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# POETICS in Translation

The theoretical context of "poetics in translation" are the "travelling" theories, discourses and concepts (...) for these journeys translation happen to be one of the key ways of travelling. Poetics also use translations as a means of transport, and the outcomes and range of these voyages happen to be quite different.



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# P o e t i c s i n T r a n s l a t i o n

Ewa Kraskowska

*This latest themed edition of our magazine is devoted to questions involving literary translation – we have given it the title “Poetics in Translation”, which is clearly a paraphrasing of the “poetics of translation”, a term which was put forward half a century ago by Edward Balcerzan, and which has since become one of the sub-disciplines in the broader field of translation studies. Ewa Rajewska writes about his precursory role in the section titled Poetological Archive, stressing its echoing of that which in the 1970s took place in the west in the field of translation studies, which constituted its autonomy thanks to the works of Jamesa S. Holmes, Gideon Toury, Susan Bassnett, André Lefevre and the recently deceased Katherine Reiss (who co-created Skopos theory). Such theories were not widely accessible to Polish experts in translation, as the circulation of scientific discourse was disrupted by causes of a political, ideological, linguistic – or simply put – financial nature. In spite of their inability to enter into a discourse with foreign circles regarding issues involved translation, our own Polish studies of translation were doing very well at the time, something Forum of Poetics is happy to acknowledge today.*

*And yet the formula of “poetics in translation” involves something other than a Balcerzanesque “poetics of translation”. Closer to its theoretical context are rather the “travelling” theories, discourses and concepts created by the likes of Edward Said, Mieke Bal and Susan Gal – in terms of these journeys, translations happen to be one of the key ways of travelling. Poetics also use translations as a means of transport, and the outcomes and range of these voyages happen to be quite different.*



*In this issue of Forum of Poetics we are also concerned with the poetics of otherness in translation and the strangeness of translation. An article written by David Bellos – one of the chapters from his brilliant book Is There a Fish in Your Ear (2011) – returns to the endless dilemma concerning familiarisation and exoticisation in translations, in order to then in a series of suggestive examples show specific solutions, with the aid of which translators try to retain traces of the “foreign-soundingness” of the source text in the target language. A study penned by Kinga Rozwadowska enters into an interesting dialogue with Bellos’ reflections; it is titled Polskie, czyli obce (Polish, therefore foreign), dealing with a famous fragment of Brothers Karamazov in which Fiodor Dostoevsky included Polish characters shown episodically in a negative light. Showing in Polish the way in which these protagonists speak was for numerous translations of this Dostoevsky text a real challenge. Another canon modernist work – the poem The Love Song of Alfred J. Prufrock by T.S. Eliot – is dealt with by Marta Kaźmierczak, who in her fabulous micro-analyses presents the history behind the Polish series of this work, putting forth an original way of analysing the quality of its translation. A text by Marta Stusek deals with Polish journeys into the poetics of Japanese haikus, while Zuzanna Kozłowska deals with translational concepts involving the works of Vladimir Nabokov and Douglas Robinson, in order to point towards an intriguing phenomenon involving the synaesthetic sense of language and its influence upon feeling a “pleasure in translation”. The current edition of Forum of Poetics also involves a discussion around two relatively new books, and though they are completely different in terms of genres, both deal with the topic of translation. One of these is a work reviewed by Borys Szumański – a collection of twelve conversations with Polish translators recorded by Adam Pluszka (Wte i wewte. Z tłumaczami o przekładach – There and elsewhere. Talking with translators about translation), a work which fits into an ever growing trend of focusing on the person and the work of translators in the communication and culture of translation. The second book, presented by Weronika Szwebs, is Reflections on Translation Theory. Selected Papers 1993-2014 by Andrew Chesterman, one of the most renowned contemporary theoreticians in the field of translation, the author of (among others) the original notion of “memes of translation”. Finally, in the section titled Poetological dictionary, we include the phrase “translation universals” penned by Ewa Kraskowska and referring to the widely debated concept by Mona Baker. Translation studies has in recent decades become a field of intense evolution in terms of substance and methodology. New fields of research are appearing all the time, and the traditional philological ways of working are enriched by modern tools and theoretical elements. This new edition of Forum of Poetics is intended to be part of this key field of exploration in the contemporary humanities.*

translated by Mark Kazmierski



# Translation Quality in a Translation Series: A Love Song for Six Voices

Marta Kaźmierczak

## Assumptions and aims

The present contribution is an attempt to explore the interrelation between the notions of quality and seriality in literary translation. Its aim is not, however, judging the “excellence” of the target texts in a normative way, but rather observing certain “quality patterns” in translation poetics.

The concept of translation series has been well established and influential in Polish translation studies, with the methodological point of departure in Edward Balcerzan’s observation made in 1968 that for literary translations it is a **series** that is the essential mode of existence<sup>1</sup>. The appearance of even one translation initiates a series which then becomes a potential one. If several translations exist, a series becomes partially realised; partially – because its nature is infinite. The scholar thus insists on a **developmental** character of the series<sup>2</sup>.

In the Western translation studies the coexistence of renditions of one and the same work is usually discussed under the name “retranslation.” While the Polish notion of seriality primarily celebrates the plurality of secondary texts, the Western tradition has been dominated by Antoine Berman’s retranslation hypothesis, which assumes the inevitable failure of translation as the premise of successive approximations to the original<sup>3</sup>. Nevertheless, it also presupposes a striv-

<sup>1</sup>“E. Balcerzan, *Poetyka przekładu artystycznego*, [in:] E. Balcerzan, *Literatura z literatury (Strategie tłumaczy)*, Katowice 1998, p. 18. First printed in: *Nurt* 1968, no. 8. All translations from the Polish criticism come from the author of the present paper.

<sup>2</sup> “[S]eria częściowo zrealizowana, jak i potencjalna, zawsze ma charakter **rozwojowy**” (Balcerzan, *Poetyka przekładu*, *ibid.*). All emphases in the paper are mine.

<sup>3</sup> A. Berman, “La retraduction comme espace de la traduction,” *Palimpsestes* 1990, vol. 13, no. 4, pp. 1–7.



ing for improvement in the successive versions<sup>4</sup>. This “corrective purpose,” although not the only function of translation is also part of Balcerzan’s understanding of translation. George Steiner, too, perceives a succession of alternative versions as “an act of reciprocal, cumulative criticism and **correction**”<sup>5</sup>.

Not only the notion of the developmental nature of the series but also certain expressions naturally suggested by the discourse somewhat favour the assumption of a quality increase. Scholars tend to talk of a development (which carries a suggestion of improvement) rather than of accretion, let alone of a degeneration of a series. The marketing uses of “new translation” labels likewise show that the latest addition to a series is believed to hold an attraction<sup>6</sup>.

However, for a translation series to display a steady growth of quality the following (not always likely) conditions would have to be fulfilled:

1. Translators would have to be aware of the previous elements in the series.

This is not always true, as show investigations by Anna Legeżyńska, who theorised the internal structure of the series<sup>7</sup>, i.e. the status of particular translations in a series and relations between them. On the one hand, some earlier translations would be marginalised (for various reasons) and would not become points of reference for future ones. On the other hand, additions to the series may be *systemic* ones (and indeed enter into a dialogue with the previous elements), but some are *occasional* and show the translators’ lack of knowledge of the work of their predecessors or interest in it. Marta Skwara, in turn, emphasises that a rendition may simply fall into oblivion before a new one appears<sup>8</sup>.

2. The intent of a translation would have to be to outdo the previous renditions.

Admittedly, dissatisfaction with inadequacy of the existing rendition(s) counts among important retranslation motivations. Even when a translator claims that his aim is showing a different facet of a given work, supplementing rather than negating someone else’s work, still the competitive factor always looms somewhere in the background, as pointedly formulated

<sup>4</sup> The hypothesis has gained surprisingly unquestioning acceptance considering the rather controversial assumption that first or early translations be necessarily weak and that their weakness consists in their “acculturating” instead of “foreignising” strategy. The latter assumption has been challenged e.g. in the study: O. Paloposki, K. Koskinen, *A Thousand and One Translations. Revisiting Retranslation*, [in:] *Claims, Changes and Challenges in Translation Studies*. Selected Contributions From the EST Congress, Copenhagen 2001, ed. H. Hyde, K. Malmkjær, D. Gile, Amsterdam 2004, pp. 27–38. An attempt at changing the perspective was undertaken by Françoise Massardier-Kenney: F. Massardier-Kenney, “Toward a Rethinking of Retranslation,” *Translation Review* 2015 vol. 92, no. 1, pp. 73–85.

<sup>5</sup> G. Steiner, *After Babel. Aspects of Language and Translation*, Oxford 1975, p. 416.

<sup>6</sup> A very rare voice assessing seriality negatively comes from Małgorzata Łukasiewicz. Yet even she seems simply carried by her rhetorical aim of defending old(er) translations, hence her rejection of the association with a “garment that quickly falls out of fashion” and with “mass production” (M. Łukasiewicz, *Pięć razy o przekładzie*, Kraków-Gdańsk 2017, pp. 83–84).

<sup>7</sup> A. Legeżyńska, *Struktura serii*, [in:] A. Legeżyńska, *Tłumacz i jego kompetencje autorskie* (1986), Warszawa 1999, 2nd ed., pp. 192–196.

<sup>8</sup> M. Skwara, *Polskie serie recepcyjne wierszy Walta Whitmana. Monografia wraz z antologią przekładów*, Kraków 2014, p. 17, pp. 79–91.



by the acclaimed translator and critic Stanisław Barańczak,<sup>9</sup> who is also one of the “voices” considered in the empirical part of this paper.

However, new translations often emerge for a range of reasons connected not with quality concerns but rather with economic, copyright or ideological factors. To cite a few possibilities:

– A publisher may commission a new translation at a cost lower than that of royalties for the old one – which is not conducive to high quality of the new additions to a series (such consequences of the Polish copyright law were explored by Anna Moc<sup>10</sup>).

– Józef Zarek cites an instance of a 1980s “underground” Polish collection of Jaroslav Seifert’s poems where translations were signed by pseudonyms; previously published renditions could not be reprinted as they would have given away their authors’ identities<sup>11</sup>.

– Commissioning a translation may be a matter of ideological patronage and of political exigencies, as pointedly illustrated by the Finnish classic in early-20<sup>th</sup>-century German versions studied by Pekka Kujamäki<sup>12</sup>. In such cases new renditions emerge to accommodate socio-historical circumstances, and not out of striving for artistic optimality.

– In recent decades British theatres have encouraged a proliferation of rewrites of world classic drama by “star dramatists”, through whom they intend to attract audiences, a trend described by Helen Rappaport, one of the marginalised language professionals, who “assist from the original”<sup>13</sup>.

3. Translators would have to be familiar with the state-of-the-art literary studies on a given author or work and also with translation criticism on their predecessors’ versions.

Again, as practice shows, in-depth preparatory studies are not always conducted (or possible), and, especially with poetry, the task may be undertaken for a sheer aesthetic fascination with the original. Jarek Zawadzki’s anthology of Polish school-canon poetry rendered into English<sup>14</sup> could exemplify it and this is said by no means with the intention of discrediting his work.

4. Translators would have to be allowed to borrow the most fortunate solutions from their predecessors.

<sup>9</sup> S. Barańczak, “Mały lecz maksymalistyczny manifest translatologiczny,” *Teksty Drugie* 1990, no. 3, pp. 7–8.

<sup>10</sup> A. Moc, *Nowe polskie prawo autorskie a kolejne tłumaczenia na naszym rynku wydawniczym, czyli przygody Pinoccia lub Pinokio*, [in:] *Między oryginałem a przekładem*, vol. III: *Czy zawód tłumacza jest w pogardzie?*, ed. M. Filipowicz-Rudek, J. Konieczna-Twardzikowa, M. Stoch, Kraków 1997, pp. 181–183.

<sup>11</sup> J. Zarek, *Seria jako zbiór tłumaczeń*, [in:] *Przekład artystyczny*, vol. 2: *Zagadnienia serii translatorskich*, ed. P. Fast, Katowice 1991, p. 10.

<sup>12</sup> P. Kujamäki, “Finnish Comet in German Skies. Translation, Retranslation and Norms,” *Target* 2002, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 45–70.

<sup>13</sup> H. Rappaport, *Chekhov in the Theatre: The Role of the Translator in New Versions*, [in:] *Voices in Translation*, ed. G. Anderman, Clevedon – Buffalo – Toronto 2007, pp. 66–77, see esp. pp. 68 and 74.

<sup>14</sup> *Selected Masterpieces of Polish Poetry*, trans. from the Polish by Jarek Zawadzki, [Charleston, S.C.] 2007.



Indeed, Legeżyńska concludes that in this field progress is a collective achievement, and “the rule of plagiarism does not apply”<sup>15</sup>, at least not on the lower stylistic levels. Practice, however, seems to prove the contrary: translators avoid repeating devices and phrasings after others, and if they do copy, they usually incur criticism<sup>16</sup>. Furthermore, Grzegorz Ojcewicz has convincingly demonstrated the barrier of plagiarism as a limitation to the development of series. In a short poem, he claims, the successive translations gradually exhaust all possible local solutions and bring the series to its boundaries<sup>17</sup>.

All in all, as Balcerzan himself famously<sup>18</sup> observed, one should not be deceived to believe that he translates best who translates last<sup>19</sup>. There can be, as noted by Dorota Urbanek, internal and external factors<sup>20</sup> conducive to extending the number of retranslations. As a result, the quality of a real-life series, if plotted in a chart, will not often resemble a steadily ascending curve.

What will such a chart look like? I intend to explore it by surveying the Polish renditions of T.S. Eliot’s *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*. Choosing for analysis a modern work of classic status, and one which has attracted translators of stature, I hope to observe an actual quest for quality – if there is one – rather than the need for updating as a retranslation factor. Secondly, although there has been in Poland a period of ideological rejection of Eliot’s poetry (the 1940s were his Purgatory, as one of his translators puts it<sup>21</sup>), the translations post-date it and apparently none of them was produced to serve political exigencies. The analysis can therefore be expected to yield results connected with poetics of the work(s).

### Approach adopted in this study

The phenomenon of translation series has been the subject of theoretical reflection as well as of empirical studies<sup>22</sup>. To cite Skwara’s enumeration, it can be harnessed, as both material and method, to establishing hierarchies among existing renditions, and besides it to analysing various poetics, languages, dictions characteristic of particular epochs or particular writers, to exploring the diverse interpretations of one text embodied in its renditions, or probing linguistic and cultural differences<sup>23</sup>. However, Skwara first of all aptly names the limitations

<sup>15</sup> A. Legeżyńska, *Struktura serii*, p. 195. This view is closely repeated by Dorota Urbanek, cf. D. Urbanek, *The Translators’ Adventures in “Alice’s Wonderland,”* [in:] *Translation and Meaning*, Part 6, ed. M. Thelen, B. Lewandowska-Tomaszczyk, Łódź – Maastricht 2002, p. 473.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. the negative response, both on aesthetic and ethical grounds, to Maria Leśniewska’s experimental “collage” translation of Baudelaire’s poem *Podróż* (orig. *Le Voyage*): Z. Bieńkowski, “W sprawie Baudelaire’a,” and J. Waczków, “Rzyko,” *Literatura na Świecie* 1985, no. 3 (164), pp. 354–364.

<sup>17</sup> G. Ojcewicz, *Granice serii*, [in:] G. Ojcewicz, *Epitet jako cecha idiolektu pisarza*, Katowice 2002, pp. 375–404.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. M. Skwara, “Wyobraźnia badacza – od serii przekładowej do serii recepcyjnej,” *Poznańskie Studia Polonistyczne. Seria Literacka* 2014, no. 23 (43), p. 107.

<sup>19</sup> E. Balcerzan, *Tajemnica istnienia (sporadycznego) krytyki przekładu*, [in:] *Krytyka przekładu w systemie wiedzy o literaturze*, ed. P. Fast, Katowice 1999, p. 34.

<sup>20</sup> Urbanek, *The Translators’ Adventures*, p. 472.

<sup>21</sup> M. Sprusiński, *Poeta wielkiego czasu*, [in:] T.S. Eliot, *Poezje*, ed. and afterword M. Sprusiński, Kraków 1978, p. 229.

<sup>22</sup> An early example is a 1991 Polish volume of conference papers (*Przekład artystyczny*, vol. 2: *Zagadnienia serii translatorskich*, ed. P. Fast, Katowice 1991). A more specific overview of theory and research up to date is given in Agnieszka Adamowicz-Pośpiech’s book, which also brings analyses of Polish retranslations of several works by Joseph Conrad (A. Adamowicz-Pośpiech, *Seria w przekładzie. Polskie warianty prozy Josepha Conrada*, Katowice 2013).

<sup>23</sup> Skwara, *Polskie serie recepcyjne wierszy Walta Whitmana*, p. 11.



of the concept as a methodological tool: she points to the series' constructed, somewhat artificial character and to the danger of isolating the translations from their socio-historical functioning in the target context<sup>24</sup>.

Translated poetry is a field in which, on the one hand, seriality becomes most pronounced, and on the other, where quality assessment is most problematic and most often judged subjective. Taking the poetics of a text as a starting point seems to provide a means for objectivising this measurement, a belief reflected in the various concepts of dominants of translation, to name the semantic dominant proposed by Stanisław Barańczak<sup>25</sup> and translational dominant theorised by Anna Bednarczyk in response to the former<sup>26</sup>. These concepts have been proved highly operative, especially if we guarantee the intersubjectivity of such a benchmark tool (as I have argued on an earlier occasion)<sup>27</sup>.

Yet the poetics of a work often cannot be reduced to one key element. This causes the volatility of approaches in translation criticism. Dorota Urbanek observed that there was no established methodology to analyse series and proposed a rudimentary procedure<sup>28</sup>. Lance Hewson in his book-length study<sup>29</sup> stresses the need for making this field less impressionistic on the one hand, and for measuring interpretative effects (comparing the interpretative potential of the source and target texts) on the other. With his novelistic examples he proposes to do so in a formalised way, by counting specific transformations (or rather their effects) in chosen segments and relating the results to the whole to get the proportion, so as to assess the scale and interpretive effects of changes. An attempt at a similar objectivisation with respect to poetry translation criticism appears worth undertaking.

In the present case, four fields will be studied, important for the overall poetics of the original work: musical qualities of Eliot's verse, the motif of indecision treated as the thematic core of *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*, the poetic diction and the intertextual dimension of the piece. The discussion will be organised around subsets of smaller components or aspects observed in the source text, whose retention or loss can be checked in a more specific manner. The appraisal will be aimed not so much at gauging the effectiveness of the solutions of individual translators as at registering the fluctuations or increase of quality in a given aspect of the poem's poetics. The overimposition of these provides a resultant showing the overall adequacy of translation at the particular points of the series' development. The aim of the survey is not to discover how Eliot's early signature poem has been interpreted by the successive Polish translators, but rather to test a certain (set of) assumption(s) about translation series as such. With this in mind, only a brief repertoire of features will be analysed and some aspects will not be given a full discussion but instead the results of it will be summarised.

<sup>24</sup> Skwara, *Polskie serie recepcyjne*, pp. 11, 16.

<sup>25</sup> Barańczak, "Mały lecz maksymalistyczny manifest translatologiczny," p. 36.

<sup>26</sup> A. Bednarczyk, *W poszukiwaniu dominanty translatorskiej*, Warszawa 2008, p. 13; A. Bednarczyk, *Wybory translatorskie*, Łódź 1999, p. 19.

<sup>27</sup> M. Kaźmierczak, "Jak wygląda koniec świata? Dominanty w przekładach wiersza Czesława Miłosza," *Między Oryginałem a Przekładem* 2012, vol. 18: *Dominanta a przekład*, ed. A. Bednarczyk, J. Brzozowski, pp. 97–115.

<sup>28</sup> Urbanek, *The Translators' Adventures in "Alice's Wonderland"*, p. 473.

<sup>29</sup> L. Hewson, *An Approach to Translation Criticism. Emma and Madame Bovary in Translation*, Amsterdam 2011.



## The Polish *Prufrocks*

*The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*<sup>30</sup>, the piece considered to have ushered in modernist poetics, was written in 1911 and published in T.S. Eliot's first collection of verse, *Prufrock and Other Observations*, in 1917. The Polish reception of Eliot began in the 1930s, with only five poems (*Prufrock* not among them) translated and published in periodicals by the poet Józef Czechowicz<sup>31</sup>. The Second World War prevented any wider cultural influences from the Anglo-Saxon culture, and later, in the Stalinist period, there were ideological barriers to the reception of a poet so intellectual, so religious, hermetic and conservative. A handful of poems appeared in literary magazines, including a 1948 translation of the *Love Song* by Władysław Dulęba<sup>32</sup>, which gained a greater resonance only when reprinted in Eliot's first Polish collection in 1960<sup>33</sup>. The second rendition, by Michał Sprusiński, dates to 1978, appearing in a collection of totally new texts<sup>34</sup>. Until the 1990s these two translations remained the only available Polish versions of *Prufrock* – at least in practical terms<sup>35</sup>. The successive three appeared within a decade and can be considered a synchronic segment of the series. Adam Pomorski first published his proposition in 1993 and it later came to open his comprehensive presentation of Eliot's poetry<sup>36</sup>. Stanisław Barańczak followed in 1998<sup>37</sup>. The latest version comes from Krzysztof Boczkowski (2001), who has been returning to Eliot throughout the past forty years. This text was reprinted in 2013<sup>38</sup> and 2016, therefore also in the sense of circulation it remains the “last say” so far.

## 1. Phonoaesthetic qualities

It seems appropriate to begin the survey with phonoaesthetic qualities because in *The Love*

<sup>30</sup> T.S. Eliot, *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*, [in:] T.S. Eliot, *Wybór poezji*, ed. K. Boczkowski, W. Rulewicz, introd. W. Rulewicz, Wrocław 1990, pp. 3–9. All subsequent citations will be to this edition.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. J. Czechowicz, *Poezje zebrane*, ed. A. Madyda, Toruń 1997, pp. 478–484.

<sup>32</sup> T.S. Eliot, *Pieśń miłosna J. Alfreda Prufrocka*, trans. W. Dulęba, [in:] T.S. Eliot, *Wybór poezji*, ed. K. Boczkowski, W. Rulewicz, wstęp W. Rulewicz, Wrocław 1990, pp. 9–14. First published in: *Znak* 1948, no. 7. All subsequent citations will be to the 1990 edition.

<sup>33</sup> T.S. Eliot, *Poezje wybrane*, introd. W. Borowy, Warszawa 1960. For *Prufrock* see pp. 43–51.

<sup>34</sup> T.S. Eliot, *Pieśń miłosna J. Alfreda Prufrocka*, trans. M. Sprusiński, [in:] T.S. Eliot, *Poezje*, ed. and afterword M. Sprusiński, Kraków 1978, pp. 7–13. All subsequent citations will be to this edition.

<sup>35</sup> There exists a rendition contemporary with Sprusiński's one, penned by Jerzy Niemojowski and published – together with an essay on both Eliot and the art of translation – in London, in a limited edition (*Miłosna Pieśń* [sic] *J. Alfreda Prufrocka*, trans. J. Niemojowski, [in:] T.S. Eliot, *Dziewięć poematów. Przekład i szkic o teorii i praktyce przekładu poetyckiego*, *Syrinx* 1978, no. 1, Sumptibus privatis Londini, pp. 51–54). This was printed explicitly “for restricted distribution” (cf. the note on editorial page) and was not known to wider readership in Poland. Fully conscious of the importance of Skwara's reservations about the “constructedness” of a translation series, which is primarily in the eye of the researcher, I intend to turn this from a disadvantage to an asset: Niemojowski's translation will be excluded from the present study on the grounds that in all probability it does not belong to any quality quest as perceived by an interested but non-specialised reader in Polish.

<sup>36</sup> T.S. Eliot, *Śpiew miłosny J. Alfreda Prufrocka*, trans. A. Pomorski, [in:] T.S. Eliot, *W moim początku jest mój kres*, trans. and ed. A. Pomorski, Warszawa 2007. First published in: *Twórczość* 1993, no. 1, pp. 3–6. All subsequent citations will be to the 2007 book edition.

<sup>37</sup> T.S. Eliot, *Pieśń miłosna J. Alfreda Prufrocka*, trans. S. Barańczak, [in:] *Od Walta Whitmana do Boba Dylana. Antologia poezji amerykańskiej*, trans. S. Barańczak, Kraków 1998, pp. 110–115. All subsequent citations will be to this edition.

<sup>38</sup> T.S. Eliot, *Pieśń miłosna J. Alfreda Prufrocka*, trans. K. Boczkowski, [in:] T.S. Eliot, *Szepty nieśmiertelności*, trans. K. Boczkowski (2001), Toruń 2013, 5th ed., pp. 96–100. All subsequent citations will be to the 2013 edition. The 6<sup>th</sup> imprint of 2016, called “ultimate” by the translator, was also consulted – it carries minor lexical changes and punctuation retouches (not always fortunate) which do not affect the passages cited in the present article and do not influence assessments made here..



*Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* it is rhythm that organises the succession of images and thoughts, and sound correspondences often prove striking. Marjorie Perloff argues that what was most arresting in 1917, and remains most attractive for the modern reader, is the way the poem sounds<sup>39</sup>. She goes on to show subtle assonances and echoes in the opening lines of the poem and to prove that they are brought about by deliberate careful word choices<sup>40</sup>. Joan Fillmore Hooker in a specifically translational context stresses that re-creating the sound and rhythm is a *sine qua non* of achieving equivalence with Eliot's original<sup>41</sup>.

In this area the two earliest Polish renditions score lowly: while there *are* passages that show rhythmical patterns, some longer stretches of text are not cadenced at all. This is particularly the case with Władysław Dulęba's text, confirming Magdalena Heydel's observations about his translation of *Gerontion*<sup>42</sup>. Michał Sprusiński employs specific pulse patterns at times, but alongside passages that sound flat and very prose-like. Lines quoted further in the paper will not infrequently show insufficient regard for rhythmic organisation.

Unlike in the original, where echoes, alliterations and internal rhymes permeate the text, in the two first Polish versions they remain incidental. The rhymes are mostly imperfect or approximate, they are re-created in the first two stanzas and in the "Michelangelo" couplet, and then appear only occasionally. Dulęba and Sprusiński seem not to have been aware of the essential character of musical qualities of Eliot's poem. As Heydel justly remarks<sup>43</sup>, some defects of early Polish renditions of Eliot were due to the lack of access to the wider, active context of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century poetry of the English language, enforced by the Iron Curtain; inability to understand the phonic organisation of this poetry may have belonged to such issues.

The later translations are musicalised to a much greater extent. Adam Pomorski re-creates the sound-structure of *The Love Song* in a masterly way, with identifiable rhythms, numerous rhymes, occasional internal echoes. At times he even amplifies the rhyming scheme, which can be judged a compensatory gesture, seeing that rhymes in Polish are (or used to be) much more important and prominent than in the Anglo-Saxon tradition. The sound of *Śpiew miłosny J. Alfreda Prufrocka* bears out Jean Ward's opinion that Pomorski's translations from Eliot are faultless with respect to rhythmical qualities<sup>44</sup>. Stanisław Barańczak, the acclaimed poet-translator, considered the master of form and known for almost breakneck stunts in re-creating versification, is also highly attentive to musicality. He builds a rhyme scheme and internal echoes, yet does not enhance this quality of Eliot's poem. These two translators introduce as well certain sound correspondences comparable with the original euphony. Importantly, they achieve the phonic equivalence without falling into the trap mentioned by Umberto Eco: of sweetening

<sup>39</sup> M. Perloff, "Awangardowy Eliot," trans. T. Cieślak-Sokołowski, *Czytanie Literatury. Łódzkie Studia Literaturoznawcze* 2012, no. 1, p. 284.

<sup>40</sup> Perloff, "Awangardowy Eliot," pp. 284–286.

<sup>41</sup> J.F. Hooker, "La Chanson d'amour de J. Alfred Prufrock" (*Sylvia Beach and Adrienne Monnier, Pierre Leyris, Maurice Le Breton*), [in:] J.F. Hooker, *T.S. Eliot's Poems in French Translation: Pierre Leyris and Others*, Ann Arbor [in England: Epping] 1983, pp. 45, 57.

<sup>42</sup> M. Heydel, *Obecność T.S. Eliota w literaturze polskiej*, Wrocław: Wyd. U. Wrocławskiego 2002, pp. 154–155.

<sup>43</sup> Heydel, *Obecność T.S. Eliota w literaturze polskiej*, pp. 155–156.

<sup>44</sup> J. Ward, "Kilka luźnych uwag na temat najnowszego przekładu poezji Eliota," *Przekładaniec* 2008, no. 21, p. 226.



what was meant to sound acrid<sup>45</sup>. Krzysztof Boczkowski is well aware of the intricacies of Eliot's versification, as proved by his comment drawing the readers' attention to the only segment where the poet altogether refrained from rhyming<sup>46</sup>. Consistently, rhymes feature in this translation and Boczkowski employs some rhythmic organisation, yet less skilfully than Pomorski or Barańczak. Moreover, his solutions can be banal (and not in places where Eliot is intentionally kitschy), e.g. in the poem's coda featuring the singing sirens he twice uses a hackneyed pair: *w dal – fal* ('away' – 'of waves').

The strophe comprising lines 99–110 (beginning with "And would it have been worth it, after all, / Would it have been worth while") typifies sound patterns in particular texts. Where Eliot relies more on verbal iterations than on actual rhyming, Pomorski offers a scheme even overmarked, with an added internal rhyme ("To nie **to**, o co mi **szło**," l. 109) and only one unrhymed verse (l. 107, E):

I cóż by koniec końców z tego przyszło nam,	A
Cóż z tego w rzeczy samej,	B
Z zachodów słońca i z podwórek, i z wodą splukiwanych bram,	A
Z powieści i z herbaty, i z sukien w powłóczystym stylu –	C
Z tego i jeszcze z rzeczy tyłu?	C
Rozum wszystkiego nie ogarnia!	D
Jeżeli nawet schemat nerwów rzuci na ekran latarnia:	D
Cóż nam z tego w rzeczy samej,	B=
Skoro moszcząc poduszkę czy zrzucając szal,	E (asson. with A)
Zwrócona w stronę okna, powie, kręcąc głową:	F
„To nie to, o co mi szło,	g-g
Nie to, daję słowo” (Pomorski, l. 99–110).	F

In the same segment Barańczak uses two full rhymes, two tautological ones and leaves three line-ends unpaired, while Boczkowski resorts to a tautological rhyme once, thus achieving three rhymes altogether. Both Dulęba and Sprusiński employ only two rhyming pairs in this strophe, the same ones: *ulicach – spódnicach* and *szale – wcale*, solutions suggested by the lexical contents of the poem itself (cf. "streets," "skirts," "shawl," "at all").

With irregular dispersion in the poem, rhymes may easily be compensated in translation in different positions. However, it seems important that the couplet "In the room the women come and go / talking of Michelangelo" (ll. 13–14, 35–36) retained its intentionally clumsy, doggerel rhyme. Dulęba, Sprusiński and Pomorski managed to preserve the name of the artist in the line-end and to find for it unobtrusive matches. The first translator retains the peripatetic character of the conversation ("W salonie, gdzie kobiet **przechadza się** wiele"), whereas Pomorski achieves the maximal naturalness of the target-language phrase: "Panie w salonie rozprawiają wiele / O Michale Aniele" ('Ladies in the drawing room debate Michelangelo extensively').

<sup>45</sup> U. Eco, *Dire quasi la stessa cosa. Esperienze di traduzione*, Milano 2004, p. 274. Eco discusses selected points of translating *Prufrock* into Italian and French on pp. 270–275.

<sup>46</sup> Eliot, *Szepty nieśmiertelności*, translator's note on p. 102.



Barańczak, while offering a strong assonance, changes the segmentation of the phrase, dividing it into three verbless sentences:

W salonie – panie, pań, paniami, paniom.

Konwersacja. Temat: Michał Anioł. (Barańczak, l.13–14)

The repetition of variously inflected plural noun *panie* (ladies) creates a shortened and reshuffled declension paradigm, a device which in Polish suggests a recurrence of a topic. In this way women themselves become the subject of the talk, which is referred to by the Latinate noun *konwersacja* (rather than the native and neutral *rozmowa*). The couplet remains ironic towards the assumed elegance of the salon, but its form becomes much more sophisticated. In fact, Barańczak's option is the most caustic one – an asset if one realises the irony inscribed in the rhyme which presupposes an Anglicised pronunciation of the painter's name<sup>47</sup>. On the other hand, the sophistication is not necessarily a desirable characteristic in the lines meant to suggest a meaningless talk<sup>48</sup>. As for Boczkowski, he introduces only a weak echo: *panie – Anioł*. Both his and Barańczak's move may have been motivated by avoidance of solutions already used by their predecessors.

The observed characteristics can be summarised as in Table 1 below, which transposes the discussed translational choices into an arithmetical score. If the results are then plotted in a line chart, they illustrate fluctuations of this one facet of the poem's poetics in the analysed Polish series. The musical quality of Eliot's voice peaks with the third and fourth rendition.

Table 1. Re-creation of musical qualities of the verse in the particular translations

Components	Translator				
	Dulęba	Spusiński	Pomorski	Barańczak	Boczkowski
rhythm (x2)	–	–	++	++	+
rhymes	0,5	0,5	+	+	0,5
'M.' couplet	+	+	+	0,5 (sophistication)	– (no rhyme)
sound effects	–	–	+	+	0,5
<b>Score: /10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>4</b>

<sup>47</sup> Cf. Eco, *Dire quasi la stessa cosa. Esperienze di traduzione*, p. 270.

<sup>48</sup> The point emerged in critical discussions in the context of the "masters of Siena" replacing Michelangelo in Pierre Leyris's French version of Eliot's poem. Umberto Eco points out that mentioning the Sienese school of painting requires some actual knowledge of art, while a reference to Michelangelo may well remain superficial (Eco, *Dire quasi la stessa cosa*, p. 271; cf. also Hooker, *T.S. Eliot's Poems in French*, p. 52, on the reception of Leyris's solution).



Note on the tables: in all sections the score will be **calibrated as “out of ten”** to make possible the final overimposition of particular results on a chart with one scale.

+ means a fully successful re-creation in the target text

(x2) – a crucial element given double weight in the calculation.

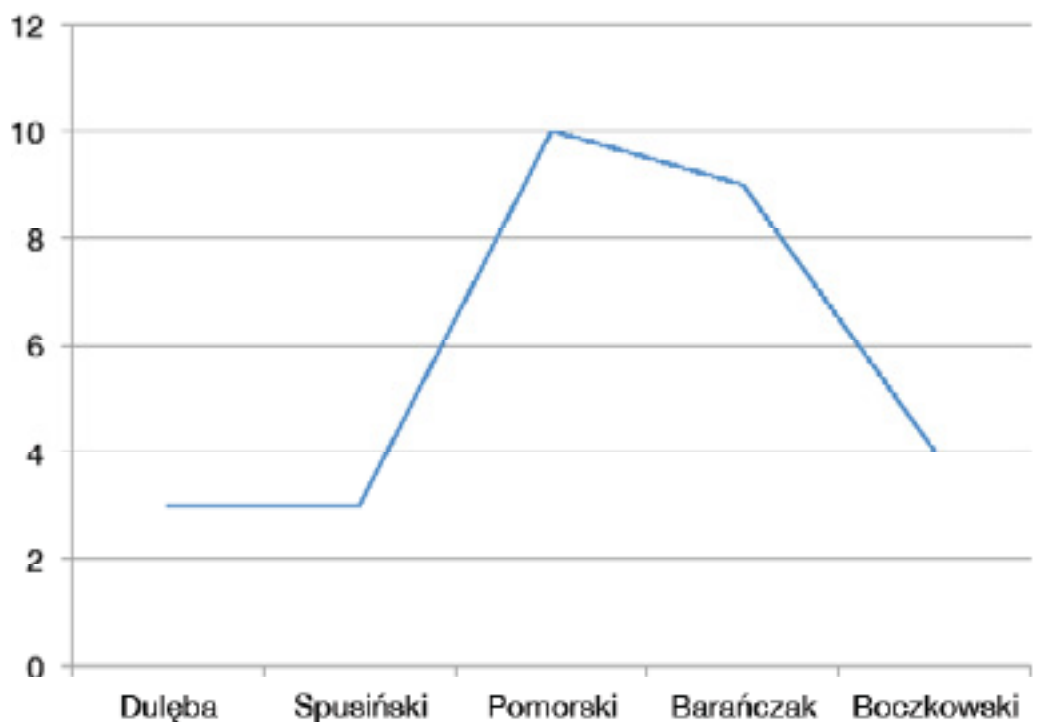


Chart 1: Phonoaesthetic qualities in the surveyed series

## 2. Thematic core: Uncertainty and indecision

Most scholars and readers of translations would probably agree that the thematic core of a given text is part of any translation invariant and a factor of translation quality. In the case of *The Love Song* uncertainty and indecision constitute the thematic vein of the poem, with Prufrock's reluctance or inability to ask the “overwhelming question” from ll. 10 and 93. The theme also penetrates into the poetics of the dramatic monologue, inasmuch as the way in which it is written in many respects itself communicates and discloses the persona's predicament. Selected excerpts will serve investigating how the translators deal with this.

Uncertainty, the “deliberate theme” of the whole 1917 collection,<sup>49</sup> is brought to the fore in the famous first stanza of its first poem. The instability of the speaker's self is represented in the splitting into “you and I.” This, *dédoublement* of the persona in the manner of Laforgue, self-ironically expresses the speaker's struggle with his own self<sup>50</sup>. The initial formulation is maintained in all the renditions, but the further references to “you” have caused some translational difficulties. In this very stanza, Dulęba unnecessarily employs the emphatic accusative

<sup>49</sup> Cf. J.X. Cooper, *The Cambridge Introduction to T.S. Eliot*, Cambridge 2006, p. 44.

<sup>50</sup> Cf. Eliot, “A Commentary,” *The Criterion* 1933, vol. XII, no. 48, p. 469.



form *ciebie* – instead of the short *cię* – which implies that the person “led on” to the overwhelming question is an actual second character<sup>51</sup>. Later on the same translator inserts the pronoun (*ty*) in a context that in Polish demands its skipping:

There will be time, there will be time  
To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet (l. 26–27).

I będzie czas, i będzie czas,  
Bym przygotował twarz  
Na spotkanie tych twarzy, które **ty** widzisz (Dulęba, l. 26–28).

Eliot’s “you” here is apparently the English pronoun meaning ‘people in general’, ‘one’. The overliteral translation unnecessarily renews the distinction between “I” and “you,” and by emphasis implies that they have a different social experience. Apparently, for Dulęba, there are actual two people paying the visit. To compare, Sprusiński’s version, although still quite literal, sounds grammatically acceptable for a man talking to himself: “na spotkanie twarzy, które spotkasz” (“you” is implicit in the 2<sup>nd</sup>-person verb *spotkasz*).

Pomorski, in turn, pursues Eliot’s device even further. His Prufrock occasionally refers to himself using the second person plural, which proves a successful way of conveying self-irony. Thus, “With a bald spot in the middle of my hair” (l. 40) becomes especially effective as “Bo łysa plama w swoich włosach **mamy**” (‘Because **we’ve got** bald spots,’ note the internal rhyme, too), and “Would it have been worthwhile...?” (l. 99) is rendered as “I cóż by... z tego przyszło **nam?**” (‘And what good **for us** would have come of that?’).

Indecision looms in the mantra “There will be time.” The predicament itself is invoked verbally in the following passage and underscored by the enumerations and sound repetitions:

And time yet for a hundred indecisions,  
And for a hundred visions and revisions,  
Before the taking of a toast and tea (l. 32–34).

Prufrock’s aboulia is reproduced in all translations, but with a varied degree of artistry. In Dulęba’s translation, the fragment belongs to the most felicitous ones:

A przecież czas na sto **niezdecydowań**,  
Na sto **spostrzeżeń** i **sprostowań**,  
zanim podadzą herbatę (l. 33–35).

The three nouns, semantically appropriate (while not literally copying the source text), echo each other closely. The text generates a slight estrangement effect, because the abstract noun ‘indecision’ – *niezdecydowanie* – sounds unaccustomed when used in plural in Polish. Even

<sup>51</sup> Critics disagree as to whether there is a silent companion, a confusion to which the poet himself has added. However, Thomas Kinsella convincingly shows in his close reading that as the monologue progresses, it unfolds that the speaker must be alone (T. Kinsella, *Readings in Poetry*, Dublin 2006, pp. 40, 48).



though the original time-adverb “yet” is unnecessarily treated as the conjunction of contrast (*przecież*), which proves Dulęba’s somewhat insufficient understanding of the text, it remains clear in his rendition that Prufrock is postponing a decision.

Sprusiński’s version proves the one least satisfying phonically and this fragment illustrates my earlier claim of rhythmical deficiencies of his text. Moreover, the word choices are not echoed in the successive stanza (Eliot’s “In a minute there is time / For decisions and revisions,” l. 47–48). *Decyzje* do not reiterate the sound of *niepewności* – the latter pair of lines is clasped together by a near rhyme, but not linked in a pattern with the former set:

Jeszcze czas na sto **niepewności**,  
Sto **objawień i poprawek**,  
Zanim podadzą tost i herbatę (Sprusiński, l. 32–34).

Oto jest czas w minucie  
**Decyzji** i poprawek, które minuta odwróci (l. 47–48).

The three later translators try to emphasise the paralysis of will by additional devices. Pomorski profiles Prufrock’s indecision by deploying the verb *uchylać się* (to evade, dodge), with the ‘hundred decisions’ as the object. In the following line, he applies inversion, putting the numeral in postposition: *wizji stu* (‘visions hundred’).

Czas mój i twój, czas na to,  
Żeby **uchylić się** od stu decyzji,  
Od **wizji stu** i stu rewizji  
W oczekiwaniu na grzanek z herbatą (Pomorski, l. 31–34).

Barańczak conveys hesitancy by means of formulations perceptibly broken off (l. 32: ‘time for you to; time for me to’ – compare Eliot’s “Time for you and time for me,” l. 31). Then he reduces indecisiveness to absurdity by having Prufrock admit that he may change his mind even *at the sight of* (*na widok*) toasts and tea:

**Czas, abys; czas, abym;** czas na to  
Nie kończące się niezdecydowanie,  
Na to, by mieć coś w planie, lecz wciąż zmieniać zdanie,  
Nawet **na widok** grzanek i filiżanek z herbatą (Barańczak, l. 32–35).

Bockowski counts hesitations in thousands (*tysiąc*) rather than hundreds and gives the stanza a strong closure thanks to a paronomasia joining “tea” with “biscuit” (*herbata* – *herbatnik*), the latter replacing the source-text’s “toast”:

I czas na **tysiąc** wahań wśród decyzji,  
Na tysiąc wizji oraz ich rewizji,  
Nim po **herbatnik** sięgniesz i **herbatę** (Bockowski, l. 31–34).



In Prufrock's voice indecision couples with self-consciousness and shyness, as shows the recurrent phrase "Do I dare," complemented in a most metaphysical or most mundane ways: "Disturb the universe?" (l. 46), "to eat a peach?" (l. 123). Another signal of self-doubt is the question "(how) shall I presume" (ll. 54, 61, 68). The key phrases reappear in all Polish versions. Three translators resume the lexical variation of "dare" and "presume." Sprusiński and Barańczak harness two reflexive verbs, *ośmielić się* and *odważyć się*, if not necessarily following the source-text pattern of distribution (cf. Table 2). Pomorski adheres to one lexical basis, but juggles with two verbs: *śmiać*, *ośmielić się*, and the verbal phrase *zdobyć się na śmiałość* ('dare – have the nerve to – pluck up courage'). Dulęba and Boczkowski consistently apply just one verb in all the contexts connected with this motif, which, in turn, enhances the intratextual coherence. It can therefore be said that both kinds of translational behaviour contribute to maintaining quality.

Table 2. Expressions of self-consciousness in particular translations

Phrase Translator	Do I dare Disturb the universe?	Do I dare to eat a peach?	(How) should I presume?
Dulęba	Czy ja się ośmielę Niepokoić wszechświat?	Czy ośmielę się zjeść brzoskwinie?	Jakże się więc ośmielę? I jakże się ośmielę? Więc ośmielić się muszę?
Sprusiński	Czy <b>się ośmielę</b> Wszechświat niepokoić?	<b>Odważyć się</b> brzoskwinie zjeść?	Jakże <b>się</b> więc <b>ośmielę</b> ? Jakże się ośmielę? Czy mam się więc ośmielić?
Pomorski	Czy <b>się ośmielę</b> łąd świata zakłócić?	Przedziałek <b>śmiałbym</b> [...]? Brzoskwini <b>zjeść</b> owoc cały?	Jakże <b>się</b> na <b>śmiałość</b> <b>zdobyć</b> ? [x2] Miałbym się na śmiałość zdobyć?
Barańczak	Czy się <b>odważę</b> Zakłócić spokój wszechświata – dziś, tutaj?	<b>A jak będzie z</b> jedzeniem brzoskwiń?	Jakże <b>się</b> więc <b>ośmielę</b> ? Czy <b>się odważę</b> w ogóle?  Jakże się więc odważę?
Boczkowski	Czy się ośmielę Wszechświat niepokoić?	Czy brzoskwinie zjeść się ośmielę?	Jakże się więc ośmielę? Jakże się ja ośmielę? Czyż się ośmielę rozpocząć działanie?

The attempted assertiveness constantly gets undercut. In line 80 Prufrock ponders if he could brace up and "force the moment to its **crisis**," i.e. make a decisive move in his relationship. Three translators, Dulęba, Sprusiński and Boczkowski, talk about "overcoming a moment's weakness." While the overall result remains the same – strength is not gathered and Prufrock does not "presume" to put in his question – a significant departure from the original consists in implying that inability to act is a momentary, not a permanent state for the speaker:



Should I, after tea and cakes and ices,  
Have the strength to force the moment to its crisis? (l. 79–80)

Czyżbym teraz, po herbacie, po ciastkach i lodach  
Znalazł siłę, by przemóc **chwilę** tej **słabości**? (Dulęba, l. 82–83)

Czyżbym po herbacie, keksach, lodach  
Miał siłę przemóc ten **słabości moment**? (Sprusiński, l. 79–80).

Czy po herbacie, lodach, pośród gości,  
Będę miał siłę, by pokonać **moment** swej **słabości**? (Boczkowski, l. 79–80)

Pomorski avoids showing listlessness as a thing of the moment. His Prufrock asks rhetorically who, in such circumstances, could not give way to weakness. However, his formulation is – unusually for this rendition – awkward, involving ‘bowing/taking one’s hat off to weakness’ (*przed słabością... uchylić czoła*):

Któż po herbacie, lodzie i ptifurkach zdoła  
Oprzeć się, przed słabością nie uchylić czoła? (Pomorski, l. 79–80)

Only Barańczak finds an idiom that means bringing matters to a head. Interestingly, the phrase literally translates back as “putting an issue on a knife’s blade,” which builds wordplay with the previous line, featuring – in this rendition – another piece of cutlery, a teaspoon (*łyżeczka*), and the action of putting it down:

I teraz, gdy łyżeczkę na spodeczek złożę,  
Miałbym **postawić rzecz na ostrzu noża**? (Barańczak, l. 80–81)

[Now, having put the teaspoon down on the saucer,  
Should I bring matters to a head / Should I ‘put the issue on a knife’s blade’?]

Finally, there is one more side to Prufrock’s frustrated (inter)actions: his inability to communicate. Having refused to act and having analysed this decision, the speaker finds himself speechless. His recognition of this is rendered as follows:

It is impossible to say just what I mean! (l. 104)  
Nie potrafię wyrazić mych myśli! (Dulęba, l. 108)  
Nie potrafię wyrazić ściśle, co myślałem, (Sprusiński, l. 104)  
Rozum wszystkiego nie ogarnia! (Pomorski, l. 104)  
Nie wiem, jak to powiedzieć... nie, nie jestem w stanie! (Barańczak, l. 105)  
O co mi chodzi, wyrazić nie jestem w stanie! (Boczkowski, l. 104)

Four translators retain this important aspect of Prufrock’s condition, while giving it different shades. Dulęba’s option suggests a possibility of a generalised reading in ‘I can’t say what I think’ (although the verb used is a perfective one, *wyrazić*, not *wyrażać*). Sprusiński’s



persona cannot precisely express what he was thinking at a past moment and, perhaps because of this imposed time perspective, does not sound upset about it, as reflected by the change in punctuation. Barańczak, conversely, is the most emphatic, having squeezed into one line two admissions of speechlessness. Boczkowski seems closest to the original formulation. In contrast, Pomorski inserts a completely different thought. As this line ends an enumeration (see extended quote in section 1), the multiplicity of things seems too much for the subject: ‘Reason will not embrace everything.’ Untypically for this rendition, the semantic shift was effected to achieve a sound embellishment; the verb form *ogarnia* provides a full rhyme for *magiczna latarnia* (“magic lantern” in “But as if a magic lantern threw the nerves in patterns on a screen,” l. 105). To compare, Barańczak sacrifices rather the lantern, while retaining the self-expression problems as well as the disturbing “medical” image recalling the beginning of the poem – he talks of ‘projecting **on a screen** / a nervous system’ (l. 106–107, line-end: *na ekranie*, and enjambment – cf. below).

The five aspects that have been selected as touchstones for this category can be formalised as in Table 3 and Chart 2. The surveyed feature peaks in the series with Barańczak’s translation where it apparently reaches optimality. The newest translation scores high, nonetheless the curve does not remain level, let alone ascend further.

Table 3. Thematic core of indecision as represented in particular renditions.

Components	Translator				
	Dulęba	Spusiński	Pomorski	Barańczak	Boczkowski
“you and me”	–	+	+	+	+
indecision	+	–	+	+	+
“dare” / “presume”	+ (no lexical variability)	+	+	+	+ (no lexical variability)
“force the moment to its crisis”	–	–	+ / – (awkward phrase)	+	–
inability to communicate	+	+	–	+	+
<b>Score: _/10</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>8</b>



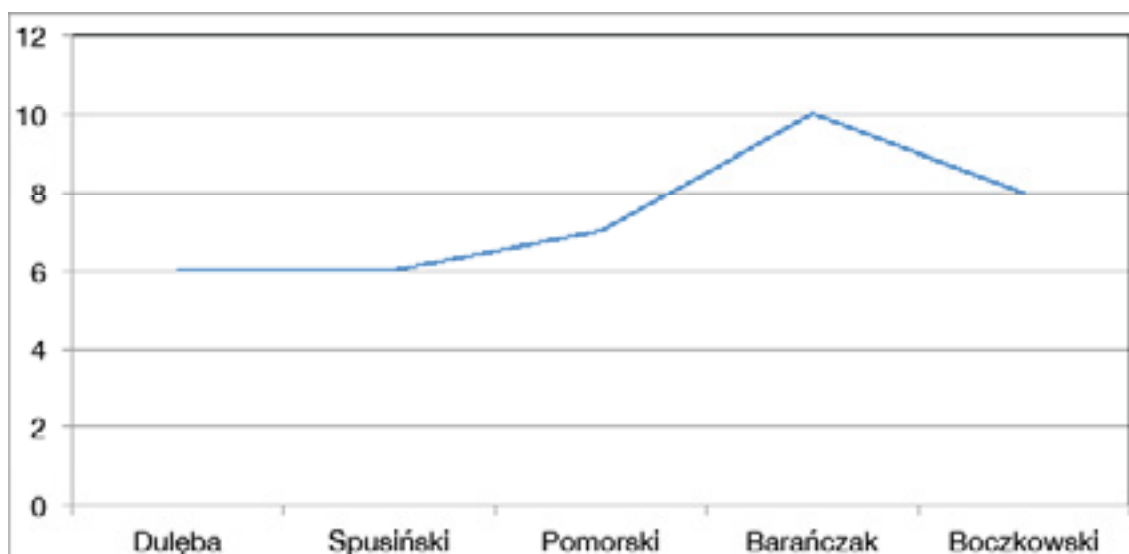


Chart 2: Thematic core of indecision as represented in the series

### 3. Language and poetic diction

As justly stressed by Hugh Kenner, Prufrock is primarily a voice<sup>52</sup>. Therefore, the linguistic shape of foreign-language renditions should preserve qualities of this voice and the tenor of its impossible love song. The critical impact of this dramatic monologue relied on its colloquial idiom and distinct oral character, on the immediate perception that it was written “in a language remote from established poetic diction,”<sup>53</sup> to use Thomas Kinsella’s formulation.

A quality translation would presuppose a similar poetics: introducing into the target texts colloquial language and idiomatic speech. Conversely, breaches of idiomaticity are undesirable – as noted already by Waław Borowy<sup>54</sup>, one finds Eliot’s formulations strange, yet not awkward. The discussion of this aspect is complemented by several more examples in Table 4.

Dulęba cast his version in a language rather neutral and standard (for his time) than colloquial. For instance, he calls a “sawdust restaurant” from l. 7 *restauracja*, while other translators prefer the expressive noun *knajpy* – ‘joints.’ The yellow fog in the second stanza (l. 16–17) has a muzzle (*morda*), but for its tongue Dulęba chooses the neutral word *język*, where, again, his successors opt for more marked solutions. He renders the imagined comment on the thinness of Prufrock’s limbs with the use of the elegant verb *zeszczupleć*, whereas later versions feature the more direct *schudnąć* (or the adjective *chude*). Occasional high-register choices in the earliest translation include the archaic particle *zaiste* (‘forsooth’ – bookish but not Biblical), and *ronić* – an equivalent for “dropping” (the question on the plate, l. 30) that is nowadays labelled

<sup>52</sup> H. Kenner, *Bradley*, [in:] *T.S. Eliot. A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. H. Kenner, Englewood Cliffs, N.J. 1962, p. 36.

<sup>53</sup> Kinsella, *Readings in Poetry*, p. 40.

<sup>54</sup> W. Borowy, *Wędrówka nowego Parsifala. Poezja T.S. Eliota (1936)*, [in:] *Studia i szkice literackie*, vol. 1, Warszawa 1983.



by dictionaries as poetic<sup>55</sup>. Possibly neither stood out so much in 1948, but on the whole, Dulęba's language sounds more formal than the original voice. On the other hand, the diction is undermined by some awkward words or expressions, like the collocation *pościłem znojnę* ('I fasted in toil'). There even appears a notorious erratic form: the singular *perfuma* (for "perfume from a dress," l. 65) might have been used with ironic intent, yet sounds incongruent with the speaker's otherwise educated voice. In some cases one should make allowances for the diachronic changes in language. Still, *rozdział* for a parting in the hair might have been old-fashioned already then<sup>56</sup> and now amuses, as the noun primarily denotes a 'chapter.'

Sprusiński achieves slight colloquiality, e.g. in the infinitive-based questions (with interrogative particle elided) as in "Odważyć się brzoskwinę zjeść?" ("Do I dare to eat a peach?," l. 122). However, the effect is undermined by his use of elements of elevated language. The recurring conjunction *albowiem* (compare: "**For/And** I have known," ll. 49, 55, 62), and the verb *wdziać* for 'putting on' trousers seem far too solemn. Another heightening of tone is triggered by a change in imagery: for the rhyme's sake wreathes woven by the mermaids become diadems. There is also a questionable collocation, "rozpięty na szpilce," in one of the memorable images – that of the eyes that pin down (discussed below).

Jerzy Jarniewicz notes with approval what he calls the "demotic" Polish of Pomorski's translations from Eliot<sup>57</sup>. In *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* Pomorski's diction proves, indeed, colloquial and very idiomatic, with numerous fortunate collocations, the use of diminutive in the word *chwilka* (a short moment) or the syntactic choice reflecting "I am no prophet" – *żaden ze mnie prorok* (l. 83). Felicitous solutions much outnumber the single dubious – catachrestic – formulation.

Barańczak uses language equally or even more flexible and rich. The natural inflections of colloquial Polish are manifest e.g. when "and here's no great matter" (l. 83) becomes the nonchalant parenthetical (*nie żeby mi zależało*) – 'not that I care much.' The only reservation concerns the expression *w ogóle i w szczególności*, which is idiomatic but seems too low in rendering the quantifier "all" in the lines: "I am Lazarus, come from the dead, / Come back to tell you all, I shall tell you all" (l. 94–95). Lazarus is, after all, a role rehearsed by Prufrock yet rejected as too sublime; Barańczak's choice seems to question this sublimity.

Boczkowski begins in a neutral style. However, he shows an inclination to step into a higher register unnecessarily. For instance, he translates "I am" into a markedly archaic and solemn compounded form *jam* in all three "I am" statements ("Lazarus," "no prophet," "not Prince Hamlet," ll. 83, 94, 111). There are also examples of very convincing, natural formulations, yet it is only fair to note that some of them are repeated after Barańczak with minimal changes in grammar and order (example in Table 4). Instances of unnatural collocations happen. This version also occasionally lacks punctuation marks demanded by the Polish syntax, e.g. in the

<sup>55</sup> *Słownik języka polskiego*, ed. M. Szymczak, Warszawa 2002.

<sup>56</sup> The decisive dictionary of the time records this meaning as already obsolete: *Słownik języka polskiego*, ed. W. Doroszewski, Warszawa 1958–1965. <https://sjp.pwn.pl/doroszewski/rozdzial;5491045.html> [accessed: 1.09.2018].

<sup>57</sup> J. Jarniewicz, "Król Rybak u pani Tumidaj, czyli cały Eliot," *Literatura na Świecie* 2009, no. 5–6 (454–455), pp. 375–377.



“Michelangelo” couplet or in the last two tercets. This is not a strategic dismissal of punctuation – as happens in modern Polish poetry often enough or as is done more consistently by Sprusiński in his translation – because the comma appears or is elided in comparable contexts, e.g. before an attributive clause: “głosy które milkną” vs. “oczy, co mnie utrwala” (ll. 52, 56).

Table 4. Characterisation of diction employed in the translations

Translator	level of colloquiality and idiomaticity <i>examples</i>	awkward or inappropriate (reason)
Dulęba	neutral: <i>restauracja, język, zeszczipić</i> heightened: <i>zaiste, ronić</i>	<i>pościłem znojnę</i> (‘I fasted in toil,’ wrong collocation) <i>perfuma</i> (erratic sg.) <i>rozdział</i> (obsolete use)
Sprusiński	slightly colloquial: <i>knajpy, rozmówki,</i> <i>spódnice wleczone</i> przez posadzki colloquial syntax: <i>Odważyć się brzoskwinie zjeść?</i>	<i>albowiem</i> (high-register conj.) <i>spodnie... wdzieję</i> (high register) <i>rozpięty na szpilce</i> (wrong collocation)
Pomorski	colloquial and very idiomatic: <i>zakazane uliczki, przyszpilić formułkę,</i> <i>poduczyć (twarz), chwilka,</i> <i>żaden ze mnie prorok, Fagas</i>	<i>suknie w powłóczystym stylu</i> (‘dresses in a trailing style’ – catachrestic)
Barańczak	colloquial and very idiomatic: <i>Podstawił grzbiet pod sadzę, prosząc z kominów</i> (l. 19); <i>ułożenie twarzy; prorok ze mnie jest</i> <i>żaden (nie żeby mi zależało); strach mnie brał;</i> <i>a jak będzie z...?</i>	<i>w ogóle i w szczególe</i> (‘in all and every detail’ – too relaxed for microcontext)
Boczkowski	neutral, moderately idiomatic: <i>Grzbiet podstawia pod sadzę proszące</i> <i>z kominów</i> (l. 19) heightened: interjection <i>O</i> , verbal form <i>jam</i> repeated	<i>łzy wzajemne</i> (‘reciprocal tears,’ wrong coll. with no corresponding ST unit) <i>łatwe narzędzie</i> (‘easy tool’ – calque from ST)

The style of *The Love Song* is predominantly colloquial, nonetheless there are **changes of tone**. As a result, in some segments a heightened register will be legitimate or even desirable<sup>58</sup>. For instance, Barańczak’s lexical choice *adwersarz* (adversary) does not impose false diction when it metonymically represents the equally sophisticated “insidious intent” (l. 9). Most conspicuously, however, in the poem’s coda the speaker switches from self-mockery to

<sup>58</sup> In the sentence featuring Lazarus (l. 94–95), the biblical context and the distance created by quoting justify a heightened diction. Similarly, it is understandable that in line 37, “And indeed there will be time,” three translators render “indeed” as *zaprawdę*, the biblical ‘verily.’



an almost romantic diction of longing:

I have seen them [mermaids] riding seaward on the waves  
Combing the white hair of the waves blown back  
When the wind blows the water white and black (l. 126–128).

The tercet voices the lyrical intensity which remains unattainable for Prufrock himself, something that he can only imagine at a distance. All translations reflect the shift of tone, yet the turn from the common to the poetical is most powerfully expressed by Pomorski, who applies a convoluted (while fully readable) Latinate syntax, that in Polish was used in Renaissance poetry:

Na falach, w morze, widziałem, pędziły,  
**Przeciwnej** wichrząc białe włosy **fali**;  
Toń biało-czarną wiatr podnosił z dali (Pomorski, l. 126–128).

Compare regular word-order and the normally required conjunction ('I saw **how** they were speeding'):

Widziałem, **jak** na falach pędziły w morze,  
Wichrząc białe włosy przeciwnej fali;  
Wiatr podnosił z dali biało-czarną toń.

Especially striking are the inverted position of the main-clause verb, *widziałem* ('I have seen'), and the splitting of the epithet from the noun in *przeciwna fala* ('blown-back wave') by putting a whole participial phrase in between. This local strategy parallels remarkably well a characteristic of Eliot's early poems, namely the influence of French on his syntax and choice of expressions. While such an affinity is sometimes believed to facilitate translation into French<sup>59</sup>, it can hardly be conveyed in other languages, at least without causing affectation. Pomorski's subtle Latinisation seems to compensate this masterfully.

Eliot's unmistakable poetic voice is further defined by novel phrasings and imagery, challenging the post-Romantic clichés and intentionally disturbing. The lines evoking the threat of the "fixing" regard of others provide a representative example worth checking across the translations. Jean Ward notes that the two earlier versions do not fully convey the cruelty of the original image<sup>60</sup>. A comparison with the original bears out her claim:

The eyes that fix you in a formulated phrase,  
And when I am formulated, sprawling on a pin (l. 56–57).

Oczy, co cię **utwierdzą** w ułożonym zdaniu,

<sup>59</sup> See Hooker, *T.S. Eliot in French*, pp. 45–48. In locating the symptoms of such influence Hooker partly relies on earlier research by Elizabeth W. Schneider (Hooker, *T.S. Eliot in French*, p. 47).

<sup>60</sup> J. Ward, "Autoaluzja i inne cechy poezji T.S. Eliota, czyli czy tłumacz jednego wiersza musi znać całą twórczość autora?," [in:] *Przekładając nieprzekładalne*, [vol. 1], ed. O. Kubińska, W. Kubiński, T.Z. Wolański, Gdańsk 2000, pp. 342, 349–350.



I skoro jestem **przytwierdzony**, przybity szpilką (Dulęba, l. 59–60).

Oczy co cię **utrwalą** w formułce zdania,  
I gdy jestem nazwany, rozpięty na szpilce (Sprusiński, l. 56–57).

Dulęba plays on two related verbs meaning ‘confirming’ and ‘fixing to something’ but, admittedly, *utwierdzać* carries rather positive connotations. Sprusiński’s choice of *utrwaląć* reverberates semantically with cementing and smacks of being ‘preserved’ in formalin, but also has a positive value due to such dominant meanings as ‘making something durable,’ or ‘committing to memory’<sup>61</sup>. Still, the eyes are not profiled as the agent in this rendition. The effectiveness of Sprusiński’s rendition is also limited by the awkwardness of the phrase *rozpięty na szpilce* (illogical: ‘spread out / stretched on a pin’).

The nexus of the literal and the figurative meaning on which Ward insists<sup>62</sup> is certainly achieved by Pomorski:

Gdy patrzą, jaką by mnie **przyszpilić** formułką,  
A kiedy sformułują, nabiją na **szpilę** (Pomorski, l. 56–57).

The eyes ‘pin down’ by means of formulas, it is indisputably they that inflict pain. The effect is strengthened by the related noun-verb pairs: *szpila* – *przyszpilić*, *formułka* – *formułować*, which themselves seem to form a “net” catching the subject-insect. It is also strikingly appropriate that Pomorski employs the diminutive *formułka*, a disparaging word in Polish, alongside the augmentative *szpila*, which conceptualises the pin as bigger and hence more painful, and besides, figuratively evokes malicious remarks.

Barańczak, in turn, de-automatises reading by playing upon the accustomed phraseology with ‘eyes closing’ – here they enclose *the speaker*, though. The subject gets imprisoned in the formula, assigned a number (as would happen to an exhibition object), and only then the image of being pinned down and therefore immobilised follows:

Oczy, które mnie **zamkną** w gotowej formule,  
I co wtedy? Gdy zamkną, **numerkiem oznaczą**,  
Gdy, **przyszpilony**, już nie będę mógł uciekać (Barańczak, l. 56–58).

Boczkowski goes back to Sprusiński’s *utrwaląć*, a verb judged not powerful enough by Ward, and buys an end rhyme (*formule* – *szpikulec*) by having Prufrock imagine himself driven on a pointed stick rather than on a pin:

Oczy, co mnie **utrwalą** w utartej formule,  
A gdy mnie przeszywając wbiją na **szpikulec**,  
Gdy **przyszpilony** wiję się na ścianie (Boczkowski, l. 56–58).

<sup>61</sup> Cf. *Słownik języka polskiego*, ed. M. Szymczak.

<sup>62</sup> Ward, “Autoaluzja i inne cechy poezji T.S. Eliota,” p. 350.



The usual referent for *szpikulec* is a skewer or spit, an implement bigger than those used for fixing an insect or worm. *Przyszpilony*, the passive participle for ‘fixed/pinned down’ in the next line (cf. orig. “When I am pinned”), does not sound logical, since a skewer would entail the state of being ‘stuck’ and a different verb. These flaws dilute the oppressiveness, and the image remains captured best by Pomorski and Barańczak.

Naturally, this single fragment could not on its own be a measure of the success of the respective translations in representing Eliot’s specific use of imagery. Yet the chosen example is quite representative of the surveyed target texts in that respect. It could not be said that any of the translators disregards the original poetics, yet Dulęba and Sprusiński occasionally take off the edge of Eliot’s striking wording. Barańczak re-creates the ultimate sense of the image while often, as was his wont in general, does not hesitate to introduce a new micro-image (like here) or to de-automatise reading by his favourite enjambment (see e.g. l. 106–107 referred to in section 2 and l. 29–30 cited in section 4). Boczkowski frequently earns his rhyme scheme at the cost of substitutions (as here) or amplifications, which at times affect the author’s diction in an undesirable way. Pomorski often – although not always – comes off best in the comparisons.

These features provide material for this section’s measurement in Table 5 and Chart 3. For concision, the conducted analysis underlying the results in the table cannot be reported in full. Examples of paronomasias – which contribute to the sound of Eliot’s voice and are taken into account – have been cited in other sections of the paper and are representative of the particular translations.

Table 5. Features of the poem’s language as represented in particular translations

Components	Translator				
	Dulęba	Sprusiński	Pomorski	Barańczak	Boczkowski
colloquial diction	–	+	+	+	–
idiomaticity	–	0,5	+	+	0,5
appropriateness of stylistically marked elements	+	–	+	0,5	+
capturing imagery	0,5	0,5	+	+	0,5



Components	Translator				
	Dulęba	Spusiński	Pomorski	Barańczak	Boczkowski
paronomasias	–	–	+	+	+
<b>Score: /10</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>6</b>

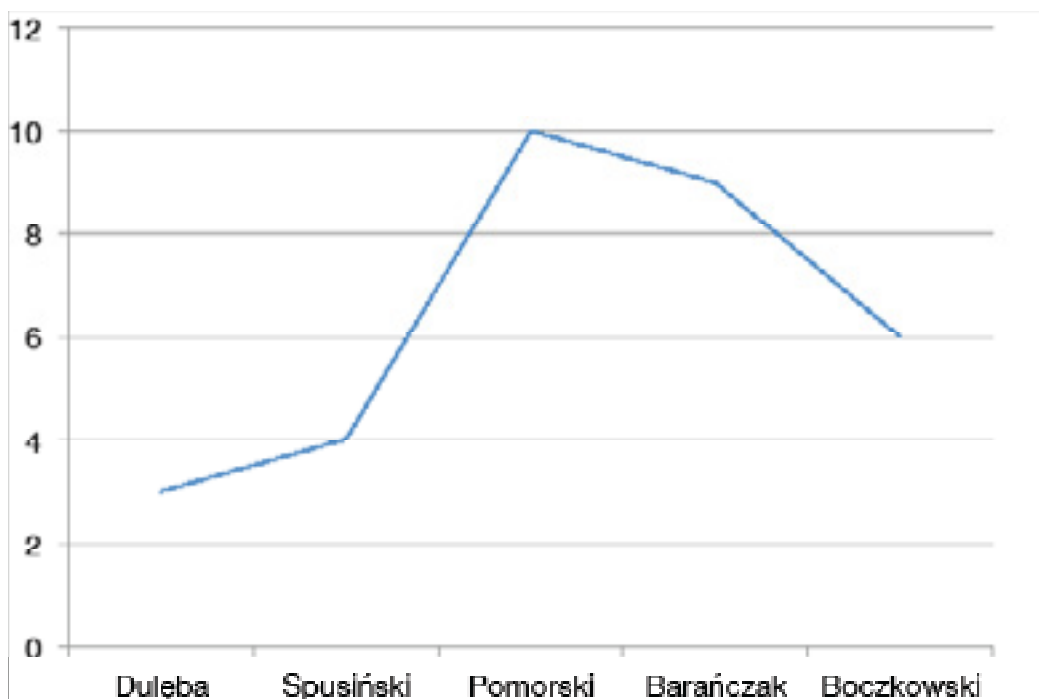


Chart 3: Language characteristics in the surveyed translation series

#### 4. Intertextuality

Intertextual references are crucial for the poem and typical of Eliot's peculiar diction, abounding in subtle and fragmentary signals of dialogue<sup>63</sup>. In *The Love Song* their use characterises the speaker as an educated man, but they also serve his direct self-representation. Beginning with the epigraph, intertexts influence the readers' expectations, activate contexts and interpretive frames.

From the tight web of allusions, a selection of eight will be surveyed. They represent varied spheres of reference and still form a wide grid. Since successful rendering of intertextuality consists not in achieving a formal correspondence of markers but in conveying their pragmatic implications, in the case of Eliot's cryptic allusiveness, additional means like the use of

<sup>63</sup> See, among many studies: Z. Ben-Porat, "The Poetics of Literary Allusion," *PTL: A Journal for Descriptive Poetics and Theory of Literature* 1976, no. 1, pp. 105–128.



explanatory notes for target texts will also be considered (if such a paratext comes from the translator and not a later editor).

All the five translators retain the epigraph which by recalling *Inferno*'s Guido Montefeltro evokes the concepts of being trapped in hell, of secrecy, of duality. They supplement it by attribution and a quote from Edward Porębowicz's canonical Polish rendition of Dante's epic.

As for the intertextual signals in the body of the text, the most legible of them reappear in all translations. When Prufrock declares that he is "no prophet" despite having seen his "head upon the platter" (l. 82–83), the allusion to John the Baptist remains clear in all renditions, the varied lexical choices for the "platter" (*półmisek, taca, misa*) notwithstanding. The reference to Lazarus (l. 94) did not cause difficulties either. The speaker's self-representation is completed by another negative juxtaposition – with Hamlet. Instead, he compares himself to "an attendant lord," "almost the Fool" (ll. 112, 119). In Dulęba's and Boczkowski's versions a characteristic is not appropriate for Polonius (*featuring* in only a few scenes, rather than *opening* them, cf. "start a scene or two," l. 113), but other clues make it fully possible to identify the character. Descriptions in all other renditions evoke Polonius as well.

The motif of mermaids (l. 124) should also be easy to handle, yet only three translators employ the noun *syreny* which denotes the mythological creatures. Dulęba writes about 'the singing of drowned women /water demons' (*śpiewy topielic*, l.130). The context of an alluring call evokes the Sirens, but the lexical choice, oriented on achieving a near rhyme (*flaneli – topielic*), is not fortunate. Pomorski, strangely, chooses a hypocoristic, *syrenka* (l. 124), which associates with children's fairy-tales and thus decreases the seriousness of the passage. This surprises vis-à-vis his majestic rendering of the description of mermaids riding seawards (cited in section 3) and the endnote<sup>64</sup> where Pomorski cites as a possible context Donne's *Song* (in Barańczak's translation, containing the non-diminutive form *Syreny*).

Lines 28–29 bring together two allusions, a biblical and a classical one. Especially the latter proves inconspicuous, embedded as it is in the poet's own phrase:

There will be time to murder and create  
And time for all the works and days of hands (l. 28–29).

Będzie czas, by zabijać i tworzyć,  
Czas na działanie i czas rąk,  
Które [...] (Dulęba, l. 29–31).

Czas zabijania i tworzenia,  
Czas pracy i czas dłoni (Sprusiński, l. 28–29).

Czas zabijania i czas płodzenia,  
Prac i dni wszystkich czas nastanie (Pomorski, l. 28–29).

<sup>64</sup> T.S. Eliot, *W moim początku jest mój kres*, p. 330.



Nastanie czas na mord i czas na tworzenie, nastanie  
Czas na prace i dnie ludzkich rąk (Barańczak, l. 29–30).

Będzie czas zabijania oraz czas tworzenia  
I czas na dni i prace (Boczkowski, l. 28–29).

The source-text phrase “There will be time to murder and create” (l. 28) only distantly echoes Eccles. 3:3 (both King James Bible<sup>65</sup> and American Standard Version<sup>66</sup> have: “There is... A time to kill, and a time to heal”). Nonetheless, the context of Eliot’s whole enumeration naturally suggests the Preacher’s “time to every purpose.” In Polish, whether the phrase will be perceived as a Biblical one depends on the grammatical structure used: the word *czas* (‘time’) must be followed by a nominal phrase, a gerund in genitive (‘time of doing something’). Dulęba uses the structure with a clause of purpose – ‘time to do.’ Sprusiński’s version does echo the Polish Bible, which renders the phrase paraphrased by Eliot as “czas zabijania i czas leczenia,”<sup>67</sup> with the said gerundial structure. Boczkowski, with the same lexical and structural choices, enhances the effect by falling back on Ecclesiastes for the repetition of the noun *czas* (time): “czas zabijania oraz czas tworzenia” (l. 28). Pomorski follows the Biblical structure but interprets “creating” as “producing” in the sense of ‘breeding’ – this move does not undermine the link of the line with its pre-text, yet it narrows down the senses inscribed in it in Eliot’s receiving text. Barańczak’s solution is the reverse: lexically, he follows Eliot rather than the Bible and talks of ‘murder’ (alongside ‘creating’), whereas his choice of a prepositional syntax hardly evokes the Biblical echo for the target reader.

The allusion to Hesiod’s title *Works and Days* was preserved by Pomorski and Barańczak. Boczkowski reversed the order of the nouns (*dni i prace*) for the sake of rhyme (*prace – tacę*) and provided explanation of the intertextual link in an endnote<sup>68</sup>. The inversion makes it very difficult for the reader to notice the intended reference if unaided; therefore the use of the paratext becomes a remedy against the blurring of the signal. On the text level, however, the allusion cannot be considered successfully re-created. As for Dulęba and Sprusiński, they both omitted “days” altogether, and conceptually joined work (or in the former’s case even “action”) immediately with the “hands” (*ręce / dłonie*), indeed important for the imagery, for they are about to drop the fatal question on Prufrock’s plate...

An allusion to a classical title, if only rendered in accordance with the target-system tradition, has every chance to be recognised by an educated foreign reader. However, a reminiscence from English metaphysical poetry is much less likely to resonate for a Polish recipient. This proves true when Eliot’s phrasing recalls that of Andrew Marvell:

<sup>65</sup> *The Old Testament. The Authorised or King James Version of 1611*, introd. G. Steiner, “Everyman’s Library,” London 1996.

<sup>66</sup> *The Holy Bible. American Standard Version*, at: Bible Gateway, <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ecclesiastes+3&version=ASV> [accessed: 1.09.2018].

<sup>67</sup> Such a phrasing features both in the contemporary *Biblia Tysiąclecia* (the so-called Millennium Bible) and the turn-of-the-17th-cent. Bible translation by Jakub Wujek formative for the Polish religious phraseology.

<sup>68</sup> Eliot, *Szepty nieśmiertelności*, p. 102.



To have squeezed the universe into a ball  
To roll it toward some overwhelming question (Eliot, l. 92–93)

Let us roll all our strength, and all  
Our sweetness, up into one ball (Marvell, l. 41–42)<sup>69</sup>.

The allusion is not preserved by Dulęba. Admittedly, when he translated the poem, no Polish version of *To His Coy Mistress* was available. Still, his use of the word *gałka* ('knob') suggests that he was not conscious of the presence of the reference:

Ściskać wszechświat do rozmiarów **gałki**  
I toczyć ją do nieodparty pytań (Dulęba, l. 96–97).

Sprusiński's Prufrock also talks about moulding into a knob ("Zgniatanie wszechświata w gałkę, / Aby go toczyć w pytania nieodparte"), although by the time of his creation, a translation of Marvell's poem, by Jerzy S. Sito, had appeared. In this 1963 text the relevant lines read: "Tedy Moc całą, Chęć i Słodycz wszelką / Utočmy razem w jedną **kulę** wielką"<sup>70</sup>). Sprusiński indicates the source of allusion in his afterword<sup>71</sup>, yet the only point in common between the two Polish excerpts is the verb (*u*)*toczyć*, anyway suggested directly by the source texts. When both Dulęba's and Sprusiński's translations were reprinted in the 1990 critical edition of Eliot's works, no connection with the metaphysical poem was indicated by the editors, which suggests that in Poland even scholars perhaps remained little aware of the intertextual importance of this line. It is Pomorski who introduces into the series the motive of 'rolling a ball.' He creates a verbal echo between his formulation in Eliot's poem and the distich from Marvell which he quotes in an endnote in, apparently, his own rendition:

Że małą **kulkę utoczywszy** z globu,  
Do przygnębiającego turlasz ją pytania (l. 92–93).

Tę słodycz, co w nas wzbiera czule,  
I moc **utocmy** w jedną **kulę** (Marvell, *Do pani cnotliwej*)<sup>72</sup>.

Stanisław Barańczak is in a unique position in this case, because he himself translated *To His Coy Mistress*. When rendering Prufrock, however, he has not made the reverberation between the two texts especially prominent. Compare:

Wgryzać się w taką kwestię z uśmiechem, **zgniatać w kulę**  
Wszechświat i **toczyć** go w stronę jakichś przygważdżających pytań (Barańczak/Eliot, l. 93–94).

<sup>69</sup> A. Marvell, *To His Coy Mistress*, [in:] *Seventeenth-Century Poetry*, ed. P. Driver, Harmondsworth 1996, p. 80.

<sup>70</sup> A. Marvell, *Do cnotliwej kochanki*, trans. J.S. Sito, [in:] *Poeci języka angielskiego*, ed. H. Krzeczkowski, J.S. Sito, J. Żuławski, vol. 1, Warszawa 1969, p. 701.

<sup>71</sup> Sprusiński, *Poeta wielkiego czasu*, p. 239.

<sup>72</sup> Eliot, *W moim początku jest mój kres*, p. 329. Pomorski offered a translation of a different, longer fragment of Marvell's poem in the footnotes to his rendition of *The Waste Land*, cf. *Kwartalnik Artystyczny* 1995, no. 2 (6), p. 14.



Całą więc naszą moc i całą czule

Wezbraną słodycz **zlepmy w jedną kulę** (Barańczak/Marvell, l. 41–42)<sup>73</sup>.

The lexeme *kula* (for “ball”) does appear, but in the translation from Marvell the word for ‘rolling’ (*toczyć*) did not feature. The similarity could have been enhanced by using the verb *lepić* in *Prufrock* (from the imperative *zlepmy* in the Polish Marvell). However, Barańczak prefers *zgniatać*, which is closest to Eliot’s original “squeezing” in terms of imagery. Barańczak’s rendition of *To His Coy Mistress* is invoked once more in the series of the Polish *Love Songs*: the author of the latest version explains the reference in an endnote<sup>74</sup>, quoting Barańczak’s *Do nieskorej bogdanki*. Nonetheless, Boczkowski, too, employs the verbs *toczyć* and *zgnieść* (finite form) and refrains from strengthening the actual textual link:

Wszechświat zgnieść w jedną kulę

I toczyć go w kierunku ostatecznych pytań (Boczkowski, l. 92–93).

References in Eliot’s poem are as a rule of low level of explicitness<sup>75</sup>, some practically classify as covert ones. Dispersed, fragmented and de-contextualised, they may escape a foreign reader’s notice even if translated with all due diligence. Bearing this in mind, one can treat added explications of intertextual links as elements contributing to translation quality<sup>76</sup>, provided that this compensates the differences in cognitive baggage, and not exempts translators from re-creating the links. As acknowledged in Table 6, Pomorski and Boczkowski offer their recipients ample notes, many of which serve namely giving information on the sources of allusions<sup>77</sup>.

The same two translators enhance the overall intertextual aura by introducing additional markers that can be treated as compensations. In the most recent version line 49 – “Bo już poznałem wszystkie dni i nocy sprawy” – strangely resonates with the first line of Franciszek Karpiński’s late-18<sup>th</sup>-century religious poem absorbed into popular devotion: “Wszystkie nasze dzienne sprawy”<sup>78</sup>. The concurrence is admitted by Boczkowski in a note<sup>79</sup>. In fact, the solution seems motivated by searching for a rhyme to the rendition of the famous line “I have measured out my life with coffee spoons” (l. 51) – which ends with the noun phrase *łyżeczkami kawy*. Nonetheless, the move strengthens the allusive diction. Pomorski’s version of *The Love Song* actually opens on a note familiar to Polish readers of poetry, with the first line: “Cóż zatem, pójdź ze mną.” There is no “you and I,” but instead: *pójdź ze mną*, ‘go with me,’ a formulation

<sup>73</sup> A. Marvell, *Do nieskorej bogdanki*, trans. S. Barańczak, [in:] *Antologia angielskiej poezji metafizycznej XVII stulecia*, trans. and ed. S. Barańczak, Warszawa 1982, p. 247.

<sup>74</sup> Eliot, *Szepty nieśmiertelności*, p. 103.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. the typology of levels of openness in: A. Majkiewicz, *Intertekstualność – implikacje dla teorii przekładu. Wczesna proza Elfriede Jelinek*, PWN, Warszawa 2008, pp. 22–26 and *passim*.

<sup>76</sup> Anna Majkiewicz comes to the conclusion that translation should by definition be characterised by a greater concentration of explicit information than the source text. Amplifications and metatextual practices can be considered immanent to the translated work (*Intertekstualność – implikacje dla teorii przekładu*, pp. 306–307).

<sup>77</sup> Jarniewicz devotes much attention to the notes in Pomorski’s volume, concentrating on those accompanying *The Waste Land* (Jarniewicz, “Król Rybak u pani Tumidaj, czyli cały Eliot,” pp. 378–381). Let me stress that the commentaries to *Prufrock* are valuable and reliable, notwithstanding the slip with “dying fall” (l.52) mis-localised to *As You Like It* (cf. Eliot, *W moim początku jest mój kres*, p. 329).

<sup>78</sup> F. Karpiński, *Pieśń wieczorna*, [in:] F. Karpiński, *Wybór wierszy*, Warszawa 1986, p. 100.

<sup>79</sup> Eliot, *Szepty nieśmiertelności*, p. 102.



which evokes the Latin phrase *Vade mecum*, used as cycle title by the major 19<sup>th</sup>-century poet Cyprian Kamil Norwid<sup>80</sup>. Naturalisation in the sphere of intertextuality is often dismissed or condemned by translation scholars<sup>81</sup>. Nevertheless, such procedures with respect to Eliot, of all writers, have on occasions been praised by critics<sup>82</sup>. Given that the intertextual dimension is a very important facet of Eliot's poetics, adding those native notes to the two Polish *Love Songs* should probably be appreciated rather than denounced. The remaining translators do not compensate the implicated or lost markers by any references to source, target or third cultures.

The eight surveyed markers and the two strategies give basis for the formalisation in Table 6. With this aspect, the curve in the chart comes closest to a growth curve but even in this sphere is not exactly like it.

Table 6. Re-creation of intertextuality in the respective translations

Components	Translator				
	Duleba	Spusiński	Pomorski	Barańczak	Boczkowski
<i>S'io credesse</i> (Dante) (epigraph)	+	+	+	+	+
"time to murder and create" (Eccles 3,1-8)	–	+	(+)	(+)	+
"works and days" (Hesiod) (l. 29)	–	–	+	+	– (inversion)
head upon a platter (l. 82)	+	+	+	+	+
"squeezed... into a ball" (Marvell) (l. 92-	–	–	+	+	+
Lazarus (l. 94)	+	+	+	+	+
"attendant lord" (Polonius) (l. 114-119)	(+)	+	+	+	(+)
mermaids (l. 124)	–	+	– (syrenki)	+	+
compensations	–	–	+ (pójdź za mną)	–	+ (dni... sprawy)
presence and reliability of paratext (translator's)	–	–	+	–	+
<b>Score: _/10</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>

<sup>80</sup> C.K. Norwid, *Vade mecum*, [in:] C. K. Norwid, *Nowy wybór poezji*, ed. J.W. Gomulicki, Warszawa 1996, pp. 273–334.

<sup>81</sup> The rejection may be implicit, as in Majkiewicz's final conclusion that intertextuality enforces foreignisation in translations (*Intertekstualność – implikacje dla teorii przekładu*, p. 303).

<sup>82</sup> Cf. J. Gutorow, *Przeciw dosłowności. Notatki na marginesie polskiego przekładu* Mercian Hymns *Geoffreya Hilla*, [in:] *Przekładając nieprzekładalne*, vol. 3, ed. O. Kubińska, W. Kubiński, Gdańsk 2007, p. 130; Jarniewicz points to re-intertextualisation as an occasional but perceptible note of Pomorski's collection, voicing approval or scepticism, depending on the case ("Król Rybak u pani Tumidaj, czyli cały Eliot," pp. 381–383). Barańczak, surprisingly, does not equip the text with any comments (except for the motto attribution), although he does so in the case of several other poems in his anthology.



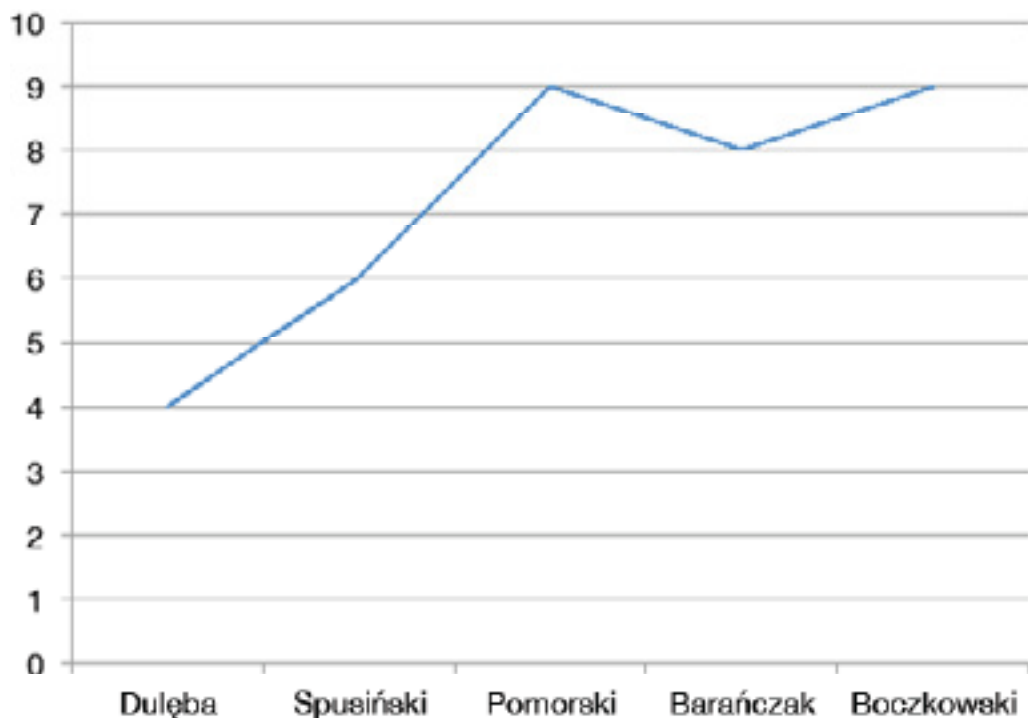
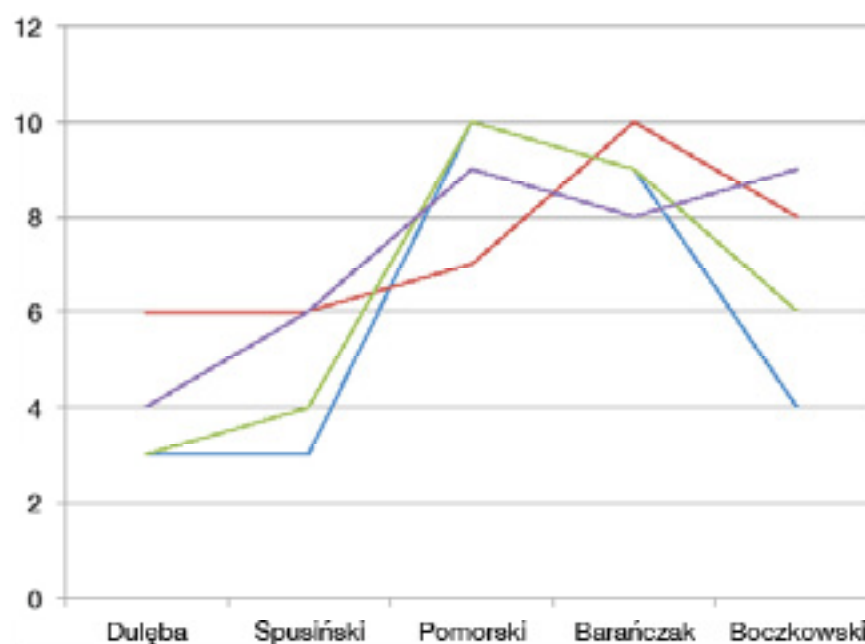


Chart 4: Intertextuality as reproduced in the studied translation series

## Conclusions

If the line charts are imposed over each other, this allows us to see the quality of renditions as a stratified phenomenon (Chart 5). It is evident that forming an assessment on basis of any single previous diagram would have been highly misleading, and that even the picture given by the four is not unequivocal. A label of overall high quality of translation can be granted only when all – or majority of – the lines run in the upper parts of the chart (as they do in the case of a hypothetical Translation 4 in an imagined ideal series in Chart 6).





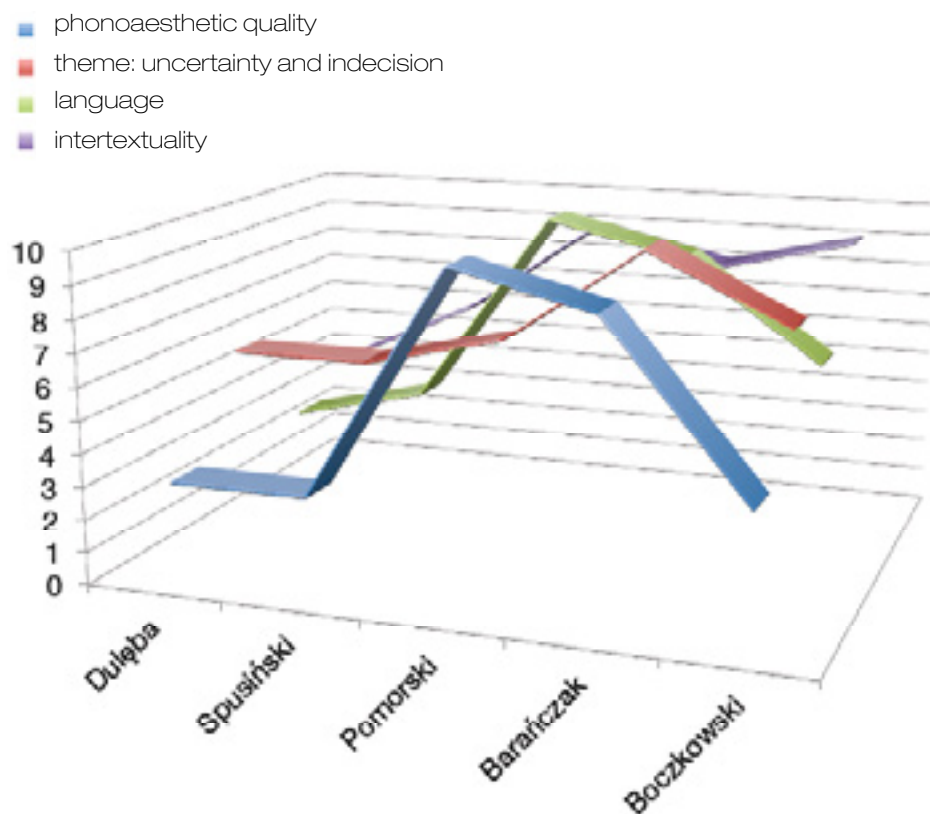


Chart 5 (a & b): The four studied characteristics plotted together

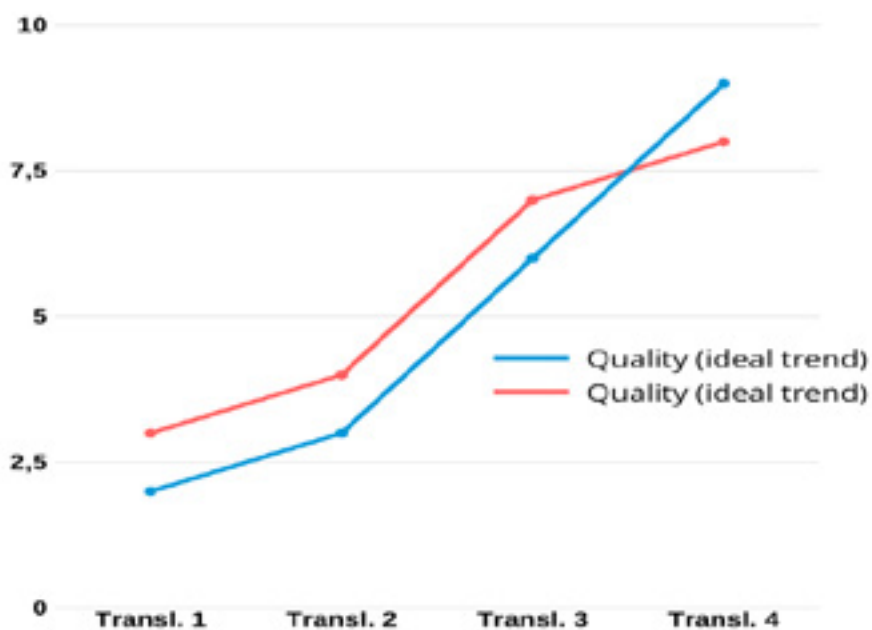


Chart 6: Quality in an imagined translation series illustrating a theoretical steady growth

The translation quality projected as a bundle of aspects shows that the lines do not necessarily fluctuate in the same way. This means that development in time may – at least for this given



series it does – involve an improvement in one aspect and a decrease of quality in another.

Secondly, our particular series as a whole does not show a clear progression. True, it seems to confirm that Władysław Duleba's translations (in general) were justly considered arduous rather than fine<sup>83</sup>. Apparently they played mainly an informative function, as pioneering ones. Michał Sprusiński's translation was praised by Wanda Rulewicz for "being faithful to the original in the sound layer"<sup>84</sup>. This seems an excessively positive assessment in the light of the present survey, and may have been the result of partly the critic's unawareness of some qualities of Eliot's verse, and partly of the lack of more sonorous translations to compare. The Polish translation series of *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* can be said to have peaked in quality with the versions by Adam Pomorski and Stanisław Barańczak. Or, to qualify it, to have peaked relatively, because both renditions achieve excellence in some respects at the expense of underscoring certain other studied features. As for Boczkowski, he has a good result in two fields, and a mediocre in two others. Consequently, though being the latest rendition, his text does not surpass all the previous ones as a straightforward understanding of the developmental character of a series might suggest.

Moreover, not all important aspects have been measured and projected here. In particular, it would be worth examining the renditions of *The Love Song* for cohesion, to see whether the internal logic is not violated by mistranslations and whether smoothing out (rationalisation) of the meandering train of thought is avoided. The more components taken into account (i.e. threads in the bundle), the greater the certainty that the assessment proves not misguided.

The charts, of course, do not constitute a method of research themselves, but a method of plotting the results. Nonetheless, I think that they show convincingly the need for a stratification of analysis and accounting for various components of quality. Still another point is that such a formalisation helps one perceive, for instance, that changes in the quality of rendering the language and those in phonoaesthetic quality have resulted in similar charts, i.e. notice a parallel which perhaps deserves a further investigation.

Finally, it seems worthwhile to revisit the conditions of improvement in quality in a series outlined at the beginning. Let us relate them to the translation series that has been discussed, with a special focus on the latest addition to it.

#### 1. Awareness of the previous elements in the series.

In the present case, the stature of the translators, either their interest in Eliot and involvement in propagating his works (Sprusiński, Pomorski, Boczkowski) or their known practise (Barańczak), make it probable that they were familiar with the previous rendition(s). Without a translator's direct admission it is, of course, very difficult for a researcher to establish whether they consult the existing texts **during the process** of composing their own. Still,

<sup>83</sup> Heydel argues that they obliterate precisely what was innovative about Eliot's poetics (*Obecność T.S. Eliota w literaturze polskiej*, p. 151). On the example of *Gerontion* she points to imposing too high, quasi-biblical archaic diction in place of the original colloquiality.

<sup>84</sup> W. Rulewicz, Wstęp, [in:] Eliot, *Wybór poezji*, ed. K. Boczkowski, W. Rulewicz, pp. cxiii–cxiv.



this precondition can be supposed to have been fulfilled. Boczkowski, at least, admits familiarity with “previous versions”.

## 2. The intent to outdo the previous renditions.

On a single occasion Boczkowski openly questions decisions of his predecessors. He claims that line 88, “After the cups, the marmalade, the tea,” has so far been “mistranslated,” without naming the renditions he has in mind<sup>85</sup>. It is however, a minor point, one would say, whether “cup” is treated as a vessel or a beverage (even if the latter appears more logical here) or that marmalade is by definition a citrus product. Although, curiously enough, no key issues become highlighted in a similar polemic way, this single remark discloses an at least partly corrective intent on Boczkowski’s part.

## 3. Familiarity with the literary and translation criticism on the oeuvre or work.

Ward has observed that although most of the translators of Eliot are usually well-versed in the subject, this does not necessarily prevent them from overlooking certain features of poetics that scholars find crucial and worth preserving<sup>86</sup>. Boczkowski’s volume, with its undoubted display of erudition and a *Prufrock* that is not, artistically, the last say, confirms it.

## 4. Authorisation to borrow fortunate translation solutions.

Some repetitions seem necessary even in the early history of the series and dictated by the original text itself. As has been suggested with reference to the “Michelangelo” couplet, certain non-optimal solutions may also be triggered by avoidance of choices already “used up”. As for Boczkowski, he does draw on the previous versions in some respects in more obvious ways, which was pointed out on two examples in section 3: a lexical choice repeated from the second translation and the phrasing *podstawia grzbiet* from the third. However, this does not always prove felicitous (as in the case of the verb *utrwać*).

In sum, it seems that the conditions, if not so likely, were all fulfilled. And yet, this alone did not guarantee an upward turn in the final segment of the chart. This even more strongly ad-

<sup>85</sup> Eliot, *Szepty nieśmiertelności*, p. 103.

<sup>86</sup> Cf. J. Ward, “Autoaluzja i inne cechy poezji T.S. Eliota,” p. 346.



# KEYWORDS

series

T. S. Eliot

POETRY TRANSLATION

retranslation

intertextuality

sound organisation

STYLE

## ABSTRACT:

The paper is an attempt to explore the interrelation between the notions of quality and seriality in literary translation. The point of departure is provided by theoretical considerations on translation series and by an expectation of quality increase to some extent inscribed in this concept. With a view to mapping quality trends in an actual translation series, five Polish renditions of T.S. Eliot's "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" are surveyed. Four aspects important for the poem's poetics are investigated comparatively and the results are then formalized. The aim is not to assess the 'excellence' of the target texts, but rather to map 'quality patterns' that can be observed in the particular aspects of poetics as the series develops.

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# Polish, Meaning foreign.

## On Translating an (In)Famous Chapter of *The Brothers Karamazov* by Fyodor Dostoyevsky

Kinga Rozwadowska

*The Brothers Karamazov*, a novel by Fyodor Dostoyevsky, has been present in the world of Polish letters since 1913, which is when the first translation by Barbara Beaupré was published (although previous to that, the chapter about the Grand Inquisitor was translated and published as a stand-alone text<sup>1</sup>). We might say that since that time this book has been a permanent and highly visible feature in Polish culture, republished a total of 23 times in six different translations.<sup>2</sup> The most popular of these has until recently been the version by Aleksander Wat from 1928; however since 2004 its greatest “competition” has come from a new translation by Adam Pomorski, a work which has been widely discussed and praised (in popular media channels). At the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century other translations were also reprinted: those by Barbara Beaupré (in spite of serious omissions from the original text, and even a falsified ending!) and by Waław Wireński from 1929. The most recent translation of *The Brothers Karamazov* was that by Cezary Wodziński (2015 – the book was issued just months before the translator passed away). One of the most meaningful and original aspects of the way the novel has been received in Poland – which includes discussion of the translations – has focused around the scene featuring Polish characters.

These protagonists appear in an inn in Mokre, where we witness a meeting after many years between Grushyenko and her first lover. The inn is also visited by Dymitr, who wants to stop the girl from going back to her beloved. Motivated by guilty feelings arising from his convic-

<sup>1</sup> M. Zdziechowski translated fragments of *The Grand Inquisitor* in his text titled *Mesjanisci i słowianofile / Messiahs and Slavophiles* (1888), and in 1907 J. Relidzyński published a translation-adaptation of this chapter for the theatre.

<sup>2</sup> In a formal sense there are five translations, though in this article I will also list the Puls 1993 publication, Wat’s version “reviewed and corrected” by Z. Podgórzec. The changes are extensive enough to warrant this version be treated as a separate, sixth translation.



tion that he accidentally killed Gregory, and also fear of Grushyenko's anger, Mitia tries to behave with good grace and respect towards his Polish rival and his companion. They in turn however do not return his good will; they approach the Russians gathered at the inn with contempt and suspicion, wilfully enflaming the political conflicts between them. In the closing of the scene, however, it turns out that following glowing comments on the topic of Polish honour and respect for ladies there follow actions which completely counter these perceptions. It transpires that the Poles have all along been cheating at cards, and Grushyenko's beloved is ready to give her up to Dmitri and vanish in return for an appropriate sum of money.

The way in which this scene is perceived in Poland must be connected with Poles seeing themselves as the Other, with the efforts needed to see the self through someone else's eyes. A decidedly larger part of the critical and academic works on the subject hover however around questions not so much to do with how Poles are presented, but Dostoyevsky himself. The negative and two-dimensional way in which he presents Polish characters is explained by the author's own experiences,<sup>3</sup> as well as his political and religious leanings.<sup>4</sup> In responses penned by researchers and interpreters of the text addressed at the author, in the nature of the questions aimed *ad personam*, we sense feelings of being wronged and unjustly treated, in a range of varied contexts, separate to the novel itself, which is considered to be a bonafide masterpiece.<sup>5</sup>

The sections featuring Poles seem to encourage Polish researchers to burden the author with responsibility for the words and actions of his protagonists, going against the widely accepted notions of Polyphony penned by Mikhail Bakhtin. Czesław Miłosz wholly discredited (though not without a deeper sense of concern) the scene featuring the Polish characters in *The Brothers Karamazov* as a sort of black mark on Dostoyevsky's writing record: a great writer ought not to sink to such depths. "This is mere journalism!"<sup>6</sup> The poet also stressed that this episode is an argument for a restriction in terms of polyphony: "It is hard to find something more singular in voice than the scene featuring Poles in *The Brothers Karamazov*, an unsubtle satire discrediting the worth of this work".<sup>7</sup>

Even if we accept that in terms of ideas this particular scene really can be reduced to a homophonic, ridiculing utterance by the author, then in linguistic terms it is one of the most colourful and multi-voiced scenes in the book. The Polish characters are ridiculed by the author not only in terms of what they do, but also in the way they speak. In the original, a comic effect is achieved through a phonetic rendering of Polish words using Cyrillic letters. The protagonists tend to

<sup>3</sup> S. Mackiewicz, *Dostojewski*, Bielsko-Biała 1997; Z. Żakiewicz, *Polacy u Dostojewskiego / Poles in the Writings by Dostoyevsky*, in: ibidem, *Ludzie i krajobrazy / People and Landscapes*, Gdańsk 1970, pp. 30-47.

<sup>4</sup> T. Rembowski, *Polska i Zachód oczami Fiodora Dostojewskiego. Rosyjskie spojrzenie / Poles and the West seen by Fyodor Dostoyevsky*, in: *Sprawy Wschodnie* 2009, no. 1-2 (18-19), pp. 87-100; J. Smaga, *Wstęp / Introduction*, in: F. Dostojewski, *Bracia Karamazow*, trans. A. Wat, ed. J. Smaga, Wrocław 2013, pp. III-CXL; J. Uglik, *Polacy w powieściach i publicystyce Dostojewskiego / Poles in the Novels and Journalism by Dostoyevsky*, in: *Przegląd Powszechny* 2004 no. 11, pp. 194-206.

<sup>5</sup> The only exception I know of is the insightful essay by Jerzy Stempowski, which using a comparative analysis of the way central and secondary characters are presented in Dostoyevsky's novel, posits a theory about the moral ideas the author has as the source of the negative way in which Poles are presented. J. Stempowski, *Polacy w powieściach Dostojewskiego / Poles in Dostoyevsky's novels*, in: ibidem, *Eseje*, Kraków 1984, pp. 229-250.

<sup>6</sup> Cz. Miłosz, *Rosja. Widzenia transoceaniczne / Russia. Transoceanic Visions. Vol I. Dostoyevsky – Our Contemporary*, selected by B. Toruńczyk and M. Wójcik, ed. B. Toruńczyk, intro. C. Cavanagh, Warszawa 2010, p. 175.

<sup>7</sup> Ibidem, p. 101.



speak in Polish, rarely trying to adjust their language to Russian syntax. The author thus takes on the role of translator, who converts their utterances into Russian as a sideline, not always accurately in fact. An example of this is Grushyenko's beloved, who refusing to drink a toast to Russia explains:

– Але не можна не мець слабосьци о свого краю? (FD, 513)

(The direct speech transcribed phonetically into Polish: "Ale nie można nie mieć słabości [d]o swojego kraju?")

(Is it not possible to have a weakness for one's own homeland? )

Dostoevsky reveals himself in the novel not as its author, but as its translator. It is worth noting however that as a translator he has almost total control. The sentence in parentheses reveals and interprets the protagonist's words, taking us into a world presented through additional information, sharing with the reader knowledge which helps us understand the action being played out. To set oneself up as a translator is to put oneself in a superior position and to reveal this position. In this way, harmonious polyphony is disrupted, and the fiction which has been presented to readers – questioned and suspended. The author-translator takes over and speaks as the protagonist, taking control over the world of the book.

It is not hard to imagine the challenge of translating a scene described in this way into Polish. The translator must hence clearly define their own place in the text, which in the original already contains the structure of the translation, and the superior position of the author as the person already translating. Another challenge is in the need to present the Polish language elements as foreign, and as a consequence, the need to look at fellow Polish protagonists as the Other. Paradoxically their statements should be for Polish readers just as incomprehensible as for Russian readers. To equate the perspectives of readers from both languages is impossible; the translator in some sense becomes a "translator" in a second context, revealing to their readers that which the author-translator revealed to his.

Some translators completely abandoned this challenge. The most radical of all the solutions applied was that of Barbara Beaupré, who in the first ever translation into Polish excluded this Otherness (meaning here Polishness) from her version. Nowhere in the whole chapter is it mentioned that the two protagonists come from Poland; whole swathes of text referring to Poland and Poles have been cut out, while both characters speak the same tongue as the other characters. Their Otherness, barely mentioned in the text, is a vague Otherness: the Otherness of those who happen across Mitia by chance (Grushyenko's beloved is referred to as simply: *an unknown stranger*).

If these two protagonists differ in any way from the other characters, it is not in the language they speak in, but in their conduct, such as their gentlemanly way of dealing with women:

"If my queen has no objections, he said at last."

"What sort of queen! What queen, just stop with all that," Grushya interrupted impatiently. "It's funny to look at you and listen to all your talk."<sup>8</sup> (BB IV, 102-103)

<sup>8</sup> All English translations of Polish citations from *The Brothers Karamazov* are those of article's translator.



In the above translation, Grushyenko understands her lover's words perfectly, but she cannot understand why he behaves the way he does. Interestingly, a similar strategy has been utilised in the most recent translation of this novel. Although Cezary Wodziński no longer conceals from his readers the fact that these "sirs" are not Russian, he doesn't specify who they are linguistically:

"If my princess will allow...", he began saying.

"What princess? Maybe a tsarina too, eh?", Grushyenko interrupted him abruptly. "I just feel like laughing listening to all that you say." (CW, 452)

In the strategy selected by Wodziński what surprises is the emphasis on intercultural translation, with no focus on inter-linguistic aspects, as if these two spheres could be mechanically separated.

This exchange of dialogue looks very different in Aleksander Wat's version, although he too gives only a partial impression of the Poles' Otherness. The protagonists in his translation twist individual phrases, and yet use almost correct language, the same as the other characters:

"If my queenie allows...", he began.

"What queenie? Queen methinks, eh?", Grushyenko interrupted him. "Your speech is amusing." (AW II, 108)

Paweł Hertz was one of the first to draw attention to these linguistic problematics in Wat's translation and explained it in the following footnote: "The Poles who appear in Chapter VII and those which follow speak in imperfect Russian, interspersed with Polish words. This is rather hard to present in Polish translation, though it should clearly be noted" (AW II, 512). Hertz appears to justify in this way the failure in Wat's translation, considering the translation language is both the device and the subject of the inter-linguistic game being played by the author. This problem was also not successfully resolved in the version produced by Zbigniew Podgórzec, whose version differed from that in the Wat translation by only one word – *królowa* (*queenie*) becomes *królewiczowa* – and the addition of an identical footnote, in which much like Paweł Hertz, he explains what he was unable to communicate in translation. Józef Smaga (and subsequently Grzegorz Przebinda) considered Wat's offering unsatisfactory and postulated that in order to retain the Polish speech as presented by Dostoyevsky in its original sounds would inevitably involve transliteration into the Latin alphabet.<sup>9</sup> In his translation, Adam Pomorski did not make use of this suggestion:

"My queen will allow me this much", he began.

"What is it with this queen again, is it meant to be tsarina, yes?" Grushyenko interrupted suddenly, "I feel like laughing listening to you all speak. (AP, 504-505)

<sup>9</sup> J. Smaga, op. cit., p. CXXX; G. Przebinda, *Piekło bez sufitu*, [online] [http://www.rubl.uj.edu.pl/pracownicy/fiszka.php?os=01\\_przebinda&jed=KKSW&opis=przeb\\_rzp18&w=1](http://www.rubl.uj.edu.pl/pracownicy/fiszka.php?os=01_przebinda&jed=KKSW&opis=przeb_rzp18&w=1), [dostęp: 29.05.2013], nlb.



Grushyenko only corrects one single word, yet the whole sentence the protagonist utters evidences his linguistic alienation, his Otherness. What he says doesn't fit either with his source language nor the target tongue. In any case, the specific word Grushyenko draws attention to is translated from Polish into Russian, and thereby is no longer comprehensible to Polish readers. The translator doesn't explain this device, and so he only refers to the readers' awareness that they are not dealing directly with Dostoyevsky's original – he makes explicit the fact that this is a translation and in this way destroys the illusion of eloquence.

As much as Adam Pomorski in the above fragment “removed” the protagonist's utterance from the order imposed by both linguistic systems, Waław Wireński in turn used simple inversion. In his translation, Poles speak in Russian with slight Polish inflexions:

– Jeżeli pozwolit moja królowa... – zaczął.  
 – Co za królowa – królowa chyba, czy co? – przerwała Grusza. – Aż mi się śmiać chce, jak wy obaj mówicie. (WW, 268)

“If my queenie will allow...”, he began.

“What is this queenie? Queen, rather, what?”, Grushya interrupted. “I feel like laughing when you both speak.”

Wireński's strategy is paradoxically linked to appropriation and domestication of the original. The Poles' speech is incomprehensible both for the other characters as well as for readers of the translation, suggesting that the world presented in the book belongs to the same culture and language as the target audience. In the language of the original (Russian), this can represent Otherness and is the effect achieved. Inflexion, though seemingly purely “mechanical”, is aimed (intentionally or else not) to strike the author's authority, for daring to ridicule Poles as a nation. The whole ideological basis for this idea is defeated by the fact that the ridiculed characters are in fact speaking Dostoyevsky's own tongue.

What does in fact wreck the perversely symmetrical linguistic division in Wireński's translation is the linguistic culture, by which we mean the form of personal address “pan / sir”, which in the original has a comic effect: it's not only the Poles who use this form, but also Dmitri, who is trying to politely adjust to Polish customs and speech, a form used by the author himself (*пан на диване, пан с трубкой* – FD, 503-521). Having used this form, Wireński manages to subvert and complicate the characters' linguistic identities. The translator additionally emphasises this ironic tone in his narration through the use of speech marks with his “sir” – Wat and Podgórzec only indicate ironic usage of this word and form at the start of the scene. Pomorski in turn adds more of the original's humorous tone and makes use of the older, even more elevated forms of address, such as *wasindziej, mościpan, pan szlachta* (AP, 504-505).

The language used by the Poles in Dostoyevsky's novel is not steady and consistent in quality – the proportions between the Polish and Russian elements change in relation to the situation and the audience. The narrator himself at some point draws our attention to the suspect, formulaic use of Russian. Adam Pomorski has produced the most literal translation of this commentary:



You sir have never seen Polish ladies with your own eyes and yet you tell some fanciful tales – the sir with his smoking pipe thus addressed Maksimov.

Sir with the pipe spoke rather acceptable Russian, any way, much better than he was letting on. Russian words, if he used them at all, were misused with a Polish slant. (AP, 508)

The narrator's observation is clear in the context of the original, in which the character speaks most often in Polish, meanwhile the words addressed at Maksimov are a mixture of Russian and Polish (FD, 508). In Pomorski's translation this should either be treated as a general observation, unconnected with the utterance preceding it, or else accept the aforementioned hinted at suggestion that in this translation Polish "pretends" to be Russian. Because previously the protagonist spoke in awkward sentences, sounding odd, his sudden switch to proper and correct Polish is "pretending" to be the language of the original. In such a case what becomes apparent is translation as convention, as a certain kind of strategy for presenting the original text, which also happens to wreck the reader's illusion in interacting directly with the original text.

This vague agreement is indicated differently in Wat's version:

"You sir have never seen Polish ladies with your own eyes and yet you tell some fanciful tales.", the sir with his smoking pipe thus addressed Maksimov.

In fact he had a good grasp of Russian, in any way much better than he pretended to have... Though he mixed up Russian words with Polish equivalents and in addition mixed them with Polish (AW II, 111)

Although here the protagonist also speaks in proper Polish, the narrator denies "reality" in the text and offers the readers this assumption, or even the faith in that which the translator is unable to render. The point of the narrator's intercession is to draw the readers' attention to the fact that they are reading a translation by pointing out its limitations (in this case: the untranslatability of this unique mix of Russian and Polish tongues).

In addition to comments about the above quote, it is worth noting the exceptional appropriacy of the phrase used by Wat (uniquely Polish): to "wield a tongue". In the context of the scene under discussion, it perfectly reflects the way in which the protagonist uses a foreign language, exploiting and modifying it in accordance with the objective he wishes to achieve. He "maims" the tongue when he wants to stress his own Otherness and mark the distance he feels exists between him and the Russians. And yet when stronger emotions make themselves felt (in this case, outrage), the protagonist shapes his response with greater care and correctness in order for it to be more persuasive. It seems all the more surprising for me that the expression *to wield a tongue* is the only thing Zbigniew Podgórzec altered in Wat's translation (ZP II, 105). A key element in the way the Polish protagonist is crafted is his self-awareness when it comes to using language to alter his appearance. This element is lost in the Wacław Wireński version, in which the protagonist is forced to continue speaking in a language beyond both the other characters and the readers also:



– Pan polskoj pani nie widzieł i mówi to, co być nie mogło – zwrócił się do Maksymowa pan z fajką.  
(WW, 270)

Mówił po rosyjsku znacznie przyzwoiciej, niż udawał. Mimo to wszystkie słowa skandalicznie przekręcał.

“Sir has not seen Polonye Dames and yet says that which cannot have come to pass”, the gent with the pipe turned to say to Maximov.

He spoke Russian far more decently than he pretended. Even so he managed to terribly twist and maim each word.

In this version the narration has an auctorial character; because the narrator’s attention is not really applicable to the reality presented in this scene we should assume that it reveals knowledge neither reader nor other characters have access to.

Another example of the lack of stability and clarity in the way the protagonist uses his Polish is when Grushyenko agrees to Dimitri joining their company. In the Pomorski translation Sir Mus(s)iałowicz<sup>10</sup> answers her using relatively correct Polish (hence the reader should assume it is “Russhish”), hence stressing the respect he feels for his old beloved: “My ruler’s wish is my law!” (AP, 505). The same protagonist speaks in a similarly flowery fashion in the translation by Barbara Beaupré: “My queen’s will is for me an order!” (BB IV, 105-106). And yet in this case, considering the total cohesion of the language in the translation, this utterance doesn’t communicate the duplicity in what is said, only the gentlemanly spirit in which it is said, something which is also questionable in other translations. Let’s take the example of the translation by Aleksander Wat: “My queen’s wish is for me an order!” (AW II, 109) – he once again introduces some Russian aspects to his otherwise correct Polish, thereby betraying the fact that he has not at all taken onboard Grushyenko’s earlier comment about the word *królowa*. Translations formed in this fashion go on to smuggle before the scene’s finale a suggestion regarding the real attitude Mus(s)iałowicz has towards Grushyenko. Zbigniew Podgórzec “corrected” Wat’s translation, insisting the protagonist improve: “My queen’s wish is my law!” (ZP II, 102). This translation leads us to conclude that the protagonist has total control over his own emotions and language, capable of achieving the desired effect on his listeners. In this particular example, Wacław Wireński also applies the consistent strategy of “inverting” languages: “Co przykażet moja caryca – to ustawa!” [What orders yet mine tsarina – my legislation!] (WW, 268). It is worth noting however that only Wireński and Wodziński left the original label applied to Grushyenko – *tsarina*. In Wireński’s version, this utterance cannot be interpreted in the light of the previous dialogue, corrected by the female protagonist, though we can sense a hint of irony in it. In the context of the “politicised” attitude, the Pole has in relation to the other characters, calling Grushyenko his *tsarina* give his words a complex aspect of submission and subservience.

<sup>10</sup>There are two variants of the way the surname is written in Polish translations as listed in this article, whereas Adam Pomorski is the only translator who has retained its original sound: Mussiałowicz. In his footnotes Pomorski holds that previous translators unnecessarily corrected Dostoyevsky’s doubled up consonant and that it signifies the character’s belonging to the nobles of Poland’s eastern borderlands. Thus the translator draws our attention to the social and literary aspect the scene should be interpreted in; he holds that the Poles who appear in it are *characters who happen to be typical for so-called anti-nihilistic novels, in which the blossoming of Russia coincided with the atrocities of the January uprising* (AP, 603). In this way the translator tries to in some part justify, or at least explain to his readers, the negative way Poles are presented in the defined literary convention.



The exchange between Grushyenko and Mus(s)iałowicz causes considerable consternation when it comes to translation. The girl pays close attention to the words her beloved utters, asking for explanations, doing everything she can to understand a person she loved years and years ago, even when the problem relates to the most basic problems in communication. Demanding a translation/explanation, Grushyenko tries to get at the truth of that which used to bind and now still binds her to the Pole, checking how familiar he remains to her, and how he has become a stranger, trying to find a common tongue which used to be based upon the feelings between them.

When Dimitri invites the Poles to play a game of cards, they at first appear reluctant to accept the idea:

- Późno, panie! – niechętnie odezwał się pan z kanapy.
- To prawda – przytaknął pan Wróblewski.
- „Późno”? Co to jest „późno”? – nie zrozumiała polskiego słowa Gruszeńka.
- „Późno” znaczy *pozdno*, proszę pani, *pozdno*, *czas pozdniej* (późna godzina) – przetłumaczył pan z kanapy. (AP, 514)

“Late it is, sir!”, the fellow from the sofa said reluctantly.

- “True enough”, Sir Wróblewski nodded.
- “Late? What is this “Late?””, Grushyenko asked, not understanding the Polish word.
- “Late” means *pozdno*, dear madam, *pozdno*, *czas pozdniej* (late hour) – the man on the sofa translated. (AP, 514)

In the above translation Adam Pomorski exhibits the pre-agreed form chosen for the translation (though speaking Polish, Grushyenko doesn’t understand Polish words). And yet from this moment on the translator begins to partly introduce the device of linguistic “inversion” in the sense it is used by Waław Wireński. This inversion however is neither complete nor thorough. In relation to the original we see the translator essentially repeats Dostoyevsky’s gesture, at times translating in parentheses the words spoken by his Polish protagonists.<sup>11</sup> And so the elements in parentheses are not a different form of footnoting by the translator, but a precise recording of the author’s presence functioning in the text as more of a translator. It is, of course, not possible to spot this without knowing the original, even though the trick played by Pomorski is in line with the text’s logic. The protagonist switches between languages in order to explain concepts which are unclear to those of a different nationality. The translator thus highlights a problem which appears on the margins of the dialogue: what does it in fact mean to “translate”?

<sup>11</sup>This device is also used twice over in the translation by Cezary Wodziński, although in his version it has a completely different effect – here all the protagonists speak in a consistently correct form of the Polish tongue. It therefore seems to me that in this version it is meant not just to suggest the subjectivity of the translation, but above all to achieve a comic effect based on the polysemy of some of the words shared between Polish and Russian. It might be that in this way the translator is trying to subtly suggest that the linguistic bond between the two nations is superficial.



In his translation Waław Wireński utilised the identical mechanism of a “translation within a translation”:

- Pozdno, panie – jakby od niechcienia odezwał się pan na sofie.
- Pozdno, cóż to jest? – spytała Grusza.
- To znaczy późno, pani, późno, czas późny – wyjaśnił pan na sofie. (WW, 274)

“Latesh, sir”, the man on the sofa said with apparent reluctance.

“Latesh, what is that?”, Grusha asked.

“It means late, m’am, late, the time is late”, the man on the sofa explained. (WW, 274)

And yet because the translator swapped languages used by the protagonists, explanations in parentheses were no longer needed. The process of translation presented in the dialogue is analogous to that which the translator of the original language performed himself, and doesn’t require any additional footnotes.

Aleksander Wat applied a different tactic to those used by Wireński and Pomorski, choosing to partly explain/translate and partly leave unsaid:

- Późno, panie! – jakby niechętnie odezwał się „pan” z kanapy.
- To prawda – potwierdził pan Wróblewski.

Ponieważ powiedzieli to po polsku, więc Gruszeńka, nie rozumiawszy ich, zapytała pana z fajką. (AW II, 117)

“It is late, sir!”, the ‘sir’ on the sofa said with apparent reluctance.

“That is true”, ‘sir’ Wróblewski confirmed.

Because they said this in Polish, Gurshyenka, failing to understand them, asked the gent with the pipe. (AW II, 117)

The above quoted translation can lead us to the conclusion that Wat decided to stop at signalling that the conversation is a subjective matter and that as a result he decided against attempting the translation in the text itself. Zbigniew Podgórzec, assuming the same, adopted a similar tactic to Wat, and yet attempted to deliver a complete translation of the conversation:

- Późno, panie! – jakby niechętnie odezwał się pan z kanapy.
- To prawda – potwierdził pan Wróblewski.
- Późno? Co to takiego, późno? – zapytała Gruszeńka.
- Późno to późno, pani. Późna godzina – wyjaśnił pan z kanapy. (ZP II, 110)

“It is late sir!”, the gent on the sofa said with some reluctance.

“That is true”, ‘sir’ Wróblewski confirmed.

“Late? What is this late?”, Grushyenka asked.

“Late is late, madam. A late hour”, the gent on the sofa explained. (ZP II, 110)



Podgórzec's translation is a complete translation, meaning not just a translation of the original but a translation within the original. As a result, we can see how essential in this dialogue is additional commentary, be it from the author himself (preserved in the translation, as in the case of Pomorski's version), or from the translator. Without causing complications in the translation within the text, the dialogue between Grushya and the Pole seems almost absurd. In the translation by Podgórzec, there is no information about the fact that Grushya's relates to linguistic confusion (and doesn't after all arise out of the text, which is wholly constructed in Polish), nor about what the facts of the translation are, as crafted by the Pole. In such a literal interpretation, as presented by Podgórzec, the answer given by "the gent on the sofa" sounds rather icy and in this way completely falsifies the dynamic between the characters.

Meanwhile the communication problems between Mus(s)iałowicz and Grushyenka perfectly reflect not only the protagonists themselves at any given moment, but also their shared narrative. During her conversation with her beloved, Grushyenka begins to realise that the Pole has forgotten about her the same as he forgot his Russian. She now knows he has become a stranger to her, and their inability to find a common tongue is merely a symptom of their feelings fading. Disappointment and bitterness culminate at the moment when Mus(s)iałowicz once again makes her name sound more Polish:

- Pani Agrypino, dotknięty jestem do żywego! – zaczął podniesionym głosem, ale Gruszeńka nagle straciła resztę cierpliwości, jak gdyby trafił w najboleśniejsze miejsce.
  - Po rosyjsku gadaj, po rosyjsku, nie waż się wtrącić ani jednego słowa polskiego! – wykrzyknęła.
  - Dawniej mówiłeś po rosyjsku, czyżbyś zapomniał przez te pięć lat! – Była czerwona z gniewu.
  - Pani Agrypino...
  - Jestem Agrafigena, jestem Gruszeńka, gadaj po rosyjsku, albo słuchać nie chcę. Pan nadął się z poczucia obrażonego honoru i łamaną ruszczyzną prędko i z namaszczeniem przemówił:
  - Pani Agrafigeno, ja przyjechał zapomnieć stare i przebaczyć, zapomnieć, co dzisiaj było...
- (AW II, 122; ZP II, 114-115)

"Lady Agrypina, I am touched to the very core!", he began speaking in a raised voice, but Grushyenka suddenly lost all of her patience, as if he had touched her most sensitive spot.

"Speak Russian, Russian you hear, and not a single Polish word out of you!", she screamed. "You used to speak Russian once upon a time, did it take you just five years to forget everything?!", She raged on, red with fury.

"Lady Agrypina..."

"I am Agrafigena, I am Grushyenka, talk Russian, else I don't want to listen."

The 'sir' swelled with hurt feelings at being so dishonoured, with rusty Russian quickly and chaotically spoke:

"Lady Agrafigeno, I came to forget the old and forgive, forget what happened today."

Grushyenka resists having her name be made more Polish, her outrage directed against attempts to subjugate her is a rebellion against the use of language to dominate her. Mus(s)iałowicz wants to see in Agrypina a "Polish dame", one of those he so boasted about in front of his Russian companions. Grushyenka reminds him of her actual name, thereby reminding



him of her true identity and origins. This is the interpretation clearly pointed to by Zbigniew Podgórzec in his lengthy commentary on the name *Agrypina*:

Agrypina is a name taken from the Greek, meaning a person born feet first. The name belonged to a saint who died in the name of her faith in Rome around 262 AD. In Russia this name is popular in its native folk form – *Agrafiëna* (diminutive *Grushya*, *Grushyenka*).

It appears that the translator intentionally highlighted the contrast between the Polish and the Russian sound of the girl's name, seeing as it conceals class and cultural contexts. In defending her name, *Grushya* also reclaims her right to be angry and vengeful, forcing the Pole to use her language. Their linguistic battles transform into a struggle to control the situation, which keeps on heading towards the status of scandal. In the versions quoted (those by Wat and Podgórzec), the Pole reluctantly and only partially follows *Grushyenka*'s instructions. In turn, in Pomorski's translation his efforts at compromise are stressed by having the Russian words printed in italics:

- Pani Agrypino, jestem dotknięty do żywego! – zakrzyknął, Gruszeńka jednak straciła resztkę cierpliwości, jakby uraził ją w najboleśniejście miejsce
- Po rosyjsku, mów po rosyjsku, żebym ani jednego polskiego słowa nie słyszała! – huknęła na niego. – Dawniej przecież mówiłeś po rosyjsku, co, przez pięć lat zapomniałeś? – poczerwieniała z gniewu.
- Pani Agrypino...
- Jestem Agrafiëna, jestem Gruszeńka, mów po rosyjsku, albo słuchać nie chcę!
- Pan zasapał z poczucia honoru i kalecząc mowę rosyjską, przemówił szybko i napuszenie:
- Pani Agrafiëno, ja przyjechał zabić *staroje* i przebaczyć go, zabić, co było przed *siegodnia*... (AP, 519)

"Lady Agrypina, I am touched to the very core!", he began speaking in a raised voice, but *Grushyenka* suddenly lost all of her patience, as if he had touched her most sensitive spot.

"Speak Russian, Russian you hear, and not a single Polish word out of you!", she screamed. "You used to speak Russian once upon a time, did it take you just five years to forget everything?!", She raged on, red with fury.

"Lady Agrypina..."

"I am Agrafiëna, I am *Grushyenka*, talk Russian, else I don't want to listen!"

"The 'sir' swelled with hurt feelings at being so dishonoured, with rusty Russian quickly and chaotically spoke:

"Lady Agrafiëna, I came here to..."

Interestingly enough, the exchange of words on the topic of the girl's name was not missed in Barbara Beaupré's translation, which up until then removed all traces of national differences, resolutely erasing linguistic differences between the characters.

- Panno Agrypino – zaczął – jestem do żywego dotknięty. – Ale Grusza przerwała mu niecierpliwie.
- Daj mi pan spokój z Agrypiną. – Nazywam się Agrafia, albo lepiej jeszcze Grusza. – Proszę nie przekręcać mego imienia.
- Proszę pamiętać, pani Agrafio, że przybyłem tu z zamiarem zapomnienia o przeszłości, gotów byłem wszystko przebaczyć, wszystko darować. (BB IV, 114)



"Lady Agrypina", he began speaking. "I am truly shaken", But Grushya interrupted him impatiently.

"Stop with all your Agrypinas. My name is Agrafia, or else best Grushya. Please do not twist my name around."

"Please remember miss Agrafia that I came here to forget the past, ready to forgive everything, to let everything go."

Even if we pass over all the painful questions of a political nature, the problem of renaming was clearly important to the translator, and her reaction meant to emphasise her emotional, stubborn character. In turn, the very fact of the Pole twisting his beloved's name around clearly shows his attitude towards his early love. In this way, the translation shows the dramatic moment in which illusions are shattered and love dies, without making reference to cultural contexts of the source text, nor to the author's other interjections. Retaining mostly the original transformation in the relations between the lovers, the translator remains mute on the things which could upset Polish readers.

Wacław Wireński, in translating this piece of dialogue, chose a more measured solution: Grushyenko doesn't make reference to the language and nationality of her former lover, instead demanding her respect her native tongue (and her person too):

– Pani Agrypina, jestem do żywego dotkniętym! – zaczął, lecz Grusza straciła nagle cierpliwość.

/– Miss Agrypina, I am deeply moved! –he began, but Grushya suddenly lost her temper.

– Po rosyjsku gadaj, po rosyjsku i żebym jednego przekręconego słowa nie słyszała! Przecież przedtem mówiłeś, jak się należy; czyżbyś przez te pięć lat zapomniał? – zaczerwieniła się z gniewu. /–Talk Russian, Russian hear, and I don't want to hear one word twisted out of shape! You used to speak it, the way it ought to be spoken; has it taken just five years for you to forget? – she said, turning bright red with anger.

– Pani Agrypina...

– Jestem Agrafiena, Grusza – gadaj jak się należy, albo słuchać nie chcę.

– Pani Agrafiena, ja przyjechał zapomnieć stare i przebaczyć, zapomnieć, co było do chwili dnia dzisiejszego... (WW, 276)

Miss Agrypina, I am deeply moved!", he began, but Grushya suddenly lost her temper.

"Speak Russian, Russian you hear, and I don't want to hear one word twisted out of shape! You used to speak it, the way it ought to be spoken; has it taken just five years for you to forget?", she said, turning bright red with anger.

"Miss Agrypina...,

"I am Agrafiena, Grushya. Speak the way you ought to, else I won't listen."

"Miss Agrafiena, I came here to forget the old and to forgive, forget all that came before this very day..." (WW, 276)

In Wireński's translation, the stress is on the linguistic inappropriacy, on words being maimed and twisted out of shape, a problem greater than simple inter-linguistic translations. This also involves the greater likelihood of intentional linguistic deformation, which is equally damaging, just as bad as names being twisted out of shape.



To end our analyses of the problematics captured in the language of translation in terms of the relationships between the protagonists, source culture and target audience, as well as that between the author and the translators, I would like to return to a symbolic and most often commented scene from the book – that of the toasts being raised. When Mitia, having raised a toast to Poland, suggests they toast Russia, his idea is keenly received by more (Russian) characters, while Maksimow adds:

– (...) za Rosję naszą starą, kochaną / To our old, beloved Russia (AW II, 116; ZP II, 109)

– (...) i ja za Rosję, starą babunię... / and I too toast Russia, that old granny... (WW, 273)

(...) za Rassiejuszkę, starą babuleńkę / for Rushienka, the old precious granny [p.] (AP, 513)

Adam Pomorski's translation stands out compared with the other translations due to the use of two unique devices. First of all, in his text *Rosja* has been replaced with the Russian diminutive *Rassiejuszkę*, and at the same time, set apart and made rather "odd". The word conceals a subtle suggestion that all the characters in this particular scene are in some way "alien" to Polish readers and this alienness is not a quality related solely to villainous characters, in this case, Poles. In this way, the translator seems to counter clear cut black&white divisions between own and others, complicating international and inter-linguistic relations established by the author of the original. I have tried to show that Pomorski often reminds his readers that they are not dealing with the original, but with a very unique sort of text that is a literary translation.

The second key decision made by the translator was to add to this fragment the following footnote: "A parody of the ending of a novel by Ivan Goncharov (1812-1891) *Urwisko* / *Escarpment*, in which proving stronger than familial longings is the call of that 'other, colossal character, that other grand 'granny' – Russia'." It is worth noting that this is not an original comment from Pomorski, but a translation from one of the Russian language editions of the novel.<sup>12</sup> And yet both in the original as well as the translation this footnote serves a similar purpose: it adds an extra dimension to this scene, as a result, no longer allowing it to remain simply a *shallow satire* at the expense of Poles; it is enhanced through an additional literary context, which enlightens the readers that Dostoyevsky was capable of ridiculing not only other nations, but also theatrical patriotism he noticed among his fellow Russians. In his "para-translation" comments, Adam Pomorski often notes that he is against attaching to Dostoyevsky the label of "enemy of the Poles". The translation of *The Brothers Karamazov* turns out to be a place where the translator can express their position, choosing and translating/explaining a given comment added to the original text. Pomorski the translator doesn't enter into a polemical debate with his author, but with the traditional form of reading this novel in

<sup>12</sup>Footnote referring to Goncharov's work I found in the novel *Братья Карамазовы* published in 1993. Interestingly enough the same version was likely used by Z. Podgórzec, and yet he chose and translated different footnotes to those chosen by A. Pomorski. F. Dostojewski, *Brat'ia Karamazovy*, Elista 1993.



the target culture. In this way, he stresses the meaning of translation as an element of a multifaceted reception of the foreign work<sup>13</sup>.

translated by Mark Kazmierski

<sup>13</sup>In place of the notion of “translation series/series of translations” I use the one suggested by M.Kwara, as broader and more accurately representing the diverse ways foreign works are received in any given culture. M. Skwara, *Polskie serie recepcyjne wierszy Walta Whitmana. Monografia wraz z antologią przekładów / Polish series of receptions of the poems by Walt Whitman. Monography with anthology of trasnlations*, Kraków 2014.



# KEYWORDS

*series of translations*

## HISTORY OF TRANSLATION

**ABSTRACT:**

The article presents a comparative interpretation of translations of one of the most controversial (among Polish readers) fragment taken from Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*. The paper presents translators with a particular challenge, ideologically and linguistically. In all for these cases, translators see the target culture and themselves as representatives, as aliens. This review aims to show the way different translators approached the task, with greater or lesser success, in spite of critical attitudes being expressed towards Poland and its people.



## RUSSIAN LITERATURE

## DOSTOEVSKY

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Kinga Rozwadowska (born 1987) – Doctor of literary studies (PhD attained from Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland with a thesis on Polish translations of Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*). She has published in numerous literary journals, incl. *Przekładaniec*, *Między Oryginałem a Przekładem*, *Ruch Literacki*. She co-authored the translation of Theo Herman's *The Conference of the Tongues* and is interested in translation theory in broader interdisciplinary contexts (sociological, political, economic).



# The Synaesthetic Poetics of Reading and Translation: Barthes – Nabokov – Robinson

Zuzanna Kozłowska

Engagement with literature, like all forms of contact, always lies somewhere between the pleasurable and the unpleasant. Reading and translating are activities which engage the body doing the experiencing – whether somatic, sensual or sexual. And yet the pleasurable potential of literature, bound by the stiff corset of modern theory, has not crossed over in a clear fashion to reflections upon literary studies. Only a few provocative projects involving the eroticisation of literary theory, such as those formulated by Susan Sontag and Roland Barthes, have opened it up to the literary realities of delight and pleasure. As indispensable elements of textual engagement, physical repulsion and fulfilment have become fully-fledged forms of aesthetic experience – dimensions of a fully restored *aisthesis*: aesthetics as sensation. Barthes' theorising of the delight (*jouissance*) and pleasure (*plaisir*)<sup>1</sup> experienced by readers liberated the body of theory from its shackles:

The unnameability and inexpressibility of delight (...) will be targeted especially against exegesis, the sensuousness of reading will stand up to the dictatorship of the senses, frivolity trembling before intelligibility. The body dressed by Barthes solely in a transparent veil of scandal will play a truly revolutionary role – offering interpretative theory a sort of shock therapy, putting into action the earlier and equally provocative (though never realised) project of Susan Sontag<sup>2</sup>.

Barthes' scandalous *The Pleasure of the Text* from 1973 does not just address the theme of delighting in reading – it is also a demonstration of it. Barthes' text not only suggests, but also makes present erotic experiences: the subject takes possession of language, occupying with loving fever the style of Barthes' manifesto. By revealing the "flirtatious"<sup>3</sup> aspects of literature, Barthes juggles multi-modal

<sup>1</sup> Following Barthes these are understood as two separate qualities (in contrast with a perception of delight as an intense pleasure – and so in categories of quantity, and not quality): transgressive, asocial delight as well as social, familial pleasure.

<sup>2</sup> A. Burzyńska, *Ciało w bibliotece / The Body in the Library*, [in:] Ibidem, *Anty-teoria literatury / The Anti-Theory of Literature*, Kraków 2006, p. 245.

<sup>3</sup> R. Barthes, *The Pleasure of the Text*, trans. Richard Miller, New York: Hill & Wang, p. 6.



sensual metaphors, engaging and combining the senses in an erotic/synaesthetic embrace: words have flavour, a texture, making us giddy, blush and aroused. Synaesthesia turns out to be a major argument in *The Pleasure of the Text*, as it fleshes out in a unique way the substantive quality of language, becoming an immovable threshold for the eroticisation of the written text: “The erotics or physical pleasure derived from literary experiences emerges through a focus on the materiality of the text.”<sup>4</sup> Synaesthesia as a rhetorical precedent gives language a sensual aspect, pointing to its complex poli- and inter-sensual nature. This linguistic materiality “is a multi-faceted concept; it includes anything that pertains to the physical constitution of the text”<sup>5</sup>, and it emerges from the sound aspects of speech, the visual typographical aspects of type, as well as the less obvious components of how texts are perceived, such as the smell of freshly printed ink along with the texture of paper or the screen. Tong-King notes that “literary writing and translation are and always have been a material and multimodal affair”<sup>6</sup> if only because of the “kinesthetics involved in writing, the words on a page or screen complete with color and typography, vocal sound in the case of oral interpreting”<sup>7</sup>. In this article I radicalise this thesis, pointing out that we sense language as a synaesthetic aesthetic formula (in the full etymological sense of this word), because the way we experience texts, stretching across a non-linear web of delight, pleasure, appropriateness, anaesthetic boredom, somatic robotisation and idiosyncracies. Synaesthesia seems to feed on a unique poetics of reading and translations of the authors being analysed. Synaesthesia is for Barthes about the reader’s pleasure in reading – pleasure that is hyper- or inter-sensual, in which one can experience a range of sensory inputs. The source of this pleasure is the tactile-kinetic sensuality of reception: “Thus, what I enjoy in a narrative is not directly its content or even its structure, but rather the abrasions I impose upon the fine surface; I read on, I skip, I look up, I dip in again”<sup>8</sup>. Human eyesight skimming across the text changes into touching the text, to skimming (with one’s fingers, eyes, head and hand movements) across its body, and eventually tasting it. The text is a body, a physical space (an expanse of skin) into which one can collapse, which can be run across, leaped over, risen above. The text is a body and reading is corporeal:

Does the text have human form, is it a figure, an anagram of the body? Yes, but of our erotic body. The pleasure of the text is irreducible to physiological need.<sup>9</sup>

The synaesthetic “patina of consonants, the voluptuousness of vowels”<sup>10</sup>, “their materiality, their sensuality, the breath, the gutturals, the fleshiness of the lips”<sup>11</sup> become the foundation of reading and creating delight in the text. The escalating sensual metaphoric intersensual aspect in *The Pleasure of the Text* fulfils an additional function: intersensual experience becomes the foundation for understanding language as a fabric with a given texture and potentially olfactory and kinetic potential, as matter with the properties of taste and visuals (“words *glisten*”<sup>12</sup>, they are colourful),

<sup>4</sup> T.-K. Lee, *Translation, materiality, intersemioticity: Excursions in experimental literature*, “Semiotica” 2014, no. 202, p. 347.

<sup>5</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>6</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>7</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>8</sup> R. Barthes, op.cit., p. 11-12.

<sup>9</sup> Ibidem, p. 17.

<sup>10</sup> Ibidem, p. 66.

<sup>11</sup> Ibidem, p. 67.

<sup>12</sup> Ibidem, p. 42.



and also – above all – as sound material, sounding out in a speaking “muzzle”<sup>13</sup>: “that the voice, that writing, be as fresh, supple, lubricated delicately granular and vibrant as an animals muzzle”<sup>14</sup>. Intersensuality is thus a bridge between the body and language<sup>15</sup>. Synaesthetically experienced words are “unexpected, succulent”<sup>16</sup>. Through the synaesthetic experience of the materiality of language the speaking subject reaches through articulation into the body’s insides, its innermost pleasures – in order to achieve textual delights: “(...) it crackles, it caresses, it grates, it cuts, it comes”<sup>17</sup>. *The Pleasure of the Text* is the pleasure of intersensual experience of a substantive linguistic fabric, exploration of its experiential potential. If a text is an erotic body, then language is its building block, its blood, muscles and skin. In biological and materialistic terms language is the source of movement, putting it more precisely: a sickly excitement – idiomatic palpitation (“an erethism of certain [...] expressions”<sup>18</sup>), linguistic ejaculation (a “gush of words”<sup>19</sup>), even a stylistic heart attack (“a suspension of the ‘heart’”<sup>20</sup>). Language is also a foodstuff – words can be savoured (“I savor the sway of formulas”<sup>21</sup>) or else forced down with disgust (“language must then be swallowed, without nausea”<sup>22</sup>). Barthes’ synaesthesia, a part of his broader project involving “the rehabilitation of sensory perception”<sup>23</sup>, is for researchers a tool, applied consciously as a corporeal figure, representing sensuality and pleasure. This Barthesian synaesthesia is therefore an operational synaesthesia; it is rhetorical too, applied resolutely as a function of a specific project. A different testament of synaesthetic sensitivity in texts is the intersensual prose penned by Vladimir Nabokov, an author gifted in the perceptual nature of synaesthesia. We know of many types of synaesthesia related to language:<sup>24</sup> tactile experience of the text, coloured lettering, savouring the taste of words, fragrant words, speech seen through the visual senses<sup>25</sup>, or even the personification of graphemes (meaning attributing to them genders or personalising letters of the alphabet and numbers). Vladimir Nabokov, synaesthete of the graph-colour type (coloured writing), phoneme-colour (flowery language)<sup>26</sup> as well as likely being a grapheme-personification<sup>27</sup>, chewed words carefully, precisely measuring

<sup>13</sup> Ibidem, p. 67.

<sup>14</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>15</sup> See. Anna Łebkowska’s understanding of synaesthesia: A. Łebkowska, *Jak ucieleśnić ciało: o jednym z dylematów somatopoetyki / How to flesh out the body: one of the somapoetic dilemmas*, Teksty Drugie 2011, no. 4.

<sup>16</sup> R. Barthes, op.cit., p. 42.

<sup>17</sup> Ibidem, pp. 67.

<sup>18</sup> Ibidem, p. 30.

<sup>19</sup> Ibidem, p. 7.

<sup>20</sup> Ibidem, p. 30.

<sup>21</sup> Ibidem, p. 36.

<sup>22</sup> Ibidem, p. 44.

<sup>23</sup> See. C. Oboussier, *Synaesthesia in Cixous and Barthes*, (<http://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/17407.pdf>) [accessed: 20.05.2017], p. 115: “Synaesthesia is axial in the intersecting projects of Cixous and Barthes to rehabilitate sensory perception (...) which, in turn, is integral to a wider concern to redefine knowledge”.

<sup>24</sup> See. Updated data on S. A. Daya: *Demographic aspects of synaesthesia*, (<http://www.daysyn.com/Types-of-Syn.html>) [accessed: 20.05.2017].

<sup>25</sup> The ticker-tape type involves converting vocal utterances into graphic records, visually perceived in the visible space alas.

<sup>26</sup> See. On synaesthesia in Nabokov see. A. Ginter, *Vladimir Nabokov i jego synestezyjny świat / Vladimir Nabokov and his synaesthetic world*, Łódź 2016; D. B. Johnson, *Synaesthesia, Polychromatism, and Nabokov*, [w:] *A Book of Things about Vladimir Nabokov*, red. C. R. Proffer, Ardis 1974; S. Conradt, *Vladimir Nabokov Talks Synaesthesia*, (<http://mentalfloss.com/article/49442/vladimir-nabokov-talks-synaesthesia>) accessed: 30.04.2015]; *Nabokov’s interview*, BBC Television [1962], (<http://lib.ru/NABOKOW/Inter02.txt>), [accessed: 30.04.2015]. See: V. Nabokov, *Speak, Memory: An Autobiography Revisited*, New York 1966.

<sup>27</sup> Personifications appear in a curious type of synaesthesia: “ordinal-linguistic personification” (porządkowo-językowa personifikacja).



out their weight, shapes and sound, both in his own writings as well as in his translations. In his 1941 *The Art of Translation*, Nabokov mercilessly deals with translation errors, arrogance and ignorance, at the same time presenting and explicating his own talent for translation. In it he reveals his *ars translatória*, discussing the challenges in translating the first verse of Pushkin's *Я помню чудное мгновенье*, which the author of *A Pale Fire* quotes solely using phonetic transcription: "Yah pom-new chewed-no-yay mg-no-vain-yay"<sup>28</sup>. The attempt to replicate the sound of the Russian using English language syllables indicates he prioritised the sound aspect of texts in translation. Nabokov's description of the sensual properties Pushkin imbued his verse with is full of synaesthetic metaphors, which are in fact a reflection of the perceptual specifics of the poem in Nabokov's subjective, idiosomatic experience. He describes his own physical reaction to the Russian verse: it's soothing, exciting melody ("The melody of the line (...) is to the Russian ear most exciting and soothing"), with the "plump", "golden-ripe" and "chewed-no-yay" in the middle of the verse as well as the many additional "m" and "n" sounds, keeping the verse in a pleasant equilibrium ("the 'm's' and 'n's' balancing each other on both sides"). Juxtaposing the Russian paragraphs with its literal English translation Nabokov animates and personifies individual phrases or sets of words in the Pushkin verse: "Yah pom-new" and his English literal equivalent "I remember" perform a "plunge" into the past: "deeper and smoother" in the case of the original, "flat on its belly" like an "inexperienced diver" in the case of the translation. Furthermore "chewed-no-yay" has a lovely Russian 'monster' in it – considering the shared lexical original of the words (чудовище; чуждый). Nabokov shows that translation does not involve the simple substitution of isolated lexical system items; words belong to sound and meaning continuums, dynamically co-creating the sense of the utterance. Stripped of this intra-linguistic weight, they bellyflop on the banal surface of unpleasant literalness. Nabokov's words not only possess colour, but also a tangible form<sup>29</sup>. Writing, translating – these are tactile states. Translations – this is a process of weighing up words, judging their shapes, textures, shades, their kinetic potential, and finally: their mutual, multi-level connections (etymological, cognitive, audible). In Vladimir Nabokov's literary criticism on translation, the clinical synthesis experienced by him becomes a real flavour criteria, an instrument of the critical process, a technique for evaluating translations. Another example of the synaesthetic poetics of reading and translating is Douglas Robinson's somatics of translation – a project involving the re-evaluating the idiosomatic impulse in translations regarding socially confirmed ideologically somatic terror. In terms of the somatic theory of translations developed in the early 1990s, the process of creation, reading, translating and reading the translation is perceived as a "series of somatic responses"<sup>30</sup>. Robinson takes the category of classically understood equivalence and replaces it with a thesis about "somatic equivalence", and equivalent to sensing: "Equivalence between an SL and TL word or phrase is always primarily somatic: the two phrasings feel the same."<sup>31</sup> A key mechanism in this sensing is synaesthetic, we "roll words around on our tongues"<sup>32</sup> during the translator's hunt for a corporeal equivalent in the target language, proprio- and intero-receptive (inner-corporeal) sensing of equivalent linguistic expressions. As in Barthes' example, language is a tangible material as well as being animated: we can "stumble over words"<sup>33</sup> and "words can also

<sup>28</sup> V. Nabokov, *The Art of Translation*, The New Republic 1941. All Vladimir Nabokov quotes come from this source.

<sup>29</sup> See.: "Mg-no-vainyay has over two thousand Jack-in-the-box rhymes popping out at the slightest pressure".

<sup>30</sup> D. Robinson, *The Somatics Of Translation*, [in:] *The translator's Turn*, 1991, pp. 20-21.

<sup>31</sup> Ibidem, p. 18.

<sup>32</sup> Ibidem, p. 5.

<sup>33</sup> Ibidem, p. 16.



caress, soothe, placate”<sup>34</sup> Robinson posits a thesis about the universality of synaesthetic sensing of language: for all of us printed text has a smell, speech – flavour: words touch us, words hurt:

We smell words, all of us, as well as see them; taste words as well as hear them. Because our culture discourages perception of language in terms of sensation, however, these somatic responses to words remain subconscious and therefore often dormant, unused, unacted-upon. We also feel words in the tactile sense – we can feel assaulted or bludgeoned by words.<sup>35</sup>

Richard Cytowic would agree with Robinson’s perception of the commonality of culturally suppressed linguistic synaesthesia, according to whom synaesthesia is a conscious process of universally inter-sensory perception<sup>36</sup>, subjected to a standardised categorised mental adjustment. Nevertheless, Robinson doesn’t describe in his project the perception aspect of synaesthesia – instead he relates the way we sense language directly to the meaning of words, to concepts; sensing encompasses for him that which is cognitive, while a key mechanism turns out to be association. Hence Robinson’s somatic theory of language I would rather call idea-aesthetic (*idea*: concept with *aisthesis*: sensing, hence the way we perceive concepts) rather than synaesthetic (*syn*: together, and so: linked to perception). Robinson’s somatics problematizes the sensing of concepts and meanings, rather than pure, non-semantic linguistic matter. Robinson appeals for the cessation in translations of tactics for the controlling of the body (and so the cognition and suppression of the ideo-somatic dimension in translation – de-masking the ideologised body, the institutionalised body which has been socially confirmed in the somatic automatism of reactions) in the name of its individualised exploration<sup>37</sup>. Successful translations are not – in the light of Robinson’s translation somatics – the result of a series of intellectual procedures, but the fruit of a translator’s sensitivity to the corporeal impact of language<sup>38</sup>. According to the author, the ideo-somatic “robotization of somatic response [...] feeds the Western myth of the purely cognitive nature of language<sup>39</sup>”, which needs to be overcome: this is because language is a sensation, oscillating between a socio-political determinant and authentic idio-somatics. The return journey towards idio-somatic experience of language is indicated by idea-aesthetic language and the sensual body in and of themselves.

In the three texts quoted above synaesthesia appears as a principle underlying the pleasure experienced in reading and translating. It is this inter-sensory experience of language that gives rise to the translator’s instincts; intersensuality is also a key quality in readers’ sensitivities. In the criticisms and translations produced by Nabokov, much like in Douglas Robinson’s translational concepts (*The Somatics of Translation*), it is this synaesthetically sensed materiality of language which becomes a key criterion for the selection of lexical and syntactic means for producing a translation. In both cases, synaesthesia turns out to be – a more or less conscious – guide for translators’ linguistic intuitions. Intersensual, corporeal contact with language appears not only in the act of

<sup>34</sup> Ibidem, p. 5.

<sup>35</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. R. E. Cytowic, *Synesthesia: phenomenology and neuropsychology. A review of Current Knowledge*, “Psyche” 1995, no. 2 (10), p. (<https://sites.oxxy.edu/clint/physio/article/synesthesiaphenomenologyandneuropsychology.pdf>) [accessed: 30.11.2018].

<sup>37</sup> D. Robinson, op.cit., p. 34.

<sup>38</sup> Ibidem, p. 17.

<sup>39</sup> Ibidem, p. 29.



creating, which should also include the work performed by translators, but also in the (Barthesian) reception of the linguistic arts and meta-reflection on the study of literature. And so, is this sort of project and manifesto capable of making us more sensitive to the omitted and suppressed, and yet universal, synaesthetic, somatic and pleasurable aspects of experiencing the fabric of language, or are they merely the projection of a completely unique idiosyncrasy of perception – synaesthesia as a rare form of neurological anomaly – set against the surface of theory? Barthes seems to use synaesthetic metaphors as a marker of the excesses of delight, occupying the body through erotic contact with language. Nabokov's synaesthesia is simultaneously a form of perception and creation – the functionalisation of inter-sensuality as a measure of linguistic equivalence is related to inter-sensual perception. And finally in Robinson's reflections on translation, ideaesthesia becomes a key element in the translator's toolkit: the effect of a careful and immersed introspection (or rather: intro-aesthesia) – the process of achieving an idio-somatic, creative response to language as well as a simultaneous resistance to ideo-somatic automatism. Synaesthesia is a strategy for linguistic pleasure, representing the somatic impulses leading to interactions with texts: writing, reading and also translating. Barthes, Nabokov and Robinson, daring to reveal their scandalously pleasurable relations with language, point towards the synaesthetic sensing of language as a source of translators' intuitions, readers' sensitivities, along with – inseparably – textual pleasure, perceived as an integral component of the experiential dimension of reading and translating. Synaesthesia is idiosyncratic in the same sense as every individual sensual-somatic experience, stretched inherently across pleasure and displeasure. Any way we conceive it, the individual experience of the body in language remains a bountiful impulse felt by readers, writers and translators; Barthes, an avid reader of Sade, Fourier and Loyola, provided Postmodernism with "one of the most beautiful testimonies on texts as an intimate approach, with all the possible connotations of words"<sup>40</sup>. The radical eroticisation of discourse<sup>41</sup>, making use of a broad range of strategies involving the embodiment of texts, bringing together that which is textual and that which is corporeal – including by means of the synaesthetic hyperbolisation of sensual linguistic matter – was a project in opposition to "strong" theory:

The materiality of written texts appeared in order to protect the "intransitivity" of literary language, and at the same time, return its idiomatic aspects. It became a strong signal of individualism and eventuality. It was thus – as Lyotard would later state – its own tool for resisting all manner of totalitarianism, including its intellectual form<sup>42</sup>.

In the revolutionary projects which highlight the raw materiality of language – representing a condition of embodiment and the consistent eroticisation of texts – synaesthesia often becomes one of the privileged rhetorical tactics as an instrument of corporeal-linguistic approximation. The synaesthetic poetics of reading and translating is to be found in the importance of taking pleasure in engaging with texts: the text of the original, the text of the translation and stretching between them the inter- and intra-linguistic game of sounds, colours, characters, tastes and touches and aromas.

translated by Mark Kazmierski

<sup>40</sup> A. Burzyńska, *op.cit.*, p. 249.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibidem* p. 247.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibidem*.



# KEYWORDS

*plesure*

## THE PLESURE OF THE TEXT

*synesthesia*

POETICS OF READING

### ABSTRACT:

In describing the delightful pleasures of reading and writing, Roland Barthes juggles multi-modal sensual metaphors, engaging and entangling the senses in a synaesthetic embrace: words have flavour, a texture, making us giddy, blush and aroused. A text is a body and reading a sensual experience: Barthes' tactile, kinetic "gush of words\*" becomes the basis for thinking, talking and taking action within language. Synaesthetic "patina of consonants, lustful vowels"<sup>1</sup>, "(...) materiality, sensuality of breathing, rasping, softness of lips"<sup>2</sup> becomes the foundation of readers' and writers' delight arising out of texts.

An excellent *exemplum* of a thus-understood synaesthetic sensitivity to texts is the inter-sensual prose penned by Vladimir Nabokov, an author gifted with a perceptive form of synaesthesia – both as a writer and a translator the man behind *Lolita* took care to chew on his words, carefully giving them their measure, shape, sound and identity. In Nabokov's criticism as well as his translation practice, much as in Douglas Robinson's translational ideas (*The Somatics of Translation*), it is this synaesthetically sensed materiality of language which becomes the key criteria in choosing the lexical and syntactic means at the translators' disposal. In both cases synaesthesia turns out to be – a more or less conscious – principle underlying the linguistic translators' instincts. Inter-sensual, corporeal contact with language comes into being during the creative process, which should also include literary translation, but also a (Barthesian) reception of the literary arts, as well as meta-reflection in literary studies. Synaesthesia seems to feed its own unique poetics of reading and translating the authors under analysis.

Synaesthesia turns out to thus be a strategy for linguistic pleasure, representing a somatic impulse to engage with texts. Barthes, Nabokov and Robinson, daring to reveal their scandalously pleasurable literary habits, point to synaesthetic engagement with language as the source of translators' intuitions, readers' sensitivities, as well as – inseparably – textual pleasures, understood as an integral component of the experiential dimension of lecture and translation.

<sup>1</sup> Ibidem, p. 98.

<sup>2</sup> Ibidem, pp. 98-99.



**Douglas Robinson**

materiality of the language

materiality of translation

*translation poetics*

ideasthesis

**materiality**

ROLAND BARTHES

*translation*

*V l a d i m i r N a b o k o v*

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# Barriers and Possibilities – Haiku Poetry in Poland

Marta Stusek

## 1. Barriers

Haiku, a micro-literary format emerging from ancient Japanese poetry, has become a synonym for short-form poetry, one often not taken seriously. It is widely mistaken for aphorisms, comic poetry, and seen as playful and far from serious. Adding to this perception are numerous publications labelled with the genre name. In my review I would like to draw attention not so much to the formal, linguistic aspect of this Far-Eastern short form poetry translated into Polish, but also to its cultural transposition and literalness. The Polish haiku examples being analysed here represent creative transformations of the genre, allowing for the emergence of new artistic qualities.

In spite of numerous doubts related to this poetic form, many articles have been published on the haiku genre, most recently in an extensive monograph by Beata Śniecikowska *Haiku po polsku. Genologia w perspektywie transkulturowej* ( *Haiku in Polish. Genealogy from a trans-cultural perspective* ). Piotr Michałowski in his book *Miniatura poetycka* ( *Poetic miniatures* ) speaks about certain forms seeking to imitate haikus:

Regardless of the effects, when it comes to imitations a poem should be considered a haiku by fitting into this paradigm unproblematically. There are no “manifestations of lack of stylistic clarity” at all, such as those which appear so frequently in Grochowiak’s writings; there is also a lack of signals indicating apotheosis, or contradictions between the poetics quoted and the poetics achieved. This is however a programmed reaching for the source, far removed from the experiences of one’s predecessors. Form in this case doesn’t represent any sort of problem, only a challenge. It is an act of faith, and not a topic for discussion. We are also witnessing the author surrendering that which is their ‘own’ and that which was so fiercely defended by the author of *Haiku-images*. ‘Haikuists’ simply practice without noting the cultural conflict and the problem of oriental poetic models. Their compositions are in some sense anonymous replicas of typical motifs, reminiscent of translations of the Japanese masters. Much like the early works in the genre, what dominates is the schematic and the ‘school’, and therefore, academic and classicist elements (...)¹

<sup>1</sup> P. Michałowski, *Haiku*, [in:] ibidem, *Miniatura poetycka*, Szczecin 1999, pp. 106-107.



In his diagnosis the researcher points to a few key elements, and especially to the replication of templates and how cultural differences tend to be ignored. Michałowski refers to Stanisław Grochowiak's *Haiku-images* (1978), a book published after the author's death, in which the poet was clearly influenced by Anglo-American imagism<sup>2</sup> – a genre which utilised motifs and forms of poetic imaging taken from the Japanese haiku form. The rules this genre is bound by have been modified in a number of ways, while the classic template is based on several rules: avoiding the use of the author's own experiences, sparing use of stylistic devices (it is sometimes noted that metaphors are disallowed), with a delicate touch of sadness (*sabi* category) and a gentle use of humour, overlapping images in the poem, hinting at the time of year (*kigo*). The haiku emerges from the initial part of a longer interconnected song (*haikai no-renga*); hence from its genesis we can read a certain obtuseness, openness, focus on the reader, a unique form of clarity. The very formal shape of the haiku in European languages – 17 syllables in three verses (5-7-5) – is the result of the original Japanese form being adapted for the needs imposed by other alphabets. Not all the aspects of this genre are easy (or at all possible) to translate. A key role in classic haikus is played by the abruptly ending word/syllable *kireji*, which aids in juxtaposing the layering of images in a poem. In the Polish language, poets achieve this effect (or fail to achieve it completely) using other devices, most often by simply “clashing” two images – the first, presented in the first two verses, and the next, found in the final verse – or else the opposite – one image presented in the first verse and the next in the next two; sometimes a hyphen is utilised. This is the case with most translations of Japanese masters of the form:

Stanę na chwilę  
wtulony za wodospadem  
Początek lata<sup>3</sup>  
(Basho, tłum. A. Żuławska-Umeda)

I will stand a while  
nestled behind a waterfall  
The start of summer

Kwitnący rzepak –  
na zachodzie krąg słońca,  
na wschodzie księżyc<sup>4</sup>.  
(Buson, trans. R. Krynicki)

Blossoming rapeseed –  
to the west the disc of sun,  
to the east the moon.

All readings and analyses of haiku poems should involve an awareness of genre conventions, bound inherently by Japanese aesthetic categories. Translations (not only linguistic) of Far-Eastern miniatures involve the transplanting of a fragment of one culture onto the ground of

<sup>2</sup> See. L. Engelking, A. Szuba, *Obraz i wir. Antologia anglo-amerykańskiego imagizmu (Images and whirlpools. An Anthology of Anglo-American Imagism)* Warszawa 2016.

<sup>3</sup> *Be haiku*, trans. A. Żuławska-Umeda, ed. B. Jewiarz, Warszawa 2017, no page numbers.

<sup>4</sup> R. Krynicki, *Haiku mistrzów*, [in:] ibidem, *Haiku. Haiku mistrzów*, Kraków 2014, p. 67.



another, something Kazuo Sato captures in his elegant formula: *Is it possible to transplant a rapeseed flower?*<sup>5</sup>

What is most vivid in this case is the genre background, understood as a collection of cultural sub-codes. Roma Sendyka, pointing to “cultural factors which play a part in the life of genres” writes: “The lines between genres have once again become interesting, though not as a place of rigorous separation – but as a space for dynamic clashes, links, blurrings, intersections of differing properties”<sup>6</sup>.

It is the clashes pointed to by Sendyka which are specifically interesting in the context of adapting Japanese small forms to Polish territory. A great deal of light is cast upon the problems of researching (Polish) haikus by Beata Śniecikowska and her observations regarding methodology:

The numerous aspects of how haikus are approached complicates methodological decisions. It turns out to be impossible to find one theoretical prism through which we could research all of the aforementioned text groups. I admit that in analysing miniatures, which are very close to examples of Eastern literature, it is worth giving into temptation and treating a haiku as an invariable collection of characteristics. In this case, what might work is a typological understanding of the genre. How to study works – ones often artistically remarkable – which only touch upon (from a range of directions) the haiku aesthetic? What about poems that para-textually, and not always for obvious reasons, signal their connection with Japanese 17-consonant verses? In such cases I choose a prototypical modelling of genre<sup>7</sup>.

I will draw attention here to one more thing – Śniecikowska writes about works “very close to the characteristics of Eastern miniature”; hence in this aspect we can encounter doubts as to which works can be considered such. We must keep in mind that an incredibly important context for haikus are the Far-Eastern religious and philosophical systems: Zen buddhism, Shintoism and Taoism. Meanwhile a widespread practice in (though not only) Polish productions involve narratives related to Christian religion. This phenomenon is connected with implicating a local character into the groundwork laid down by foreign forms, which would hereby involve replacing the less well known in any given culture religious system with one which is well-known and widespread. Piotr Michałowski calls this method of transplanting the local into the foreign (making use of Erazm Kuźma’s findings) “invasive”<sup>8</sup>.

We should therefore consider whether haikus which exceed thematically and/or formally the demands imposed by the original genre should not be perceived as misunderstandings. The

<sup>5</sup> See. K. Sato, *Czy można przesadzić kwiat rzepaku? (japońskie haiku i ruch haiku na zachodzie)* ( *Is it possible to transplant a rapeseed flower? Japanese haiku and the haiku movement in the West* ), trans. A. Szuba, *Literatura na Świecie* 1991, no.1.

<sup>6</sup> R. Sendyka, *W stronę kulturowej teorii gatunku, ( In the direction of cultural theory of genre )* [in:] *Kulturowa teoria literatury. Główne pojęcia i problemy* ( *Cultural Theory of Literature. Main Concepts and Problems* ), ed. M. P. Markowski, R. Nycz, Kraków 2006, p. 277.

<sup>7</sup> B. Śniecikowska, *Haiku po polsku. Genologia w perspektywie transkulturowej / Haiku in Polish. Genealogy from a trans-cultural perspective*, Toruń 2016, p. 18.

<sup>8</sup> P. Michałowski, *Polskie imitacje haiku / Polish haiku imitations*, *Teksty Drugie: teoria literatury, krytyka*, interpretacja 1995, no. 2, p. 47.



author of the monograph dealing with Polish versions of Far-Eastern miniatures questions Christian haikus and points to works which clearly refer to religion, as well as those which embody something we could call “Polish Zen”:

Polish ‘Zenistic’ haikus are works which are far from moralising, not expressing any sort of mission, but simply affirming instead. With a monumentality which is typical of them, and a focus on moments experienced, they strongly contrast texts which are uniquely ‘spiritual’, referring to *not clearly defined metaphysical spaces* [my emphasis – M.S.]. It is not possible to firmly establish whether these poems refer to Christianity, or other religions and even spiritual paths. These are works which angle uniquely elated senses, referencing uncharted spaces, subtly alluding to religion<sup>9</sup>.

An example of this idea is the haiku penned by Fr. Janusz Stanisław Pasierb. In his volume titled *Morze, obłok i kamień* (*Sea, Cloud and Stone* 1992) the poet uses the three titular elements involving nature which is trans-human in order to communicate existential narratives, with a clearly religious tone:

a cloud is the foretelling  
a stone is an answer  
a sea is fulfilment

a cloud Annunciation  
a stone Easter  
a sea fulfilment<sup>10</sup>

who throws  
the stone bones of clouds  
who plays with the earth sea us?

A cloud tied up  
a stoned sea  
who won?<sup>11</sup>

Pasierb doesn’t follow the formal rigours of the haiku syllable order. He remains faithful to the formula of three ascetic verses, and yet the number of syllables in individual poems varies – some are more developed than others. What is interesting is the solution he selects to the problem of imaging – the author of *Butelka lejdejska* uses just one image formed out of the natural elements mentioned in the title. Using minimalistic forms of expression, Pasierb casts a new light upon them, all the while crafting before the reader a simple vision of a seascape, all the time programming differently the way we respond to this scrap of reality, while his observations lead to cosmological divagations. Alongside Biblical topics in his haiku we also find theological reflection, including the question about the One “who plays with the earth, the

<sup>9</sup> B. Śniecikowska, op.cit., p. 460.

<sup>10</sup> J. S. Pasierb, *Morze, obłok i kamień*, cit.op: *Antologia polskiego haiku*, ed. E. Tomaszewska, Warszawa 2001, p. 95.

<sup>11</sup> Ibidem, p. 96-97.



sea, with us?”. Janusz Stanisław Pasierb doesn’t write however a “catholic haiku”, but makes use of minimalistic Japanese conventions to express religious ideas (some of the poems refer to Christianity through Annunciation, Easter or stoning), as well as metaphysical notions, not necessarily connected with specifically religious dogmas.

## 2. Possibilities

A breach of genre conventions, unique miniature forms which utilise numerous classical conventions, while at the same time modifying them with the aim of securing new qualities, are often much more interesting projects than those striving to be faithful to the original Japanese model. Twenty years ago, Czesław Miłosz hinted at the potential hidden within the haiku form:

Haiku poets stick to the sidelines and are not part of the landscape of contemporary poetry. The discussions they engage in involve the question of how much rules should be followed, those particular to this genre. In the end they abandoned the syllabic construction and began to write free-form verse in three lines, taking care to be as succinct as possible. For some even three lines was too much and they introduced the one-line haiku. Another issue is that of the experiences that are expressed: are these religious or aesthetic? The majority of authors, influenced by Zen Buddhism, look for religious enlightenment, while others use moments of other kinds of experiences, including erotic ones. In any case, the diversity of topics tackled leads us to conclude that something new has come into being, fitting for a tech-commerce civilisation in which attention paid to nature (rejuvenating) has specific significance<sup>12</sup>.

Miłosz’s comments can be understood to refer to the present day. Although it has been often noted that the haiku form offers possibilities within the realm of “attaining a new way of seeing<sup>13</sup>”, until now this potential has not been analysed in terms of new methodologies and interpretative practices, such as the example of *ecopoetics*<sup>14</sup>. Excluding one’s own experiences from poems and accentuating the equal value of each natural feature moves aside the anthropocentric view of the world in the name of a more equal relation, one stressing the co-existence of all species. Awareness of the importance of unity with the non-human natural world is found, for example, in this poem by Jadwiga Stańczakowa:

The sky blue of space  
the green of grasses beneath one’s feet  
cosmos is home<sup>15</sup>

The haiku penned by the author of *Depresja i (Depression and divination)* is very diverse: among works which follow closely the classic template, one can also find some in which the author uses the haiku form to express the experience of not being able to see, such as

<sup>12</sup>Cz. Miłosz, *Wprowadzenie / Introduction*, in: ibidem, *Haiku*, Kraków 1992, pp. 16-17.

<sup>13</sup>See. D. T. Suzuki, *Satori, czyli zdobycie nowego punktu widzenia / Satori, meaning a new way of seeing*, [in]: ibidem, *Wprowadzenie do buddyzmu zen / Introduction to Zen Buddhism*, trans. M. and A. Grabowscy, Poznań 2004

<sup>14</sup>See. J. Fiedorczak, G. Beltrán, *Ekopoetyka. Ekologiczna obrona poezji / Ecopoetics. Ecological Defence of Poetry*, Warszawa 2015.

<sup>15</sup>J. Stańczakowa, *Haiku*, Wrocław 2015, p. 10.



Wreath made of larch  
blind she lays it on a grave  
and the heart can see<sup>16</sup>

Wianek z modrzewia  
ślepa kładzie na grobie  
i serce widzi

and

A ladybird in hand  
covered in braille  
and so I can feel it

W dłoni biedronka  
w kropeczki brajla  
więc ją wyczuwam<sup>17</sup>

Stańczakowa's haikus are both true to their Japanese masters and a testimony to her own way of seeing the world. The word "seeing" is key here. For the poet not being able to see is part of her identity. It is not a lack, but a different way of experiencing and seeing the world, something the haiku form can be a creative outlet for.

In 2014, Ryszard Krynicki published *Haiku. Haiku mistrzów*. (*Haiku. Haiku of the masters*) – a volume of poetry divided into three parts: in the first he collected miniatures he called *Prawie haiku* (*Almost haiku*), and in the second the previously unpublished *Haiku z minionej zimy* (*Haiku from a gone-by winter*) – works which through their subject matter and syllable arrangement were close to the classic template, while the third *Haiku mistrzów*. (*Haiku. Haiku of the masters*) was a collection of works by Japanese masters: Basho, Buson, Issa and Shiki (Krynicki did not translate from the Japanese original – instead he used English and German translations). A haiku written by the author of *Organizm zbiorowy* (*Collective organism*) can be seen as an entry point on his poetic journey. Clear inspiration by this Japanese form can be seen both in the minimalistic form, as well as the topic matter handled in the poems preceding the author's use of convention, by which we mean texts the poet termed *almost haiku*:

*Prawie haiku*  
*nisko kołuje kruk niewidzialny*  
*widzicie go?*

*The invisible crow circles low*  
*can you see it?*

Hans Arp

<sup>16</sup>Ibidem, p. 28.

<sup>17</sup>Ibidem, p. 55.



The wedge-shaped crow writing in the snow:

– I am not dead yet.

You who are reading this

Neither<sup>18</sup>.

*Nadal nie wiem*

*I still don't know*

My beloved Issa is said to have written 3000 haikus.

I read about this 14 years ago

and I still don't know what to think about it<sup>19</sup>.

In the “correct” haiku by Krynicki, arranged in the cycle he called *Haiku z minionej zimy* (*Haiku from a Gone-by Winter*), we find the following existential reflection:

Rusałka pawik?!  
 Kruche piękno w żałobie  
 Stulonych skrzydeł<sup>20</sup>.

Nymph, peacock butterfly  
 The frail beauty in mourning  
 Of folded wings.

This careful observation of the natural world leads towards broader considerations, presented in more direct terms than we find in classic haikus. Krynicki creates essentialist, philosophising miniatures, in which the rigours of the Japanese form allow him to apply great linguistic precision. In the poet's repertoire we also find more invasive examples, showing local colours, firmly tied to Polish daily realities:

Tramwaj, dziewczyna  
 żegna się z koleżanką:  
 – No to pa, kurwa<sup>21</sup>!

Tram, girl  
 saying goodbye to her friend:  
 –And so fucking bye!

Another author of short-form poems related to the Japanese genre is Leszek Engelking, a translator of miniatures by English language poets and imagistic poems. In his earlier miniatures,

<sup>18</sup>R. Krynicki, *Prawie haiku*, op.cit., p. 21.

<sup>19</sup>R. Krynicki, *Nadal nie wiem*, op.cit., p. 22.

<sup>20</sup>R. Krynicki, *Haiku z minionej zimy*, op.cit., 35.

<sup>21</sup>Ibidem, p. 42.



the poet remained closer to conventional haiku forms, while his later works in the volume titled *Komu kibicuję umarli* (*Whom the dead cheer on*, 2013) are filled to the brim with dark humour. All three-verse poems are given the title *Haiku*. This specific reference to the subject of death forces us to see the macabre in Engelking's small forms:

*Haiku*

msza pogrzebowa  
nagle z trumny dobiega  
dzwonek komórki<sup>22</sup>

a funeral mass  
suddenly from the coffin  
cell phone ringing sounds

The poet is able to achieve the effect of contrast similar to the layering of images in haikus – Engelking puts together a heightened mood (a funeral mass) with a grotesque form of humour (the sound of a cell phone ringing from inside the coffin). Bringing these elements together frequently allows the author of *Supplement* to achieve interesting effects:

*Haiku*

napisał kredą  
symbol nieskończoności  
i wybuchł śmiechem<sup>23</sup>

he used chalk to draw  
the infinity symbol  
and burst out laughing

In this poem as well as in his other miniature works, Engelking uses laughter mixed with seriousness; grotesque motifs introduce both a note of comedy, as well as philosophical reflections about passing. By using a haiku-style asceticism of form, the poet has presented his own unique perception of the absurdity of existence marked with the desire for eternity. Life however turns out to be as fragile as the matter his hero, unnamed, indicates solely through the personalised form of verb – he draws an infinity symbol. The human drive to triumph over mortality ends with a burst of laughter, the human distancing himself from his own desires, aware of the bitter truth of existence. In the volume titled *Komu kibicuję umarli* (*Whom the Dead Cheer On*) death is often shown in clear terms:

*Haiku*

w przestworze gwiazda  
na parapecie mała mucha  
obie zdychają<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup>L. Engelking, *Haiku [msza pogrzebowa / Funeral Mass...]*, [in:] ibidem, *Komu kibicuję umarli / Whom the Dead Cheer On*, Poznań 2013, p. 31.

<sup>23</sup>L. Engelking, *Haiku [napisał kredą...]*, dz. cyt., p. 28.

<sup>24</sup>L. Engelking, *Haiku [w przestworze gwiazda...]*, dz. cyt., p. 24.



in the heavens a star  
a small fly on the window sill  
both dying

Another time death is shown more gently, in almost impressionistic form:

*Haiku*

cmentarz wieczorem  
światła się zagnieździły  
w śniegu na grobach<sup>25</sup>

evening cemetery  
lights have nested  
on snow covered graves

Engelking's haiku brings to mind the tradition of writing death poetry<sup>26</sup>, even though the poet is more direct than those in writing about the topic of all things ending, removing the barrier of a lack of literal expression, balancing between lyricism and his own brand of drastic expression.

It is also worth noting the visual aspects of the way haikus are printed on the page – the rich tradition of miniatures and related phenomena, such as the *haiga* – combining poems and graphics – allow a wide realm of possibility to open up in the printed book medium (though it is not limited to it). In order to review the relations between haikus and the visual arts we needn't reach as far back as ancient Japanese works – the potential found in the aesthetics found in Far-Eastern small forms is also utilised (with greater or lesser success) in Polish publications. An example of this can be found in *Niepełna pustka. Haiku (Not-full emptiness. Haiku)* published by Austeria, in which Elżbieta Tabakowska's poems are *sumis* created by Lidia Rozmus – monochromatic images reminiscent of calligraphy.

Another interesting project is a book issued by Blue Bird Press – *Be haiku* is a combination of the works by Japanese masters (translated by Agnieszka Żuławska-Umeda) with minimalistic, conceptual artwork by Ryszard Kajzer. In this particular selection of poems, next to the Polish language translations (done directly from the originals by Żuławska-Umeda, a renowned expert in Japanese culture who works to make the haiku form popular), the original Japanese versions have also been printed. Even for readers who do not know this language, this format can turn out to be a wise decision, allowing readers to be aware of the difference between the originals and the translations in the way they appear on the page. The question of visual perception is key here – to put it succinctly: the poems look oh so different. This book is further enhanced by the addition at the end of pages of “blank” dotted three-line sections, encouraging readers to fill these empty spaces, according to Beata Jewiarz's introduction: “a tattoo on the margins of consciousness”<sup>27</sup>. In looking at the potential of Japanese miniature forms, I also want to point out problems with

<sup>25</sup>L. Engelking, *Haiku[cmentarz wieczorem...]*, dz. cyt., p. 34.

<sup>26</sup>See. *Japońskie wiersze śmierci / Japanese death poems*, trans. & introduction M. Has, Kraków 2004

<sup>27</sup>B. Jewiarz, *Pomiędzy / Inbetween*, [in:] *Be haiku*, ed. B. Jewiarz, Warszawa 2017, no page numbers.



haikus published online. According to Beata Śniecikowska<sup>28</sup>, artists crafting online *haiga* and haikus tend not to use the full gamut of possibilities offered by online platforms. Most poems published online could look just the same on the printed page, in a traditional book format<sup>29</sup>.

Even so, we should point out that the perception of haikus and the kind of perception demanded of Internet users contains a certain analogy. The World Wide Web and mobile devices allow readers to become accustomed to quick readings of content, a specific sort of “catchiness” in short text (and text-image combinations) communications, which also makes small poetic forms more popular. Perhaps the haiku along with its minimalism and impressionistic character has the chance to fit with modern forms of reading texts.

We should stress that setting excessively broad borderlines for Oriental lyrical forms involves a certain risk of Japanese miniatures being seen as synonymous with short poems. And yet, as we see in various analyses of individual translations, works which go beyond the limits of the genre are able to fit in with the maxim “minimum words – maximum content”. The tendency to perceive haikus as banal is connected with the way in which poetic miniatures are trivialised on the whole. Short forms, though favoured by many renowned poets, are often not valued highly, and are treated instead as an addition to “proper forms”, by which we mean longer texts. Marcin Telicki wrote:

Many professional readers agree that works which utilise minimal amounts of words and masterpieces are difficult to fit together. Short-form poetry is often ignored. (...) widespread reception of short-form poetry as being uncomplicated, simplified, stripped of stylistic diversity and lacking in cognitive and/or artistic valour is unjustified. It can even – paradoxically speaking – much harder in terms of reception than ‘traditional’ poetry. Where does this sense come from?<sup>30</sup>

The haiku fits perfectly into the category of “*minor poetry*” – remaining outside the *mainstream*, utilising formal minimalism, emerging from a different cultural milieu. All of this means that contact with Japanese poetry can lead to misunderstandings. Nevertheless, far-eastern miniatures are in their asceticism and clarity of form exceptionally focused on interaction with the readers. As a result, dealing with classics of the genre, as well as faithful renderings and interesting creative variations on the haiku theme can prove for readers a fruitful experience allowing for a change in perception and leading to new ways of seeing.

translated by Mark Kazmierski

<sup>28</sup>B. Śniecikowska, op.cit., p. 633.

<sup>29</sup>We could refer here to classic selections of haikus, which appear in both digital and print formats: <http://www.haiku.art.pl/> [access: 30.06.2018].

<sup>30</sup>M. Telicki, *Krótkie formy liryczne wobec problemu / Problems surrounding short lyrical forms presenting reality* Przestrzenie Teorii 2006, no. 6, pp. 85 – 86.



# KEYWORDS

## HAIKU

*short poetic forms*

**ABSTRACT:**

This article discusses haiku adaptations in Poland. The author deals with problems related to the reception and translation of Japanese miniatures, as well as doubts about the way the genre is understood. In the second part of her work we find indications of the possibilities of using haiku to achieve new creative effects. This includes an analysis of works by Jadwiga Stańczakowa, Ryszard Krynicki and Leszek Engelking.



## miniatures

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Ewa Kraskowska

# Universals of Translation

According to Mona Baker, *universals of translation* are linguistic features which usually occur in translated rather than original texts and are thought to be independent of the influence of the source language on the target language. Baker first introduced the concept of universals of translation in her 1993 article entitled *Corpus linguistics and translation studies – implications and applications* and it has been discussed in translation studies ever since.

The question of universals of translation was first raised when descriptive translation studies began to employ corpus linguistics methods. First introduced in the 1970s, corpus linguistics is the study of language by means of text corpora, i.e. large sets of digitalized texts (language samples) which have been selected and organized according to specific criteria (e.g. subject matter, form, time of publication, etc.). Corpora are processed by specialized computer programs in order to analyse various linguistic phenomena. The most popular and comprehensive corpora can be found online. They are usually monolingual corpora of national languages. They are mostly based on written samples, although there are also corpora of spoken (transcribed) language. They include various types of texts, be it literary, journalistic, or scientific, and are used by scientists, editors, writers, teachers, and translators alike.

Comparable and parallel corpora are particularly useful for translators and translation scholars. The latter contain source texts and their translations into one or more languages. Their ancient prototype is the famous Rosetta stone from 196 BC, inscribed with three versions of the same text in Ancient Egyptian, in hieroglyphic and Demotic script respectively, and in Ancient Greek. As we know, without the Rosetta stone, Jean-François Champollion would not have deciphered Egyptian hieroglyphs. It should be added that the recent rapid improvements in Google Translate and other translation applications would not have been possible without the dynamic development of such corpora. Comparable corpora, on the other hand, are not compiled in order to develop translation studies and methods, but contain texts that can be compared in accordance with specific parameters, e.g. genre, subject matter, date of publication, etc.

In studies which are supposed to test the universals of translation hypotheses, scholars analyse bilingual corpora which contain pairs of source and target texts<sup>1</sup> or monolingual corpora composed of translated and non-translated texts with stylometric tools. The rationale behind the methodology employed to compile a corpus on the example of which one wants to analyse universals (i.e. methods used to select the texts, their number, etc.) remains a controversial issue in translation studies.

<sup>1</sup> In Poland, such studies are carried out by Jan Rybicki, see: *idem, Original, Translation, Inflation. Are All Translations Longer than Their Originals?*, „Digital Humanities” 2010.



According to the most basic definition, universals of translation are typical linguistic features of translated texts which are independent of the language of the source text and the respective language systems.<sup>2</sup> However, researchers who agree with Baker's hypothesis often prefer to talk about tendencies or rights instead of universals, as it is impossible to definitively prove that some features are indeed universal. This notwithstanding, stylometric methods used to analyse comparable corpora actually confirm that on a macro scale such a phenomenon as "translation style" does exist. The following linguistic features are generally categorized as universals of translation: avoidance of repetitions present in the source text, simplification, normalization, discourse transfer, distinctive distribution of lexical items, and, finally, explicitation, which appears to be the most controversial notion. Indeed, literary translators usually try to avoid repetitions. For example, when one translates a book from English into Polish, the monotonous *he said* is often replaced with such equivalents as *rzekł* (he uttered), *odparł* (he replied), or *zauważył* (he observed). Possible corrections suggested by the authors of the source text and editors also play a role here. The question of self-translation, or the second version of the same text, is particularly interesting in this context. Simplification usually concerns syntax, while normalization is the process of adjusting the language of the source text to the standards of the target language (which usually go against the non-normative stylistic features of the original). Stylometric analyses have demonstrated that simplification and normalization are generally used in the translation of scientific or scholarly texts and feature less frequently in translations of literary works. Discourse transfer is connected with Gideon Toury's "law of interference" in translation and concerns situations in which the structure of the source text is transferred to the target text, failing to meet the standards of the target language. This phenomenon can be observed, for example, at the level of syntax. Indeed, as a result of unwanted interference, the sentences in the translated text often retain syntactic features of the source language. Translations are also said to exhibit a distinctive distribution of lexical items (i.e. some words appear more frequently in translated than in source or non-translated texts).

Finally, *explicitation* is transformation which consists of making explicit in the target text what is implicit in the source text or of making even more explicit what is already explicit in the source text. In other words, explicitation occurs when what is implied in the source text is expressed explicitly in the target text or if a given section of the source text has been emphasized in the target text using some lexical means. Explicitation is also independent of systemic differences. [...] Another proof for explicitation is the fact that we can rewrite the target text so that it is less explicit.<sup>3</sup>

An example of such a transformation is Bronisław Zieliński's take on John Donne's famous phrase "no man is an island" in the Polish translation of Ernest Hemingway's *For whom the bell tolls* (whose title is also a quote). Zieliński explicitly translated the short phrase "no man is an island" as "no man is a self-contained island" ("*żaden człowiek nie jest samoistną wyspą*").

<sup>2</sup> *Routledge Encyclopaedia of Translation Studies*, ed. M. Baker, London–New York 2005, p. 288–291.

<sup>3</sup> E. Gumul, *Explicitation in Simultaneous Interpreting. A Study into Explicitating Behaviour of Trainee Interpreters*, Katowice 2017, p. 325.



Explicitation thus resembles a translation technique called *overtranslation*. Overtranslation, or *amplified translation*, consists of inserting additional information in the target text. However, overtranslation is the result of the translator's conscious decision and usually concerns specific moments in the text, whereas explicitation is a semi-unconscious global cognitive process. Therefore, according to Andrew Chesterman, explicitation manifest itself "beyond the particular"<sup>4</sup> and that is why it can be described as a representative example of Mona Baker's universal of translation.

translated by Małgorzata Olsza

<sup>4</sup> A. Chesterman, *Beyond the particular*, [in:] *Translation Universals. Do they exist?*, ed. A. Mauranen, P. Kuusimäki, Amsterdam-Philadelphia 2004, p. 33-50.



# KEYWORDS

## CORPUS LINGUISTICS

e x p l i c i t a t i o n

*universals of translation*

### **ABSTRACT:**

In the present article, I discuss the concept of the so-called universals of translation, which appeared in connection with the development of corpus linguistics. The hypothesis about the existence of such universals was put forward by Mona Baker in 1993 and it has been discussed in Translation Studies ever since. I also briefly summarize the critical discussion surrounding Baker's hypothesis.

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# The Poetics of Translation According to Edward Balcerzan

Ewa Rajewska

A few dates: it has been 50 years since *Poetyka przekładu artystycznego* (*The Poetics of Creative Translation*)<sup>1</sup> was first published. In this article, Edward Balcerzan, a young researcher of literary translation and a translator of poetry postulated that the poetics of translation should become the subject of rigorous literary study. Thirty years after its initial publication, this key text, translated into many other languages<sup>2</sup> and included in numerous anthologies,<sup>3</sup> was included in an expanded format in Balcerzan's book *Literatura z literatury (strategie tłumaczy)* (*Literature From Literature [translator's strategies]*); two decades have gone by since that time.

In addition to *The Poetics of Creative Translation*, the year 1968 also saw the publication of Edward Balcerzan's doctoral dissertation titled *Styl i poetyka twórczości dwujęzycznej Brunona Jasieńskiego* (*Style and Poetics in the Bilingual Writings of Bruno Jasieński*), while his lecture *La traduction, art d'interpréter*, presented in May at an international translation studies conference in Bratislava, which under the banner of "Translation as an Art" was to create the foundations for a Europe-wide discussion about the maturation of translation theories, was subsequently published at the beginning of the post-conference book, edited by James S.

<sup>1</sup> Edward Balcerzan, *Poetyka przekładu artystycznego* [*The poetics of artistic translation*], Nurt 1968, no. 8, p. 23-26.

<sup>2</sup> *Поетика уметничког превода*, trans. B. Rajčić, „Градина” [Ниш] 1974, nr.3; *Die Poetik der künstlerischen Übersetzung*, [in:] G.R. Kaiser, *Vergleichende Literaturforschung in den sozialistischen Ländern 1963-1979*, Stuttgart 1980; *La poetica della traduzione artistica*, [in:] *Teorie della traduzione in Polonia*, ed. L. Costantino, Viterbo 2009; *The Poetics of Artistic Translation*, trans. S. Gauger, [in:] *Literature from Literature. Essays on Translation by Edward Balcerzan and Stanisław Barańczak*. K. Szymanska, M. Heydel (eds.), intr. K. Szymanska, transl. S. Gauger, A. Lloyd-Jones, D. Malcolm, K. Szymanska, Lausanne 2018.

<sup>3</sup> See. *Polska myśl przekładowicza. Antologia*, ed. P. de Bończa Bukowski, M. Heydel, Kraków 2013.



Holmes,<sup>4</sup> who shortly afterward created a pioneering map of the developing field of translation studies.

In 2010, the poetics of translation was included in a programme covering a specialisation in translation co-created by Edward Balcerzan, taught in the Polish Studies programme at Adam Mickiewicz University, and since that time has remained a foundational subject initiating young adepts into this field of knowledge and the arcana of theoretical thinking about translation.

### The “Poetics of Translation” as a Field of Academic Research

“For many researchers the existence of a separate field of humanities research which could be called the poetics of translation is not without its problems. Custom requires we talk more about the general theory of the art of translation, or about the obligations associated with criticism concerning translations, and not about poetics”, wrote Balcerzan in 1968. He reprinted this passage in 1998, confirming its ongoing relevance to today.<sup>5</sup>

For Balcerzan poetics is one of the fundamental categories in the field of literary studies:<sup>6</sup>

[...] in terms of today’s broader understanding, he first answers a general question: “in what way does a work of literature exist?”, and then he offers us tools for the analysis and interpretation – description and explanation – of works, which allow us to discover literature in an ontological context which is specific to it, without allowing it to be reduced to other contexts (e.g. sociology, psychology, etc).<sup>7</sup>

So how does Balcerzan’s poetics of translation relate to poetics thus understood? Here our starting point will be the ontology of each work:

The poetics of creative translations ought to [...] ask a similar question: “in what way do literary works translated from other languages exist and function?”. It furthermore needs to provide proof that even though a translation is a “normal” literary work, even though its is governed by the same rules concerning structure, even then it exists differently than works within the field of one’s native literature. And it is only after we pin down the essence of this difference, having shown how this works “differently”, that we can concern ourselves with our research tools, with our own system of concepts and terminologies.<sup>8</sup>

Both the way in which the explanation is delivered and the mention of “rules relating to structure” clearly locate this presentation within the field of structuralism (The question “in what ways do literary works exist?” is a quote followed by a link to *Zarys teorii literatury* (Outline

<sup>4</sup> *The Nature of Translation. Essays on the Theory and Practice of Literary Translation*, edited by James S. Holmes, Mouton – The Hague – Paris 1970.

<sup>5</sup> Edward Balcerzan, *Poetyka przekładu artystycznego*, [in:] *Literatura z literatury (strategie tłumaczy)*, Katowice 1998, p. 17-31.

<sup>6</sup> See Ibid, *Literackość. Modele, gradacje, eksperymenty*, Toruń 2013, p. 307.

<sup>7</sup> Ibidem, *Poetyka przekładu artystycznego*, [in:] *Literatura z literatury*, p. 17.

<sup>8</sup> Ibidem, op. cit.



of *Literary Theory*) published in 1967, an excellent structuralist handbook written by Michał Głowiński, Aleksandra Okopień-Sławińska and Janusz Sławiński, which shaped the thinking of several generations of Polish Studies researchers). And yet we should not be surprised that poetics, understood as a toolkit, yet also as a theory of literary texts, the first degree of literary theory, emerges out of specific methodological concepts. In addition, as we read Balcerzan's *The Poetics of Creative Translations* we may find it hard not to think back to Roman Jakobson's *Linguistics and Poetics*, a text known within the field of Polish theoretical discourse mostly thanks to Krystyna Pomorska's translation dating back to 1960. Jakobson also defines the range of topics covered by poetics (let us recall this includes the *differentia specifica* of literary arts in relation to other forms of art and literary expression), pointing towards its significance within the broader field of literary studies ("it is [...] predestined [...] to occupy the most prominent position"), criticising also the process of "replacing the description of internal qualities contained within literary works with subjective, censoring judgements". Let us note that a similar thing happens when critics of translation enter the field of poetics. According to Jakobson, the obligatory objectivism in research should in this case ensure poetics becomes illuminated through linguistic study ("poetics can be considered an integral part of linguistics"), which would enrich its toolkit<sup>9</sup>.

The poetics of translation did not in fact find its place on the map of translation studies outlined by James S. Holmes in 1975, and yet it seems that this author was thinking in a context similar to Balcerzan. The first of two branches he identifies within "pure translation studies" – theoretical translation studies or translation theory – should be "using the results of descriptive translation studies, in combination with the information available from related fields and disciplines, to evolve principles, theories, and models which will serve to explain and predict what translating and translations are and will be."<sup>10</sup> And here ontological obligations within translation theories become serious, and yet they merely represent here a point of access: according to Holmes the direction of activities leads from the specific to the general, meanwhile for Balcerzan this works in the opposite direction: first specifics, and then the instruments. In what way can literary works translated from a foreign tongue exist differently than a work of native literature is something this research questions, answering thus:

The original literary work, written "straight away" in a given language, is a singular form of expression, or if one prefers, a one-off form of expression. The nature of a single original work is encapsulated by its uniqueness. [...] When it comes to translations, however, the process is reversed. The translation of a foreign language work will always be one of many possible versions. The essential nature of translations is therefore their multitude of variations and repeatability. The same foreign language work can be the basis of a large series of translations in any given language.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> See. Roman Jakobson, *Poetyka w świetle językoznawstwa*, trans. K. Pomorska, [in:] *W poszukiwaniu istoty języka. Wybór pism*, vol. 2, ed. M. R. Mayenowa, Warszawa 1989, pp. 77 & 79. This text first appeared in *Pamiętnik Literacki* 1960 no. 51 (2).

<sup>10</sup> James S. Holmes, *The Name And Nature Of Translation Studies* (1975), p. 73, <https://archive.org/details/Holmes1972TheNameAndNatureOfTranslationStudies> [accessed 14 08 2018].

<sup>11</sup> Edward Balcerzan, *Poetyka przekładu artystycznego*, [in:] *Literatura z literatury*, pp. 17-18.



According to Balcerzan this *Differentia specifica* of the artistic process can be presented thus:

[T]ranslation exists in a “translation series”. This series is the fundamental way in which creative translations exist. This is the unique essence of its ontology.<sup>12</sup>

“Translation series” is a term coined by Edward Balcerzan, a term rather unknown within the field of English language translation studies, which tends to instead use the term “multiple translations”, or else a “series of translations”<sup>13</sup>. The conceptualisation of the English phrase is slightly different however to the conceptualisation of “series”, it would seem: even more able to strip individual translations of their individuality. Indeed, Balcerzan’s “translation series” also points towards a whole collection of texts – a collection set in linear order and creating an essentially single text thread (though wrapped up in numerous mutual reference points: each chronologically subsequent element would enter into relations with its predecessor(s), and in the case of translations – above all with the primary text)<sup>14</sup>.

And yet the intertextual radiance of the original work can flow in a number of directions, although not all of these will be extended and not each chronologically subsequent element in the series will be in contact with its predecessor – because not all translators read the translations published before they began their work, sometimes this is due to an objective inability to do so, difficulties in terms of access to relevant texts, or due to their own carelessness or indifference, or even at times, their fears they will involuntarily and subconsciously absorb someone else’s solutions.

A specific translation, existing in – even if only a potential – series of translations, being thus “one of many possible expressions” is always a statement on a specific topic. It is dependent on its own foreign language precursor/template. Balcerzan perceives this dependence in terms of categories of obligation, adding to the text published in 1997’s *Poetics of artistic translation*: “The essence of a translation series is not the destruction of meanings designed and built into the original, but a tension between that which expands those meanings and that which condenses them.”<sup>15</sup> Series do of course establish themselves in terms of differences, and yet this does not mean that anything goes. In a 2013 text written by Balcerzan titled *Literackość (Literariness)* we find mention of the “apparently instructional” genesis of poetics: the poetics of translation, as well as how the poetics of the original should be used to extract a one-off normative poetics<sup>16</sup>. And then for it to be represented in translation. As early as 1968, inspired by the analysis presented by Rievsin and Rozencajg, the researcher wrote that “Objectively speaking there exist [...] two kinds of translation acts. The first can be termed as a ‘proper translation’, the second – ‘interpretation’. In the former case, there is

<sup>12</sup>Ibidem, p. 18.

<sup>13</sup>Soren Gauger, translator *Poetyki przekładu artystycznego* into English, makes use of the term ‘a series of translations’, see. *Literature from Literature. Essays on Translation by Edward Balcerzan and Stanisław Barańczak*. K. Szymanska, M. Heydel (eds.), Lausanne 2018.

<sup>14</sup>Anna Legeżyńska covered this in the chapter *Struktura serii* in her book *Tłumacz i jego kompetencje autorskie. Na materiale powojennych tłumaczeń z A. Puszkina, W. Majakowskiego, I. Kryłowa, A. Błoka*, pub. 2 expanded, Warszawa 1999.

<sup>15</sup>Edward Balcerzan, *Poetyka przekładu artystycznego*, [in:] *Literatura z literatury*, p. 21.

<sup>16</sup>See. *ibid*, *Literackość*, pp. 163 & 172.



a search for equivalent semantic and emotional symbol counterparts for the original among the symbols available in the target language”<sup>17</sup>. And yet when those equivalents are not available, then “we must go beyond language and literature – instead we must make reference to reality. Seeking solutions in our knowledge of reality is the very act of interpreting the original”<sup>18</sup>. Usually it is not possible to completely define the differences between these two approaches, and yet one of them tends to dominate in translations, hence we can talk about “proper translations” and “interpretations”, not only as types of translation acts, but also as types of texts. Clearly the dependence in terms of the foreign language original is more clearly defined in the first type of translation, the “proper” kind – and the duty it fulfils turns out to be duty not only to the primary text, but also interestingly enough to its author: “Proper translations attempt to do justice to the author of the original, to speak in their voice. [...] The person performing the translation once again, in their own fashion, tells about the world relating to the original [...]”<sup>19</sup>.

Competing tales about the world presented in the original can, according to Balcerzan, compete very intensively: “a war of substituted worlds” in reference to a series of translations of the same source foreign language text is a concept we know from his later book *Tłumaczenie jako „wojna światów”* (*Translation as a “war of the worlds”*) (2009)<sup>20</sup>.

Duties are duties, and yet if the tale of the “person performing the translation” about the world of the original is not unique enough, too mechanical, shackled, and as a result, failing to achieve the optimal norms, it begins to touch upon the danger of being a replica. This is a dangerous thing, and yet not in all cases singularly negative: “It would seem that a chance for copies is in the style”, according to Balcerzan. “Replicating foreign stylistic arrangements, apparently out of line with the spirit of native literature, is often a revolutionary act. It becomes a ‘discovery of style’ (J. Etkind)”<sup>21</sup>.

For those who do not know *Poeziya i perevod* by Efim Etkind (1963), the above contention can be interpreted in line with the theory of poly-systems introduced a little later by André Lefevere, who claimed that alternative poetics in terms of dominant trends in any given poly-system must come from without, through translation, in order to effect changes in the currently established canon<sup>22</sup>.

Similar relations mean that it is now even more interesting to ask what at that time was a source of inspiration for Edward Balcerzan. The version of *Poetyka przekładu artystycznego* (*Poetics of creative translation*) published by the journal *Nurt* contains “Bibliographical indicators” – a record of what in 1968 Balcerzan considered important for the study of translation. This included the volume *O sztuce tłumaczenia* (*On the art of translation*), edited by Michał

<sup>17</sup>Ibid, *Poetyka przekładu artystycznego*, Nurt, p. 25.

<sup>18</sup>Ibidem.

<sup>19</sup>Ibidem.

<sup>20</sup>See ibid, *Tłumaczenie jako „wojna światów”: w kręgu translatologii i komparatystyki*, Poznań 2009, pp. 187–211.

<sup>21</sup>Edward Balcerzan, *Poetyka przekładu artystycznego*, Nurt, p. 26.

<sup>22</sup>See. André Lefevere, *Beyond the Process. Literary Translation in Literature and Literary Theory*, [in:] *Translation Spectrum*, ed. Marylin Gaddis Rose, New York 1981.



Rusinek, *Wstęp do teorii tłumaczenia* (*Introduction to translation theory*) by Olgierd Wojtasiewicz, along with writings by Russian authors – especially those by Etkind, Rievin and Rozenwajg, but also a Czech anthology of translation theory edited by J. Levý.

Of obvious importance is Korney Chukovsky, quoted in the text itself, although not mentioned in the bibliography, along with his *Principy chudozhestvennogo pierewoda* (1918). Instructional. This is how Balcerzan writes about them in *Literackość*:

Of the genesis of a book published in 1918 titled *Printsipy khudozhestvennyi perevoda*, representing within Russian letters – in many ways still very relevant – ordering of the poetics of translation, its author would many years later write: “We needed a theory of creative translation equipping translators with simple and clear guidelines, so that every translator – even a regular one – could perfect their craft. These guidelines could also be dimly grasped earlier, but they had not been formulated as yet” (K. Czukowskij, *Vysokoe iskustvo. O Printsipach khudozhestvennyi perevoda*, Moscow 1964, p. 4).<sup>23</sup>

It was not much different when it came to Balcerzan’s poetics of translation.

## Poetics of translation in the light of Translator Studies

In postulating the institutionalisation of the poetics of translation, Balcerzan also points towards its horizons and potential sub-types or branches: the poetics of the process of translation, the poetics of the translated text, and the poetics of the translator. On this topic, we find James S. Holmes in agreement, highlighting among other things, a descriptive research into translations focused on the process of translation [*process-oriented descriptive translation studies*] as well as on the product, and so, on the text [*product-oriented DTS*]<sup>24</sup>.

What is intriguing in the way Balcerzan frames his ideas is the human dimension – in spite of convictions about structuralist depersonalisation, especially in terms of the poetics of the translator. Poetics seen from such a perspective – translational, and thus perhaps not so much the author’s (or perhaps “translational”?) – is something rather new. Lawrence Venuti called for the recognition of the (invisible) translator, even though this also includes a few years later (1995) Anthony Pym (2009)<sup>25</sup> and Andrew Chesterman, who proclaimed the establishment of translator studies – (2009)<sup>26</sup>. In our part of Europe, in the 1960s research into authoring poetics were well established, and it is enough to mention Mikhail Bachtin’s *Problemy poetyki Dostoyevskogo* (*Problems of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*), published in Russia in 1963 (“and instantly made popular in Poland” according to Balcerzan. – I used a ‘shared’ copy, lent to me for a short while by Michał Głowiński from IBL PAN<sup>27</sup>) or else the monograph titled *Poetyka Tuwima a polska tradycja literacka* (*Tuwim’s poetics and Poland’s literary tradition*) written by Michał Głowiński himself (1962). And yet research into “translatory”

<sup>23</sup>Edward Balcerzan, *Literackość*, p. 163.

<sup>24</sup>See. James S. Holmes, *The Name And Nature Of Translation Studies*, pp. 72-73.

<sup>25</sup>See. Anthony Pym, *Humanizing Translation History*, *Hermes* 2009 no. 42.

<sup>26</sup>See. Andrew Chesterman, *The Name and Nature of Translator Studies*, *Hermes* 2009 no. 42.

<sup>27</sup>Edward Balcerzan, *Pochwała poezji. Z pamięci, z lektury*, Mikołów 2013, p. 67; the Polish translation of Bachtin’s work was produced by Natalia Modzelewska a few years later in 1970.



poetics was still in its nascent stage; the book by Waław Borowy *Boy jako tłumacz* (*Boy as a translator*, 1922) was not reprinted for a long time to come. Meanwhile Balcerzan in 1968 sketched out his proposal for research procedures, placing the translator in the centre of his focus – not only the obvious issue of the translator's poetics, but also the poetics of the process of translation:

The fundamental category within poetics is the category of the subject of a given statement. [...] Works which are translated are most often "split in two": a certain part of the work comes, in some way directly, from the author of the original, and a certain other part – from the translator. The poetics of creative translation has to therefore be interested in a type of translator "behaviour" with regards to the author, where it clearly comes not to what the person translating might have been thinking, but that how their decision is preserved in the text.<sup>28</sup>

Here Holmes reasons quite differently – his descriptive research oriented on the translation process was to focus on what "precisely happens in the 'small black box' of the translator's 'mind' at the time they create a new more or less adequate text in a different language". Holmes proposed that this field should be called *translation psychology* or else *psycho-translation studies*.<sup>29</sup> For clearly understandable reasons, structuralist research on translations could not develop in this direction.

In order that the story told by the "author of the translation" about the world of the original not be a simple copy, authors can themselves perform certain transformations, the typology of which Balcerzan refers to by making reference to W. Kopitlov. This includes reduction, meaning a shortening of a section by cutting out certain elements or else stripping the stylistic structure of certain characteristics; inversion, meaning the changing of word order, phrasal combinations or more advanced sequencings; substitution, which involves a swapping of elements; or else amplification, meaning adding new elements to the text, often default, latent in the ellipsis. The more freely a translator makes use of these devices, the more their translation will head in the direction of interpretation, and not proper translation. The motivation for such actions can differ; the most interesting of these seems to be the one which emerges from entering into a polemic with the author of the original text. Balcerzan writes about "polemical translations" – created in order to question the value of the original; and also "latent translations" – more of his unique terminologies. "Latent translations" are signed (or rather: overwritten) with the translator's own name, the name of the author of the original being omitted. And yet this is not plagiarism – latent translations are according to Balcerzan "reconstructing in the target language certain fragments of the original, providing them with a new function and new meaning. It is not in fact an act of plagiarism seeing as it inherently recognises the connections between itself and the source text. The reader must recognise this latent aspect of the translation – only in this way can they recognise its polemical motivation"<sup>30</sup>. According to Balcerzan "latent translations" have much in common with that

<sup>28</sup>Edward Balcerzan, *Poetyka przekładu artystycznego*, Nurt, p. 26.

<sup>29</sup>James S. Holmes, *The Name And Nature Of Translation Studies*, pp. 72, 73.

<sup>30</sup>Edward Balcerzan, *Poetyka przekładu artystycznego*, [in:] *Literatura z literatury*, p. 31.



which Tadeusz Pióro recently defined as a strategy of “poetic covers”<sup>31</sup>, especially present in Polish poetry of recent years<sup>32</sup>.

Let us finally note that Balcerzan’s pioneering article is titled *Poetyka przekładu artystycznego* (*The Poetics of Creative Translations*). “Creative” rather than “poetic”, even though much of the material quoted comes from the world of poetry. Not “literary” either, even though journeys towards inter-semiotic translations – broader than just literary genres – is not very much present in this article. “Creative” because it really is – and this seems to be a signature aspect in the writings by Edward Balcerzan – it refers to that which is most important: “the mysteries of artistic processes”<sup>33</sup>

translated by Mark Kazmierski

<sup>31</sup>See. Tadeusz Pióro, *Czas to biurokracja, którą tworzą wszyscy*, [in:] *Lekcja żywego języka. O poezji Andrzeja Sosnowskiego*, ed. G. Jankowicz. Kraków 2003, p. 107.

<sup>32</sup>I have dealt with this topic elsewhere, see. Ewa Rajewska, *Kariera coveru*, [in] *Kultura w stanie przekładu. Translatologia – komparatystyka – transkulturowość*, ed. W. Bolecki, E. Kraskowska, Warszawa 2012.

<sup>33</sup>Edward Balcerzan, *Poetyka przekładu artystycznego*, [in:] *Literatura z literatury*, p. 22.



# KEYWORDS

translation series

Edward Balcerzan

*literary translations*

**ABSTRACT:**

The article draws attention to a largely forgotten text by Edward Balcerzan titled *Poetyka przekładu artystycznego* published in 1968. Ideas presented by this Poznan-based translations expert and poetry translator echo the ideas presented some years later by James S. Holmes in his highly esteemed text *The Name And Nature Of Translation Studies* (1975). We should pay particular attention to the human aspect of his research methodologies, especially a branch of translations studies postulated by him 50 years ago: translator poetics. Another important term coined by Balcerzan is the concept of a “translation series”.



# POETICS

## *creative translations*

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Borys Szumański

# Translation and Emancipation

c r i t i c s :

*Wte i wewte: Z tłumaczami o przekładach*,  
edited by Adama Pluszka. Gdańsk 2016.

The interviews with seventeen translators collected by Adam Pluszka in *Wte i wewte* [Back and forth] provide the reader with illuminating insights into the process of translation. Each of these approximately 20-page conversations focuses on a different aspect of translation, as seen through the eyes of translators whose background and experience vary. Pluszka asks his interviewees about their personal attitudes to translation, translation problems, Polish language and culture, and the status of the translator. Each question triggers a conversation or a reflection that has not been widely addressed in mainstream Polish culture. While Pluszka's book may be discussed alongside *O sztuce tłumaczenia* [On the art of translation] (1955) edited by Michał Rusinek, which brings together literary translators' comments on their translations, the latter book is primarily a collection of technical and theoretical observations, and as such resembles *O nich tutaj* [About them, here] (2016) edited by Piotr Sommer.<sup>1</sup> Accord-

ing to Sommer, *O nich tutaj* is a collection of the most important essays written by translators on the subject of translation that have been published in *Literatura na Świecie* [World Literature] in the past 30 years. In this sense, Pluszko's *Wte i wewte* and Zofia Zalewska's *Przejęzyczenie: Rozmowy o przekładzie* [A slip of the tongue: Conversations on translation]<sup>2</sup> both constitute a novel take on translation, especially in the context of Polish writings on the subject. They provide a platform for a different, more anecdotal and conversational, discussion of translation. Apart from *bona fide* translation issues, Pluszko is also interested in more elusive questions, such as the attitudes of translators to their texts, the feelings that they experience during translation and the broadly understood social, economic, cultural, and technical aspects of their work. Pluszko explores the political context of published texts, the behind-the-scenes of the cooperation with publishers and editors, and the problems associated with

<sup>1</sup> *O nich tutaj: Książka o języku i przekładzie*, ed. P. Sommer, Warsaw 2016.

<sup>2</sup> Z. Zalewska, *Przejęzyczenie: Rozmowy o przekładzie*, Wołowiec 2015.



translating particularly interesting or embarrassing sentences and texts. Ultimately, however, what is most striking about *Wte i wewte* is not so much the nature of the topics discussed, but the fact that translation is treated as a part of mainstream culture.

Until recently, translation did not raise much interest outside the professional circles. Indeed, such an important cultural phenomenon has been unfairly underrepresented and confined to the margins of literary and communication studies. Today, books similar to the ones edited by Zofia Zalewska or Adam Pluszka seem to respond to a growing social or even cultural demand. What has changed in the reception of books devoted to translation? The average reader still tends to define the translated text as a paradox which replaces the original: although the translated text substantially differs from the original, it is signed with the name of the author. Recently, however, the presence of the translator in the act of translation has been openly acknowledged, as evidenced by various marketing campaigns or translation awards. Thanks to this, as readers, we are more and more willing to notice and appreciate the fact that translation, traditionally defined as an intimate relation between the source and the target text, is also influenced by a third party, namely the translator and their language, which distorts, problematizes, and animates the act of rendering a given text into a different language. Indeed, we are growing and learning as readers so that we can recognize the hidden problematic aspects of translation and ask questions about its course and circumstances. *Wte i wewte* thus plays a dual role. It both announces and formulates new critical theories on translation. It is aware of the changing role of the translator and addresses this issue from a number of different perspectives. *Wte i wewte* shows the failure of outdated notions of the translator as invisible and translation as reproductive, addressing the need for a better understanding of the phenom-

enon of translation in contemporary culture. At the same time, it also creates such a need by adopting a number of different perspectives, which counter the narrative of the invisible translator who produces a transparent translation. Each of the seventeen interviews is actually an attempt to find the language for speaking about translation. It is both an exciting and an exhausting process. The failure of thinking about translation as a purely technical act reveals the eternal enigma of translation. Elżbieta Tabakowska thus comments on the issue:

A brilliant translation is equal to the original, right? But how can you measure this supposed equality? It is impossible to compile a full list of the meanings of a given work of art. A work of art is not a box with a limited and clearly defined content. Rather, it is a magic box: every time we open it, we find something unexpected and new. I can do my best to penetrate all the nooks and crannies, but my reading, and therefore also my translation, will never exhaust the possibilities that the box offers. There will be other interpretations, new readings, and new translations. And that is wonderful (p. 144).

Tabakowska, an excellent translator and translation scholar, demonstrates that the notion of a perfect copy is an illusion. After all, the many meanings of the original text may remain hidden, and the translator needs to find a way to deal with this problem. What strategies does one use to create what we call translation and what we are prepared to recognize as translation? Indeed, all these issues raise the question of the translator's subjectivity. The most renowned translators and translator scholars, including Lawrence Venuti, Douglas Robinson, and Andrew Chesterman, and in Poland, among others, Jerzy Jarniewicz and Magda Heydel, openly address the question of the translator's subjectivity and *Wte i wewte* also joins the debate. This collection of interviews with various translators gives voice to the translator as a creative individual,



demonstrating that his or her mind, emotions, background, as well as cultural, social, and economic conditions determine the final version of each translated text and thus influence the state of national literature.

At the same time, in his interviews Pluszka addresses the difficulty of speaking about the experience of translation. On the one hand, the interviewees reflect on the process of translation, commenting on particularly difficult translation problems. Memories, anecdotes, and technical tips thus constitute an important part of the book. On the other hand, the metaphors, comparisons, and concepts used allow us to identify various discourses, philosophical ideas and theoretical systems, which the interviewed translators use in order to accurately describe the process of translation. The anecdotal is thus complemented by a more structured argument and a specific intellectual tradition behind it. At the intersection of the personal and the universal, or as Douglas Robinson<sup>3</sup> would say, the idiographic and the ideographic, the interviewees attempt to answer the question of what translation actually is (be it an original, a mystery, a foreignness, or a difference). Whatever the answer may be, it is determined by the translator, their identity, and the manner in which they (and others) define their task. Let me refer at this point to three, in my opinion, particularly interesting, statements that appeared in *Wte i wewte*. In my understanding, the selected examples will also constitute certain critical categories. I would like to organize them from the least idiographic to the most ideographic, thus systematizing the spectrum of translators' attitudes. I would like to quote Maciej Świerkocki first:

In all honesty, I think that translating ... long books is pleasant and enjoyable for the translator, because, first of all, he has something to do for many

months and does not have to worry too much about looking for the next assignment. Secondly, he can take the plunge in to the text or rather immerse himself in the book, get lost in it and, as a result, forget about the real, and for the most part infantile and impolite, world. I definitely prefer fiction to reality (p. 22).

For Maciej Świerkocki, translation provides an escape from the real world and constitutes a source of pleasure. Both of these aspects have rarely been discussed in translation criticism. Świerkocki links translation to the fantastical and the creative. As the perspective changes, we no longer ask questions about the role which the translator's personality plays in the process of translation, but concentrate on the role of translation in the formation of the translator's identity. The enigma of translation is closely related to the enigma of the translator's life. My second example is a quote from an interview with Barbarą Kopeć-Umiastowska:

It may happen that the text carries the translator; the energy of the original is such that the book translates itself. The better the book, the more often it happens, because then the added value, irreducible to the visible elements such as lexis, syntax and style, is greater. Language has an almost supernatural power over man and maybe it is better not to enter into it too much. We should not trust language completely, because it can lead us astray (p. 130).

Similarly to Maciej Świerkocki, Barbara Kopeć-Umiastowska also comments on the elusive notion of taking pleasure in the process of translation. However, Barbara Kopeć-Umiastowska seems to pay more attention to the "added value" and the "supernatural power" of language. Indeed, the role of language has already been emphasized by hermeneutics and linguistics. Still, Barbara Kopeć-Umiastowska marries the two, so that the focus is on the amazing powers that language has over the translator in the act

<sup>3</sup> D. Robinson, *The Translator's Turn*, Baltimore–London 1991.



of translation. This question is often addressed by Pluszka's interviewees, albeit in different forms. The enigma of translation is thus linked to the mysterious power of language. My third and final example is a quote from an interview with Dariusz Żukowski:

At a certain point in his autobiographical novel, Coetzee reflects on immortality, as this theme merges with the essence of work. He writes about the immortality of a worker who produced a concrete block. He envies him. After many years, you can still point to the permanent result of the worker's labour. It is paradoxical that people who do "useful" work are paid the least, while some stock market speculators and other financial crooks have fortunes. And what is the role of the translator in all this? Translators and other professionals who process symbolic language, especially human scientists, have come up with this grand unified theory that is supposed to justify their supposed importance and the freedom they are granted, including the fact that they are not evaluated on the basis of how useful they are. And translation is often discussed in terms of secret knowledge. In a sense, it is secret knowledge, especially if you take into account hermeneutics or even the mysticism of translation that since antiquity has attempted to find the answer, in the most general terms, to the question of linguistic equivalents and the essence of language (p. 98).

By referring to pragmatic and market categories, Dariusz Żukowski comments on the value of the translator's work in a new social reality. In his provocative statement, he distances himself from the notion of the enigma of translation, treating it as a discursive trick, a construct, used to artificially raise the prestige of the translator's work. It might seem that Żukowski seeks to erase the subjectivity of the translator. He encourages us to see the translator as a manual worker, who is no longer hidden behind the original, but found among thousands of any-

mous contractors working for translation agencies. Indeed, Żukowski is more interested in the "invisible hand of the market" than the enigma of translation postulated by the hermeneutic tradition. In his opinion, the subjectivity of the translator has more to do with economic rather than linguistic exchange. The selected examples differ in terms of the underlying personal and theoretical approaches. Dariusz Żukowski seems to be particularly sensitive to this issue, emphasizing the role of discourse in constructing the social image of the translator. He points out that our view of the translator, especially when it comes to their social and professional image, is determined by the prevailing ideologies of translation. The prestige, nature, definition, and value of the translator's work are determined by social narratives. While such a diagnosis does not invalidate the question of subjectivity, it renders it more dramatic. "And what is the role of the translator in all this?," Żukowski asks, acknowledging the threat that the identity of the translator is facing and demanding that translation should be given social and institutional recognition. Żukowski thus openly addresses a very important question that is later commented on by other interviewees, albeit not in so much detail. Indeed, *Wte i wewte* voices concerns that appear in the era of transition and crisis. On the one hand, the crisis of the old translation discourse may give the translator the opportunity to gain independence, as their voices are finally heard and their social identities are finally recognized. On the other hand, such a crisis also poses a threat of the renewed objectification and alienation of the translator, this time through encroaching market forces. There is also a threat that translators and their work will find themselves suspended in a vacuum and the very phenomenon of translation, even though it plays such an important role in the contemporary world, will become more and more enigmatic, unstable, and questionable. As a result, the status of the translator shall change. In this context, *Wte*



*i wewte* may be described in terms of a testing ground where various translation theories clash and in terms of an open platform for discussion about the chances that the renewed definition of the role and status of the translator offers.

Indeed, one more voice of the eighteenth translator which appears in *Wte i wewte* in the form of a paratext should be acknowledged. In the face of crisis, Jerzy Jarniewicz, the author of the introduction to the book, a translator and a theoretician of translation, draws on the myth of Antigone in order to construct a new identity that would, on the one hand, allow translators to feel safer in this new somewhat hostile world and, on the other hand, give them agency and motivate them to action. In his short sketch entitled *Antygony wracają, albo o emancypacji przekładu literackiego* [Antigones return: On the emancipation of literary translation], Jarniewicz compares the ongoing emancipation of contemporary translators with the emancipation of women (as he argues, such a comparison is sanctioned by the role female translators played in world history and the history of translation). Thus, he rightly emphasizes the links between translation and feminist criticism. In the face of faltering phallogocentric culture, which makes a fetish out of the relation of similarity and obliterates the differences which are an inherent part of every translation, translation is like a woman who wants to move beyond the binary logic of thinking and develop its own positive identity:

... another aspect is important here, namely the view of translation as no longer innovative, but regenerative, passive, secondary, subordinate, and servile. These adjectives are also often used to create a discriminatory stereotype of femininity (p. 11).

The stakes are doubled, as is often the case with translation. On the one hand, translation is validated as a creative act that is anchored in a much broader context than just referencing

the original. On the other hand, the subjective presence of the translator in their creative work, the translator's right to be visible both in translation and in the social sphere, demands recognition and validation. Traditional translation criticism abided by an unwritten law that sentenced translators to social and creative self-destruction – the translator was meant to disappear, dematerialize in the text. Similarly, women were meant to take care of the family, which constituted the most important social unit, and at the same time not appear in the public sphere. Similarly to women in the patriarchy, translators and editors were meant to guarantee the existence of the system while remaining at its margin or even outside of it. Jarniewicz's comparison is thus seminal: the metaphor allows translators to reflect on their position in the world and arms them with productive concepts and references, outlining the possible course of future action:

Let's be clear: translators are contemporary Antigones. They are like the daughter of Oedipus, although, luckily for them, they do not share her tragic fate. They are expected to be faithful to the original and they are held accountable for this. They are expected to obey the law but not to craft legislation. However, nowadays translators are more and more responsible for law-making (p. 14).

Recognising and negotiating the conditions of one's presence and produced translations lies at the heart of creating the identity and subjectivity of the translator. Those who operate in the "translation zone"<sup>4</sup> located at the intersections of languages and discourses are particularly well-suited to perform this work, but at the same time, faced with the hardships of the job, they are also exposed to simplistic and reductionist solutions, the consequences of which are borne not only by themselves but also by readers. It is

<sup>4</sup> This term is originally used by Emily Apter in her book *The Translation Zone: A New Comparative Literature*, Princeton 2006.



not an exaggeration to say that translators are responsible for the shape of the target culture and its relationship with other cultures. Today we know that this responsibility is not so much about remaining faithful to the original, but about identifying different instances that determine the process of translation and its outcome. This process also takes place at the basic level of minor translation decisions, applied translation strategies, and compromises, and in the act of discussing the definition and role of translation.

The advantage of the book is that the interviews with professionals conducted by Adam Pluszka are ultimately addressed to the non-specialist reader. Anecdotes, memories, digressions, and personal reflections animate the book. Most importantly, however, *Wte i wewte* popularizes translation and translation criticism by means of accessible, spontaneous, and diverse discourse. It is a great and absorbing read that shows the bright and dark sides of translation, rightly inspiring interest in the profession.

translated by Małgorzata Olsza



# KEYWORDS

*f e m i n i s m*

TRANSLATION

translation criticism

**ABSTRACT:**

In the present article I review *Wte i wewte: Z tłumaczami o przekładach* [Back and forth: Translators on translation] edited by Adam Pluszka. I refer to selected examples from the text to discuss the question of the translator's identity and desire in a broadly defined psychoanalytical framework. I examine the possible realizations of the translator's desire and emphasize the need for the translator's "emancipation," as argued by translators and translation critics alike.



translation discourse

# psychoanalysis

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Weronika Szwebs

# Interdisciplinary Hopes and Traps

c r i t i c s :

Andrew Chesterman, *Reflections on Translation Theory. Selected Papers 1993-2014*, Amsterdam/Philadelphia 2017.

The theoretical study of translation doesn't enjoy wide renown. Both branches of research which comprise this field are, for a range of reasons, treated with some reserve, and their juxtaposition does more to deepen than to remove doubts. The very act of translation – in its basic, practical dimension – is a phenomenon which even in the field of humanities is often passed over in silence. This state of affairs emerges, on the one hand, from well-entrenched myths and expectations that an ideal translation is a transparent one, and, on the other, from fears about entering into a field of research demanding quite specific competencies. Theory is also a troublesome phenomenon, and as an integral element of the modern humanities, it tends to be accused of sterility, a disconnect with reality and intellectual autoeroticism. Translation theory brings upon itself all these doubts. Firstly, raising the already complex problems of translation to an even higher degree of complication and abstraction, it struggles to enter the humanities mainstream. Secondly, active translators themselves all too often contend that they do well enough without resorting to theory, often using this fact as an argument to challenge

the usefulness of reflecting upon their craft in an academic fashion. If translation theory is not useful to translators and those reading the fruits of their labours, sceptics say, is it useful only to those who busy themselves with it? Although we could easily find other examples of grumblings directed at other fields of theoretical practice, the question of the addressee – both of different sorts of theories, as well as of the book under review – is most certainly relevant.

Let us assume for the sake of orientation that within the field of humanities there appear both theoretical texts, which – depending on the topic or the way it is dealt with – can interest readers outside this specialist field, along with texts which focus on questions of importance to researchers in a given field. The majority of articles by Andrew Chesterman published in his book *Reflection on Translation Theory* clearly belong to the second category. The publication contains relatively few texts that would interest a non-specialist hungry for more enlightened reading, seeking to open their eyes to previously overlooked aspects of specific translations they would likely have previously. Nor are



translators ideal readers of this book, in spite of the fact that the author often discusses the usefulness of his observations in the teaching of translation. The analyses contained in Chesterman's articles will bring the greatest benefits to translation experts wishing to review the conceptual tools at their disposal, and the current status of the discipline they work in.

The book is made up of 28 articles originally published between 1993-2014 in specialist publications and books dealing with translation studies. Chesterman focuses on methodological questions, analyses concepts useful in research, and discusses concepts and hypotheses that are key to this particular field of research. He makes use of conceptual analysis, drawing on a handful of sample translations to illustrate his points. In individual articles, he problematises the following key categories from a range of perspectives: causality, explanation, similarities/differences, strategies, and norms and universals. Some of the articles also represent polemical discussions of influential conceptions or theoretical texts, including Skopos theory, John Catford's *A Linguistic Theory of Translation* and James S. Holmes' influential article *The Name and Nature of Translation Studies*. Chesterman's discussion on the implications of specific theories, the precision with which he constructs his research methods, and the remarkable care with which he utilises concepts can be seen as an invitation, or even a demand, to consider one's own academic skills, though the depth of this inspiration will most certainly depend on the degree to which one's research orientation overlaps with his.

Taking into consideration the state of translation theory in Poland and the degree to which foreign concepts have been assimilated, those quoted by the author offer a tangible benefit that Polish readers can extract from reading the essays contained in *Reflections on Translation Theory*. In recent years, many of the concepts dealt with

by Chesterman have also been discussed in Polish translation studies, either in translation or through the reading of influential foreign texts dealing the theory of translation. Their presence in Poland, however, is limited to their original form without taking into consideration later polemics, revisions and enhancements. There is nothing unusual about this – it is the most widely known theories that tend to be translated and referred to, while the dynamics of reception cannot keep pace with the dynamics of the discussions taking place abroad. Perceptive methodological debates should now be taking place in Poland, yet when reading publications and attending conferences devoted to translation, one gets the impression that most articles here lack systemicity, while the methodologies in them are more often simply used rather than analysed. Chesterman's analysis allows us to broaden our thinking about the concepts and terminology which often appear in Polish translation studies, such as Skopos theory, descriptive orientation or strategic concepts.

The number of articles contained in the book, the number of issues dealt with, and the degree of complication in the questions dealt with mean that it is impossible to summarise here the overall arguments made by the author: it is only possible to describe their style and point to some defining aspects. Readers familiar with Chesterman's previous works will not be surprised to find that he is much closer to the Anglo-Saxon than the Continental style of presenting theories. In dealing with matters of methodology, discussing categories used in translatology, or offering up new definitions and tools, the author attempts to consider a very broad scope. Theoretical problems within his own field are perceived by him from a general scientific methodological perspective, borrowing theoretical solutions from other fields of research, and attempting to transpose them onto the field of translation studies. As a result, the book contains references to biology, genetics and ethics. Chesterman's



universalising enthusiasm can also be seen in his powerful attachment to translation studies as a separate discipline which possesses firm scientific foundations, clearly defined aims, and its own methodology and coherent terminology. *Reflections on Translation Theory* is both an expression of a desire for this to really be true (the aim of the conceptual analyses is to achieve such a state of affairs) as well as fears regarding its current dispersed, diversified and still uncertain status as merely an inter-discipline. This notion is stated several times explicitly and is behind many of the analyses and proposals contained in the book.

It is worth noting that for Chesterman translation studies is not merely an abstract concept, but a shared space in which researchers can meet, represent different traditions and share their interests in different aspects of translation. An example of such a dialogical focus on constructing this discipline is his perceptive description of influential theoretical conceptions arrived at by other researchers. Aside from this, Chesterman formulates many of his proposals in such a way that they become invitations to discussions intended to develop an optimal model. An example of this sort of approach is an article titled *Shared Ground in Translation Studies*, written together with Rosemary Arrojo. One of the inspirations behind it was Chesterman's noticing a fundamental theoretical chasm between researchers representing "postmodern cultural studies and textual theories" and those who consider translation studies to be a field of empirical research. Chesterman and Arrojo, although rather different in their research formats, have here decided to make a list of 30 theses relating to translations which they both agree with, even though the two authors belong to different intellectual traditions. In the same vein is the text *Proposal for a Hieronymic Oath*, which opens up a discussion with other experts working in a narrow field. Chesterman contends in it that the ethical models of translation he presents in

his article are mutually incompatible, making reference to Alasdair MacIntyre's concept to offer his own, and then follows this with a formula for a multi-pointed Hieronymic oath, one to which professional translators could hold themselves.

Although concepts used in translation studies have become firmly embedded in the Polish research environment, the book's heavy focus on strengthening the discipline and making it more coherent, as well as the frequently mentioned fears of its collapsing into a narrowly focused, disconnected discipline, might be rather surprising for Polish readers. Chesterman refers to a state of affairs he is familiar with, and the desires and concerns he expresses about the potential fate of this area of research are not uncommon among Western researchers in the field. The current state of research into translation in Poland – from a theoretical angle, as well as in terms of research and institutional practices – clearly differs from that assumed by Chesterman; hence his gestures are in the Polish context not so obvious. Up until now Polish academic structures have failed to produce many departments focused solely on translation research: experts in the field come mostly from philologies or Polish literary studies, where they function and source their information, in addition quite clearly separated into literature and language/linguistics experts. Even though forums for exchange of ideas exist – conferences, journals, festivals – it is hard to conclude that a strong and resolute drive towards unification exists, be this institutional or methodological.

Acknowledging the insight evident in the book's conceptual analysis, while also maintaining a safe distance to it (ensured by work within the Polish academic space), we can consider whether the author's determined drive to develop common ground, methods and concepts is really as universally useful as Chesterman contends. The author repeatedly suggests that more cohesion within the discipline would benefit both research-



ers and translators, and he is likely to be right in this respect. Even so, not all of the ideas and arguments he presents seem to me convincing, such as the questionable benefits of choosing to aim at cohesion. Let us look firstly at the researcher's position. In order to achieve a common language in a field of research that brings together people from very different research backgrounds, one must begin with general formulations that researchers from different orientations can identify with. It can turn out, however, that for a specific research practice – especially one relating to culture, literature or philosophy – concepts developed to meet the needs of all those disciplines will prove to be substandard in relation to those created for the sake of a more specific field of analysis. Will making the discipline more cohesive really result in a researcher who is interested in how a given author's poetics spreads via translation to influence the poetics used in a different language feel more connected to a researcher who seeks to deepen an awareness of how the translators of functional texts make decisions? And if not, will either of them really lose out due to a lack of common ground? It seems to me important to draw attention to the place of a more idiosyncratic style of description, one which deviates from more widely prescribed theoretical jargon, or does very well without it. Giving up on precision means giving up on the possibility of perceiving and expressing the nuances that oftentimes are what leads participants in culture and researchers develop their interests in the first place. It also means giving up on local critical traditions, which are sometimes connected with a given context and research subject. Although in the article penned together with Arrojo we find the contention that superficially coherent concepts (such as *translation* and *Übersetzung*) can in different languages mean something different, this awareness doesn't seem to rectify Chesterman's universalising gestures.

Among the benefits arising from increased coherence in translation studies (aside from disci-

plinary prestige and ease of use for researchers), Chesterman also mentions the benefits for translators. For example, in his text titled *Problems with strategies*, in which the author does an interesting job of trying to order key terms often used as synonyms we find the thesis that terminologies should be so clear and simple that they could be used in the teaching of translation. Although it is beyond doubt that using precise categories which function in logical relation to each other should have a positive influence on the outcomes of creative processes, we could debate whether it is necessary to clarify and cohere the whole of this field. Perhaps it is enough to clarify the set of concepts used in a given space of creativity and which allows us to name the phenomena we need to name?

The suspicion that a different state of affairs is hard to achieve is further deepened once again when we recall that English is not a universal metalanguage in which all translators are trained.

*Reflections on Translation Theory* is a selection of twenty research theses penned by one of the most renowned representatives of contemporary translation studies. Chesterman has produced a decent standard of writing on influential theoretical concepts and ideas used in research work. Those interested in the state of and possibilities for translation studies will find within his book many ideas for its evolution and perfecting. Fans of a more individualised means of theorisation, who hold subtleties above models might feel it is tiresome. Chesterman's book in all certainty will succeed as an inspiration and a guide through the tricky process of reflecting upon their own theoretical apparatus.

translated by Mark Kazmierski



# KEYWORDS

*translation theory*

## TRANSLATION STUDIES

**ABSTRACT:**

This text is a review of a book by Andrew Chesterman: *Reflections on Translation Theory. Selected Papers 1993-2014* (John Benjamins Publishing Company, Amsterdam/Philadelphia 2017). It explains the author's research methods and describes the problems covered in individual articles. Special attention is paid to a description of Chesterman's attitude to the field of translation studies, including the fears, hopes and postulates presented by the author about its shape and status. The perspectives emerging from the book are contrasted with the current state of research into translation in Poland today, and doubts are cast on the need to achieve greater coherence in this field of research.



## translation research

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