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**THE STYLISTICS OF LITERARY TRANSLATIONS: WILLIAM
FAULKNER**

ABSTRACT

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Summary:***Introduction***

The importance and significance of translations in our daily life is highly multidimensional: translation increases our ability to investigate through literature the feelings and thoughts of people from different societies and different times, it widens and deepens our world and our consciousness in countless ways and it allows access to world literature. While translations have paved the way forward for global interaction, a translator's task is never too easy, as he/she has to serve not only as an intermediary between different language systems, but also as an intercultural mediator. A translator must also acquire a keen sense of the style of the languages involved in the process of translation, sharpening and enhancing our critical awareness of the emotional impact of words, their cultural load, the mood that infuses them and the atmosphere they create. The challenge faced by a translator is therefore to create a work that will maintain the dynamic potential of the original – its thematic, linguistic and emotional scope – to its fullest extent, while making this new rendering accessible to readers of a different language. The extent to which such task is possible depends exclusively on the translator's work, specifically on his ability to transfer between languages those qualities of a literary work that are above or beneath any language. In itself, this remains a vital quality of communication that goes beyond the form of its expression.

William Faulkner is known, among other things, for his style, which is not always easy to comprehend: the American author is often associated with exceedingly long and over-elaborated sentences running one or several pages, frequent time and character shifts, southern dialect, frequent use of the stream-of-consciousness technique, he mentions characters or events that the unaware reader will not learn about until much later. All these narrative peculiarities make Faulkner a difficult author to read and translate.

The current doctoral research falls within the scope of linguistic and literary stylistics. The thesis sets out to examine and highlight some of the problems faced by translators in their

attempt to translate Faulkner's work into Romanian. The aim of this thesis is to reveal the extent to which the Romanian translation can stay "true" to the original text, that is, to what extent the translators followed Faulkner's peculiar sentence structure, syntactic features, lexical choices, cultural references, punctuation. The translations under analysis belong to Radu Lupan, Mircea Ivănescu, Michaela Bogza, Dan Jebeleanu and myself.

The main objectives of this thesis are:

- to outline the line of research that will enable me to approach the translation of Faulkner's work from a stylistic perspective;
- to provide a close examination and an analysis of the role of meaning and context in translation;
- to review 20th century major approaches to translation studies;
- to review Romanian writers' attitude towards the act of translation and its role as a bridge between cultures;

The present study is based on several hypotheses. One of them is that a literary text has a hard-to-define added value, conveyed by the particular way in which such texts exploit grammar, lexis, etc. This added value is related to the style of a given text. Another hypothesis is that a fine literary translation must reproduce something of the style of the original text. A third hypothesis is that stylistic and linguistic analyses can identify important stylistic features of the original text and assess whether equivalent features are present or not in the translation of the original.

The theoretical and methodological framework of the present analysis draws extensively on the seminal contribution of several 20th century widely known theorists (Eugen Nida, Peter Newmark, Juliane House, Jiri Levy) and of several Romanian representative figures whose critical approaches impacted on the development of this field in Romania (Gheorghe Asachi, Tudor Vianu, Vasile Alecsandri, Mihai Eminescu, Alecu Russo, Constantin Dobrogeanu Gherea). The principles and methods of research are grounded on a detailed stylistic analysis of several translations belonging to Radu Lupan, Mircea Ivănescu, Michaela Bogza, Dan Jebeleanu and myself.

The originality of this thesis resides in the angle of approach: a stylistic analysis of translations, an aspect not often insisted upon in Romania. For quite a long time, literary translation has been treated differently by theorists specialized in this domain, on the one hand and by the practitioners in this field, on the other. The translation of literary works from one language into another has been a natural way of accessing the literature of other countries. These

translations from world literature have not only helped familiarize Romanian readers with the great literary values of mankind but have also had an impact on the development of our own literature.

The translations of Faulkner's work have seldom been the subject of detailed specialized studies. Most of the time these translations were merely mentioned in magazines or newspapers under the heading 'translations from world literature' or as a casual reference to the activity of those who had translated from Faulkner. Therefore, the present thesis seeks to approach the translations of Faulkner's writings from an integrated stylistic perspective focusing on the act of translation as such and on the quality of the translation alike. Herein reside the novelty and the originality of the thesis.

The thesis provides a comprehensive stylistic analysis of the Romanian translations as well as a contrastive examination of the Romanian versions by Radu Lupan, Mircea Ivănescu, Michaela Bogza and Dan Jebeleanu. Each style is discussed for opportunity, clarity and choice of register (linguistic, cultural and social). The intention is to underscore the translators' expressiveness and examine their use of language means to compensate for lexical scarcity or semantic ambiguity in an attempt to preserve the "unique" style of William Faulkner. My stylistic approach may well serve as a useful tool for a better understanding of the Romanian translators' work, their general attitude towards translating from world literature, their common features as well as their differences. The method is descriptive and no measureable indicators will be used. The examination includes examples of problematic or challenging linguistic choices from a stylistic perspective. Additionally, other aspects, such as narrative techniques, lexical choices, figures of style, etc. are taken into account when certain translation choice needs explaining.

Structure of the thesis

The doctoral thesis is structured on three main chapters. The first chapter, *Linguistic, Literary and Intercultural Dimensions of Translation* is an overview of the theoretical aspects which serve as a basis for the other chapters. The first subchapter, *Major Orientations in Translation Studies*, reviews several key approaches to the study of translation advanced during the 20th century, focusing particularly on the 1960s – 1970s, when most of Faulkner's work was translated. The most important theory of this period – equivalence – shows that the source text

shares some kind of ‘sameness’ with the target text and it triggers a debate on what kind of and what degree of sameness a translator should obtain. This engenders different types of equivalence: Jakobson speaks about intralingual, interlingual and intersemiotic types of translation; Catford introduces the notion of “shifts”, distinguishing level shifts from category shifts; Nida brings to the fore his formal and dynamic equivalence; House his overt and covert translation; Koller outlines five types of equivalence: denotative, connotative, text-normative, pragmatic and formal; Newmark replaces Nida’s opposition between dynamic and formal with communicative and semantic equivalence.

The concept of equivalence is one of the most debatable and controversial approaches to translation studies. According to the equivalence approach to translation, a translation is not a mirror version of the source text. One cannot overlook a certain subjectivity found in the practice of translation or the socio-cultural and historical circumstances under which that translation is produced. Other approaches to translation studies emerged and beginning with the 1970s, translation theorists have distance themselves from the linguistic approach focusing their attention towards other approaches, from political and social perspectives. These are known as ‘cultural turn’ approaches and are advertised by well-known scholars such as: Even-Zohar, Bessnett, Lefevere, Toury, Gentzler. Other approaches have left their mark on translation studies: the *skopos* theory – introduced by Vermeer and Reiss; the ‘integrated approach’ introduced by Snell-Hornby; Venuti’s foreignizing translation; Hermans’s Descriptive Translation Studies. Nowadays, translation studies – after much repression and neglect – have become well-established. They are regarded as an interdisciplinary and intercultural phenomenon that borrows elements from different academic areas such as linguistics, cultural studies, postcolonial studies and psychology. The 2000s have brought new approaches to translation studies or have consolidated old ones since much of the publications on the field are just revisited editions of well-known studies on the topic. Among the new approaches we mention Gutt’s cognitive approach; the ‘textual dynamic enterprise’ devised by Ellis and L Oakley-Brown; the interdisciplinary approach of Snell-Hornby and Munday; the notion of ‘untranslatability’ introduced by Apter; Spivack’s psychoanalytical approach. Nowadays translators are faced with a new challenge: how to cope with the development of the Internet and the emergence of new technological developments in communication. The result is that the political, cultural or geographical boundaries are less constraining and more fluid. In such a world, the job of the

translator is ever more significant and his profession increasingly demanding. He is forced to search for new practical techniques that can prove more efficient and less time consuming.

The next subchapter *The Specifics of Literary Translations* reviews and illustrates several translation strategies as per literary genre and discusses the uniqueness of the literary translations. There are certain differences between a literary text and other text types: literary texts have aesthetical and rhetorical significance, the literary language has a distinct role from standard language, such texts have deep roots in the source language and culture, etc. Such difficulties pose real problems for any translator who takes upon himself the task of translating literary works, since new challenges arise with every literary piece that is translated. The subchapter sets out to exemplify the particular challenges of a literary translation by referring to different translation strategies, different approaches depending on text types and different literary theories. The next two subchapters *Linguistic Aspects of Translation* and *Intercultural Aspects of Translation* serve as a backdrop against which Faulkner's translations can be assessed, pointing out the importance of linguistic and cultural aspects and the need to preserve them in the process of translation. The aim is to reveal the extent to which a translation depends on our understanding of the culture and grammar we are working with and to see to what extent the translators under analysis should let themselves be influenced by these two contexts. This last part of the chapter also approaches the issue of style, stylistics, linguistic stylistics, focusing mainly on the importance of a stylistic approach to translation and on the latest developments in the field.

The second chapter, *William Faulkner's Romanian Renderings* is devoted to Faulkner's reception in Romania. A brief survey of the way Faulkner was received in Western world is offered before tracing the critical response to Faulkner's work in Romania. William Faulkner is one of the American novelists who enjoyed wide critical acclaim in the late 20th century Europe. With few exceptions (Great Britain), Faulkner has been welcomed wholeheartedly throughout Europe, critical response being unaltered by pre-imposed ideological distortions. The last part of the chapter dedicated to Faulkner's reception in Romania, *Romanian Responses to William Faulkner's Fiction*, is structured into two sub-sections: while the first sub-section reviews the most important studies in chronological order, the other examines the studies published in *Contemporanul*, *Secolul 20*, *Tribuna* and *Convorbiri literare*. The late nineteen sixties and early seventies were undoubtedly the most fertile years in Romanian Faulkner studies. According to

the Astra Library data repository, no less than 10 novels were translated during this period. The rest of the 1970s and the 1980s proved to be relatively quiet in this respect: *Neînfrânții*, translated by Virgil Ștefănescu-Drăgănești, *Sartoris*, by Mircea Ivănescu while the 1990s continued the list with two other translations by Mircea Ivănescu: *Pogoară-te Moise* and *Steaguri în țărână* and one by Radu Lupan, *Gambitul calului*.

A seminal and, by far the most pertinent and complex analysis of the American novelist in our country is Sorin Alexandrescu's monograph published in 1969. He portrays Faulkner not only as a humanist who believed in the power of man to overcome all hardship but also as an excellent chronicler of his time and place. The early 1970s Romanian criticism continued with Radu Lupan's *Text și context* and Ana Cartianu's volume *Eseuri de literatură engleză și americană*. As to the Post-Revolutionary period, the criticism on Faulkner consisted of a new monograph entitled *Cartea Eșecurilor* by Mircea Mihaieș (1990) – a hermeneutic study of Faulkner's poetics and poietics – to be followed in a chronological order by Suzana Carmen Cismaș' *Rebreanu, Hardy, Faulkner spațiu generic și destine tragice* (2000), Didi Ionel Cenușer's *Faulkner's Larger Meanings. "The Greek Conception"* (2005), Ana Harand's *The Ancient Tragedy and William Faulkner's Novels* (2006) and Mircea Mihăieș' *Ce rămâne. William Faulkner și misterele ținutului Yoknapatawpha* (2012). The second part of the subchapter deals with the studies published in newspapers and magazines. The aim is to shed light on a number of articles published on Faulkner's work that were hardly insisted upon when mention was made of Faulkner's reception in Romania. Many reviews of Faulkner's writings are still buried in old journals and magazines which are, more often than not, inaccessible to the general public. This subchapter takes stock, in a chronological order, and reviews the essays, articles, translations, reviews and prefaces that were published on the American author and his reception in our country, such as "W. F. Confluente" by Mircea Ivănescu published in *Steaua*, "Destin și caracter în opera lui Faulkner" by Alexandru Ivasiuc in *Viața Românească*, "Faulkner" by Pelin Mihai, published in *Ramuri* and so on.

Although Faulkner has not been as admired in Romania as his contemporaries Hemingway or Steinbeck for instance, he has enjoyed a wide critical readership. The great number of books, articles, essays and translations stand testimony to this and accommodate a large number of interpretations. Faulkner has been perceived in different hypostases: as a humanist (Alexandrescu, Balotă), realist observer (Alexandrescu, Cartianu, Lupan, Stanciu),

linguistic experimentalist (Balotă) or historiographer (Alexandrescu, Balotă). Irrespective of how many interpretations he may have housed, Faulkner's reception in our country has been determined by this regional – universal duality. Faulkner's work is grounded in his native South, a land comprising both the souls and the soil of the American South encouraging comparisons between its mythical and “real” history. At the same time, many of the events narrated as well as the character types are illustrative of the human condition everywhere in space and time. Therefore it does not come as a surprise that much of the criticism before 1989 dwelt upon this regional identity of the novelist, highlighting his preoccupation with the plight of the downcast and the dispossessed and the social injustice. As far as post-revolutionary criticism is concerned, there has been a shift in the critical approach – now criticism is mainly stylistic. This has also been a time when Romanian critics feel urged to defend the American writer against an earlier rather negative reception in Europe. However, in Romania Faulkner has enjoyed a positive reception, with almost all of his works having been translated.

The third chapter, *William Faulkner's Translation into Romanian: Case Studies*, is structured into 5 subchapters: *Romanian Views on Translation*; *Translating Faulkner's Worldwide*; *Stylistic Matrixes and Devices in William Faulkner's Work*; *The Bear, Landing in Luck* and *A Space of Possibilities: Translating and Analyzing a Sample of “Sanctuary”*. The first subchapter focuses on the translation activity of some of our most important writers: Gheorghe Asachi, Tudor Vianu, Vasile Alecsandri, Mihai Eminescu, Alecu Russo, Constantin-Dobrogeanu-Gherea, etc. The major objectives are: to evince the opinions of some prominent Romanian writers concerning the act of translation; to show their attitude towards translations from world literature; to draw a parallel between the Romanian writers' approach to the study of translations and that of prominent world theorists.

Gheorghe Asachi believes that our literature could not evolve unless it was integrated into the process of world literature. Costache Negruzzi also speaks about the importance of translations from world literature. While insofar as the process of translation is concerned Negruzzi believes that a translator should render the exact content of ideas of the original text, Vasile Alecsandri, does not share the same view concerning text accuracy. He would name those who gave a “word-for-word” translation “croitori de fraze absurde” (tailors of absurd phrases). Mihai Eminescu shares Alecsandri's view, holding that a direct or literal translation generates an awkward, pompous style. While Alecu Russo criticizes the language of the interpretation

(*tălmăcire*) which neither the public nor the interpreter understands, Constantin-Dobrogeanu-Gherea pays special attention to the language of translations, stressing the importance of translations in the development of our own literature. He maintains that a translator should never seek a word-for-word translation, rather he should encapsulate the whole atmosphere of the original text into the rendering. In his work *Studii de literatură universală și comparată*, Tudor Vianu holds that a translation should be a work of art and a first-class translator, an artist.

Contemporary literary criticism views the act of translation as a cultural one that favors the knowledge and direct acquaintance with world literature. When working on a translation, contemporary theorists emphasize the need to take into consideration all contexts: social, cultural, grammatical. The translation is no longer considered a secondary, mechanical activity, but a creative process. This subchapter is important for the understanding of the social and historical circumstances under which the Romanian translators under analysis carried out their translations of Faulkner. The second subchapter tackles the issue of Faulkner translations worldwide. Mention is made of the ways translators attempted to cope with Faulkner's innovative style, his language, his use of suspense, his long descriptive passages, the oral character of his writings, his metaphorical language or his regional character. The third subchapter provides a careful analysis of Faulkner's style so as to ease some of the challenges faced by anyone who takes upon himself the task of translating the American novelist. The analysis is limited to those aspects of his style – language, narrative technique and the use of time – which pose serious problems for the translator. Next, two translations of Faulkner's short stories – *The Bear*, by Radu Lupan and Mircea Ivănescu and *Landing in Luck*, by Michaela Bogza and Dan Jebeleanu – are further examined and a detailed stylistic text analysis doubled by a contrastive study of the two Romanian versions will come full circle in our approach. The intention here is hardly to assess translation quality, rather the scope is wider, to point to particular current translation problems. The fragments analyzed are presented in a logical order as they appear in the original text to facilitate the understanding of the analysis. The translations are compared in terms of mistakes, omissions, differences in rendering the punctuations, the elements of foregrounding, idioms, lexical choices. The analysis of the source texts and the target texts has shown that the Romanian translators mediated Faulkner's writings in different ways. What I have tried to assess through this comparative analysis is to what extent each of the Romanian translators were faithful to the style of the source texts, that is, to what extent the

translators followed Faulkner's lexical choices, sentence structure, punctuation, register, etc. The last part of the chapter accommodates a careful textual analysis of one of Faulkner's most controversial novels, *Sanctuary*. A stylistic analysis will be provided to investigate and understand some of the choices made by Mircea Ivănescu, and to explain some of the choices I have made in an attempt to retain the overall atmosphere of the original.

Conclusions

My thesis on the use of stylistic analysis in the evaluation of literary translations, with a focus on particular cases of English to Romanian translation, adds to present understanding in the following ways: it confirms the legitimacy and importance of employing stylistics for literary translation; it suggests that a fine translation ought to render something of the style of the original text; it demonstrates that translation strategies can be relevant and flexible and, last but not least, it proves that stylistics provides a useful linguistic tool of understanding literary texts.

I hold that for a literary translator, stylistics is a valuable tool that helps him/her recognize significant stylistic devices in the original text and estimate if equivalent characteristics are present or not and if the equivalent functions are attained or not.

I start from the assumption that familiarity with Faulkner's style is of paramount importance for everyone who takes upon himself the task of translating his work. Faulkner uses literary stylistic devices (metaphors, personification, foregrounding, inverted syntax, extensive use of epithets, etc.) meant to reproduce certain psychological effect on the reader's mind and anyone who attempts to translate Faulkner should be able to render them as accurately as possible into the target language. Romanian versions vary in the way they maintain these devices and techniques, with some of the translators failing to notice them. I believe that out of the four translators, Ivănescu seems to be the translator who paid the closest attention to stylistic patterns. I have also brought my contribution to the topic by describing my own translation process as an example of the translator's labor, by explaining both the external work of the translator as well as the inner mental processes. The aim of my translation is to stress the importance of translating the style of the author. I have managed to show how a translator grasps the concept of style and how the analysis of stylistic factors works in the process of translation. A personal descriptive study may increase the translators' awareness of the necessity for stylistic analysis and theories in their translation studies.

Scrutinizing the four Romanian translations, I found that in general, Ivănescu preserves the original style better than the other three. His translation indicates that he was aware of Faulkner's style, of the foregrounded features and as such, he was able to provide sound target-language compensations. Retaining the repetition in the original text by its equivalent repetition in the translated text is preferred regardless of how odd or monotonous it may sound. Variation or even omission of repetition will result in misrepresentation of the author's intention and as such it should be avoided. But one has to keep in mind that Ivănescu translated the short story in 1991, more than 25 years later than the other three translations. It is easy for us average readers of the 2000 to see the shortcomings of Lupan's, Bogza's or Jebeleanu's translations.

In the 1960's, interest in Faulkner's work was minimal and, because of the Communist policy, the Romanian readers did not have access to specialized dictionaries, technical devices or even free access to world literature or world criticism. Neither did they have access to extensive studies on Faulkner's style – for example, Alexandrescu's monograph was published in 1969, three years after the publication of Lupan's, Bogza's or Jebeleanu's translation – which is crucial for anyone who takes upon himself the task of translating Faulkner. When the three translations were published, only a few critics – Ivănescu, Biberi, Ivasiuc and Bălănescu – published essays and articles in magazines or newspapers which were not easily available to the general public. If Ivănescu is a better translator of Faulkner it is also because the language he used has been "extended" in the meantime by other writers and because the Romanian critic was familiar with Faulkner's poetics: *William Faulkner. Confluențe* (1962). Ivănescu was aware of Faulkner's most obvious stylistic features – such as vocabulary or sentence structure – and as such he was able to render them in his translations. This knowledge enhances Ivănescu's ability to maintain most of Faulkner's style in his Romanian translation.

In general, Radu Lupan's translation is a great success because, although it was produced more than fifty years ago, when the social, political and economic conditions of Romania were extremely difficult, it basically conveyed the overall meaning of the original text which makes the target text friendly and familiar to the Romanian audience. Just like Ivănescu, Lupan dealt with the American author in a volume entitled *Text și context* (1983) and this familiarity proved to be a valuable tool in translating Faulkner. However, Lupan was less concerned with keeping the same sentence structure as in the original text. He might have overlooked the importance of keeping the same order as in the original or he might have done it on purpose to ensure the

fluency of the target text. He might have even considered that too much respect for Faulkner's writings and a translation too close to it could result in a rigid and unnatural Romanian text. Lupan also ignored certain words (especially adjectives) whenever he considered that they were unimportant or they might have come into conflict with what he wanted to render. His translation is smooth and fluent Romanian which is – to a certain extent – at the expense of certain stylistic features of Faulkner's original short story.

Compared to Ivănescu and Lupan, the other two translators did not seem to realize the closeness of the relationship between studying the source text and translating it. This is an easy task for a translator of short stories. Unlike a translation of a novel, where the translator has to work with different types of units – such as chapters – and the coherence must be retained for longer spans of texts, the translation of a short story is an easier job, since the text can be re-read. On the other hand, translating short stories can be very demanding since every little detail has to be taken into consideration. Even if the source text was a short one, lacking many of Faulkner's infamous stylistic devices, the two Romanian translations have some shortcomings: omissions, inconsistencies and even misunderstandings. The most poignant aspect of Bogza's and Jebeleanu's translations is their inconsistency to keep the same word order as in the original text. They adopted the Romanian word order to insure the fluency of the translation. The choices made in terms of changing the word order or in terms of punctuation can be seen as negative since both interfere with features of Faulkner's style, namely long sentences or unnatural sentence structure.

There are also some obvious mistakes on their part, some worse than others. In translation, a mistake is the choice of a wrong word in terms of meaning and as such conveys a partially or totally different meaning from the original word. Such mistakes are caused by several reasons, which may include lack of linguistic knowledge, lack of time, misinterpretation of the original text, lack of revision. Examining Bogza's translation, several mysterious omissions can be noticed which can be the result of lack of attention during the translation process or a way out of a difficult piece of the original text. There is certainly and inevitably some loss of meaning as a result of omission. The translator should only use it as a last resort, when the benefits of producing a fluent and smooth translation outweigh a total faithfulness of the original text. Bogza used this strategy far more often than Jebeleanu, sometimes jeopardizing the meaning of certain parts of the source text. She omitted words as well as entire sentences. Regarding the

omission of entire sentences, it is very difficult to state what might have caused them. The use of particular sentence structure or lexical choice is not done randomly by a particular author; it contributes – sometimes fundamentally – to the construction of style and meaning as a whole. Consequently, translators should avoid, as much as possible, omitting any information from the original text, however difficult the translation of it may prove to be. As compared to Lupan or Ivănescu, Bogza and Jebeleanu were less careful to details, to original sentence structure or punctuation. However, for an untrained eye, their translations read easily and fluently in Romanian.

One has to keep in mind that the two translations were published more than fifty years ago, when translations were made for commercial purposes. Professor Rodica Dimitriu claims that the poor quality of translations was the result of the market-governed translation-studies. This was also a period when the critics considered the translations a creative art and the translators, artists (Vianu, Gherea) who did not have to translate the words that make up a text or to render the stylistic particularities: he/she has to render the “spirit” that animates it.

Limitations and further research

The strength of this thesis resides in its ability to offer a fresh perspective on the issue of stylistic imitation in translation. The thesis has shown that a rigorous analysis of the style of the authors to be translated is an essential tool in achieving an accurate translation of the source text. The awareness of the stylistic choices that are common to a certain author can allow the translator to successfully emulate these choices in the translation. Assessing the faithfulness of a translation is a difficult task in many respects, since such assessments are often subjective and up to debate. This thesis is an attempt to remove such subjectivity by providing a strong theoretical framework and analysis of some of the most significant stylistic elements of Faulkner’s language.

However, this thesis comes with its own limitations. Firstly, the small size of the translations must be recognized. Several examples are not merely sufficient to draw sound and robust generalized conclusions. Secondly, the focus was on the linguistic and theoretical concerns of translators of literary texts, when in fact, there is a broad array of aspects that may influence – consciously or not – a translator’s choice of phrasing and the evaluation of literary translations. Thirdly, even though this research was intended as a descriptive one, it cannot

entirely prevent the likelihood of bias, since the analysis and assessment of the translations has been based on my own judgment.

Although the study provides compelling evidence for the valability of employing stylistic analysis in the assessment of what an accurate translation should be, further research needs to be considered.