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How Many Hungarian Voices Does Alice Munro Have?

Fruzsina Kovács

Abstract

This article analyzes the effect of translation on the Hungarian literary field after the change of regime. It does so by considering the reception of Alice Munro's published volumes between 1989-2014, emphasizing the changed position of agents in the translation trajectory, the observed effect of the international symbolic capital involved in the translation flow, and the agency as seen in paratexts of the literary translations. The study builds on the theoretical framework of translation sociology, on the work of Pascale Casanova, Andrew Chesterman, Johan Heilbron and Gisèle Sapiro, and employs the literary field concept of Pierre Bourdieu. Within the framework of this study, 40 articles published by both literary critics and journalists and 170 blog posts from *www.moly.hu*, the largest Hungarian web 2.0 online book reader community, have been examined. Translational phenomena of the time period have been investigated on the basis of the CEACS Translation Research Project database.

Résumé

J'étudie ici l'effet de la traduction dans le champ littéraire hongrois après le changement de régime par la réception des volumes publiés par Alice Munro entre 1989 et 2014. J'accorde une attention particulière au changement de position des agents dans le processus de la traduction, à leur apparition dans les paratextes des traductions littéraires, et à l'effet observé du capital symbolique international impliqué dans le flux de traduction. L'étude s'appuie sur le cadre théorique de la sociologie de la traduction, sur les travaux de Pascale Casanova, Andrew Chesterman, Johan Heilbron et Gisèle Sapiro, et sur le concept de champ littéraire de Pierre Bourdieu. Le corpus étudié est constitué de 40 articles publiés par des critiques littéraires et des journalistes ainsi que de 170 articles de blog disponibles sur le plus grand portail communautaire de lecture en ligne du Web 2.0 hongrois, *www.moly.hu*. Les phénomènes transitionnels de la période ont été étudiés à partir de la base de données du Projet de recherche du traduction de l'AECEC.

Part of this study appeared in Hungarian in the January 2018 issue of *Tiszatáj* literary magazine.



1. Theoretical and methodological approach

Andrew Chesterman differentiates between four perspectives for research within translation studies. The linguistic perspective operates on a textual level and aims to uncover “relations between translations, their source texts, parallel non-translated texts in the target language, and other translations” (Chesterman 2007, 173). The second perspective is the cultural approach of the 1980s, where “the focus is on ideas [...], on the transfer of cultural elements between different repertoires or polysystems. Central issues are questions of ideology, cultural identity and perception, values, relations between centre and periphery, power, and ethics” (ibid., 173). In the 1990s, translation research turned to questions about the decision-making process, the cognitive aspects of translation and interpreting, and not necessarily the final product. The fourth perspective that Chesterman points out is the sociological point of view, which allows the researcher to ask questions about the status of translators, the role of translations in society, and the agents of the translation process (ibid., 173).

Researching the social aspects of translation, however, is not a recent phenomenon. Chesterman points out that several translation scholars (Gideon Toury, André Lefevere, Theo Hermans, Michaela Wolf) have urged for the study of the context of translations, more precisely, the study of the ‘translation event’ – to use Toury’s term – in the framework of descriptive translation studies since the 1980s. In this paper, a multi-level field approach – a macro, a meso and a micro level analysis – will be applied to examine the social contexts of translation, which methodology is rooted in cultural sociology (Bourdieu 1990, Heilbron and Sapiro 2007, Sapiro 2008). Macro level studies examine translation flows within the world system of languages (De Swaan 1993) in a core-periphery relation model between cultures. According to Heilbron, translations move unevenly from languages that fill a central position in the international translation system towards languages that are on the periphery (Heilbron 1999). Today, the English language has come to fill a hyper-central position, and is involved mostly in the export of literature. Hungarian, on the other hand, is spoken by approximately 13 million people around the world, and in the core-periphery model, the Hungarian language takes a peripheral position. Pierre Bourdieu, in his field theory, places the struggles of a literary field for autonomy in the larger context of economy and the field of power (Bourdieu 2016). The agents of the cultural production may take various positions in the field, accumulate symbolic capital, and interact with each other according to the norms of society, their interests and their habitus. The agents in the translation flow thus include the author, the literary agent, chief editor, editor, translator, reviser, proofreader, commissioner (such as institutions, publishers, subsidizers, organizers of events, politicians, etc.), critics, journal-



ists, readers, etc. My study examines the specific circumstances of the arrival of Alice Munro's work in Hungary, which is part of a larger translation flow between Canada and Central Europe, and the reception of published collections of short stories by various agents in the target culture.

2. The author and her work

Alice Munro published her first short story as a university student in 1950 in *Folio*, a literary journal of the University of Western Ontario (Stein 2012). She made her debut to the general Canadian readership in 1968, when Ryerson Press in Toronto published her first collection of short stories, *Dance of the Happy Shades*, for which she received Canada's highest recognition, the Governor General's Literary Award for Fiction in English. In subsequent years her stories began to be published internationally, in particular by *The New Yorker*. Her critics and her biographers both agree that her succinct and concise use of language, her precise sentence structures and her crystal-clear portrayal of characters have earned her recognition as one of the great masters of storytelling.

Alice Munro has been endowed with rich cultural capital since the beginning of her literary career: she has received many highly prestigious awards and prizes for her work. She has been the recipient of the Governor General's Award three times (1968, 1978, 1986), the Trillium Book Award three times as well (1991, 1999, 2013), and the Giller Prize twice (1994, 2004). In 1998 she received the National Book Critics Circle Award (USA), in 2009 the Man Booker International Prize (UK), and in 2013 her lifetime oeuvre brought her the Nobel Prize in Literature. Her published works that circulate in the international literary field comprise fourteen short story collections published between 1968 and 2012.

After the first publication in Canada and in the United States, her work was available on the British book market from the second half of the 1970s, which was negotiated by her first literary agent, Virginia Barber, based in New York (Thacker 2005, 553). Munro's short stories have been widely translated; these translations, however, first appeared with a great lapse in time compared to both the first Canadian publication and to each other. As a comparison, on the European market the first German translation of one of her short story collections came out in 1981, while the first such translation to appear in the eight member countries of the CEACS was published in 2003, in Czech. This was followed by the first collection of short stories in Serbian (2006). Munro was first brought out in Slovenia in 2010, and in Romania and Croatia in 2011; in other words, in these countries Munro was 'discovered' only after her Man Booker Prize. Slovakia and Bulgaria were the last countries where Munro



collections saw the light of day – in 2014 and 2015 respectively, in the wake of the Nobel Prize. As we can see, the European reception of Alice Munro’s books is fairly diverse in time and in these countries as well. In the case of Hungary, a few Munro translations appeared from the second half of the 1980s in literary journals, translated among others by Judit Márta Elek (1985), Erzsébet Czine (1986), and Mária Borbás (2003); interestingly, only Borbás can be considered a well-known translator. The first book publication of Alice Munro’s short stories had to wait until 2006, when Park Publishing purchased the rights to publish *Hateship, Friendship, Courtship, Loveship, Marriage*. Regarding the Hungarian publication of Munro’s work, we must emphasize that in some cases the target culture readers could only access the texts more than forty years after their first publishing.

Volumes and a movie-tie-in book published in Hungarian:

Title of Hungarian translation, date of publication	Translator	Title of the source text, date of publication	Years between source and target text publication
<i>Szeret, nem szeret...</i> 2006	Mária Borbás	<i>Hateship, Friendship, Courtship, Loveship, Marriage</i> 2001	5
<i>Csend, vétek, szenvedély</i> 2007	Mónika Mesterházi	<i>Runaway</i> 2004	3
<i>Egy jóra való nő szerelme</i> 2008	Mónika Mesterházi	<i>The Love of a Good Woman</i> 1998	10
<i>Mennyi boldogság!</i> 2011	Mónika Mesterházi	<i>Too Much Happiness</i> 2009	2
<i>Asszonyok, lányok élete</i> 2013	Mónika Mesterházi	<i>Lives of Girls and Women</i> 1971	42
<i>Drága élet</i> 2014	Mónika Mesterházi	<i>Dear Life</i> 2012	2
<i>Boldog árnyak tánca</i> 2015	Zsuzsa Rakovszky	<i>Dance of the Happy Shades</i> 1968	47
<i>Nyílt titkok</i> 2016	Zsuzsa Rakovszky	<i>Open Secrets</i> 1994	22
<i>Juliet, három történet</i> 2017 (2007)	Mónika Mesterházi	<i>Julietta: three stories</i> 2016 (2004)	1
<i>Ifjúkori barátnőm</i> 2017	Zsuzsa Rakovszky	<i>Friend of my Youth</i> 1990	27



3. Influential factors in the translation flow

The reason for delay in the publication of the translations can be traced back to the political climate of the region in the second half of the 20th century. In the 1960s and 70s Alice Munro's books could not enter the Hungarian literary field, not even into its periphery (not least, of course, because she was only just emerging as a writer). Contemporary literature from the West was heavily censored during communism based on socialist ideology. Only selected pieces were translated and disseminated, based on two conditions: they either supported the socialist humanistic ideal of the regime, or presented a critical view on capitalism and Western societies. Between 1945 and 1989 only 33 entries appear in the CEACS's Translation Research Project database that were translated from the English Canadian literary field. As a contrast, however, for the 25 years following 1990, the CEACS translation project database shows 359 entries reflecting a very great variety of genres. This sudden explosion and liberation of the publishing business was witnessed in many Central European countries, and in fact Timothy Garton Ash already noted the trend in the mid-90s (Ash 1995). Research has been done on the phases and ripples of change in the publishing industry in Hungary, touching upon both the technological change and the restructuring of ownership of the publishing houses (Laki 2008). The economic aspects of the change have been in the focus of researchers for several decades (cf. Lux and Horváth 2018). The change within the Hungarian literary field at first was radical. Instead of mostly Russian and ideology-driven literature, long awaited works of world literature appeared on the market. On the cultural transfer process of science fiction and fantasy in Hungary between 1989 and 1995 in-depth research has been carried out (e.g. Sohár 1999). Further research from the viewpoint of translation sociology may add new aspects to the analysis already made on the period following the political transformation. The transition in the power positions of the agents and the dynamics within the field has been a longer process in which influential factors such as cultural policy and a changed perception of international institutional recognition can be observed.

3.1 Cultural policy

Literary translation in Canada is government-supported through the Canadian Council for the Arts and the Department of Canadian Heritage; financial support has been part of Canada's cultural policy since 1957 and is now in an even increased way in the lead-up to the Frankfurt Book Fair in 2020, where Canada will be the Guest of Honour. This significant boost from the source culture is a marketing strategy that motivates translation flows. Park Publisher was a recipient of a translation grant from the Canada Council



for the Arts both in 2017 and in 2018. Besides financial support, cultural events (for example, book fairs) play an important role in translation flows. Canada was the guest of honor at the International Book Festival Budapest in 2007, where Canada presented 800 Canadian titles and introduced seven Canadian authors to agents of the Hungarian literary field who were present at this well visited annual event (Eszéki 2007). The fair was probably a motivation for publishing Munro, as suggested by the sequence of dates for publications of her work as shown in the table above.

3.2 The Nobel effect

During the years of communism, the recipients of the Nobel Prize in the Eastern Bloc were discouraged from associating high value with the award of the Swedish Academy, or even from attending the award-giving ceremony. After the peaceful transition of 1989, however, the international symbolic capital of the Nobel Prize within a global literary system became a significant marker for all agents in the translation trajectory. James F. English points out about the nature and dynamics of circulation of cultural value that “the modern ascendancy of cultural prizes may conveniently be said to have started in 1901 with the Nobel Prize for Literature, perhaps the oldest prize that strikes us as fully contemporary, as being less a historical artifact than a part of our own moment” (English 2005, 28).

In the case of Hungary, the effect the Nobel Prize has on the literary field is even more recent. Hungarian publishers now seek to secure rights for international authors who are likely to win this recognition, as they know that not only current translations, but previous volumes of the author will sell immediately, topping the best-seller lists at least for a short time.¹ The Nobel Prize is surrounded by media attention and publicity, which again drive sales. Park Publishing in 2006 made an initial financial investment to introduce Munro, and for several years continued to balance costs by publishing commercial titles to break even with the publishing costs of highbrow literature. The volume of short stories did not immediately become a success. When Munro’s Nobel was announced on 10 October 2013, all daily and weekly newspapers as well as national TV channels reported the event. With the author, all agents of the field – translators, publisher, editors, etc. – shifted to a more central place in the literary field. On the international level, *BookNet Canada* and *Nielsen Book* collected data

1) Research results on the effect of the Nobel Prize vary. Andreas Hedberg examined the role of independent publishers since 2000 in publishing French and Romance language fiction into Swedish (2016). In the interviews he conducted, he refers to the Nobel effect as a short-term increase in the sales of books. Anna Gunder studied the Nobel effect on Icelandic literary translation between 1949 and 1969 into Swedish (2011). The author could not find direct correlation between the institutional recognition of the Nobel and the number of published translations, thus calls for further research.



on the sales of Munro's books through an eight-week period, starting before the announcement of the Nobel Prize. The figures show that the sales of Munro's short story collections soared internationally due to the prize (BookNet Canada). Although the Hungarian market can be considered small in the context of the global book market – print runs of even 3,000 copies are considered to be a fair amount for literary books – the fact that further collections of short stories have been translated since 2013 suggests an increase in the sales figures of the Hungarian publisher as well.

Although the above-mentioned two factors – the financial support of the source country and the Nobel effect – have been new and influential in the Hungarian literary field, they can be characteristic of other translation flows within the Central European literary field as well. Beyond the macro level enquiry, questions at the mezzo and the micro level of the literary flow might point to details that are more specific to the Hungarian reception of Alice Munro's books.

4. Reception and the dynamics of the market

Several national publishers have brought out English-Canadian literature for the Hungarian readers since the turn of the century, among them Ulpius, Jelenkor and Európa, which has been publishing world literature since 1948. However, the translation rights for Alice Munro's books were all promptly secured by Park, a fairly young company, founded in 1988, at the change of the political transformation. The profile of Park Publishing has changed over the years, adapting to the dynamics of the national and international book markets. As seen in its lists, first it was publishing non-fiction and serving popular reading tastes to gain capital, but in a few years' time it expanded its portfolio to literary works endowed with symbolic value, and published works of Nobel Prize winning authors such as Saul Bellow and Toni Morrison. In 2013 Park Publishing joined a conglomerate, Libri Publishing Group, that currently incorporates 10 publishing houses. In this case, the publishing of Alice Munro's lifework connected large-scale production poles (Sapiro 2008, 2010), that is Random House and Park Publishing, which after the merge with Libri is considered a large-scale publisher within the Hungarian context.

4.1 Marketing strategies of the publisher

Several different types of marketing strategies have been used by Park Publisher that influence the reception of Munro's books. On the visual level, the volumes have been labelled with special stickers that mark the symbolic capital, referring to the International Man Booker Prize and/or the Nobel in literature. These books get special



promotion: they are placed in the forefront with the bestsellers at the place of selling. Various cultural events are organized by the publisher, bookshops as well as academia to familiarize the public with Munro's work. Among these a panel discussion took place in Írók Boltja [Writers' bookshop] a well-known bookshop in Budapest, on 4 December 2013, where three agents of the literary field cooperated. The chief editor of Park Publishing, Vera Tönkő, journalist Ildikő Orosz and translator Mónika Mesterházi discussed the specific challenges of the translation and publication of the texts. Other events include a film screening in the city of Szeged on 28 April 2014 of Sarah Polley's *Away from Her* (*Egyre távolabb* [Further and further] in Hungary), a film adaptation based on a Munro short story, and a discussion after the screening. The panelists were three literary scholars, Katalin Kürtösi, Éva Zsizsmann and János Kenyeres.

Although Munro's short stories became well known in the form of printed books, the literary content is carried by other media as well. An audio book featuring well-known Hungarian actress Anikó Für was placed on the Hungarian market by Kossuth Publishing House – founded in 1944 – to reach the audience with a preference for auditory information. Film adaptations that have appeared in Hungary include Sarah Polley's *Away from Her* (based on Munro's short story "The Bear Came Over the Mountain"), screened in the largest art cinema in Budapest (Művész) on 27 June 2007, and the above-mentioned film by Pedro Almodóvar, premiered in Művész on 4 May 2017. Film adaptations can also open the way for, complement or enhance literary reception. In readers' responses, which I am going to discuss later, several mentions of the film adaptations can be found, which suggest that the texts and the audiovisual input are consumed together.

Pascale Casanova points out that international literary exchanges depend on the structure of the world literary field, on the literary capital that a nation holds, and the developed nature of the given literary field. Thus, these exchanges are often unequal: the agents of the flow are quick to gain capital by translating, in other words 'high-jack capital' in the struggle for autonomy of the national field (Casanova 2019, 291). Casanova – based on Bourdieu – explains that national literary fields struggling for an autonomous position aim to bridge the time gap between source text and target text publication. "In these situations of specific 'delay,' translation is the only means of making up literary time. In other words, it is an instrument of 'temporal acceleration': translation allows the whole of a national field which is temporally very distant from the literary centers, to enter into the world literary competition by revealing the state of (aesthetic) struggles at the literary meridian" (Casanova 2010, 294). In the reshaped literary field after 1989, the publishers had the freedom to select the texts for translation but, as we see in the case of Alice Munro's books, while trying to 'make up literary time' by publishing translations from the literary centres, they



had to renegotiate their position in the national field and adapt to the dynamics of a global book market.

In the international literary field, more and more emphasis is placed on marketing events such as book fairs and on the placement of texts alongside film adaptations. We can see that the agents of the translation trajectory in Hungary, the publisher, the distributor, the marketer, the translator, etc., while aiming to achieve their own aspirations within the literary field according to their set dispositions and position, sometimes also collaborated.

4.2 The translators

Alice Munro's collections of short stories have been translated into Hungarian by three renowned translators. Mária Borbás translated the first published volume, titled *Hateship, Friendship, Courtship, Loveship, Marriage*, the next five volumes were rendered by Mónika Mesterházi, then the following three collections by Zsuzsa Rakovszky. Who are these translators, and what kind of cultural capital do they hold in the Hungarian or international literary field?

Mária Borbás was born in 1930, studied Hungarian, French and English at Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest and later worked for Európa Publishing House as an editor. She is a highly respected Hungarian literary translator who has translated world literature extensively. She has also published two books on the professional aspects of literary translation. She was awarded the Attila József literary prize in Hungary in 1994. Mónika Mesterházi was born in 1967 and studied Hungarian and English at Eötvös Loránd University, from where she holds a PhD in contemporary Irish literature. She has received four Hungarian literary prizes (1996, 2005, 2007, 2008), among them the Attila József Prize and the Artisjus Prize. She is a translator of contemporary poetry and fiction, and has also published four volumes of her own poetry (1992, 1995, 1999, 2007). Zsuzsa Rakovszky was born in 1950 and studied Hungarian and English at Eötvös Loránd University. She writes both fiction and poetry, and has extensive institutional recognition. She translates world literature as well as contemporary commercial fiction. Rakovszky has been awarded numerous literary and state prizes, including the Attila József Prize (1988), the Kossuth Prize (2010), and the Hungarian Laurel Wreath Award (1997).

We can see that all three translators are endowed with different kinds of symbolic capital. They hold prizes and literary awards for their achievement, but the translated works that they have 'consecrated' also become their 'transnationally accumulated symbolic capital' (Sapiro 2008). Casanova points out that



in the world literary universe translation is both one of the main weapons in the struggle for literary legitimacy and the great authority of specific consecration. For a dominated writer, struggling for access to translation is in fact a matter of struggling for his or her existence as a legitimate member of the world republic of letters for access to the literary centers (to the critical and consecrating authorities), and for the right to be read by those who decree that what they read is worth reading. [...] In other words, in the dominated regions of the literary field, translation is the only specific means of being perceived, becoming visible, of existing. (Casanova 2010, 295-96)

Although Park Publishing House may have chosen the translators for their existing symbolic capital, for the translators, working with Alice Munro's texts may also have meant a process of legitimization of their own literary career as well in the aftermath of the political transformation.

Bourdieu's sociology allows for an integration of translation practice into his heuristic ('field') model. The practice of translation, like every practice in Bourdieu's terms, is based upon a coincidence of two instances (generally separated by scholars): the external instance of literary texts (what we have customarily called the literary institution and what Bourdieu calls the fields) and the internal instance (textual productions and products, the producing agents and their 'habitus') (Gouanvic 2005, 147).

In the next section I turn to the reception perceived in paratexts and in the *responses* of readers on a micro level.

5. Reactions and responses of the readers

"Even if people are not aware that a given text is a translation, they nevertheless react to it as a text; and these reactions themselves are of relevance to translation research," says Andrew Chesterman (2007, 179). He posits that translations will induce a reaction in society that may manifest itself in certain *responses*, i.e. "observable acts of behaviour" (ibid., 179). In this section I examine the reception of Alice Munro's short stories based on the readers' responses. From a text typological point of view, I differentiate between critical responses in literary journals, articles of journalists published in newspapers targeting the general public, and the informal web2 online discussion forum of readers based on Lothar Hoffmann's genre analysis (Hoffmann 1991). Nine Hungarian literary journals (*Korunk*, *Élet és Irodalom*, *Műút*, *Látó*, *Holmi*, *Jelenkor*, *Árgus*, *Nagyvilág*, and the *Szépirodalmi Figyelő*), six newspapers (*Magyar Napló*, *168 óra*, *Magyar Nemzet*, *HVG*, *Magyar Narancs*, *Népszabadság*), and *Litera.hu*, an online literary magazine aiming at a general readership, have been surveyed for responses to Munro's published books. The largest online discussion forum of books in Hungary,



www.moly.hu, was the source for the readers' informal responses. Forty published articles and 170 online forum entries have been examined according to the following aspects: date of publication, whether they were published in response to Alice Munro's Nobel Prize, the mention of the text being a translation, the person or habitus of the translator and the mention of any other agents of the literary field.

It may not be surprising that 84% of the articles aimed at the general public appeared only after October 2013; 75% of them, that is 12 articles, were published between 10 October 2013 and 28 February 2014 in connection with Munro's Nobel Prize. In the same time period, seven publications appeared in literary journals, which is 33% of the articles aimed to reach literary experts. Thus we can see that the responses of literary critics are more evenly spread out in time, and only part of their responses are connected to the award of the Swedish Academy; they mostly focus on the literary aspects of Munro's work. Almost half (49%) of the examined 21 articles that were published in literary journals were brought out by the prestigious Hungarian literary journal *Élet és Irodalom*. These publications have appeared from 2007 on, that is from the launch of the first translated collection of stories, and since that time Munro's work has been regularly reviewed there. In 2007, *Runaway* – the second collection appearing in Hungary – received very positive critical acclaim in *Élet és Irodalom* (Bazsányi 2007), which may have moved Munro's work from the periphery to a more central place in the Hungarian literary field.

Among the articles written for the general public, I will highlight an article by journalist Ildikó Orosz. On the one hand, she reports about the Budapest International Book Festival, where Canada was a guest of honor in 2007, on the other hand, she comments on the two published volumes of Alice Munro, whom she refers to as a “possible Nobel Prize winner” at that time. The journalist differentiates between the translations done by Mária Borbás and Mónika Mesterházi, and considers the work of Borbás a “fair” translation, while refers to Mesterházi as the “Hungarian voice” of Munro and says that “... for the precise, unadorned sentences following the original text, the praise goes to Mónika Mesterházi” (Orosz 2007).

A total of 63% of the literary journal and newspaper responses examined recognize that the published volumes are translations, even if that only means mentioning the name of the translator. When referring to the translator's work, they use phrases such as “excellent translation,” “clearly reflects the original,” “a sensitive interpretation,” “solves the task very well.” “a worthy rendering of the original,” on one occasion “misttranslation” and also once “not Munro's style.” In the total of 40 articles examined, there are five critical remarks on the translator's strategies. Two of these refer to the translation of Canadian *realia*, one to the translation of a name, one to a stylistic problem, and once an alternative meaning of a phrase is offered by the critic. It is important to point out that the agents of the literary field reacted



to the cultural product immediately after its appearance on the market with critical reviews, journalistic writing, and interviews with the translators and the chief editor. These responses have also made the translators and other agents *visible*, to use Venuti's term (Venuti 2009).

The differences between the voices of the translators were also pointed out by literary critic Borbála Ruff in the 28 February 2014 issue of *Élet és Irodalom*, in which she reviews four collections of short stories. She remarks on the stylistic differences between the translated texts "I feel that Mária Borbás in her translations did not find what Mónika Mesterházi instinctively discovered and fine-tuned to be the most valuable trait of the texts. Munro's stories are complex. Their structure may be simple, but by playing with language, important moments that may almost go unnoticed in everyday happenings become emphatic" (Ruff 2014d). Although Ruff does not specify "what" – that is, the "most valuable trait" of the texts, which is present in one text and not in the other – she emphasizes Munro's crystal-clear style and the instinctive attitude of the translator when rendering the text. This *response* refers to the three different translator habitus. Mária Borbás uses domesticating strategies (Bánhegyi, 2015), Mónika Mesterházi aims to give a precise translation of specifically Canadian terms such as those for natural species, while keeping the concise, unadorned style of the texts, and Zsuzsa Rakovszky makes textual coherence a priority, creating a narrative that runs smoothly. The reception of Munro surveyed in this article shows that the responses, although only to a small extent (5%), make mention of the fact that the texts were translated by multiple translators and point to different habitus.

The reception also includes four interviews and a translator's commentary. This latter text was published by a literary journal entitled *Holmi* as a preface to Mónika Mesterházi's translation of *Runaway*; in it she comments on the literary features of Munro's writing (Mesterházi 2007). Two interviews with Mesterházi were published in printed media, one interview with translator Zsuzsa Rakovszky and one with Vera Tönkő, the chief editor of Park Publishing, in online media. The interviews all appeared in media targeting the general public (*Heti Világgazdaság*, *Magyar Narancs* and *Litera.hu*). While the translators talk about the challenges of rendering the text, Mesterházi also draws attention to the often undervalued work of revisers and proofreaders. The interview with the chief editor of Park allows an insight into the network of the agents in the literary field, as she explains that a Canadian friend of András Rochlitz, CEO of Park Publishing, recommended Munro's recently published book, *Hateship, Friendship, Courtship, Loveship, Marriage*, in 2001, which appeared later in Hungarian in 2006. In the interview, the chief editor also says that they maintain contact with the writer through her literary agent.

Finally, I would like to turn to the reader, who as an agent in the flow has several different possibilities to *respond* to the texts. One of the most important online read-



ing communities in Hungary is *Moly.hu*. The web2-based readers' forum was launched in 2008, and currently has 207,577 members (31 August 2017). Hungarian researcher Máté Tóth has studied the sociological aspects of the online community, the attitudes and motivation of participation and the reading tastes of the members in comparison with the Norwegian readers' portal *Boekelskere.no*. His quantitative study shows that the "majority of the members of *Moly.hu* (83.5%) are women, belonging mostly to a young age group. The average age of female members was 27.5, for male 27 years, the average age 27.4. [...] Those who filled in the questionnaire fall into the highly educated category in their age group, mostly university students or with a university degree" (Tóth 2011). Tóth points out that "the users of the book community belong to a fairly homogeneous group, and this virtual space does not lend the possibility to negotiate differing opinions, exchange views between members belonging to various layers of society" (ibid.). He adds that although there is no great difference in the sociological status of the users, the reading tastes do present a great variety, thus the dialogue, and expressing opinions are still meaningful exchanges on the interface of the online forum.

I examined 170 posts that appeared between 1 December 2008 and 31 August 2017 for this current study. The posts concern the eight volumes of Munro that had been published up to August 2017, although the amount of responses for each book vary to a great extent. Due to the diverse number of posts (one volume has been evaluated by only two members) and the homogeneous nature of the online community, we cannot claim that these posts are representative of Hungarian readers' tastes, but we can nevertheless examine the comments thematically for any mention regarding the dynamics and agents of the Hungarian literary field which affect the reception of Munro's work.

The responses given by readers to the short stories vary indeed according to reading tastes. The posts are highly subjective; a common characteristic of the posts is that the readers express their opinion fairly soon after having read the book. Besides expressing likes and dislikes, the comments can be thematically categorized by comments on the book cover, the Nobel Prize, the translation of the title, the translators and audiovisual adaptations. A high number of posts refer to the cover, which shows that the book cover influences reception even before one's exposure to the text. One commenter says: "If I only saw the cover and the title, I would have never read it..." (langimari, 19 November 2013). Posts that appear after October 2013 often regarded the Nobel Prize as a guarantee, as a label of quality, which then influenced the readers' "horizon of expectations" (to use a term from Jauss 1982). The work of the translator was only commented upon by 3% of the responses examined, in connection with only three volumes. Out of these five responses, one praises the translator; the other four, however, connect their bad reading experience with bad translation, but, unlike the



literary critics, do not give an example of the mistakes that were noticed. Regarding the film adaptations of Munro's short stories, the readers recommended the public screening event. Although a wide range of opinions is expressed on *Moly.hu*, the possibility of expressing a personal opinion on a reading experience is an important feature of the literary field that did not characterize the cultural field before 1989.

We can conclude that Munro's oeuvre has moved from a peripheral position, being published occasionally in literary magazines, to a central position in the Hungarian literary field via translation. The reception of Munro's short stories has been closely connected to the translation process as well, as three highly regarded translators have been involved in the co-creation of the texts. The published volumes have received extensive literary praise and prompted all agents in the field to respond in various ways. The reception of the books and the attitudes of the agents of the field have been closely connected with the transnational symbolic capital that Alice Munro holds, part of which capital is due to the Nobel Prize. The effect of this institutional recognition has been a major factor, but as we have seen, it is not exclusive in the responses. The positions and the role of agents within the literary field have significantly changed since the political transformation, where relations are continuously being negotiated by the agents, and in which key figures are the publishers, the translators and the readers. To answer the question of how many Hungarian voices Munro has, we have to consider not only the translators, but the voice artist of the audio book, the reviewers and proofreaders as well as the editors who have shaped the voice that Hungarian readers can pick up. To them, we can also add those who have influenced the language use of translation professionals and the teachers of translation in the past 25 years. This 'heteroglossia', to use Mikhail Bakhtin's term, is also quite usual in Canada, from where Alice Munro's narratives originate. The multiple voices of the agents in the literary field thus form the social context of the Hungarian reception of the texts.

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