

TRANSLATABILITY OF INTERTEXTUAL MARKERS: VERIFYING A PARADIGM

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ABSTRACT

The paper locates research on intertextuality in poetry translation within the paradigms set in 1957 by Olgierd Wojtasiewicz, the founder of Polish TS, who paid attention to what he called “erudite allusions” in translation a decade before the very term “intertextuality” was coined and adopted in Western Europe. The author tests one of Wojtasiewicz’s tenets: that the level of translatability of allusions depends on the recognizability of the source of allusion, understood in terms of cultural closeness. Thus, within European culture translatability of references to the Bible or to the Western canon could be assumed, while allusions to exotic cultures should be difficult to transpose. In the paper these assumptions are verified on the poetry of the Polish modernist Bolesław Leśmian and its translations into English, Russian and Czech. Examples have been selected from several intertextual domains – references to the Bible, to Indian culture, Slavonic mythology and Polish literature – so that varying cultural distance between the interacting texts can be observed. Wojtasiewicz’s paradigm is only partly confirmed, as favourable conditions do not necessarily correlate with successful re-creation of intertexts. The verification complicates the theoretical model, underscoring the importance of the human factor in translation and of empirical surveys in TS.

Keywords: poetry translation; intertextuality; Bolesław Leśmian; Olgierd Wojtasiewicz; recognizability; cultural domains; Biblical, Hindu, Slavonic, Polish references

Aims and assumptions

The aim of the paper is to locate the research on intertextuality in translation within a paradigm set by Olgierd Wojtasiewicz, who, with his book *Wstęp do teorii tłumaczenia* (1957, *Introduction to the Theory of Translation*) can be considered the founder of the Polish Translation Studies.¹ The book has been enjoying a renewed interest since 1992 when

¹ Indeed, the semicentennial of the book’s publication was celebrated as marking fifty years of the discipline in the Polish academia (Hejwowski et al. 2009).

it was first republished (then reissued several more times). In the preface to the second edition Tomasz Krzeszowski (1992: 7–9) emphasizes that the study is far from outdated, on the contrary – Wojtasiewicz was much ahead of his times and had discovered many points and perspectives long before they were generally embraced. Krzeszowski mainly contrasts his approach with generative grammar and looks for parallels with cognitive linguistics, but Wojtasiewicz can be seen as a forerunner of contemporary research in many respects.

From my point of view it is important that the author, although starting from a formal linguistic perspective, came to realize that the centre of gravity for translation was in the cultural issues (thus anticipating the Cultural Turn). Interestingly, over a decade before the very term **intertextuality** was coined by Julia Kristeva and adopted in Western Europe, Wojtasiewicz paid attention to what he called **erudite allusions** in translation. For him it was a notion as capacious as intertextuality is in modern understanding: including references to literature, to other arts, to historical facts and potentially – to any extratextual phenomena (1957: 77). He found allusions one of the central translation difficulties, so much so that a genre intertextual *per excellence* – parody – was in his view essentially untranslatable. Wojtasiewicz divided allusions according to the level of translatability. He stressed that the decisive factor here is the (varying) recognizability in the target culture. The scope of the domain for which some ‘key texts’ or references are common differs from case to case: it may be all the Western and Central Europe, or only Scandinavia, only Iberian countries, or peoples’ democracies, and so forth (1957: 80). The range of recognizability depends not necessarily on geographical location but rather on cultural proximity: Wojtasiewicz assumes e.g. that classical allusions will resonate more with Italian recipients than with their Albanian neighbours (1957: 80). On the whole, within European culture translatability of references to the Bible or to the Western canon could be presumed, while allusions to exotic cultures should be difficult to transpose.

My aim is to test whether – as Wojtasiewicz suggests – the level of translatability of intertextual markers depends on the recognizability of the source of allusion, understood in terms of cultural closeness. The material chosen is the poetry of the Polish modernist Bolesław Leśmian (1877–1937) and its translations: into English and Russian (comprehensive corpora of texts) and into other languages, used selectively, to broaden intercultural comparison (limited to Czech and Ukrainian in the current paper).

While Wojtasiewicz does not propose a specific model, in my study Leśmian’s references are systematized according to the presumed decreasing range of recognizability of the archetext: from those which are supposed to be widely known and easiest to translate, to less and less known spheres, where the difficulty would increase. Thus, in the material the following domains of reference can be distinguished:

1. The Bible, Biblical legends and prayers originating from the Bible.
2. Antiquity and classical mythology.
3. Western literary canon – references to Goethe, Victor Hugo, Ossian, the figures of Don Juan and Don Quixote.
4. Literary fairy tale – from *Sleeping Beauty* to *Arabian Nights*.
5. Literature, culture and beliefs of India – e.g. the ruler Asoka.
6. Western philosophy – Nietzsche, Kant, Berkeley, negative theology.

7. Slavonic mythology – borrowing fantastic creatures, their attributes, protective measures against them; folk-motivated anthroponyms.
8. Polish literature – references to authors translated into foreign languages (Jan Kochanowski, Adam Mickiewicz), and not known internationally (Franciszek Karpiński, Tadeusz Miciński).
9. Polish folklore – travesty folk songs, borrowing characteristic motifs, expressions, rhythms.
10. Self-references – self-quotations and recurring neologisms.

In the present survey intertextuality is understood as a functional relation: one when a link with another text significantly contributes to a poem's semantics or is necessary for the understanding of it. Stylistic reminiscences are not taken into consideration. The elements which refer to some previous texts are called **intertextual signals** or **markers**, for short – **intertexts**. The texts that are being referred to are called **archetexts** or **pre-texts**. It should also be stressed that Leśmian is notoriously difficult to translate for his linguistic experimentation on the level of word-formation and syntax, for combining fantastic plots and creatures with philosophical content and for employing traditional metrical forms. The gloss translations and retellings of the content do not do justice to the complexity and finesse of the poems.

Due to the volume of the corpus, only several examples from selected domains will be presented in the current paper. The references analysed will be to diverse pre-texts, so that varying cultural distance between the interacting texts can be observed. A comprehensive survey based on the whole of the corpus is available in Kaźmierczak 2012.

Biblical references

Let us begin with references to the Scriptures. Wojtasiewicz's assumption of high level of translatability is shared by other scholars. For instance, when Ritva Leppihalme concedes that "Sometimes, of course, allusions present no particular translation problems", she illustrates this with biblical ones: *slaughtering the fatted calf* for the prodigal son, and the *good shepherd* and his flock (Leppihalme 1997: ix).

However, in the analyzed corpus, Biblical references are not always successfully re-created in the translations. Certain reductions or distortions may result from the fact that intertextual signals are scattered in the text and/or significantly modified by the author himself. This can be said of Leśmian's masterpiece, the long poem *Łąka* (*The Meadow*), where biblical allusions and elevated vocabulary connoting religion conspire to present the Meadow as a female deity and meeting of man with her as a rite. In the first part the Meadow awakens to consciousness and receives the same gifts as the newborn Christ did according to the Gospel:

Przyszły pszczoły z kadzidłem i myrrą, i złotem (*Łąka*, part I, Leśmian 2000a: 303).
[There came bees with frankincense, and myrrh, and gold.]²

² Unless otherwise noted, philological translations are mine – M. K. When available, glosses from Rochelle Stone's 1976 monograph on Leśmian are used. Boldface is occasionally added in the quotations to highlight the words or phrases under discussion.

The translator into English, Sandra Celt, closely follows the formulation from the Gospel,³ restoring the order in the enumeration, changed by Leśmian:

With gold and frankincense and myrrh the bees arrived (Leśmian 1987: 49).

They saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and [...], they presented unto him gifts; **gold, and frankincense, and myrrh** (Matt. 2.11, *King James Version*).

According to the *Russian Synodal Bible*, what the Magi brought were *золото, ладан и смирна*. In Sergei Shorgin's translation of *Łąka* the concept has been retained, but the phrasing changed. None of the lexemes has been borrowed from the biblical source:

После – пчёлы с кадиллом, и миррой, и златом (Лесьмян/Leśmian 2006: 167).

Кадило means censer, not incense,⁴ unless in its obsolete use (cf. Сорокин/Sorokin 1997: 190); so it is at best metonymic. *Злато* is an Old Church Slavonic form for *золото*, gold, and therefore rather solemn, whereas *мирра* is much more intelligible for a modern audience than *смирна*.⁵ The reference is **re-created on the conceptual level** (denotation), but the 'standard' phrasing is replaced with occasional one: the very combination of words is apparently unprecedented in the Russian language.⁶ The change can also be motivated by the rhythmical factor, since the exact biblical phrase would not fit the adopted metre, whereas the position of word-stresses in the nouns chosen by Shorgin enables the creation of an anapaestic line.

The Czech versions of the Scriptures⁷ have *zlato, kadidlo a myrhu* (*mirru* – *Bible Kralicka*). In Leśmian's poem Jan Pilař only retains one of these elements, the myrrh:

a přišly zlaté včely s **myrhou** a vůněmi (Leśmian 1972: 25).

Incense is replaced by the less specific *vůně* – 'scents' or 'perfumes.' Perhaps the noun *vůně* (when combined with the oriental myrrh) introduces some biblical flavour, since it appears in the recurring scriptural phrase "vůně spokojující Hospodyna" – "a sweet savour unto the LORD" (esp. in Leviticus and Numbers). Nonetheless, the specific reference to a deity being born onto the world is lost. If a biblical context is sensed by the recipients, the associations will be shifted from the New towards the Old Testament, where burnt offerings are repeatedly mentioned (e.g. Exod. 29.41: "aby byla vůně příjemná, obět ohnivá Hospodinu"). Most of all, however, it looks as if the translator

³ In the analysis I refer to translations of the Bible seminal for the respective languages and cultures: *King James Version*, *Russian Synodal Bible* and the *Czech Kralice Bible*; details of the editions are placed in reference list.

⁴ An explanatory sentence in a modern dictionary makes a point of this: "От кадила идет запах ладана и угля" (Кузнецов/Kuznetsov 2004: 408).

⁵ The latter is absent from Кузнецов/Kuznetsov 2004, while in Ushakov's dictionary marked as 'historic' (2004).

⁶ Cf. search results: <www.google.pl/#hl=pl&q=кадило%2C+мирра+и+злато&lr=&aq=&oq=&fp=8127ca82c4efa5a4>, DOA 20th Sept. 2013.

⁷ Comparison conducted at: *Unbound Bible*, <unbound.biola.edu>, DOA 20th Sept. 2013.

aimed at rationalizing the image: the bees do not bring gold, they are of golden colour themselves (*zlaté včely*) and apparently they carry sweet nectar.

The subtle biblical context was not re-created in any of the translations in the next case. In the Polish poem the use of the verb *nawiedzać* in its archaic or literary sense of 'to visit' brings to mind *Nawiedzenie* – the Visitation of Elisabeth by Mary (cf. Luke 1.39–56).

Zwilżysz miedzę w tym ruczaju,
Co wie o mnie, że **trawą** brzeg jego **nawiedzę** (part I, Leśmian 2000a: 303).
[Moisten the bank in the brook / that knows of me that with grass I shall visit its bank.]

The verb is complemented in a highly non-standard way. 'I shall visit the bank with grass', says the Meadow, where *trawa* (grass) is in the instrumental case. Sandra Celt was apparently only aware of the modern meaning of the word – visitation by calamities or bouts of illness (cf. Szymczak 2002); she created an infelicitous neologism:

Let the Brook the bank beshower,
His banks I'll **green-infest**, that's what he knows of me (Leśmian 1987: 49).

Infesting implies overrunning in dangerous numbers or by pests, which is contrary to the original projection of the Meadow's coming as a festivity and epiphany. Shorgin, in turn, has reformulated the whole stanza, to the exclusion of the lexeme under discussion (Лесьмян/Lesmian 2006: 167). Pilař conveys the denotation: the Meadow will cause the grass to grow on the bank: "u bystrřiny, / co vř, ře její břehy **pokryji** trávnikem" (Leśmian 1972: 25). Despite the brook remaining personified (*bystrřina vř* – it 'knows'), the image becomes more conventional: the Meadow, some kind of embodied natural force, brings about changes in nature.

Suppression of intertextuality may result from an **individual interpretation** of the translated text, or at least be interconnected with it. Shorgin, the only translator to have rendered all parts of the poem, makes some of the references more explicit, but tones down some others. By obliterating certain intertextual markers, the Russian translator partly divests the Meadow of divinity, supplanting it with magical qualities and abilities. For instance, as the birth of Jesus was announced to the shepherds by angels shining with glory and singing (Luke 2.8–20), so the appearance of the Meadow draws the village folk by voices on high and a green light (*řwiatłošć* strongly connotes religion):

I zdawało się wszystkim, ře coř w niebie woła,
A zielona się řwiatłošć jarzyła dokoła (part V, Leśmian 2000a: 311).
[And it seemed to everybody that something was calling in the sky/heaven,
And a green (holy) light was glowing all around.]

Shorgin retains the image and makes the voices from heaven explicitly sing (*Что-то ... пело*). The light, however, is no longer holy, it becomes a 'magical', though radiant, greenness – *волшебная зелень*:

Что-то с неба, казалось, и пело, и звало,
И волшебная зелень повсюду сияла (Лесьмян/Lesmian 2006: 172).

A similar shift can be observed in the final section of the poem. The Meadow is presented as the one who grants whatever people ask of her, which echoes Christ's promise:

Czegokolwiek zażądacie,
To się zjawi w waszej chacie
(part VI, *Leśmian* 2000a: 314).
[Whatever you demand,
shall appear in your hut.]

Ask, and it shall be given you; [...]
For every one that asketh receiveth;
(*KJV*, Matt. 7.70–8; cf. Luke 11.10).

Shorgin, however, substitutes the allusion in these lines with a literary expression for having enough and to spare:

И в согласье с волей вашей,
Дом ваш будет **полной чашей** (*Лесьмян/Lesmyan* 2006: 173).
[And according to your will,
you shall live in plenty.]

That the above translation shifts are strategic rather than accidental is evidenced in the second stanza of the VI part of the poem. In a formulation not motivated by the original the Meadow is called a charmer or a sorceress: “Луговина – **чаровница**” (*Лесьмян/Lesmyan* 2006: 173). Thus, all told, Shorgin's Meadow is a supernatural but not necessarily a divine being.

The Bible has been a key text for the whole European culture, universally translated and influencing the stocks of most languages and literatures. Therefore, intercultural differences in the level of translatability of biblical intertexts are not expected. Nevertheless, in the corpus under discussion there is a certain disproportion in the number of poems with biblical references translated: they are more often represented in Russian. It is only partly accounted for by the fact that the Russian renditions outnumber other sets of translated texts. The opportune situation of transferring the allusions into English, where the Bible has had a central position in the culture, has not been fully taken advantage of. It is manifest in the selections, but also in some local solutions, e.g. when Sandra Celt refrains from using the capital letter in the epithet “the lord of snowbound distant cause” (“Pan ośnieżonej w dal przyczyny”), originally modelled on “the Lord of Hosts” (‘Bałwan ze śniegu’, *Leśmian* 2000a: 359; ‘The Snow Idol’, *Leśmian* 1987: 75). The reductions of Biblical intertextual markers are systematic in Jan Pilař's versions, as further evidenced in the poem ‘Alcabon’ (*Leśmian* 1972: 104–105). Perhaps the influence of (self) censorship can be sensed in *Zelená hodina*, the volume published in the communist Czechoslovakia. To compare, Russian renditions of the Soviet period (*Лесьмян/Lesmyan* 1971) do not show signs of repressing religious elements (In that context it should also be remembered that Lesmyan's poetry is not pious but metaphysical, often contrary to orthodox Christian beliefs).

Let us sum up the current section. The initial assumption has been a high level of translatability of biblical intertexts and the diagnosis of the discussed cases confirms ostensibly opportune circumstances for translation. The findings, however, show relatively numerous cases of reduction of intertextual markers in the renditions, the main expla-

nations being the translators' overlooking implicit and dispersed signals, or interpretive shifts. Additional constraints may include metrical-rhythmical reasons and, perhaps, suppression of religious elements.

Hindu intertexts

Let us move to intertextual markers connected with the culture and beliefs of India. This domain is exotic from European perspective, nevertheless it is one with which Europeans are partly, if superficially, acquainted. George Steiner noticed that some perceptions of Asian cultures may even turn into clichés afflicting translations (1975/1998: 333). The colonial history of India naturally contributed to the exceptional wealth of writing on it in English, but the figure of Buddha, or the concept of *samsara*, the endless cycle of death and rebirth, are not unknown in other European countries, nor in Russia. Meanwhile the poems by Leśmian that refer to them do not have any translations in the collected corpus.

A poem that has, indeed, generated two renditions is 'Džananda' (2000a: 352–354). The episode told in it has apparently been invented by Leśmian, yet it reads like a credible extension of Indian mythological stories. Explicit intertextuality consists in borrowing a character from the Hindu pantheon, that of Indra, god of the sky, thunder and war. In the poem Indra takes on himself the form of a peacock⁸ and flirts with a girl, who is then accidentally killed with an arrow aimed by envious Džananda at the peacock. The translation of intertextuality almost boils down to transferring the name of the deity. Yet also the philosophical tension between time, timelessness and eternity is – implicitly – intertextual, drawing on the concept of Atman (Trznadel 1964: 107).

The English rendition by Janek Langer ('Jananda', Leśmian 2000b: 16–18) does contain the name *Indra*, but the intertextuality is blurred on the linguistic level, by awkward formulations and use of syntax. The parallel structure of *above her – inside* suggests that it is the girl who is the incarnation of Indra:

Leżała, dłużąc w trawie swój dreszcz jednolity.
Paw z nią gruchał, a w pawiu tkwił Indra ukryty.
Porzucił praistnienia zjesieniałość górną,
By się nasnuć jej w oczy tak barwno i piórno! (Leśmian 2000a: 352).

[She was lying, elongating in the grass her uniform shiver.
A peacock was cooing with her, and in the peacock Indra was stuck hidden – M. K.]
[He abandoned the lofty autumnedness of primeval existence, / To spin and spin before her eyes, so colorful and feathery! (Stone 1976: 226, American spelling retained)]

⁸ There is a traditional story about the peacock hiding Indra: "The peacock's beautiful and distinctive colouring is said to be a gift from the god, Indra. One day the King of Gods was doing battle with Ravana, the Demon King. The peacock, which in those days resembled his plain brown hen, took pity on Indra and raised its tail to form a blind or screen behind which Indra could hide himself. As a reward for this act of compassion, the bird was honored with the jewel-like blue-green plumage that it bears to this day" ('Peacock', *Khandro Net*, <www.khandro.net/animal_bird_peacock.htm>, DOA 20th Sept. 2013).

She lay in the grass stretching her shivering body,
Above her a cooing peacock, – inside hidden Indra;
God abandoned his distinguish[ed] but elderly looks,
To appear in those decorative feathers and colour (Leśmian 2000b: 16).

In the next two lines the confusion clears up, but an element incongruent with Indra's image in the Hindu beliefs is introduced: *elderly looks*. Both in literature and in visual arts of India, Indra is a young warrior (Wałkowska 1988: xviii, even called eternally young – cf. Frédéric 1998: 379) or at least a man in his prime. Most probably it was Leśmian's innovative noun of quality, *zjesieniałość* ('having become like autumn'), that suggested the translational solution.

There is another distortion of Indra's image. Indra reproaches Dżananda for the senseless attempt to kill a god (if incarnated): "Boga chciałeś zmóc w ptaku?" (Leśmian 2000a: 353). Langer cuts short 'god in the bird' to *bird-god*: "Wanted to defeat the bird-god?" (Leśmian 2000b: 17). The use of a compound suggests that the peacock is Indra's typical incarnation, while in the original poem it is an occasional one, so that the image is not in conflict with the traditional concept of this anthropomorphic deity. In the Hindu mythology there is a bird-god indeed, the eagle Garuda, mount of Vishnu and the king of birds (cf. Frédéric 1998: 293), hence the translational shift is the more harmful.

The Russian translation by Gennady Zeldovich does not contain any inconsistencies in the image of the Vedic deity. For instance, the peacock (*павлин*) is unambiguously the bearer of god's image (*образ Божий*) and Indra abandons the 'autumn of primaevial existence' (*прабытную осень*):

Ворковал ей **павлин**, в коем **образ** был **Божий**.
Это **Индра** покинул **прабытную осень** (Лесьмян/Lesmyan 2004: 134).

Moreover, the translator succeeds in creating an atmosphere of timelessness adequate to Leśmian's intertextual presentation of time. In the couplet below Zeldovich reproduces the stagnation in which eternity is short of breath (*Задышается вечность*) as well as the morphological and semantic opposition of two worlds – here and beyond (*świat* vs. *zaświat* – *мир* vs. *замирье*):

Tchu nie stało wieczności! Nie drgnęły upały.
Świat i zaświat tym samym snem nieruchomiały (Leśmian 2000a: 352).
[Eternity was breathless! The heat never stirred.
The world and the world-beyond were standstill in the same slumber.]

Задышается вечность! Все пусто пред глазом!
И замирье и мир обездвижели разом (Лесьмян/Lesmyan 2004: 134).

The impression of Indian spirituality is enhanced by lexical and syntactical innovations parallel to Leśmian's, like *сбледнел в безграничье* (Лесьмян/Lesmyan 2004: 135) – 'he paled in/into boundlessness', where the noun itself is an occasional one. This is even more mysterious than Indra's 'paling in timelessness' in Polish (*i pobladł w bezczasie*, Leśmian 2000a: 353). Zeldovich also plays with grammatical properties of the text, e.g.

investing with temporality some originally neutral phrases, as in the already quoted line introducing the girl lying in the grass (Polish cited and glossed above). In the source text the verb *dłużyć*, used in a non-standard way, apparently has spatial meaning, whereas in the Russian translation the sense of continuing in time is prominent:

Leżała, **dłużąc** w trawie swój dreszcz jednolity (Leśmian 2000a: 353).

Она **длила** в траве неразымные дрожи (Лесьмян/Lesmyan 2004: 134).

The contrasting samples are characteristic not of intercultural differences in the translatability of references but of the two translators' respective achievements. The example of Langer proves that intertextual signals posing no special difficulties may be deformed due to translators' inattention or lack of competence. For Zeldovich intertextuality is not necessarily his priority: it is Leśmian's unusual language that he strives to re-create. True, he is the only translator to have paid attention to this section of Leśmian's oeuvre but he retains or obliterates intertexts at will: out of his three renditions of 'Hindu poems' one is heavily stylized as folksy and larded with dialectal vocabulary ('Pururawa i Urwasi' – 'Пурурава и Урваси'; Лесьмян/Lesmyan 2005).

As for the paradigm under scrutiny: we have assumed a relatively lower yet manageable level of translatability, but in Leśmian's case the texts referring to Indian culture prove unpopular with translators. Moreover, the case analyzed exemplifies how a fairly uncomplicated intertextual task – alluding by means of a major mythological figure – can be failed due to linguistic imperfection. Also translational prioritising proves a crucial determinant of whether intertextual signals will be retained or not.

References to Slavonic mythology

Slavonic mythology is an archetext of a much narrower range of recognizability in the European culture. Old beliefs of central and Eastern Europe are little known in the western part of the continent (unlike many Celtic myths that gained more than local currency). Even in the field of modern Slavonic cultures the references will not be universally recognized; some beliefs and imaginary figures were common to West Slavs, some – known to East and South Slavs only.

Leśmian's poetry abounds with creatures whose origin, directly or indirectly, is Slavonic mythology: *boginiak*, *planetnik*, *rusalka*, *południca*, *dusiótek*. Some 'generic' names of those creatures, e.g. *rusalka* (Slavonic water nymph), have been discussed as untranslatable (Bałuk-Ulewiczowa 2004: 103). However, the folksy-but-metaphysical ballads form the core of Leśmian's writing. Accordingly, they are numerously represented in the corpus of translations, despite the difficulties to face.

When confronted with intertextuality from this domain, translators resort to a full spectrum of strategies. The translators into Slavonic languages prove to be at an advantage. Some expect from the secondary recipients to be to a certain extent bicultural, some adapt the names of the creatures or circumstances, shifting within the Slavic culture. Ukrainian translator, Viktor Koptilov tends to transform the markers so that they associ-

ate with the target culture: he sets one ballad on a steppe (Лесьмян/Lesmyan 1979: 29), while in another poem he replaces Leśmian's *Мажка* (Leśmian 2000a: 174) with the – mostly Galician – *Мавка* (Mavka), and suggests her relation to *Польовик* (Polyovik), a field spirit known to East Slavs (Лесьмян/Lesmyan 1979: 32). Sergei Petrov, in turn, inserts Ukrainian elements into the Russian text (Лесьмян/Lesmyan 2006: 115–118). In both cases the intertextual address is shifted, but the associations evoked remain within the Slavonic domain.

English renditions of poems with Slavonic intertexts are few: two by Celt, one by Ryszard Reisner, none in Langer's collection (plus Rochelle Stone's fragmentary gloss versions). The translators do not dare to transfer the designations of the Slavonic spirits, there are no attempts at finding functional replacements in the 'repertory' of English folklore and there is no fortunate coinage. The only inventive creation has been a tongue-in-cheek Celtic re-intertextualization by Internet users (Leśmian 2008). Admittedly, sometimes the difficulty or failure in translating the name of a creature may be compensated by conveying carefully its appearance, attributes, the way it interacts with humans or the means with which to fight it. For instance *Południca*, a demon who assaults and fatigues people in the fields, was believed to appear at noon (hence the name – Lady Midday, *daemon meridianus*), in the shape of a woman dressed in white (the poet makes her pale). In Leśmian's ballad 'Świdryga i Midryga' (2000a: 203–205) all these elements are employed as secondary intertextual markers. When they are carried into Sandra Celt's English rendition, they become markers on which intertextuality primarily relies, and they compensate for the clumsy and self-contradictory nomination *vampire-nymph* (Leśmian 1987: 25). It also redresses the fact that such a demon is not known to the target recipients.

Some texts seem to have been left untranslated on moral rather than linguistic or cultural grounds. Two ballads ('Mak' and 'Strój', Leśmian 2000a: 206–207; 220–222) with the motif of supernatural beings entering into sexual relationships with humans (cf. Gieysztor 1982: 221) do not have renditions into either English or Russian. The possible claim for their untranslatability on account of the names of the personages – *boginiak*, *planetnicy* – is disproved by the existence of Czech versions of both poems ('Mák', 'Šaty', Leśmian 1972: 85–86; 89–91). In general, Jan Pilař shows a penchant for the ballads with Slavonic contexts and he deftly inserts in-text guidance for the readers in an unobtrusive way. In 'Strój' ('Attire'), the beautiful dress draws to a maiden a host of demons known to South Slavs and to the inhabitants of Małopolska (Little Poland):

Zbiegło się na te dziwy aż stu **planetników**, [...]⁹
 Podawali ją sobie z rąk do rąk, jak czarę:
 „Pójmy duszę tym miodem, co ma oczy kare!”
 Podawali ją sobie z ust do ust na zmiany:
 „Słodko wargą potłoczyć taki krzew róžany!”
 Porywali ją naraz w stu pieszczot zawieję:
 „Dziej się w tobie to samo, co i w nas się dzieje!”
 Dwojgiem piersi ust głodnych karmiła secinę:
 „Nikt tak słodko nie ginął, jak ja teraz ginę!”
 Szła pieszczota koleją, dreszcz z dreszczem się mijał,
 Nim jeden wypił do dna – już drugi nadpijał
 (Leśmian 2000a: 220).

Sběhlo se na te divy sto **duchů planetníků**, [...]
 A podávali si ji jak číši z dlaně v dlaň.
 „Napojme duši medem, který má oči vran!“
 A podávali si ji z úst do úst všichni muži.
 „Sladké je vtiskat ústa na keř takových růží!“
 Naráz ji strhávali do mazlivého reje.
 „Děj se v tobě to samé, co uvnitř nás se děje!“
 Krmila dvěma prsy ta ústa hladová.
 „Tak sladce neumíral nikdo, jak mřú teď já!“
 Jeden za druhým s ní se mazlil a vášní chvěl,
 než do dna vypil jeden – druhý už upíjel
 (Šaty, Leśmian 1972: 89–90).

It is of little consequence for the plot of the ballad that *planetnicy* were personifications of weather phenomena (Gieysztor 1982: 232). What counts is that caresses of supernatural beings (the phrasing *duchů planetníků* is clear in that regard) bring disgrace on the protagonist and, in consequence, death. In lieu of an equivalent, the marker can be substituted and is not in itself a sufficient cause of untranslatability.

To recapitulate: the assumption of low translatability of allusions to local mythology into languages of Western Europe was confirmed by the English translators' reluctance to accept the challenge and by their helplessness with the markers. The conjectured obstacles accompanying the translation into related languages, in turn, proved far from insurmountable: we observe numerous renditions, inventiveness and exploiting the possibilities of shifts within the Slavonic culture. Among the external constraints disinclination to handle potentially scandalizing content has been revealed.

Polish literature as archetext

Polish literature is relatively little known internationally, perhaps with the exception of 20th-century poetry, which gained certain renown. Even when translated into foreign languages, the classics of Polish literature have little chance of penetrating into the world canon or foreign local canons (exceptions prove the rule). References to Polish literature can thus well epitomize translation problems consisting in the fact that the intertextual signal does not resonate with the readers.

Leśmian's signals of a dialogue with Polish literary tradition mostly disappear, regardless of the direction of translation. They are usually implicit or covert and in many cases the renditions indicate that the translators have not been aware of intertextuality. Certain similarities to (a translated version of) a pre-text that can still be observed are most probably unintentional and result from a translator's closely following Leśmian's phrasing

⁹ To see these wonders a hundred planetniks flocked – trans. M. K. / They passed her round from hand to hand, like a goblet: / “Let us ply the soul with this mead, that has black eyes!” (Stone 1976: 276) / They passed her round from mouth to mouth, taking turns, / “It's sweet to press on one's lips such a rosebush!” / They carried her away all at once in a blizzard of caresses: / “Let the same happen in you that happens in us!” / With a pair of breasts she fed a hundred hungry mouths: / “No one has died so sweetly as I do die now!” / The caress went in turns, shivers passing one another, / Before one drank up – another was already tasting of the drink – M. K.

or Leśmian's imagery. It is also interesting that the central position of the pre-text in the source culture is not helpful: even intertextual links with Mickiewicz's *Pan Tadeusz* have been missed (cf. Kaźmierczak 2012: 194–196).

In the further parts of the poem *Łąka, The Meadow* – available only in two Russian renditions – there are hidden references to poems by Franciszek Karpiński and Cyprian Kamil Norwid, which vanish in the target versions. The last part of *The Meadow* is an appeal to love and the phrase “A opaszcie świat cały ścisłym korowodem” refers to lines from Adam Mickiewicz's 1820 ‘Ode to Youth’: “Hej! ramię do ramienia! spólnymi łańcuchy / Opaszmy ziemskie kolisko!” (Mickiewicz 1983: 15). If this intertextual address is recognized, other elements echoing the ‘Ode’ will be discovered in the near context (cf. Trznadel 1964: 241). The phrasings that coincide are bolded:

Łąka, part. VI. (Leśmian 2000a: 313–314)

Nawołujcie się ludzie, pod jasnym **lazurem**,¹⁰
Chórem w światy spojrzycie, zatrwożcie się
[chórem!
Miłość, **wichrem** rozpędzona,
Wszystko **złamię** i pokona,
Zaś tych, co się sprzeciwią, w śnie **skrępuje**
[sznurem!

A **opaszcie świat cały ścisłym korowodem**,

Aby wam się nie wymknął, schwytny
[niewodem...
Zapłąsajcie, zaśpiewajcie,
Pieśnią siebie wspomagajcie,
Toć wejdziemy w świat – próżnią, aby wyjść –
[ogrodem!
[...]

Dla mnie – rosa, dla mnie – **zieleń**,

Dla was – nagłość **rozweselen**,

A kto pieśń wysłuchał – niech mi poda dłonie!

Oda do młodości (Mickiewicz 1983: 15–16)

Serca niebieskie poi **wesele** [...]
Razem, młodzi przyjaciele! ... [...]

Hej! ramię do **ramienia!** spólnymi łańcuchy

Opaszmy ziemskie kolisko!

Zestrzelmy myśli w jedno ognisko
I w jedno ognisko duchy! ...
Dalej, bryło, z posad świata!
Nowymi cię pchniemy tory,
Aż opleśniałej zbywszy się kory,
Zielone przypomnisz lata. [...]

Szumią **wichry**, cieką głębie,
A gwiazdy **błękit** rozjaśnią – [...]

Oto **miłość** ogniem zionie,

Wyjdzie z zamętu świat ducha.

When translating into Russian Leśmian's image of the happy pageant *girding* the Earth, Leonid Martynov (Лесьмян/Lesmyan 1971: 148–150) uses the same verb that appears in Pavel Antokolsky's translation from Mickiewicz: *опоясать* (Мицкевич/Mitskevich 1979: 29). There are also other lexical coincidences (bolded in the table). Nonetheless, the links are too subtle for a foreign reader to notice the dialogue between the poems without the help of a paratext – which is not provided (cf. notes, Лесьмян/Lesmyan 1971: 263–264).

¹⁰ Gather together, o people, beneath the bright **blue**, / In unison turn your eyes to the worlds, in unison take alarm! / **Love**, sped by the **whirlwind**, / Shall break and conquer all, / While those who will resist, it shall bind with a rope in their sleep! // But **encircle the whole world** in a closed ring-dance, / So that, caught in your net, it should not slip your grasp ... / Begin the dance, strike up a song, / Sustain one another with a song, / For we come into the world – through a void, to exit – through a garden! (Stone 1976: 178). // For me – the dew, for me – the **green**, / For you – the suddenness of **cheer**, / And you who have heard the song – give me your hands! – M. K.

Лужок, Лесьмян/Lesmyan 1971: 149–150

Так скликайтесь, о люди, по вольным
[просторам
Хором видеть миры, петь
[взволнованным хором.
Ведь **Любовь**, как буйный **ветер**,
Одолеет все на свете,
А противников **свяжет**, наперекор им!

Опоьящите весь свет хороводов рядами,
[...]

Пусть **лазурь** ваших душ, зноем
[действий согрета [...].
Для меня – роса и **зелье**,
Вам – нежданное **веселье**!
Дайте руку! А песню мы ту не забудем!

Ода к молодости, Мицкевич/Mitskevich
1979: 28–29

Так лейся же, опьяняй **весельем**, [...]
Друзья молодые! Вставайте разом! [...]
Други, в бой! И строим согласным
Всю планету вокруг опояшем!
Пусть пылает в единстве нашем
Мысль и сердце пламенем ясным!
Сдвинься, твердь, с орбиты бывалой,
С нами ринься на путь окрыленный,
Ты припомнишь возраст **зеленый**,

С кожей расставшись завялой.[...]
Вражда стихий пировала **бурно**, [...]
Запели **вихри**, помчались воды,
Возникли звезды в тверди **лазурной**, [...]
Чтобы **любовь** благая воскресла.

There are few instances of attempts to overcome the objective difficulties entailed by translating references to the Polish literature. The obligatory link between Leśmian's 'Urszula Kochanowska' and Jan Kochanowski's *Laments* is the only intertextual relation in the corpus explicated in the paratext – in some of the seven existing editions (the ballad has four English, one Russian, and two Ukrainian versions). Surprisingly, there were instances of implicitation used in the translation of this ballad, thus weakening instead of strengthening the signals of the intertextual dialogue.

Awareness of the barrier to conveying source-culture intertextuality may lead to the decision to **re-intertextualize** the work in a way oriented on the target context. Sergei Shorgin's rendition of *The Meadow* does not exhibit affinities with the Russian version of 'Ode to Youth'. However, in the same last part, the translator *adds* an intertextual marker, one connected with the target culture:

Nie grążyłem ja w niebie ni steru, ni wiosła,
Lecz mnie radość swym prądem zmiotła i uniosła (Leśmian 2000a: 313).
[I never plunged in the sky neither rudder, nor oars,
It was joy that swept me and took with its current.]

Без руля был небесный мой путь, **без ветрила**;
Мы летели [...] (Лесьмян/Lesmyan 2006: 173).

The inserted intertext, a phrase split and slightly modified, is "Без руля и без ветрил", a well-known quotation from Mikhail Lermontov's poem *Демон* (*Demon*, part 1, stanza 15):

На воздушном океане,
Без руля и без ветрил,
Тихо плавают в тумане
Хоры стройные светил (Лермонтов/Lermontov 1983: 53).

In the Russian culture this phrase, meaning ‘with no rudder nor sails’ has become winged, and lost dependence on its initial context. It signifies acting ‘without any sense of purpose’ (cf. Кузнецов/Kuznetsov 2004), and thus reflects the intention of the passage of Leśmian’s text. Also, insofar as Leśmian enters into a dialogue with the Romantic tradition, a hidden quotation from the Russian romantic may partly compensate for the lost references to Norwid and Mickiewicz.

An opposite reaction to difficulties may be renouncing the translation of certain texts. Sandra Celt’s decision to translate only the first part of *The Meadow* (Leśmian 1987: 49, 51) illustrates her tendency not to tackle poems with pronounced intertextuality. She does include ‘Urszula Kochanowska’, but evades the question of the rendition of the protagonist’s name by not placing any title over the translation in her bilingual edition (Leśmian 1987: 82–83).

To sum up the section, the assumption of low translatability of references to Polish literature is strengthened in the case diagnosis by the fact that references to these pre-texts are usually covert. The findings corroborate the hypothesis: the hidden intertexts have become obliterated (neither the status of the pre-text in the source culture nor the existence of its translation prove helpful), while the remaining markers seem incidental. Only obligatory intertextuality is retained (to varying degrees) and sometimes additionally explained. In the face of the obstacles, translation may be given up altogether; however, a referential quality of the text can be suggested by means of a substituted or added intertext. Although the difficulties manifest themselves differently, low recognizability proves to be an actual barrier to conveying references to Polish literature into both cultures considered, Russian and English.

Conclusion

Wojtasiewicz’s assumptions have been only partly validated by the survey. It can be said that the expected areas of difficulty indeed proved to pose problems for translation. The expected facilitations, however, were not confirmed. Many references to widely known texts and texts of culture – exemplified here by the Bible – have been omitted or mistranslated, favourable circumstances notwithstanding. However, also in the two last domains discussed, where difficulty increased, examples of fortunate solutions can be found, evidencing the possibility and the translators’ will to overcome the cultural barriers by various means, including re-contextualization.

Thus, empirical translatability of intertextual signals depends only partly on the range of recognizability of allusions. Crucial factors here turned out to be intertextual competence of the translators and their attitude towards the phenomenon of intertextuality: the markers may either go unnoticed, or not be deemed important enough to retain. Some reductions of intertextuality dovetail with transformations re-interpreting the poem, as Shorgin’s shift towards Meadow-the charmer. Czech versions, in turn, show that a translator may attach more importance to some intertextual domains and not reproduce others. When the reductions of Biblical references are re-visited after the survey of the Slavonic motifs, it becomes apparent that Pilař’s renditions are skewed in favour of the latter domain. His *Meadow* shifts from the original hierophany towards folkloric beliefs.

The examination also shows that certain additional constraints may hinder the transfer of otherwise easily-translatable signals: in poetry the linguistic form of intertextual markers may collide with the demands of versification. In some cases language innovation proves an impediment or ideological – political or moral – constraints play a part.

The partially positive verification does not disqualify the model, it complicates it. Theoretically speaking, the analysis of the contexts often bears out the assumption of conditions conducive to translation. The renditions can be imperfect *despite* the opportune translational circumstances, i.e. theoretical translatability does not necessarily correlate with an existing successful rendition, or with the existence of a translation at all. This only makes one realize the weight of one of the basic premises of Wojtasiewicz's theory: the fact that he assumed an ideal translator (cf. Wojtasiewicz 1957: 8). The tension between the adopted paradigm and the findings underscores the necessity of a close alliance between theory (idealized models) and empirical surveys (of imperfect facts) in Translation Studies.

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