at the writer's interest in nursery rhymes and tried to account for the fact that a great deal of Christie's novels have titles inspired from this popular genre. We argued that the contrast between the title, suggesting the serene and innocent universe of childhood and games, and the plot, burdened with the presence of evil intentions and violent death, created a particular horizon of expectation in the readers. *One, Two, Buckle My Shoe* (1940), *Crooked House* (1949), *A Pocketful of Rye* (1953), *Hickory Dickory Dock* (1955), or the short story *How Does Your Garden Grow?,* included in the 1974 collection *Poirot's Early Cases*, are but a few examples in point. A less explicit allusion to nursery rhymes can be found in *And Then There Were None*, a novel initially published in 1939 with the title *Ten Little Niggers* or *Ten Little Indjuns (Indians)*, but changed later, under the pressure of political correctness. These titles work as a form of covert intertextuality, subtly alluding to a detail in the detective plot, which is either important in solving the mystery, provides a more general comment on the atmosphere in the novel or hints at the stages of the narrative. Thus, *One, Two, Buckle My Shoe*, reminiscent of the counting exercise for children, announces a

novel in which a series of murders follow one another, but "buckle", used as a verb in the title, is also found as a noun designating one of the clue objects that helps Poirot catch the criminal. *Crooked House*, while alluding to a poem for children, where the repetition of the epithet "crooked" has comic or obsessive effects, unravels a story in which the polysemantic character of this adjective plays an important part in understanding the moral message: "crooked" may mean 'bent', but also 'dishonest, evil'. The mysterious serial killer in *A Pocketful of Rye* has a distinct signature: he murders by literally following the instructions of the nursery rhyme in which the phrase giving the title to the novel is to be found – *Sing a Song of Sixpence*. In *Hickory Dickory Dock*, the explicit reference to the rhyme is found in the address – Hickory Street – of the boarding house where strange incidents followed by murder take place. *How Does Your Garden Grow?* projects a tranquil atmosphere, in a cosy English village – a cottage and a garden – an environment which, at a close inspection by detective Poirot, proves to be the murder scene and hides the murder weapon. *And Then There Were None* suggests a countdown from ten, which, in the story by this title, is reflected in the disappearance and brutal death of ten characters, stranded on an island, with no chance of escaping their unfortunate fate.

They also made an analysis of the translation into Romanian of titles that contained nursery rhyme references. It took them to the conclusion that, most of the times, the target language titles were devoid of the intertextual potential the source language ones were characterized by, but that this did not necessarily mean they were completely inappropriately chosen, as they could still trigger the readers' valid anticipation of the content of the books.

The analysis in the article mentioned will be taken further here in the direction of some of Christie's English titles containing literary, cultural or historical allusions and their Romanian equivalents. Both the source language and the target language titles will be adjacently commented upon, drawing on Taha's (2009) general categories of title reference and on Levinson's (1985) more detailed taxonomy of title functions. Our reason for using these two approaches from the vast work done in the area of titology on types and functions of (literary) titles (including, for example, research by Levin (1977), Hoek (1981), Genette and Crampé (1988), Nord (1989, 1995), Ostrowski (1999), etc.) is that we consider them usefully complementary: of interest to us here are Taha's view of titles as systems of external and internal reference, and Levinson's underlining / reinforcing, undermining / opposing,

mystifying / disorienting, disambiguating / specifying and allusive title functions. The allusive function of titles, as intended by Levinson, backs their external reference, while the rest of the functions he suggests play a role in shaping internal reference.

The purpose of taking this analytic path is to highlight whether the functions fulfilled by the source language titles are similar to those fulfilled by the target language titles and, as a consequence, what similarity or dissimilarity in this respect they may bring about in terms of the readers' expectations about the content of the book. The translation techniques at work in the transfer from one language into the other will unavoidably be brought into discussion.

3. Agatha Christie's titles and high-brow literary allusion

Apart from using nursery rhyme titles, an equally puzzling technique exploited by Agatha Christie is to project her readers' expectations about the plot of some of her novels by starting from famous literary quotes. The cultural prestige of the strategy is obvious, and so is also the difficulty of translating such titles.

3.1. Taken at the Flood (1948) – Duși de val *['Carried by the Wave']* *(1999)*

Taken at the Flood (1948) is a novel set in post-war Britain, the subject, apart from a murder investigated by Poirot, being the economic and social challenges faced by the members of a society that has changed radically, the characters desperately trying to keep up with the cynical rhythm of the new world and, more often than not, failing to do so. The title is an excerpt from a soliloquy uttered by Brutus, in Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, preparing the final moment of the civil war against Mark Antony:

> There is a tide in the affairs of men
> Which, *taken at the flood*, leads on to fortune;
> Omitted, all the voyage of their life
> Is bound in shallows and in miseries.
> On such a full sea are we now afloat;
> And we must take the current when it serves,
> Or lose our ventures. (Act IV, Scene 3, 218-223)

For Brutus, power is like the tide – ebbing and flowing. One must seize the opportunity when it arises because, otherwise, both literally and metaphorically speaking, when the tide ebbs, one remains stranded or gets drowned.

In the United States, the title chosen by the publishers preserved the Shakespearean reference but simplified it, by picking the first line of the soliloquy, more readily recognizable by readers: *There is a Tide*… The suspension points signal, for those aware of the intertextuality at stake here, the fact that this is only a partial quote, an excerpt from a longer text.

In the Romanian variant of the title, *Duși de val* [*'Carried by the Wave'*] – reached by adaptation – the translator ignores both the literary allusion captured in Christie's original and the contextual meaning of "taken by the flood" (i.e. in a position of being aware of the opportunity offered and taking advantage of it) and uses a Romanian idiomatic phrase, which means "being abandoned to the random forces of destiny" (dexonline.ro). Hence, what the Romanian title tells the readers is the very opposite of the message conveyed by the line of the Shakespearean play used in the original title (which, intertextuality apart, has a perfectly clear meaning, as an everyday phrase that captures the moral of the story whose title it is).

Thus, if the original title is both a system of external reference (to style), "serving to connect two texts" (Taha 2009: 7) and one of internal reference, which "reinforces and affirms the thesis of the text" (12), "is the essence of the author's system of intentions" (13) whose complete details may be searched for in the body of the text, the translated title is certainly not the former and fails to be the latter, too.

In Levinson's (34-37) terminology, the English title is "allusive", "underlining / reinforcing" – it adds supplementary weight to the background theme of the novel, and it is also "disambiguating / specifying" – it serves to endorse the reading of Christie's novel within the 'seizing the opportunity when it arises' frame indicated above. The adapted Romanian title is neither of these.

Failure of the translated title to comply with the functions of the original title prompts us to consider it a rather "mystifying / disorienting" title (Levinson 36), one that "instead of either corroborating or confounding something in the body of the work seems […] tangential […] to it" (36). We may suspect, with a pretty high level of certainty, that, after reading the book, the conclusion may be drawn that its Romanian title created wrong expectations about its main theme.

If unable to grasp the contextual meaning of "taken to the flood", Christie's translators should have resorted to several Romanian renditions of *Julius Caesar* prior to theirs, which offered accurate interpretations of the original message, that of rising to the occasion. Had they done so, they might have hit upon the appropriate equivalent. A translation by Adolphe Stern, in 1922, goes, for example, like:

> E un curent în trebile-omeneşti:
> *De'l iei în toi*, te duce la noroc.
> De'l scapi, călătoria vieţii noastre
> Ne poartă în prăpăstii şi nevoi.
> Acuma noi plutim pe-o mare plină,
> Şi va să folosim curentul bun,
> Sau pierdem ăst folos. (146)

emphasizing the notion that the lucky man should swim with the current or else, he would see himself falling into an abyss. In his translation of Julius Caesar (1955 [1999]), included in the first Romanian edition of Shakespeare's plays, Tudor Vianu is more sensitive to the Romanian collocations of the noun "val" ['wave'], and imagines man to be a sailor, who, when waves are pounding, can either ride along or get shipwrecked:

> Se schimbă soarta omenească-ntruna:
> *Ştim valul cum ne bate*, el ne duce
> Înspre noroc, dar dacă nu luăm seama,
> Călătoria vieţii ocoleşte
> Printre nevoi şi stânci. Aşa e marea
> Pe care navigăm şi dacă valul
> Ne saltă, se cuvine-a-l folosi;
> Zădărnicim altfel prilejul bun. (197)

3.2. The Mirror Crack'd from Side to Side (1962) – Oglinda spartă ['The Cracked Mirror'] (2010)

In *The Mirror Crack'd from Side to Side* (1962), the protagonist is a beautiful actress who leads a sad and solitary life, reminiscent of the legend to which the title alludes, collected by Tennyson in his famous ballad *The Lady of Shalott*, which actually contains a line identical to Christie's title. Based on the popular Arthurian subjects, the poem is about a cursed lady, imprisoned in a tower, who can only see the life that unfolds itself outside, in the real world, as reflected in a mirror. But

when she hears about a procession coming from Camelot, she cannot help taking a glimpse at the noblest and most valiant of the knights, Sir Lancelot. This is when the mirror cracks – a common folklore superstition has it that when this happens, one has to expect something unfortunate in the near future – and the lady drops dead, much to the knight's chagrin:

> She saw the water - flower bloom,
> She saw the helmet and the plume,
> She look'd down to Camelot.
> Out flew the web and floated wide;
> The mirror crack'd from side to side.
> 'The curse is come upon me', cried
> The Lady of Shalott.
> […]
> Singing in her song she died,
> The Lady of Shalott. (Tennyson 86)

In Christie's novel, Miss Marple and other guests present at the party thrown by American actress Marina Gregg are puzzled by the "frozen look" on her face and consider it to be a bad omen. It turns out that the Hollywood star has just learnt a secret that overwhelms her and pushes her towards committing murder. A similar strategy that employs literary allusion is used by P. D. James, whom critics often considered the most important follower of Agatha Christie, in her debut novel, *Cover Her Face* (1962), published in the same year as Christie's novel. This title is taken from John Webster's Jacobean tragedy *The Duchess of Malfi*, the story of a young and beautiful woman's violent death, the very subject of P. D. James' book.

The Mirror Crack'd from Side to Side was published in the United States, in 1963, under an abbreviated title variant, *The Mirror Crack'd*, the archaic spelling of the past tense being preserved, but the intertextual reference being eluded. The keyword "mirror" is also preserved, for the connection it makes with the "frozen look" on the protagonist's face in the climactic moment of the narrative, while the entire phrase reminds us of the popular superstition. In seeking the best variant, the Romanian translators must have been inspired by the American version, and simplified it by proposing an interpretation of the more cryptic original: the English sentence in *The Mirror Crack'd* is turned into a Romanian noun phrase, *Oglinda spartă* ['The Broken / Cracked Mirror'].

As we see it, *Oglinda spartă*, the Romanian title translation obtained by transposition (by reduction, if considered the equivalent of

the initial title of its British edition) functions in a slightly different way when compared to *Duși de val* for *Taken at the Flood.* If *Duși de val* preserves nothing of either the external or the internal reference of *Taken at the Flood* and is unsuccessful in performing the same allusive, underlining and disambiguating functions as the latter, *Oglinda spartă* has a similar, though not duplicate, external and internal reference as *The Mirror Crack'd (from Side to Side)* is, at least to some degree, successfully allusive, underlining and disambiguating. "Oglindă spartă" ['cracked / broken mirror'] is a collocation that pertains to everyday vocabulary, so, if not part of a larger, more relevant context, it has no potential to indicate intertextuality in literary terms. However, it can connect the micro universe of the book to a broader outer context – in both cultures, source and target, a cracking mirror is popularly believed to be indicative of a bad omen, so a title like *Oglinda spartă* ['Cracked Mirror'] certainly prepares the readers for a story with an out of the question, impossible happy ending, one that Christie's actually is.

Being shared by numerous cultures, the negative symbolism of a cracked mirror must have been familiar to the Romanian translators, so making use of the official translations of Tennyson's poem (should they have been available) as help in deciding upon the most appropriate equivalent word would, most probably, not have altered their choice.

3.3. By the Pricking of My Thumbs (1968) – Când mă furnică degetele ['When My Fingers Itch / Prickle'] (1998)

Christie quotes again from the classics in one of her few stories which features neither Poirot nor Miss Marple, but Tommy and Tuppence Beresford – *By the Pricking of My Thumbs*, published in UK, in 1968 and, one year later, with the same title, in the US. The line is recognizable from Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, being among the cryptic words uttered by the three witches. We remember that the play's dark setting and moral ambiguity relies heavily on the actual as well as symbolic presence of the "weird sisters", messengers of destiny, temptresses of the weak mortals, but also a convincing contribution to the Weltanschauung of the 17th century, when witchcraft was threatening to become an obsession, spreading with the force of a pandemic. In the original text, the line is continued with a clear reference to evil: "something wicked this way comes" (Act IV, Scene 1, 45).

In Agatha Christie's story, a mad old woman with a dubious past, hiding in a mysterious cottage in the woods, is a kidnapper and killer of

small children. This is one of Christie's most Gothic stories, and the portrayal of Mrs. Lancaster as a stereotypical witch is successfully completed by the Shakespearean reference in the title of the novel. *By the Pricking of My Thumbs* was translated into Romanian by transposition, as a temporal clause, *Când mă furnică degetele* ['When My Fingers Itch / Prickle'], a choice which did not take into consideration the official translated versions of Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, most probably because intertextuality in this particular case was not acknowledged as such. Two Romanian *Macbeths* have the witches exclaim: "După mâncărimea degetelor mele, simţ că vine încoace un blestemat" ['By the pricking of my fingers, I feel a wicked man is getting near'] (in the first, 1912 translation by Constantin Al. Ştefănescu) and, respectively, perhaps more inspired, "Degetele când mă pişcă, vreun păgân încoa' se mişcă" ['When my fingers prick, a wicked man must be getting near'] (in the translation by Ion Vinea, employed in the first edition of Shakespeare's complete works published by Editura de Stat pentru Literatură şi Artă, in 1961).

Since neither of the official translations of *Macbeth* into Romanian was taken over to serve as the equivalent of Christie's title, intertextual external reference remains an attribute of the title in the source language only. Nevertheless, the allusive function of the translated title is suppressed only partly, since the physical sensation described by the collocation it contains as well as by that employed in the English title, just like the reference to the cracked mirror, is superstitiously believed to foretell some approaching evil. Thus, external reference to what seems to be universals of folk culture is preserved both in the case of Christie's own title and in its Romanian variant. Moreover, the internal reference is similar for both titles in that they suggestively relate to the type of plot the readers may expect (one whose ending is quite gloomy) and are, therefore, underlining / reinforcing and disambiguating / specifying, as explained previously.

3.4. Three Act Tragedy (1935) – Tragedie în trei acte (2011)

An allusion to the typically gloomy and oppressive atmosphere of the Jacobean tragedy, replete with foul play and horrible deaths, can be found in a title like *Three Act Tragedy* (1935). While the three acts typically refer to an organization of the plot so as to observe the time unit, in Christie's novel, the "acts" are in fact a succession of three murders, two of them – those of a cheerful vicar at a party, who drinks port, and of an old lady in a retirement home, who eats poisoned

chocolate – being in fact only dress rehearsals for the third, that of a doctor who knows a secret that is dangerous for the murderer.

In the United States, the initial title was translated intra-linguistically, by resorting to modulation: *Murder in Three Acts* (1934). While preserving the metaphor of the three acts, the perspective was changed in such a way as to render the reference to genre explicit – crime / detective stories, and the adjoining theme of the novel obvious – murder is committed. The Romanian title is a translation of the British original based on transposition: *Tragedie în trei acte* (NP premodifier + N → N +PNP postmodifier).

In the examples discussed in 2.1 to 2.3, the external reference of the titles takes the shape of allusion to a specific literary work by a specific author, overtly made via using quotations from it. In the case of *Three Act Tragedy – Tragedie în trei acte*, external reference remains in the area of allusions to literature, but takes a different form – reference to genre, i.e. reference to a class of literary works that share various features (of which the type of plot and its development are probably the most obvious) and not to a singular work only. Internal reference works hand in hand with external reference in the case of both the original and the translated title, to guide the readers in the direction appropriate for a correct deciphering of the novel.

Both titles are effectively underlining / reinforcing – they add additional weight to the theme of the novel, though in general rather than specific terms, and disambiguating / specifying – they validate the distinctive perceptual reading of detective stories.

3.5. The Rose and the Yew Tree (1948)

An obscure novel, and one of Christie's few which are not whodunits, is *The Rose and the Yew Tree* (1948). A social drama, the novel sets in contrast two characters, one confined to a wheelchair, unhappy and frustrated, considering his life a failure and a cynical blow of destiny, watching the other's political success and soaring to fame. The title alludes to a line in T.S. Eliot's *Four Quartets*, which reads "The moment of the rose and the moment of the yew tree / Are of equal duration" (*Little Gidding*, V/3). The two "moments" are meant to express the ultimate antithesis between life and death: the rose, a symbol of innocence and purity, on the one hand, and of passion, on the other, standing for life, in its many-fold facets, being in opposition with the yew tree, that grows in graveyards, symbolizing sorrow, mourning and

loss. This is one of Agatha Christie's few works which has not been translated into Romanian yet, but which we have considered worth mentioning here for the intertextual character of its title that backs its external and internal reference, and, consequently, its allusive, underlining and disambiguating functions, as discussed so far.

4. Agatha Christie's titles and non-literary allusion

Apart from Christie's habit of referring to high-brow literature out of a desire to borrow an extra degree of elitism from the classics for her own middle-brow genre, she also sprinkles her bibliography with numerous other types of allusion. It seems that her invitation for readers to solve puzzles and find clues extends beyond the detective plot, into the vast and versatile network of cross references. An interesting example in this respect is that of the titles which include a variety of historical-cultural references, that are difficult to decode by readers and even more difficult to translate without solid cultural competence.

4.1. Ordeal by Innocence (1958) – Vinovat fără vină ['Guilty without Guilt'] (2013)

Ordeal by Innocence is a novel published both in the UK and the US in 1958, in which an apparently solved and classified murder case is opened years later, when new witnesses appear. When a family's adoptive mother is murdered and the suspicion falls on one of the siblings, known for his aggressive temper and immoral inclinations, nobody takes the investigation further, so Jacko is convicted and dies in prison. Because the adoptive mother was herself an evil person, her disappearance, together with the disappearance of the turbulent son, seem a relief for the survivors. When the case is reopened, with the arrival of an absent-minded scientist who could, in fact, offer Jacko an alibi, this revelation only brings grief, suffering and more deaths into the family.

Christie's title has an archaic touch, referring to the medieval and early modern legal practices of testing a suspect's guilt by subjecting them to physical pain – the trial by ordeal could include direct combat, trial by fire or trial by hot or cold water. If the accused survived these trials, which were, in fact, a form of torture, they were declared innocent. Because a degree of miracle was involved in this process, the ordeal was also known as God's judgment. By making this reference, Agatha Christie invites her readers to meditate on the

arbitrariness of the manner in which justice is applied, whether we talk about the Middle Ages or the contemporary period.

The Romanian translation of Christie's title – *Vinovat fără vină* ['Guilty without Guilt'] – an adaptation of the original, ignores the historical allusion, even if the trial procedure alluded to may be referred to by a term in Romanian, "ordalie", that is perfectly synonymous to the English "ordeal" in the context discussed. Thus, the external, history-related reference that may be associated with the English title is not carried over by the Romanian title. What remains intact when transferred into Romanian, though achieved via different lexical means, is its internal reference to the overarching theme of the novel – the unjust punishment of an innocent person. The allusive function of the English title works both externally and internally, while that of its Romanian correspondent bears referential significance only in connection to the text of the novel itself. Like in most of the cases discussed so far, both variants of the title successfully perform an underlining / reinforcing function – they place emphasis on the theme of the novel, yet, again, in general rather than specific terms, and a disambiguating / specifying function – they offer the public the right grid for the reading of a detective story.

4.2. The Seven Dials Mystery (1929) – Misterul celor şapte cadrane *['The Mystery of the Seven Dials']* ***(1996)***

The Seven Dials Mystery, the title of a novel published in 1929 in the UK and the US, is linked to a cultural context as well, this time, to a specifically British one. Two mentions of the "seven dials" appear in the crime story by this name: the first is identifiable at the level of the plot, while the second is a compound proper noun. The plot zooms in on the murder of a man, a guest in a big house, who is famous for not being able to wake up on time in the morning. Consequently, no fewer than eight alarm clocks are set in his room, but, although all the alarms go off, he does not wake up one day, as he has been killed in his sleep. Investigating the crime scene, the detective notices that one of the eight clocks is missing, thus only seven "dials" remain as inanimate witnesses of the murder. At the same time, the investigation is carried out not only as an official police business, but also by the members of a secret association whose mission is to monitor international crime, a group known as "The Seven Dials". The actual significance of this name is to be found in a London area, homonymously called (because of a junction where seven roads converge), near Covent Garden, built in the

early 18th century as a residential neighbourhood, which decayed in the Victorian period. The Seven Dials has become a synonym of poverty and petty crime, with dark narrow lanes, poor and dubious lodgings and gambling dens, inhabited by immigrants and the underclass of Britain's capital city.

The title of the novel thus anticipates, both by external, cultural reference and by internal reference to the story itself, the atmosphere of danger, foul play, and crime which dominates the plot. Unlike it, its translation into Romanian, *Misterul celor șapte cadrane* ['The Mystery of the Seven Dials'], though obtained by transposition (here, implying change of word order) which, theoretically, presupposes changes only at the grammatical, and not at the semantic, connotative level, while referring directly to the crime scene described in the book, fails to capitalize on the cultural allusion conceived by Christie in the original. Therefore, the external reference of the original title is annulled and only the internal one is preserved. Alluding to something that is to be found outside the text itself is a function of the source title only, while the underlining / reinforcing and the disambiguating / specifying functions, based on the direct, non-connotative meaning of the word "dials" ['cadrane'] are shared by this title and its suggested Romanian equivalent.

5. Conclusion

Titles of literary works, be they established by the authors of the works themselves, by editors or by publishers, have been scrutinized mainly as primary paratextual elements and only rarely as elements of a translated piece. Of all their features, the reference and functions of original titles should be transferable in full to their translated counterparts, as titles in their own right. However, our analysis in this article has, hopefully, demonstrated that the translation of literary titles is not always a process of establishing a one to one equivalence (we may suspect that instances of perfect matching occur more often in the case of titles which have a direct, denotative meaning and less so in the case of allusive, connotative and metaphorical ones). As seen, only in some situations do translated titles fully overlap with the source titles in terms of reference and functions (see *Three Act Tragedy – Tragedie în trei acte*). We call such translated titles *fully compliant titles.* At the other end of the spectrum, there are translated titles which fail to take over the reference and any of the functions of the original titles (see *Taken at the Flood – Duși de val*). We refer to them as *non-compliant titles*. In between these,

there lie translated titles whose reference and functions correspond only partly to the reference and functions of the titles they stand for in another language (see *The Mirror Cracked (from Side to Side) – Oglinda spartă, By the Pricking of My Thumbs – Când mă furnică degetele* or *Ordeal by Innocence – Vinovat fără vină*). We include these in the category of *semi-compliant titles*.

By suggesting the three categories above, we mean to highlight the fact that translated titles may be approached within the same framework as the original titles, but additional perspectives may be added when they are analyzed: one must not overlook the fact that they are not independent, but bear sometimes unbreakable connections with the titles they originate in. Note that we have used the adverb "sometimes" instead of the more categorical "always" – this is because we do not lose sight of a fact that has been so often highlighted in Translation Studies – that apparently perfect, word-for-word renditions are not necessarily functional, while deviations from the source language text, such as the reduced length of a book title, may make perfect sense and be able to trigger both appropriate reader expectations and emotions similar to those the author had in mind to produce. In other words, our classification, placing emphasis on the connection between the source and the translated titles, may be a criterion that could help in assessing the degree of functionality of the latter in the target language, for the target readers, in the target culture, even when the latter are not perfect equivalents of the former.

REFERENCES

Dicționar explicativ al limbii române, www.dexonline.ro.

ELIOT, T.S., *Four Quartets*, Faber and Faber, London, 2014.

GENETTE, G. & B. CRAMPÉ. "*Structure and Functions of the Title in Literature*", Critical Inquiry, vol. 14 (4), Summer 1988, pp. 692-720.

HOEK, L. H. *La marque du titre : Dispositifs sémiotiques d'une pratique textuelle*, Mouton, La Haye, 1981.

LEVIN, Harry. "*The Title as a Literary Genre*", The Modern Languages Review, vol. 72 (4), 1977, pp. xxiii-xxxvi.

LEVINSON, J. "*Titles*", The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism, vol. 44 (1), 1985, pp. 29-39.

NORD, C. "*Der Titel – ein Mittel zum Text? Überlegungen zu Status und Funktionen des Titels*", in N. Reiter (ed.), Sprechen und Hören: Akten des 23. Linguistische Kolloquiums in Berlin, Niemeyer, Tubingen, 1989, pp. 519-528.

NORD, C. "*Text-Functions in Translation: Titles and Heading as a Case in Point*", Target, vol. 7 (2), 1995, pp. 261-284.

OSTROWSKI, W. "*Titles and Subtitles: Preliminary Notes on Their History and Fuction*", Acta Universitatis Lodziensis. Folia Literaria Anglica, vol. 3, 1999, pp. 97-116.

PERCEC, D. & L. PUNGĂ. "*They Do it with Nursery Rhymes. The Mystery of Intertextuality in Agatha Christie's Detective Fiction from a Literary Critic's and a Translator's Perspective*", British and American Studies, vol. XXV, 2019, pp. 247-257.

SHAKESPEARE, W. *Macbeth.* Translated by Const. Al. Ştefănescu, Tipografia Horia Carp & Marinescu, Bucureşti, 1912.

SHAKESPEARE, W. *Opere alese.* Vol I: *Iuliu Cezar.* 2nd edition. Translated by Adolphe Stern, Editura Librăriei Socec& Co. Societate anonimă, Bucureşti, 1922.

SHAKESPEARE, W. *Opere.* Vol. II: *Iuliu Cezar.* Translated by Tudor Vianu, Editura de Stat pentru Literatură şi Artă, Bucureşti, 1955.

SHAKESPEARE, W. *Opere.* Vol. IX: *Macbeth.* Translated by Ion Vinea, Editura de Stat pentru Literatură şi Artă, Bucureşti, 1961.

SHAKESPEARE, W. *Iuliu Cezar. Ediție bilingvă.* Translated by Tudor Vianu, Pandora, Bucureşti, 1999.

SHAKESPEARE, W. (David Bevington, ed.). *Shakespeare's Tragedies*, Pearson Longman, London, 2002.

TAHA, I. "*Semiotics of Literary Titling: Three Categories of Reference*", Applied Semiotics / Semiotique Applique, vol. 22, 2009, pp. 1-18, URL: http://french.chass.utoronto.ca/as-sa/ASSA-No22/Article4en.html (last accessed May 12, 2019).

TENNYSON, A. *Poems*, Everyman's Library, London, 2004.

TITLES ANALYSED

CHRISTIE, A. *The Seven Dials Mystery*, William Collins and Sons, Glasgow and London, 1929.

CHRISTIE, A. *The Seven Dials* Mystery, Dodd, Mead and Company, New York, 1929.

CHRISTIE, A. *Misterul celor şapte cadrane.* Translated by Doina Topor, Lidia Grădinaru, Simina Sprinţeroiu, Excelsior Multi Press, Bucureşti, 1996.

CHRISTIE, A. *Murder in Three Acts*, Dodd, Mead and Company, New York, 1934.

CHRISTIE, A. *Three Act Tragedy*, Collins Crime Club, London, 1935.

CHRISTIE, A. *Tragedie în trei acte.* Translated by Ionela Chirilă, Litera, Bucureşti, 2011.

CHRISTIE, A. *The Rose and the Yew Tree*, William Heinemann, London, 1948.

CHRISTIE, A. *The Rose and the Yew Tree,* Farrar & Rinehart, New York, 1948.

CHRISTIE, A. *Taken at the Flood*, Dodd, Mead and Company, New York, 1948.

CHRISTIE, A. *Duşi de val.* Translated by Simina Sprinţeroiu, Lidia Grădinaru, Excelsior Multi Press, Bucureşti, 1999.

CHRISTIE, A. *Ordeal by Innocence.* Collins Crime Club, London, 1958.

CHRISTIE, A. *Ordeal by Innocence.* Dodd, Mead and Company, New York, 1958.
CHRISTIE, A. *Vinovat fără vină.* Translated by Lingua Connexion, Litera, Bucureşti, 2013.
CHRISTIE, A. *The Mirror Crack'd from Side to Side*, Collins Crime Club, London, 1962.
CHRISTIE, A. *The Mirror Crack'd*, Dodd, Mead and Company, New York, 1963.
CHRISTIE, A. *Oglinda spartă.* Translated by Ionela Chirilă, Rao, Bucureşti, 2010.
CHRISTIE, A. *By the Pricking of My Thumbs*, Collins Crime Club, London, 1968.
CHRISTIE, A. *By the Pricking of My Thumbs*, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1969.
CHRISTIE, A. *Când mă furnică degetele.* Translated by Simina Sprinţeroiu, Lidia Grădinaru, Excelsior Multi Press, Bucureşti, 1998.