



Irish Translators' and Interpreters' Association  
Cumann Aistritheoirí agus Teangairí na hÉireann

# Translation Ireland

*A special issue*

**Polish/Irish Issues in Translation**

Volume 19, number 2

**Guest editor, Robert Looby**

**General editor, John Kearns**

I.T.I.A.  
Irish Translators' and Interpreters' Association  
Cumann Aistritheoirí agus Teangairí na hÉireann

The ITIA on Facebook

Page: <https://www.facebook.com/ITIA.Ireland>

Profile: <https://www.facebook.com/irish.translators>

The next issue of *Translation Ireland* will be a general issue on all aspects of translation and interpreting. If you have an article that you would like to share with the translation and interpreting communities in Ireland and abroad, please contact the editor, John Kearns, at [kearns@pro.onet.pl](mailto:kearns@pro.onet.pl)

The Irish Translators' and Interpreters' Association represents the interests of translators and interpreters in Ireland and aims to promote the highest professional and ethical standards in translation and interpreting. For more information on the work of the Association, along with details of how to become a member, please see the Association's website: [www.translatorsassociation.ie](http://www.translatorsassociation.ie). The Association is based in the Irish Writers' Centre, 19 Parnell Square, Dublin 1, Ireland. Tel: (+353) (087) 6738386.

© The editors / Irish Translators' and Interpreters' Association, 2014.

The English texts of the poems by Fíona Bolger printed here first appeared in her collection *The Geometry of Love between the Elements* (Arklow: Poetry Bus Press, 2013) and are reproduced here with the kind permission of the author and the publisher. Ewa Stańczyk's Polish translations appear here for the first time.

The Polish text of Marek Gajdziński's 'Irlandzka proza i napitki' was published as no. 16 in the author's 'Zapiski Londyńskie' series in *Bliza – Kwartalnik Artystyczny*, 3(16), 2013, and is reproduced here with the kind permission of the author and publisher. Antonia Lloyd-Jones's English translation appears here for the first time.

Paweł Huelle's piece 'Arann Islands' was first published in his book *Inne historie*, (Gdańsk: słowo/obraz terytoria, 1999). Siobhán McNamara's English translation is published here for the first time.

The Polish text of Zenon Fajfer's 'Widokówka z Dublina' first appeared in the journal *eleWator* (1/2012). The English translation and commentary by Katarzyna Bazarnik are published here for the first time.

ISSN 1649-7767

## Contents

ROBERT LOOBY JOHN KEARNS	2
Introduction	
SEAN BYE	3
Inner and Outer Lives: Seamus Heaney and the Post-War Polish Poets	
PATRICK JOHN CORNESS	7
Horror Vacui? Explicitation in a Polish Translation of Marie Heaney's <i>Over Nine Waves</i>	
BARRY KEANE	29
Angst and Expectations: The First Stage Production of Samuel Beckett's <i>Waiting for Godot</i> in Poland	
KASIA LECH	37
Memory, Communism, and Foreign Words in Julia Holewińska's <i>Foreign Bodies</i> : Balancing Foreignising and Domesticating Strategies in a Production by Polish Theatre Ireland	
PATRYCJA LEWKÓW	49
The Rocky Road to Polish: An Overview of Irish-language Literature in Polish Translation	
MARK Ó FIONNÁIN	59
Leabhar na Polainne	

## **Translations**

Thomas Moore – 'The Meeting of the Waters' translated by Adam Mickiewicz	73
Józef Czechowicz – Two Poems translated by Aidan Doyle	77
Kate O'Shea – Two Poems translated by Kasia Lech	83
David Toms – Two Sonnets translated by Joanna Malicka	91
Fióna Bolger – Three Poems translated by Ewa Stańczyk	97
Paweł Huelle – 'Arann Islands' translated by Siobhán McNamara	105
Marek Gajdziński – 'Irlandzka proza i napitki' translated by Antonia Lloyd-Jones	111
Graham Tugwell – 'We Touch the Sun on Scarlet Stool' translated by Magdalena Moltzan-Małkowska	125
Zenon Fajfer Widokówka z Dublina Translated, with a Commentary, by Katarzyna Bazarnik	
Interview Antonia Lloyd Jones in Conversation with John Kearns	157

## Book Reviews

CORMAC ANDERSON

*Forked Tongues: Galician, Catalan and Basque Women's Poetry in Translations by Irish Writers.* Manuela Palacios (ed.). 172

SEAN BYE

*Migrant Birds: Selected Poems by Adam Mickiewicz,* selected, translated and introduced by Anita Jones Debska. 175

SHARON O'BRIEN

*Translation Studies and Eye-Tracking Analysis,* eds. Sambor Gruzca, Monika Płużyczka, and Justyna Zając. 177

PÁDRAIG BREANDÁN Ó LAIGHIN

*Téarmaíocht don Aontas Eorpach. Taithí na hÉireann: Tionscadal GA IATE / Terminology for the European Union. The Irish Experience: The GA IATE Project.* Úna Bhreathnach, Fionnuala Cloke, agus Caoilfhionn Nic Pháidín. 180

PAWEŁ SCHREIBER

*Game Localization: Translation for the Global Digital Entertainment Industry* by Minako O'Hagan and Carmen Mangiron. 188

JOANNA KLARA TESKE

*Translation and Philosophy.* Lisa Foran (ed.) 191

## Report

JOHN KEARNS

What We've Been Up To:  
A Report on ITIA Activities 2013-2014 199

Notes on Contributors 203



## Introduction

It has often been said that Poland and Ireland have much in common historically, socially, and culturally. On the surface, the parallels are clear – both may obviously be seen as post-colonial nations in which the Catholic Church has wielded considerable power. Yet dig a little deeper and there may be grounds to question exactly how much store we should set in these similarities. Even if Polish is now the second most widely spoken language in Ireland from day to day, it is not the culmination of some ancient yearning for Celto-Slavic communion. It is business – and a business mostly transacted through the medium of English. For surely the greatest cultural difference between Ireland and Poland is linguistic: Poland has kept her language, Ireland has lost or is losing hers.

So let us not recount the familiar but superficial connections between the two countries. Instead let us create some linkages so that for the Irish Poland will be Poland, not ‘the East’, and for the Poles Ireland will be Ireland, and not ‘the West’. Hence we present here dual text translations of such diverse writers as Józef Czechowicz, Kate O’Shea, Paweł Huelle, Thomas Moore, and Graham Tugwell. In particular, to counter the impression that Polish-Irish translation relations are a recent phenomenon, we open this section with a translation by Poland’s greatest 19th-century poet Adam Mickiewicz of Thomas Moore’s famous ‘The Meeting of the Waters’.

During the preparations for this volume, we were saddened to hear of the death of Seamus Heaney, much respected for his poetry and much loved for his warm personality. Seamus was an Honorary Member of the Irish Translators’ and Interpreters’ Association had a keen interest in Polish poetry. Our collection opens with an article by Sean Bye on his connections with post-war Polish poets.

Already retold and rewritten countless times, the Irish myths in Marie Heaney’s *Over Nine Waves* were translated into Polish in 1996 and provide Patrick Corness with food for thought in his article. Corness examines and questions the tendency of the translator to explicate the source text. Is such explication always necessary or does the assumed great cultural distance encourage translators to over-interpret?

Patrycja Lewków’s contribution is a survey of Irish-language literature in Polish and is an essential starting point for anyone interested in the subject. The debt to such translators as Ernest Bryll and Małgorzata Goraj-Bryll, who brought the *Táin* to Polish readers in the 1980s, is acknowledged here, as is the more recent work of Anna Paluch and others.

The flow reverses with Mark Ó Fionnáin’s contribution on Liam Ó

Rinn's translations of Polish poet and seer Adam Mickiewicz. Seamus Heaney once remarked that both Ireland and Poland are largely the creation of nineteenth-century Romantic poets: Mickiewicz was certainly one of them and Ó Rinn's work carries a strong linguistic and political charge. The poems were translated into Irish, not English, and it is in Irish that this article is written.

Scarcely any less charged is Julia Holewińska's, *Foreign Bodies*, a play about sexual politics, nostalgia and disillusionment inextricably bound up in recent Polish history. Kasia Lech's article is a fascinating insider's view into disentangling the various skeins and staging the resulting translation in Ireland. It takes us far beyond narrowly linguistic translation issues.

Barry Keane's contribution is also theatre-related, examining the reception of *Waiting for Godot*, which was made available to Polish theatre-goers by translator of French literature Julian Rogoziński. Through the critics' reaction we can see how much altered the play was in its translation from page to stage. Keane's study is part of a larger project which, if we were publishing this a year later, we would no doubt be reviewing. As it is, our review section is not limited to books of specifically Polish-Irish interest. Such books exist – you are reading one now – though they are not yet numerous.

In recent years, Polish journalism and reportage have gained an international literary reputation, most famously through the writing of Ryszard Kapuściński. Arguably the leading translator of Polish reportage, Antonia Lloyd-Jones has specially translated for us a piece by the Polish journalist Marek Gajdziński concerning the Irish in London, and particularly the work of writer Billy O'Callaghan (the piece was the introduction to two stories by O'Callaghan, which Gajdziński himself translated into Polish). We were very honoured to welcome Antonia as a guest to Dublin earlier this year and this volume also features a public interview she gave on that occasion.

We very much hope that you will enjoy the writing featured here – it's been a fascinating project collecting all this work, and we hope you agree that it's been worthwhile. We would like to thank the many individuals and bodies who gave us assistance, including the Irish-Polish Society and the Polish Embassy in Dublin. In particular we would also like to thank Dr Ewa Stańczyk and Dr Máire Nic Mhaoláin for their editorial assistance.

**Robert Looby**

**John Kearns**



## **Inner and Outer Lives: Seamus Heaney and the Post-War Polish Poets**

**Sean Bye**

Polish Cultural Institute, New York

For a poet whose subject matter was so rarely the political, it's telling that Seamus Heaney devoted a large part of his Nobel Prize lecture to the political situation in Northern Ireland. Heaney noted that Northern Irish society in general, and his Catholic background in particular, put strong pressure on him to take sides in the conflict, both personally and artistically. But poetry, he said, was "an art that was earnest and devoted to things as they are" – meaning he could not, in his mind, be simply a political or Catholic poet. Rather he sought an artistic response to the political violence swirling around him that was both "true to the impact of external reality and [...] sensitive to the inner laws of the poet's being" (Heaney 1995).

Poets all over the world have struggled in circumstances of war and political violence, so it was perhaps natural that Heaney would look abroad to draw lessons from others' experiences. In his Nobel lecture he discusses the Soviet poets Anna Akhmatova and Osip Mandelstam, who suffered and in the latter case died under Stalinism. He later told the interviewer Dennis O'Driscoll that the work that meant most to him "was stuff born out of more stressful conditions, stuff that had a knottier origin and a tighter grain. I got more of a charge from Zbigniew Herbert and Miroslav Holub and that whole eastern-European school" (O'Driscoll 2008: 281).

Of those Eastern Europeans, Polish poets were particularly important for Heaney. His first introduction to Polish poetry came in the early 1980s, through the collection *Post-War Polish Poets*, edited by Czesław Miłosz and including works by Zbigniew Herbert, Stanisław Barańczak, Adam Zagajewski, Wisława Szymborska, and Miłosz himself. Heaney was drawn to these poets because, as he put it in *Government of the Tongue*, they all shared an ability to "survive amphibiously in the realm of the times and the realm of their moral and artistic self-respect" (Heaney 1989: xx). Heaney's writing about these poets often turns to phrases such as *the times*, *the century*, or *History* (usually with a capital 'H'). By these he meant the political and historical forces that could overwhelm an individual poet, particularly war and political violence. Such forces demanded a response, but for an artist, responding to them ran the risk of becoming caught up in them too. The imperative, as Heaney understood it, was to reconcile the outer life of History with the inner life of the

artist, and the best way to do this was to stand apart from History and respond to it from afar. In doing so, the poet gained and then passed on through his or her work a special kind of knowledge – a deeper truth about human experience.

The best example of this, and one Heaney often raises, is Czesław Miłosz's cycle of poems *The World*. Written at the height of the Second World War in Nazi-occupied Warsaw, the poems give an innocent, almost idyllic portrayal of everyday life in the countryside where Miłosz grew up (now Lithuania) before the war. Far from being escapist, *The World* was a powerful statement of Miłosz's refusal to be cowed by the violence and suffering he was seeing every day. Heaney called the poems "a case of beauty holding a plea with rage" (Heaney 2011). Miłosz became a tremendous influence for Heaney, who compared him favourably to Yeats: while the latter consciously injected himself into Irish history, Miłosz preferred to observe, allowing History to make its impression on him. Heaney's admiration could border on the grandiose: in his essay 'Secular and Millennial Miłosz', he contends that Miłosz's life is a mirror of not just the twentieth century, but indeed of the whole millennium, with Miłosz passing through the innocence, destruction and decline of Western culture, accumulating and imparting wisdom as he goes (Heaney, 2002: 444–445).

One possible reason for this grandiosity is the unshakeable sense that when Heaney writes about Miłosz, he is really writing about himself. The Polish critic Jerzy Jarniewicz noted:

'This figure of the poet as somebody on a secret errand, with ancient and vital truths in his keeping, appeals to [Miłosz]', says Heaney, and one assumes that although he speaks of Miłosz here, the role of the poet thus defined, the guardian of vital truths, appeals equally strongly to Heaney himself. It would be hard to find a poet with similar – prophetic, or bardic – ambitions among contemporary British, Irish, or American poets, Yeats being possibly the last one. (Jarniewicz 2007:107)

That last sentence is meant to describe Miłosz, but there are shades of Heaney in it as well. Poland has a history of 'bards' – poets who are seen as imbued with a kind of supernatural power to speak to the condition of the nation. The term refers particularly to the Romantic poets who gave voice to Poland's struggle for independence in the 19th century. Latterly, it has often been used to refer to Miłosz for articulating the spiritual suffering of Poland during the war and under Communism. In this sense it could apply to Heaney too: through standing artistically apart from the conflict in Northern Ireland, Heaney could speak for

Northern Ireland in a way that almost no one else could.

For all of his admiration for Miłosz, the two never forged a personal relationship. “I couldn’t say that I ever knew Miłosz well”, Heaney admitted to O’Driscoll. “I was always a bit in awe of him” (O’Driscoll 2008: 300). He was close to other Polish poets though, including Zbigniew Herbert (to whom he dedicates a poem in *Electric Light*) and Wisława Szymborska. Yet the Polish poet with whom he had the closest personal relationship was Stanisław Barańczak, the poet and translator living in exile and teaching at Harvard. Barańczak would later write that the immediate understanding they reached “was [in part] the obligatory fondness that should be felt by representatives of the two Catholic nations, wronged by history and consuming large quantities of potatoes (and their products)” (Barańczak 1995, quoted in Jarniewicz 2007: 109, Jarniewicz’s translation).

Their friendship bore fruit in 1995 in the form of a joint translation of *Laments*, by the Polish Renaissance poet Jan Kochanowski. A cycle of funeral elegies on the death of his young daughter, Kochanowski’s *Laments* fulfill something of the same role in Polish culture as the sonnets of Shakespeare do in Anglophone culture. This collaboration seems to have come about more by accident than design – Heaney describes Barańczak springing the project on him almost fully-formed – but the collection remains Heaney’s most direct and sustained artistic engagement with Polish poetry. At first it seems an odd choice, but Heaney and Kochanowski share a plainness of style, a fondness for rural imagery, and a skill for taking everyday life and imbuing it with metaphysical significance – indeed, the *Laments* strongly echo Heaney’s ‘Clearances’, a cycle of poems on the death of his mother. Heaney insisted his contribution to the translations was minor, but their warmth, humanity and occasional but distinctive Hibernian diction suggest otherwise.

Perhaps Barańczak was on to something when he made that joke about the potatoes. He wouldn’t be the first to notice that Ireland and Poland have in many ways had parallel histories. Theirs were histories of life on the edge of empire, of decolonisation, of war and political violence, of poverty and of Catholicism. It’s likely that Heaney felt an immediate sense of kinship with Poland’s poets because their experience of History was so close to his own. This blossomed into close personal and creative relationships and, above all, a complete artistic philosophy that gave him something to strive towards – a ‘whole’ life, making no compromise between the life of the world and the life of the spirit. But from there he parts ways with his Polish contemporaries. Summing up his own view of history, Czesław Miłosz once wrote:

Perhaps some Western writers are longing for subjects provided by spasms of historical violent change, but [...] we, i.e. natives of hazy eastern regions, perceive history as a curse and prefer to restore to literature its autonomy, dignity and independence from social pressures. The Voice of a poet should be purer and more distinct than the noise (or confused music) of History. (Barańczak 1990: 177–8)

For Heaney, though, History not only does not sully the work of the poet; it enriches and completes it. In his Nobel lecture he says of his own country's bard,

Yeats's work does what the necessary poetry always does, which is to touch the base of our sympathetic nature while taking in at the same time the unsympathetic nature of the world to which that nature is constantly exposed. (Heaney 1995)

In other words, for Heaney, History and poetry – the inner world and the outer – are fundamentally bound up in one another. It is only through reconciling the two, and thereby transcending them, that poetry can become truly whole.

## References

- Barańczak, Stanisław (1990) *Breathing under Water and Other Eastern European Essays*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Barańczak, Stanisław (1995) *44 wiersze*, Kraków: Znak,
- Heaney, Seamus (1989) *The Government of the Tongue*, London: Faber and Faber.
- Heaney, Seamus (1995) 'Crediting Poetry', (Nobel Lecture) [http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel\\_prizes/literature/laureates/1995/heaney-lecture.html](http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/literature/laureates/1995/heaney-lecture.html) (last accessed March 16th 2014).
- Heaney, Seamus (2002) 'Secular and Millennial Miłosz,' *Finders Keepers: Selected Prose, 1971–2001*, New York: Farrar Straus Giroux, 444–450.
- Heaney, Seamus (2011) 'Seamus Heaney on Czesław Miłosz's Centenary', *The Guardian* 7 April.
- Jarniewicz, Jerzy (2007) 'The Way via Warsaw: Seamus Heaney and Post-War Polish Poets', in Ashby Bland Crowder and Jason David Hall (eds) *Seamus Heaney: Poet, Critic, Translator*, Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 103–120.
- O'Driscoll, Dennis (2008) *Stepping Stones: Interviews with Seamus Heaney*, London: Faber and Faber.

# ***Horror Vacui? Explication in a Polish Translation of Marie Heaney's Over Nine Waves***

**Patrick John Corness**  
Coventry University

## **1. Introduction**

### **1.1 The Scope of the Study**

Taking as example texts Marie Heaney's *Over Nine Waves: A Book of Irish Legends* (Heaney 1994) and its Polish translation by Mieczysław Godyń (Heaney 1996), the present sample case study undertakes a preliminary survey of some instances of explication in a literary translation.

The article will focus on the translator's treatment of semantic components of the source text in cases of explication; these components may be preserved, amplified, intensified, impoverished, or otherwise altered in the translation process. For reasons of limited space this brief article will merely present a few illustrative examples under the chosen categories. No attempt is made to quantify the phenomenon of explication in the translation of the chosen text, or to assess the translation as a whole, as this would require a more extensive investigation.

This study is prompted by Jerzy Jarniewicz's hypothesis that literary translators are prone to *horror vacui*, a fear of empty spaces, introducing redundancy, over-interpretation, or distortion in translated texts; Jarniewicz (2012: 53) suggests that Polish translations of English literature are almost without exception considerably longer than the respective source texts. He attributes this to translators' perceived need to fill in places of indeterminacy as part of the translation process, which results in a concretisation of the original message in the translated text.

### **1.2 Phenomenological Underpinnings**

Places of indeterminacy and concretisation are phenomenological concepts introduced by the Polish philosopher Roman Ingarden; in *The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art* he explains the importance of the cognitive process in reading, an understanding of which is doubly vital for an understanding of the translation process, which should involve first of all close reading of the original, then a true

representation of its message in the target language, taking into account what it does not say – or says only implicitly – as much as what it does make specific and explicit:

The literary work, and the literary work of art in particular, is a schematic formation. At least some of its strata, especially the objective stratum, contain a series of ‘places of indeterminacy’. We find such a place of indeterminacy whenever it is impossible, on the basis of the sentences in the work, to say whether a certain object or objective situation has a certain attribute. If, for instance the color of Consul Buddenbrook’s eyes were not mentioned in *Buddenbrooks* (and I have not checked to see), then he would be completely undetermined in this respect. We know implicitly [...] that his eyes are of some color, but we do not know which. I call the aspect or part of the portrayed object which is not specifically determined by the text a ‘place of indeterminacy’. [...] The presence of places of indeterminacy is not accidental, the result of faulty composition. Rather, it is necessary in every literary work of art. It is impossible to establish clearly and exhaustively the infinite multiplicity of determinacies of the individual objects portrayed in the work with a finite number of words or sentences. Some of the determinacies must always be missing. (Ingarden 1973: 50–51)

In his treatise on literary translation, *The Art of Translation*, Jiří Levý (2011: 27) explains concretisation as follows:

The text of a work is realised as a social fact, and produces an artistic effect, only when it is read. The reader and the translator receive the work in the form of a text, and in the process of its perception the text functions as objective material which is transformed by the recipient subject, the reader. This process results in a concretisation by the reader. This is how a specific act of reading occurs.

### 1.3 Systemic Non-Equivalence

Source and target texts may not correspond in length for a number of reasons. The first of these is systemic non-equivalence; for example, English has many monosyllabic words, while these are relatively rare in Polish, whereas the four-syllable or five-syllable words common in Polish are relatively rare in English. Of

course, more words does not necessarily mean a longer text, as an English text will contain more (generally shorter) words and the corresponding Polish text will contain fewer (generally longer) words. However, this systemic difference may result in differences in length between source and target texts in these languages.

What is important from the point of view of translation analysis, however, is not the actual relative overall lengths of the texts, but whether meaning in the source text is in some way extended, amplified, over-interpreted, or padded out in the translation process. Formal aspects such as line-length in poetry translation may be significant, but, generally speaking, a more important kind of systemic non-equivalence than typical word-length is semantic incommensurability between the vocabularies of the two languages.

#### 1.4 Equivalent Units of Translation

The translator may add words not found in the original, but that does not necessarily entail the intrusion of semantic components absent from the original. Since pragmatic considerations in translation mean that the target text must observe the norms of the target language, semantic equivalence is not word-for-word equivalence. Susan Bassnett (2002: 116) notes Hilaire Belloc's remark that in the translation of "intention", it is often necessary to *add* words not in the original "to conform to the idiom of one's own tongue". The basic fact that there are no pre-existing concepts and no pre-determined repertoire of vocabulary in any language – each language community quite arbitrarily forming its own conventional set of concepts and vocabulary to refer to the world around it (indeed these concepts and vocabulary change and develop over time as historical and social circumstances change) – means that there is no direct word-for-word equivalence between natural languages. A semantic unit of translation, as defined by Vinay & Darbelnet (1969: 38), may therefore consist of varying numbers of words in the source and target languages respectively, e.g. *'sur-le-champ'*: *'immediately'*, *'le grand film'*: *'the feature'*.

As Daniel Hahn (2013: 45) writes, "there is no word in one language that maps exactly onto a word in any other language, exactly replicating not only the sense but the precise sound, the resonances, the cultural freight; if such a thing were possible, well, they'd be one and the same language". Expansion may therefore occur for legitimate pragmatic reasons, i.e. there are more words in the target text unit of translation, but semantic addition is not necessarily involved.

## 1.5 The Translation Process

The translation process will be considered, following Jiří Levý (2011: 31, 35), as occurring in three stages, namely 1) Apprehension of the source, 2) Interpretation of the source and 3) Re-stylisation of the source. In this approach, the translator must first of all fully apprehend the sense of the original text, including its undertones, associations, allusions, ideo-aesthetic values, situational and cultural background, and authorial intention. Next, the translator has to interpret the source text. Where there is semantic incommensurability between source and target language, as is frequently the case, interpretation is required:

It is frequently the case that the target language does not have at its disposal an expression that is as semantically broad or ambivalent as an expression found in the original. The translator must then specify the meaning, selecting a narrower concept, and this demands knowledge of the reality behind the text. (Levý 2011: 38)

The third stage of the translation process involves what Levý calls *re-stylisation*. This means rendering the sense and intent of the original in a form that respects the lexical, grammatical, and stylistic system of the target language, including consideration of versification traditions etc.

Levý (2011: 35) warns that translators may be prone to over-interpretation, reading into the source work meanings which are not actually present, possibly as a result of misapprehension of the author's overall intention. On the other hand, in aesthetic terms:

[t]he specificity of the original cannot ... be preserved down to the last detail. ... What should remain constant is not the realisation of the unity of content and form ... but its concretisation in the mind of the recipient; in popular terms the resultant impression, the effect the work has on the reader. (Levý 2011: 91)

Readers concretise, i.e. interpret the work in their own way and, while translation also involves interpretation of the source, the translation should ideally be no less open to interpretation by its readers than the original work. However, Jerzy Jarniewicz (2012: 56) holds that as a result of the process of concretisation and filling in of places of indeterminacy, a translated text incorporates a superfluity of information by comparison with the source text, i.e. surplus, supplementary



meaning introduced by the translator. This phenomenon is familiar, but to propose it as a translation universal would surely be to overstate the case.

## 1.6 Explicitation

Vinay and Darbelnet (1969: 9) define explicitation as a process of introducing information into the target language which is present only implicitly in the source language, but which can be derived from the context or the situation. Levý (2011: 94) remarks:

Spatial and temporal distance renders some references to the environment of the original unintelligible in a different culture so they cannot be conveyed by normal means; therefore an explanation often has to be provided instead of a precise translation, or by contrast merely a hint. However, explanations and hints cannot be introduced arbitrarily, as this might result in either over-representation or simplification of the original.

Taking explicitation to be a possible translation universal, Shoshana Blum-Kulka (1986: 19) presented the following hypothesis:

The process of translation, particularly if successful, necessitates a complex text and discourse processing. The process of interpretation performed by the translator on the source text might lead to a TL<sup>1</sup> text which is more redundant than the SL<sup>2</sup> text. This redundancy can be expressed by a rise in the level of cohesive explicitness in the TL text. This argument may be stated as “*the explicitation hypothesis*”, which postulates an observed cohesive explicitness from SL to TL texts regardless of the increase traceable to differences between the two linguistic and textual systems involved. It follows that explicitation is viewed here as inherent in the process of translation.

Taking issue very strongly with Blum-Kulka’s explicitation hypothesis, and especially with her statement that “it might be the case that explicitation is a universal strategy inherent in the process of language mediation, as practiced by ... translators...”, Viktor Becher (2011: 4) states in the abstract of his thesis on

---

<sup>1</sup> Target Language

<sup>2</sup> Source Language

explicitation and implicitation in translation that:

Unlike most other studies of explicitation in translation, the present study did not depart from the assumption of a “translation-inherent”, universal process of explicitation (cf. Blum-Kulka’s Explicitation Hypothesis). Rather, the prediction underlying the study was that every instance of explicitation (and implicitation) can be explained as a result of lexicogrammatical and/or pragmatic factors. This prediction was essentially confirmed by the study’s findings.

The *prima facie* evidence of the present brief investigation does not support the latter rather uncompromising conclusion any more than it supports a doubtful unqualified hypothesis that explicitation, in particular redundant explicitation, is a universal characteristic inherent in all translated texts. What our evidence does suggest is that explicitation may be justified as contributing to the process of conveying fully and accurately the message of the source text in the target text and re-encoding it correctly but that explicitation may be inappropriate, redundant or misleading. The quality of a translation depends on its success as a process of cultural transfer, which is in turn dependent on the use of explicitation where appropriate and its avoidance where that is appropriate.

If one assumes that the degree of explicitation is likely to depend on the level of communicative ‘risk’, then this may be expected to vary according to text type, and to be at its highest, perhaps, in literary translations. Becher (2011: 62) considers that:

...translators have to cope with a certain kind of risk – the risk of not being understood. Accordingly, it is not surprising that translators will go to great lengths to ensure understanding, and this is where explicitation comes into play.

There is an important distinction to be made between optional or gratuitous explicitation on the one hand and obligatory, systemic explicitation on the other. Conclusions regarding the former cannot be arrived at until cases of the latter have been taken into account.

## 2. Sample Data

### 2.1 Explicitation motivated by lexicogrammatical incommensurability

Pragmatic considerations dictate that the translation must convey the message expressed in the source language using the lexicogrammatical means of the target language and applying its norms in respect of usage. As shown in the following examples (2.1.1–2.1.7), this may entail the explicitation of certain aspects of the source text using means not present in the latter; contextual factors also apply, however.

#### 2.1.1 *had heard* ><sup>3</sup> *already heard earlier*

Polish, like other Slavonic languages, has fewer verb tenses than English, though it compensates for this with a system of verbal aspects. This is a systemic difference which means that there is, for example, no distinction corresponding to that between English past and past perfect (pluperfect) tenses, so this distinction has to be rendered in Polish by other means, as for example in this case where the adverbial of time *już wcześniej* [already earlier] compensates semantically for the lack of a past perfect verb tense in Polish:

Midir **had heard** of Etain's beauty and as soon as he saw her he fell deeply in love with her and carried her off with him to Aengus Og's house at the Boyne. (Heaney 1994: 22)

Midir **słyszał już wcześniej** o krasie królowny, gdy zaś ujrzał ją na własne oczy, od razu głęboko ją pokochał i zabrał z sobą do domu Aengusa nad rzeką Boyne. (Heaney 1996: 31)

[Midir **already heard earlier** of the queen's beauty and as soon as he saw her with his own eyes he fell deeply in love with her and carried her off with him to Aengus's house on the river Boyne.]<sup>4</sup>

<sup>3</sup> The > symbol is adopted in the present paper to represent a semantic shift (i.e. addition or alteration by the translator).

<sup>4</sup> All back translations of examples from the Polish, as well as translations of quotations from Jarniewicz 2012, are my own – PJC.

### 2.1.2 Before Bres had been made > Before Bres was made

There is no hard and fast rule requiring explicitation in such cases, however. The solution is subject to the decision of the translator in a given case, most probably motivated by the level of 'risk' of misunderstanding. In this example, the English source text includes the adverbial of time *before*, and the Polish simple past tense verbs are treated as adequate to render the sense of the English past perfect in the translation when accompanied by the Polish counterpart of *before*: *zanim*.

**Before** Bres **had been made** ruler, Nuada **had been** the king of the De Danaan tribe. (Heaney 1994: 8)

**Zanim** Bres **objął** rządy nad plemieniem De Danaan, władzę królewską **sprawował** w nim Nuada. (Heaney 1996: 18)

[Before Bres **became** ruler over the De Danaan tribe, Nuada **exercised** royal authority over them.]

### 2.1.3 had gained > gained

The following sentence is a direct continuation of the above (2.1.2). Here we can observe that the context provided by the preceding explicitation obviates a need for its repetition in the immediately succeeding ones:

Nuada it was who **had gained** Ireland for his people by leading them in battle against the Fir Bolgs. (Heaney 1994: 8–9)

To właśnie on **zdobył** Irlandię dla swego ludu, wiodąc go do boju przeciwko Fir Bolgom. (Heaney 1996: 18)

[It was he who **gained** Ireland for his people, leading them into battle against the Fir Bolgs.]

### 2.1.4 had driven... taken...established > drove... took ... established

This next sentence in the text follows suit:

His powerful army **had driven** the Fir Bolgs out of Ireland, then **taken** over the island and **established** the king's stronghold at Tara. (Heaney 1994: 9)

Potężna armia Nuady **przepędziła** Fir Bolgów z wyspy, **objęła** ją w posiadanie i **zbudowała** w Tarze królewską fortecę. (Heaney 1996: 18)  
[Nuada's powerful army **drove** the Fir Bolgs from the island, **took** it over and **established** the king's stronghold at Tara.]

### 2.1.5 lost > lost

This sentence again follows on from the previously quoted ones (2.1.2–4) It shows that even in English the context is adequate to render the intended meaning without the use of a further past perfect tense:

In that battle Nuada **lost** an arm. It was severed from his body by the sword of Sreng and though he won the battle this accident cost Nuada his kingship. (Heaney 1994: 9)

Wszelako w bitwie z Fir Bolgami Nuada **stracił** rękę, odrąbaną mieczem Srenga. I choć odniósł zwycięstwo, utracił tron. (Heaney 1996: 18–19)  
[However, in the battle with the Fir Bolgs he **lost** an arm, severed by the sword of Sreng. And although he gained a victory he lost the throne.]

### 2.1.6 had foretold > once predicted to him

There are further examples in the translation under investigation of the addition of adverbials of time to compensate for the systemic difference in tense structures between English and Polish, but as we have seen, the implementation of this solution by explicitation is governed by other factors, such as the immediate context or that of the text as a whole. Here is one more example where explicitation of the past perfect meaning is implemented by the addition of an adverbial of time not explicit in the source text:

One of his druids **had foretold** that he would die at the hand of his own grandson. (Heaney 1994: 5)

Oto jeden z druidów **przepowiedział mu kiedyś**, że zginie z ręki własnego wnuka. (Heaney 1996: 15)  
[Now one of the druids **once predicted to him** that he would perish at the hand of his own grandson.]

### 2.1.7 had carried > once ... carried

Similarly:

Just as she **had carried** Cian to Eithlinn, so she carried Lugh safely back to his father. (Heaney 1994: 8)

Jak **ongiś zaniósła** Ciana do Eithlinn, tak teraz zwróciła syna ojcu. (Heaney 1996: 18)

[As **once she carried** Cian to Eithlinn, so now she returned the son to his father.]

## 2.2 Explication motivated by a sense of cultural distance

In the translation of *Over Nine Waves* by Mieczysław Godyń we can find examples of explication, or filling in of places of indeterminacy where information is implicit in the source culture but not in the target culture, which means that this information must be made explicit in the translation. Sensing that the reader of the translation may not apprehend an allusion or a feature specific to the source culture, the translator adds explanatory detail, for example:

### 2.2.1 *Fir Bolgs* > *Fir Bolg tribe*

LONG AGO the Tuatha De Danaan came to Ireland in a great fleet of ships to take the land from **the Fir Bolgs** who lived there. (Heaney 1994: 3)

Dawno, dawno temu do Irlandii przybyli na licznych okrętach Tuatha De Danaan, aby objąć w posiadanie kraj zamieszkały przez **plemię Fir Bolg**. (Heaney 1996: 13)

[LONG, LONG AGO the Tuatha De Danaan arrived in Ireland in numerous ships to take the land inhabited by **the Fir Bolg tribe**.]

The *Fir Bolgs* are presumably an unknown cultural concept to most Polish readers, though in the context it would soon become clear, so on first mention the translation justifiably adds the word *tribe* to identify them.

Jerzy Jarniewicz (2012: 58) quotes the following excerpt from a Polish

translation of James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* as an example of explicitation whereby a cultural concept unknown in the target culture, *the sailor's hornpipe*, is rendered by what is effectively an extended definition (*lively nautical dance melodies*) rather than a corresponding term in the target culture:

### 2.2.2 *hornpipe* > *lively nautical dance melodies*

His mother played on the piano the sailor's **hornpipe** for him.

Grywała mu na fortepianie **skoczne żeglarskie melodie taneczne**  
[She played for him on the piano **lively nautical dance melodies**]

Similarly, to render a rather arcane concept in Irish culture, the historical *liss*, a ringfort or circular fortified settlement, the Polish translator of *Over Nine Waves* has added an extended explicitation which is tantamount to a dictionary, or one could say encyclopaedic, definition:

### 2.2.3 *liss* > *fortress raised in the form of a heaped stone mound*

Aengus was walking outside his **liss** and the fly landed on his cloak.  
(Heaney 1994: 24)

Aengus przechadzał się właśnie przed swą **usypaną w kształt kamiennego kopca warownią**, gdy raptem usiadła mu na ramieniu szkarłatna mucha. (Heaney 1996: 33)

[Just as Aengus was walking outside his **fortress raised in the form of a heaped stone mound**, suddenly the crimson fly landed on his shoulder.]

## 2.3 Over-interpretation

Examples can be found of the arbitrary addition of information which is not made explicit in the given sentence of the source text because it is clearly derivable from the context, being explicitly mentioned elsewhere in that text, and therefore redundant.

**2.3.1** *fly* > *crimson fly*; *on his cloak* > *on his shoulder*; *walking ... and* > *Just as ... walking... suddenly*

In the sentence mentioning the *liss* (2.2.3, above), the generalised word *fly* is specified as the *crimson fly*, although the reader knows this information from the context. There are also two items of gratuitous information added here, not derived from the context but simply invented by the translator. Instead of landing on Aengus's *cloak*, the fly lands, more specifically, on his *shoulder*, and the adverb *suddenly* is also gratuitously added as yet another invented specification:

Aengus was walking outside his liss and the fly landed on his cloak. (Heaney 1994: 24)

Aengus przechadzał się **właśnie** przed swą usypaną w kształt kamiennego kopca warownią, gdy **raptem** usiadła mu na **ramieniu szkarłatna** mucha. (Heaney 1996: 33)

[**Just as** Aengus was walking outside his fortress raised in the form of a heaped stone mound, **suddenly** the **crimson** fly landed on his **shoulder**.]

Similarly, there is extensive arbitrary explicitation of how *perfect* is to be interpreted in the next two examples, with gratuitous repetition of information already known:

**2.3.2** *not perfect* > *not perfect, as he had an artificial arm*

But he was still **not perfect** and therefore not fit to be king. (Heaney 1994: 10)

Nadal jednak **nie był bez skazy, jako że rękę miał sztuczną i wciąż** nie nadawał się na króla. (Heaney 1996: 20)

[But he was still **not perfect, as he had an artificial arm**, and therefore he was **still** not fit to be king.]

**2.3.3** *perfect again* > *no longer had any imperfections to his body*

Nuada **was perfect again** and **deemed fit to be king**. (Heaney 1994: 11)



Tak więc Nuada **nie miał już żadnego uszczerbku na ciele i nic nie stało na przeszkodzie, by znów był królem.** (Heaney 1996: 21)  
[So Nuada **no longer had any imperfections to his body and there was nothing to prevent him being king again.**]

**2.3.4** *accompanied by Ceithlinn and his warriors > with Ceithlinn at his side ... at the head of his warriors.*

In this case, specific poetic associations and poetic overtones drawn from the context are made significantly more explicit. The more general original expression *accompanied by* is interpreted by the translator as *at his side*, specifying a close personal relationship with Ceithlinn and *at the head of*, specifying that he positioned himself at the head of his warriors, as their leader. Both these relationships and physical events can be inferred from the context, but the translator gratuitously makes them more specific, spelling them out for the reader instead of allowing the reader to make the inference in the way the original author intended:

Then marshalling his fearsome army and **accompanied by** Ceithlinn and his warriors, he made for the harbour. (Heaney 1994: 17)

Po czym ustawił w ordynku swą przerażającą armię i **z Ceithlinn u boku** ruszył **na czele** wojowników ku przystani. (Heaney 1996: 26)  
[Then marshalling his fearsome army and with Ceithlinn **at his side** he made for the harbour **at the head of** his warriors.]

## **2.4 Semantic narrowing**

Jarniewicz (2012: 69) concludes that “the translator is between the Scylla of over-translation and the Charybdis of under-translation”, and that “in literary translation superfluity is inevitable”. The translator’s interpretation of the source text may carry over too individualistically into the translation, robbing readers of the same opportunity to concretise the work in their own way as is presented in the original text. Jarniewicz offers examples of arbitrary concretisation in translation, involving over-interpretation, the addition of redundant information, or arbitrary selection from a range of potential meanings in a semantic field. In the above examples, there are various gratuitous semantic additions.

Sometimes, faced with an expression which has different meanings and associations in different contexts, a translator may select one of them arbitrarily,

i.e. without sufficient justification in the given context. Such arbitrary explicitation can devalue the work by erasing the ambiguity or “intriguing suggestiveness” of the original (Jarniewicz, 2012: 57). In the following example, Jarniewicz (2012: 61) comments that the Polish translator has arbitrarily selected, from the various meanings and connotations of *tumbril* (associated *inter alia* with the delivery of victims to the guillotine at the time of the French Revolution), only ‘its two-wheeledness’:

#### 2.4.1 *tumbril* > a two-wheeled cart

Something of his sad freedom  
As he rode the **tumbril**  
Should come to me

coś ze smutnej wolności, jaką  
czuł, wieziony **dwukołowym wózkiem**,  
niechby na mnie spłynęło (Seamus Heaney 1994: 46–47)

[something of the sad freedom, which  
he felt, riding in a **two-wheeled cart**,  
may trickle down to me]

#### 2.4.2 *entertainment* > songs and lively music

An echo of Jarniewicz’s hornpipe example mentioned above (2.2.2) is found in the translation of *Over Nine Waves*. Here, however, we find the reverse process, whereby the generalised, abstract concept *entertainment* is arbitrarily rendered specific, more concrete. It is interpreted, without unequivocal contextual justification, as meaning *songs and lively music*:

The poets and musicians who had been silent in Breš’s day now **entertained** the household. (Heaney 1994: 12)

Bardowie i grajkowie, którzy za panowania tyrana umilkli, teraz **rozweselali** dwór **pieśniami i skocznią muzyką**. (Heaney 1996: 22)  
[The poets and musicians who had been silent under the tyrant’s rule now **amused** the household **with songs and lively music**.]

### 2.4.3 *craftsmen* > *craftsmen expert in artistry*; *amazing feats* > *wonders of dexterity and strength*

In the following sentence the translator has rendered explicit something that is merely implicit in the text, inferring from the context that *craftsmen* are to be interpreted as *craftsmen expert in artistry* and that *amazing feats* are to be interpreted as *wonders of dexterity and strength*:

**The craftsmen** taught him to work in wood and metal, the champions and athletes performed amazing **feats** for him and invited him to join them in their training. (Heaney 1994: 8)

**Biegli w kunsztach rękodzielniczy** szkolili go w obróbce drewna i metalu, a zapaśnicy i atleci dokazywali na jego oczach  **cudów zręczności i siły** i zapraszali, by przyłączył się do ich ćwiczeń. (Heaney 1996: 18)  
[**The craftsmen expert in artistry** taught him to work in wood and metal and the wrestlers and athletes performed **wonders of dexterity and strength** for him and invited him to join them in their training.]

### 2.4.4 *horse* > *steed*

In this case, the general term *horse* is replaced by a strongly stylistically marked synonym, adding powerful poetic connotations not highlighted in this way by the original author:

Darts of light came off the young man's armour and off his weapons and the gold-embossed harness of his **horse**. (Heaney 1994: 15)

Blask bił od zbroi młodzieńca, od jego oręża i zdobionej złotem uprzęży jego **rumaka**. (Heaney 1996: 25)  
[Darts of light came off the young man's armour and off his weapons and the gold-embossed harness of his **steed**.]

### 2.4.5 *men* > *knights*

In similar fashion, the very general *men* is semantically narrowed, replaced by the specific, stylistically marked *knights*:

They had barely taken their places when another troop of **men** appeared on the horizon approaching Tara, but they were as different from Lugh and his noble followers as night is from day. (Heaney 1994: 15–16)

Ledwo zajęli miejsca, gdy na widnokręgu ukazał się następny oddział **rycerzy**, tak bardzo jednak odmiennych od Lugh'a i jego zacnych wojów jak noc od dnia. (Heaney 1996: 25)

[They had barely taken their places when another troop of **knights** appeared on the horizon approaching Tara, but they were as different from Lugh and his noble knights as night is from day.]

#### 2.4.6 *warrior* > *notable knight*

The term *warrior* already carries certain poetic connotations, but here the translator has added a further intensifying attribute, not explicit in the original:

I am a **warrior**. (Heaney 1994: 13)

Jestem **znamienitym rycerzem**. (Heaney 1996: 23)

[I am a **notable knight**.]

### 2.5 Distortion by over-interpretation or misinterpretation

As we have seen, over-interpretation frequently involves selection from a range of possible semantic components or their addition, usually but not always derived from the context. Sometimes, it actually involves distortion of the meaning, possibly as a result of misunderstanding, e.g.

#### 2.5.1 *menial* > *most arduous*

He stripped the leaders of their wealth and power and made them do **menial** tasks. (Heaney 1994: 9)

Wyzuł przywódców plemiennych z bogactwa i władzy i wyznaczał ich do **najcięższych** prac. (Heaney 1996: 19)

[He stripped the leaders of their wealth and power and made them do **the most arduous** tasks.]

The translator has over-interpreted, i.e. misinterpreted, the adjective *menial*, distorting its meaning: *menial* (i.e. *demeaning, degrading*) tasks are interpreted as *the most arduous tasks*, reading into the target text semantic components suggesting hard labour not actually present in the source text. The translator may distort the original author's intention in respect of the narrative, passing on a misinterpretation to the reader of the translation:

### 2.5.2 *the power to slay his grandfather > the power which was to cause the death of his grandfather*

Moreover, though he did not know it, he had within him **the power to slay his grandfather**, Balor of the Evil Eye. (Heaney 1994: 8)

Poza tym, choć o tym nie wiedział, nosił w sobie **moc, od której miał zginąć jego dziad**, Balor o Złym Oku. (Heaney 1996: 18)

[Moreover, though he did not know it, he had within him **the power which was to cause the death of his grandfather**, Balor of the Evil Eye.]

The altered narrative function in the above change from the (potential) *power to slay* to the (foretold) *power which was to cause the death* is a case of semantic addition which involves the gratuitous foreshadowing of an event, interpreting it as actually occurring in the future rather than as something that is expressed as merely potential in the original text.

## 2.6 Explicitation of metaphorical expressions

### 2.6.1 *a man's head on a table... moving... > a man ... giving the impression that his head...*

Under the category of explicitation which Jerzy Jarniewicz refers to as *From Metaphor to Comparison*, the following example is offered from a Polish translation of Michael Ondaatje's *The English Patient*, (quoted in Jarniewicz 2012: 68):

He saw a **man's head on a table moving towards him**. (Ondaatje 1993: 9)

Ujrzał mężczyznę zbliżającego się do niego ruchem tak posuwistym, **jak-**

**by jego głowa przesuwiała się po stole** (Ondaatje 1997: 15)  
[He saw a man moving towards him with a gliding motion, **giving the impression that his head was sliding across a table.**]

### 2.6.2 screamed > screamed with a human voice

In the following example from *Over Nine Waves*, it is equally bizarre in English as well as in Polish that a stone should *scream*. The translator has added the prepositional phrase *with a human voice*, functioning as an adverbial qualifier. The original surrealistic image is replaced with a realistic representation of how a stone could be conceived of as screaming, i.e. like a human being. In this way, a striking metaphor becomes a down-to-earth comparison with a phenomenon in the real world, detracting from the stylistic value of the text:

From Falias they brought Lia Fail, the Stone of Destiny. They brought it to Tara and **it screamed** when a rightful king of Ireland sat on it. (Heaney 1994: 3)

Z Falias wzięli Lia Fail, czyli Głaz Przeznaczenia. Przenieśli go potem do Tary, a **głaz krzyczał ludzkim głosem**, ilekroć zasiadł na nim prawowity król Irlandii. (Heaney 1996: 13)

[From Falias they brought Lia Fail, that is to say the Stone of Destiny. They brought it to Tara and **the stone screamed with a human voice** whenever a rightful king of Ireland sat on it.]

### 2.6.3 a net of fish > like a fishing net

Jarniewicz (2012: 67) quotes a further example from *The English Patient*, pointing out that the translator has interpreted the metaphor *hauling a net(-ful) of fish* as *like a fishing net*:

Hauling the gray sheet, a winding cloth, a net of fish. (Ondaatje 1993: 59)

Zgarnęła szare płótno, wlokąc za sobą, jak skrzyconą szmatę [*sic*], jak sieć na ryby. (Ondaatje 1997: 62)

[She hauled the grey canvas, dragging it behind her like a crumpled rag, **like a fishing net.**]

#### 2.6.4 boatload of sailors > his crew

In *Over Nine Waves* we can find a similar example, where the stylistic impact of the expressive *boatload of sailors* is lost in translation, rendered blandly as the explicitation *his crew*.

Fine and delicate though the thread looked, Bran and his **boatload of sailors** found themselves being pulled slowly but surely to land. (Heaney 1994: 60–61)

Choć nić wyglądała na cienką i delikatną, Bran i **załoga** poczuli, że powoli, lecz nieubłaganie zbliżają się do brzegu. (Heaney 1996: 67)  
[Although the thread looked fine and delicate, Bran and **his crew** felt that they were slowly but surely approaching the shore.]

#### 2.6.5 Cuchulainn outshone > nobody could equal Cuchulainn

There is a stylistic loss in the explicitation of the metaphorical expression *Cuchulainn outshone everyone* as *nobody could equal Cuchulainn*:

They took turns on the ropes, displaying their skills, but Cuchulainn **outshone** everyone. (Heaney 1994; 90)

Kolejno wstępowali na ring, by pochwalić się swymi niezwykłymi umiejętnościami, lecz nikt **nie mógł równać się** z Cuchulainnem. (Heaney 1996: 98)  
[They took turns on the ropes, to show off their exceptional skills, but nobody **could equal** Cuchulainn.]

#### 2.6.6 had none to touch it > could not boast of anything similar.

Similarly, there is a stylistic loss in this explicitation of the metaphorical expression *none to touch it*:

in Aillil's herd there was a magnificent bull called the White-Horned and Medb **had none to touch it**. (Heaney 1994: 126)

Aillil miał w swoim stadzie wspaniałego byka zwanego Białorogim. Medb

zaś **nie mogła się poszczycić niczym podobnym.** (Heaney 1996: 132)  
[Aillil had in his herd a magnificent bull called the White-Horned and  
Medb **could not boast of anything similar.**]

### 3. Conclusion

In the translation of *Over Nine Waves* investigated, a number of examples of explicitation filling in places of indeterminacy in the source text were identified. Such cases of explicitation fall into a number of categories. They may be the result of systemic incommensurability between the source language and the target language, or they may be motivated by a need to make explicit certain culture-specific information which is implicit in the source language but not in the target language. As such, these are in principle legitimate, indeed obligatory outcomes of a successful translation process, as long as they do not introduce redundant semantic information. However, examples are also found of gratuitous addition of information which is redundant because it has been mentioned elsewhere in the source text (but not in the given unit of translation) and even of information which is neither explicit nor implicit in the source text as a whole. There are also cases of gratuitous or questionable interpretation, involving semantic narrowing or revealing actual misunderstanding of the source. In such cases, the translation fails to convey the true message of the source text. Given the impact of translation quality on the reception of (for example) Irish literature in Polish translation, these examples suggest that further research into explicitation in literary translation practice, to identify cases of its contribution to successful cultural transfer and of certain imperfections in that process, would be a worthwhile subject for closer study.

### References

- Bassnett, Susan (2002) *Translation Studies* (third edition), London: Routledge.
- Becher, Viktor (2011) *Explicitation and Implicitation in Translation*, PhD dissertation, Universität Hamburg.
- Blum-Kulka, Shoshana (1986) 'Shifts of Cohesion and Coherence in Translation', in Juliane House and Shoshana Blum-Kulka (eds) *Interlingual and Intercultural Communication: Discourse and Cognition in Translation and Second Language Acquisition Studies*, Tübingen: Gunter Narr, 17–35.
- Hahn, Daniel (2013) 'Translation Q&A', *The Stinging Fly*, 25(2): 44–45.



- Heaney, Marie (1994) *Over Nine Waves: A Book of Irish Legends*, London & Boston: Faber and Faber.
- Heaney, Marie (1996) *Za dziewiątą falą: księga legend irlandzkich* [Beyond the Ninth Wave: A Book of Irish Legends], transl. Mieczysław Godyń, Kraków: Znak.
- Heaney, Seamus (1994) *44 Wiersze* [44 poems], transl. Stanisław Barańczak, Kraków: Znak.
- Ingarden, Roman (1973) *The Cognition of the Literary Work of Art*, transl. Ruth Ann Crowley and Kenneth R. Olson, Evanston: Northwestern University Press.
- Jarniewicz, Jerzy (2012) 'Horror vacui, czyli poetyka nadmiaru w przekładzie literackim', [*Horror vacui, or the poetics of superfluity in literary translation*] in Jerzy Jarniewicz, *Gościnność słowa: Szkice o przekładzie literackim* [The Hospitality of Words: Sketches on Literary Translation], Kraków: Znak, 52–69.
- Joyce, James (1992) *Portret artysty z czasów młodości* [Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man], transl. Zygmunt Allan, Bydgoszcz: Wydawnictwo Pomorze.
- Levý, Jiří (2011) *The Art of Translation*, transl. Patrick Corness; ed. with a critical foreword by Zuzana Jettmarová, Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins.
- Ondaatje, Michael (1993) *The English Patient*, Toronto: McClelland & Stewart.
- Ondaatje, Michael (1997) *Angielski pacjent* [The English Patient], transl. Waław Sadkowski, Warszawa: Świat Książki.
- Vinay, J.-P. & Darbelnet, J. (1969) *Stylistique comparée du français et de l'anglais: méthode de traduction*, Nouvelle édition revue et corrigée, Paris, Bruxelles, Montréal: Didier.



# Angst and Expectations: The First Stage Production of Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* in Poland

Barry Keane

University of Warsaw

In 1956, Poland, under the leadership of Władysław Gomułka, managed to wrest meaningful autonomy from Moscow, and within a short space of time the country was transformed from a minion to an independent state run along one-party socialist grounds, which in turn was henceforth free to carry out its affairs within the ever-watchful sphere of Soviet influence. This landmark achievement is often referred to as the October Thaw or Revolution, and almost immediately Poland's cultural life began to look west, even if for many the most important aspect of this political sea-change was that Party regalia disappeared from the streets, more music was played on the radio, and people's social and cultural life improved greatly (Libera 2009: 4–9). What is more, there is much to suggest that there was also a thrust at this very time to embrace contemporary French literature as a way of hailing this perceived new beginning. One illustration of this can be gauged by the fact that Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz's literary journal *Twórczość* [*Creativity*] gave over its November issue to contemporary French writing, publishing a declaration which had been formulated by writers gathered in Warsaw's Pen Club on October 23rd, and which read, "After years of lies and hurt, a time of hope has come"<sup>5</sup> (Drewnowski 2004: 324). This pronouncement was openly supported by Iwaszkiewicz, who boldly asserted, "Yes, socialism, but our own socialism; yes, friendship with the Soviet Union, but on the basis of equality"<sup>6</sup> (ibid.). As we shall see, in anticipating and then witnessing the spectacle of Beckett's tramps, angst and expectation would prove to be the strangest of bedfellows.

In that very same heady month of October, dramatist Adam Tarn produced the maiden issue of the journal *Dialog*, whose aim was to bring western plays to Poland by first introducing them in translation. Three years previously, at the very end of 1953, Tarn had made his theatrical debut in Warsaw's Teatr Współczesny [Contemporary Theatre] with his play *Zwykła sprawa* [*An Ordinary*

<sup>5</sup> „Po latach kłamstw i krzywd, nastaje czas nadziei”. All translations from Polish are by the author – BK.

<sup>6</sup> „Tak socjalizm, ale nasz własny socjalizm, tak, przyjaźń z Związkiem Radzieckim, ale na zasadzie równości”.

*Affair*]. The play was directed by Erwin Axer, who in turn was assisted by Jan Kreczmar, the future director of Beckett's *Waiting for Godot*. For the unproven dramatist, the experience of collaborating with directors, actors and set designers was a revelatory apprenticeship as he came to understand how a text evolved from the page to the living truth that theatrical drama aspired to be:

And then, seeing the arduous work of the director entailing the precise positioning of the actors, listening to their discussions and his explanations, bringing this and that into a discussion – only then did I understand what stagecraft is all about. Precisely this! Collective work. Which, when translated into the language of the theatre means: the patience of the director + the patience of the author + the patience of the actor, and then set design.<sup>1</sup> (Tarn 1951)

From the outset, *Dialog* determined to take a programmatic approach to the featured plays in that they were never translations of translations, as Tarn felt this had too often been the case in Polish theatrical tradition. Furthermore, translators were also expected to provide an informative introduction to the play, which represented a significant enhancement in their literary profile. *Dialog* staff would rigorously check the standards of these translated plays, and soon acquired a skill for spotting recurring weaknesses and idiosyncrasies. However, the translators did not always appreciate critical feedback, and soon Tarn found that an unexpected aspect of his job was contending with the tirades of piqued contributors (Żmij-Zielińska 2009).

Initially, Tarn set out the agenda of the early issues, and commensurately farmed out commissions to translators in waiting. In this he was ably helped by the fact that the circle of translators was so small that Tarn knew who was working on a particular project at any given time and could forward-plan issues accordingly. One figure whom he was particularly anxious to have attached to the new journal was Julian Rogoziński, who to this day counts as one of Poland's greatest exponents of French literature, and who at the time was certainly the most eligible person for the task of translating Beckett.

In the 1930s Rogoziński studied Polish and Iberian studies at Warsaw

---

<sup>1</sup> „I wtedy, widząc mozolną pracę reżysera nad właściwym ustawieniem aktorów, przysłuchując się ich dyskusji i jego wyjaśnieniom, sam wnosząc to i owo do dyskusji – wtedy dopiero zrozumiałem, co to jest warsztat sceniczny. Właśnie! Praca kolektywna. Co przełożone na język teatru znaczy: cierpliwość reżysera + cierpliwość autora + cierpliwość aktora, oraz dekoracje”. Where no page number is given the full text of the item can be found by using the search engine (with the article's title) at <http://www.e-teatr.pl/pl/index.html>.

University, and during this time he began translating writers such as Balzac and Apollinaire. Over the following twenty years, he dedicated himself to the translation of large swathes of the French literary canon. After the war, he served as a diplomat in France and Belgium, but by the mid-1950s he had embarked on a new life in the provincial town of Kielce. Rogoziński marked this new phase by focusing on more recent works from France, and principally the great triumvirate of Sartre, Camus, and Beckett.

However, in spite of having secured the services of a top literary translator for an exciting dramatic piece, Tarn allowed Beckett's play to be published in extract form only, and the translation took up a paltry nine pages of the journal. This was either because the translation was incomplete at the time or because issues of space had not been settled upon. At any rate, Tarn later regretted not having published the play in its entirety, ruefully accepting that a historic opportunity had been missed. On the basis of this experience, Tarn determined that henceforth plays would never be published in fragmentary form. It was to be all or nothing: "As for extracts, well they never again featured in our journal"<sup>2</sup> (Żmij-Zielińska 2009).

Rogoziński's introduction to the play for *Dialog*, unremarkably entitled 'Od tłumacza' ['From the Translator'], compared the inertia and hopelessness of Estragon and Vladimir to the fates of the dramatic characters as conceived by Sartre, although Rogoziński pointed to the fact that unlike Sartre or Kafka, Beckett's characters were unable to push back or move on. He also confidently stated that Godot was indeed God: "Godot – to zapewne Bóg", a widely-held contention that Beckett had in fact dismissed earlier: "if by Godot I had meant God I would [have] said God, and not Godot" (Knowlson 1997: 412). However, Rogoziński argued that the Biblical allusions tipped the scales in favour of Godot being, in fact, God. His other argument, clearly more tenuous, if not a touch bizarre, was that Beckett was Irish and that Ireland was the Island of Saints, whereas in the camp of the sinners stood the giant figure of Jonathan Swift. Here Rogoziński may have been alluding to Swift's grotesque work, *A Modest Proposal*, which critics have acknowledged as having been an informative piece for Beckett's writing of *Watt* (Fletcher 1962, et alia).

In the run-up to the performance of *Waiting for Godot*, critics expressed their consternation at the way in which writers like Beckett had conceived of Man as being unable to speak up for himself, and further still, they decried his inability to give Life some moral framework. However, though they also regarded the play as a declaration of the end of western capitalism, there was some establishment nervousness that the play would somehow destabilize the kind of social harmony

<sup>2</sup> „Co zaś do fragmentów, nigdy się więcej w naszym piśmie się powtórzyły”.

that Poland's socialist experiment had supposedly achieved – or more pointedly, that it was somehow an allusion to the perceived hopelessness of the individual living under communism (Wyżyńska 2001).

One critic who defended the play was card-carrying, party-faithful theatre critic Jan Alfred Szczepański, who wrote for the *Trybuna Ludu* [*The People's Tribune*]. Szczepański penned a defence of *Waiting for Godot* when it was three months into its run. His article is particularly interesting because it sheds some light on censorial decision-making in Poland. Indeed, on the basis of the critic's account, it seems that the process was a great deal more transparent and democratic than many today would suppose. Szczepański had sat on a commission just prior to the premiere of *Waiting for Godot*, which had gathered to gauge the appropriateness of a batch of recent west European films due for general release. During the course of the meeting, one delegate took a bellicose stance against what was a seemingly inoffensive Italian film. He was promptly challenged by other participants to explain the reasons for his objections, to which he responded with a hatful of platitudes, the choicest of which was “you can harm people who are kept going on milk, if you suddenly give them goose or turkey”.<sup>3</sup> However, this stance was dismissed out of hand, the film was given its release, and Szczepański happily reported that cinemagoers were not suffering any problems with indigestion. In spite of the fact that in this instance cool heads won the day, Szczepański complained that his like-minded peers were constantly having to counter arguments that Polish audiences were not mature enough to cope with the corrupting influences of western culture. However, as Szczepański claimed, this anti-intellectual stance cut little ice with many leading cultural figures who were looking to present Beckett within the context of wider European literary and cultural traditions, of which mosaic Poland constituted an essential piece. Indeed, in as much as Beckett had brought the absurd to the Kierkegaardian outlook, so the critic argued, the Irish dramatist also fit in with the Polish traditions of existential angst which had had their beginnings in the era of the fin-de-siècle Young Poland (*Młoda Polska*) movement and which saw its pre-war literary acme in the 1930s with avant-garde writers such as Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz (Witkacy), Bruno Schulz, and Witold Gombrowicz, who had merged existential musings with grotesque motifs (Drewnowski 2004: 216-219). Indeed, elsewhere from among the ranks of critics discussing Beckett, it was noted that Gombrowicz had declared in his personal writing that existentialism was an unavoidable characteristic of the human condition, and that it could not simply be brushed aside. In fact, it was necessary to confront existentialism and emerge victorious:

---

<sup>3</sup> „Ludziom tak długo trzymanym na mleczku, może zaszkodzić nagle podana gęś lub indyczka”.

If Polish Catholicism or Polish Marxism fence themselves off through their foolish disregard, they will become a backstreet, a tenement yard, a backwater. It isn't possible to step over existentialism, you must conquer it.<sup>4</sup> (Dolecki 1957)

We may imagine that this debate on expectancy must have been raging about Kreczmar as he assiduously prepared *Godot* for performance. However, for Kreczmar, the play could not be so easily pigeonholed. When asked by Swiss writer Walter Weideli, if Poland was waiting for its Godot, Kreczmar said unhesitatingly that it was, or more pointedly, that the Polish people were. However, the director prefaced this with the oxymoronic notion that waiting is a protection from death (Kreczmar 1989: 356). For the director, this was the cathartic revelation that the play offered. What was more, for Kreczmar, Beckett, in pointing to the absurdity of life, was not doing so as an end in itself, but to expose the absurdity of the judgements and values upon which people built their lives. Following that line of thought, it made no sense to look for a rationale to anything, but to simply accept existence without the anticipation of understanding. Here Kreczmar proposed Pascal's agnostic wager as a reasonably acceptable position to adopt (ibid. 371–372). Looking to encapsulate what he felt about Beckett from a textual and philosophical perspective, Kreczmar stated that the dramatist was a minimalist dealing with big things, who commensurately had revealed a condition that was not worth taking much trouble over (ibid. 372–373). However, Kreczmar chose to believe that people's subjective hopes would always leave a chink of light, signifying hope. This hope brought the director to the conclusion that ultimately it is better to live than to end up swinging by the neck at the end of a rope tied to the leafless branch of a withered tree.

Kreczmar remained principally wedded to the notion of *Godot* as a meta-theatrical event, which was neither a proscriptive nor a didactic piece, and which therefore opened the human condition to subjective interpretation. To this end, the director interpreted the play as a circus spectacle, wherein Vladimir and Gogo were made up as clowns and not tramps, and in keeping with their roles they would trip over the props in order to negate the illusion of reality. Indeed, Eberhardt (1957), who had seen the Paris production, approved of Kreczmar's costume changes, having preferred also the delivery of the Polish actors to the French cast, who, according to the critic, had spoken as if they had had stones in their mouths. Eberhardt, in turn, favoured the Warsaw production as it proposed characters with different individual

<sup>4</sup> „Jeśli polski katolicyzm czy też polski marksizm odgradzą się od tego niemądrym lekceważeniem, staną się zaułkiem, podwórkiem, prowincją. Egzystencjalizmu nie można przeskoczyć, trzeba go przezwyciężyć”.

styles and, what is more important from the perspective of the play's ambition to represent a human drama, he felt that the actors had managed to arouse some semblance of sympathy for their predicament. Gogo, for example, evoked the persona of a provincial theatrical director or actor who had fallen on hard times and was wondering where the next job was to come from. Didi, in turn, called to mind a fallen intellectual who was grappling with forgotten facts and impaired deductive skills. Pozzo's journey from Paris to Warsaw saw him transformed from a brutal landlord to a burlesque English overlord, wearing red women's trousers and replete with homosexual overtures. Lucky in his Polish incarnation as played by Adam Mularczyk was not the ghostly and trembling figure of the Parisian production, but rather a stone-faced peasant resigned to his lot in life:

Here, however, we have a circus: one clown cannot pull his shoe off, the other is helping him, both end up falling down, one clown gives the other a kick, they don't hear one another, they scream, they mispronounce words, they chase one another, they trip up, they invent games, and they even juggle with bowler hats.<sup>5</sup> (Kijowski 1957)

It seems also that like a Laurel and Hardy movie, the clownish gags filled the silences and made the time pass in a more pleasant fashion. However, for Eberhardt, if anything tipped the scales in favour of the Parisian production it was the fact that the Polish production was almost too pleasant an affair. This he put down to the translation, which in his opinion had been too smooth, and had failed to impart the coarseness of the original.

On the night of the premiere – January 25, 1957 – and for the following two weeks, audiences who attended the play were subjected to what was frequently described as a disorienting experience. Indeed, the initial reception almost mirrored that of the scenes in Paris and elsewhere, in that the reaction of the audience almost became a secondary event, with people turning their heads and sharing bemused looks (Treugutt 1957). Frequently people left after the first act, unable to take the starkness of what was being proposed. However, beyond the plain fact that the play had upset some patrons, critic Karolina Beylin, writing for *Ekspres Wieczorny*, thought the spectacle had potentially launched a generation of young people with “notions about themselves” (Beylin 1957). Apparently, Beylin was particularly appalled when she heard a young couple enthusiastically praising the play aloud as they were shuffling to the exit. Beylin couldn't figure how they could have arrived

<sup>5</sup> „Tu zaś cyrk: jeden błazen nie może ściągnąć buta, drugi mu pomaga, obydwaj się przewracają, błazen błaznowi daje kopsa, nie słyszą się nawzajem, wrzeszczą, przekręcają słowa, gonią się, podstawiają sobie nogi, wymyślają zabawy, nawet żonglują melonikami”.



at such a favourable judgement, facetiously suggesting that the poster should have come with a health warning for people suffering from nerves or who might come down with a bout of existential angst. We are all, the critic maintained, waiting for a Godot, but that did not mean that people necessarily wished to be reminded of the fact. Sometimes denial or ignorance were better ways of proceeding in life. It has to be said, however, that Beylin did actually review the play favourably.

Undeniably, the overall critical reception of the play was exceptionally positive, with many reviewers proclaiming that Kreczmar had surpassed the Paris production. Indeed, many commented on the fact that the play seemed to grow in popularity as its run continued, with many theatregoers choosing to attend a second and third time in order to listen more carefully to the Irish humour: “A humour-filled atmosphere amongst the audience, some giggle all the time. Perhaps it’s going to do well?”<sup>6</sup> (Treugutt 1957). Furthermore, it was generally accepted that the actors greatly improved on their performances as time went on, and they began to explore better the play’s comedic potential (Czuliński 1957). However, having said that, there were rumblings in some quarters that it was difficult to see how the play could contribute to the development of theatrical values other than reaffirming that the grotesque was ensconced as a staple of Poland’s avant-garde outlook (Koziański 1957). Indeed, the same critic wondered if other theatres should not consider performing the play in a more stark and realistic way, his general thesis being that the play still left plenty of room for experimentation: “Generally speaking all experiments with this play can be exciting – both for artists and for spectators”<sup>7</sup> (ibid). Beckett would not have approved of the sentiment.

## References

- Beylin, Karolina (1957) ‘Czekając na Godota’ [‘Waiting for Godot’], *Ekspres Wieczorny* (January 25).
- Czuliński, Jeremi (1957) ‘Francuska Awangarda’ [‘The French Avantgarde’], *Żołnierz Wolności* 35 (February 10).
- Dolecki, Zbigniew (1957) ‘Godot czeka najdłużej’ [‘Godot Waits the Longest’], *Kierunki* 8 (February 24).
- Drewnowski, Tadeusz (2004) *Literatura Polska 1944–1989. Próba scalenia. Obiegi – wzorce – styl*, Kraków: TAIWPN Universitatis.
- Eberhardt, Konrad (1957) ‘Dramat o ludzkiej bezradności’ [‘A Drama about Human Helplessness’], *Sygnaly* 9 (March 3).

<sup>6</sup> „Na sali nastrój żartobliwy, poniektórzy chichoczą bez przerwy. Może to i kasowa sztuka?”

<sup>7</sup> „W ogóle wszelkie eksperymenty z tą sztuką mogą być pasjonujące – dla artystów i dla widzów”.

- Fletcher, John (1962) 'Samuel Beckett et Jonathan Swift: vers une étude comparée', *Littératures X: Annales publiées par la Faculté des Lettres de Toulouse* 11.
- Kijowski, Andrzej (1957) 'Koszmar czasu' ['Time's Nightmare'], *Teatr* 7 (April 1).
- Koziński, Kazimierz (1957) 'Godot w Warszawie' ['Godot in Warsaw'], *Przekrój* 622 (March 3).
- Kreczmar, Jerzy (1989) *Stare nieprzestarzałe* [*Old Things with Life in Them Yet*], Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy.
- Knowlson, James (1996) *Damned to Fame: The Life of Samuel Beckett*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Libera, Antoni (2009) *Godot i jego cień* [*Godot and his Shadow*], Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak.
- Szczepański, Jan Alfred (1957) 'Na przykładzie: Czekając na Godota' ['Waiting for Godot as an Example'], *Trybuna Ludu* 103 (April 14).
- Tarn, Adam (1951) 'Lekcja warsztatu scenicznego' ['A Lesson in Scenography'], *Teatr* 1.
- Treugutt, Stefan (1957) 'Godot', *Przegląd Kulturalny* (January 25).
- Wyżyńska, Dorota (2001) 'Godot w garnizonie' ['Godot in the Garrison'], *Gazeta Wyborcza* (September 9).
- Żmij-Zielińska, Danuta (2009) 'Z młodości *Dialogu*' ['The Early Days of *Dialog*'], *Dialog* 2, (February 19).

# **Memory, Communism, and Foreign Words in Julia Holewińska's *Foreign Bodies*: Balancing Foreignising and Domesticating Strategies in a Production by Polish Theatre Ireland**

**Kasia Lech**

Canterbury Christ Church University

This article engages with selected translation strategies undertaken to transfer a Polish play by Julia Holewińska, *Ciała Obce* [Foreign Bodies], into the context of Irish theatre. We look at Polish Theatre Ireland's production of the play (directed by Lianne O'Shea and presented in Dublin's Project Arts Centre in 2013), focusing on linguistic and cultural aspects of the translation and, in particular, issues concerning the memories of communism in Poland.

The analysis is framed by Lawrence Venuti's theorisation of translation processes. Venuti defines two general types of translation strategies: 'foreignisation' and 'domestication'. The former "resists dominant target-language cultural values so as to signify the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text" (2008: 23). The latter, by avoiding foreign words and using vocabulary and ideas that the target audience are familiar with, makes for a comfortable encounter between target audience and translated text (2008: 21). Here we reflect on the negotiations and tensions between these strategies in the translating, staging, and presenting of *Foreign Bodies* in Ireland. We propose that by using both strategies to transfer memories of communism in Poland to the Irish stage, the production can facilitate an intercultural discussion on gender in the Polish and Irish contexts and allow multicultural audiences different levels of engagement.

This is important because Holewińska's play tells the story of Adam, a hero of the Solidarity movement who, after the fall of communism in 1989, undergoes sex reassignment surgery and becomes Ewa. Ewa is recognised neither by the Solidarity movement nor by her friends and family. Her own son (Adam was married and has a son) refuses to call her 'mother' and says that his father is dead. In short, Ewa is written out of history. Holewińska's play, set in Poland pre- and post-1989, alternates between both periods to explore issues of transgenderism, transsexualism and, in a broader sense, aspects of the performativity of gender and the imprisonment of an individual in two political systems, as well as within the rules imposed by society. The scenes involving Adam (in pre-1989 Poland) are

indicated by the letter A, (1A, 2A, 3A etc.) while those with Ewa (post-1989) are indicated by E: (1E, 2E, etc.). Thus the play is structured in the following way: 1A, 1E, 2A, 2E, 3A, 3E, etc.

As well as alternating between two different eras, the play switches between two different styles. This is already evident in the *dramatis personae*. Some of the characters are named: Adam, Ewa, Maryjka (Adam's wife), Lech (Adam/Ewa's and Maryjka's son), and Adam's/Ewa's friends (Jadwiga, Zofia, Rysiek, etc.). However, other characters are presented according to their dress and the roles signified by their costumes: 'Pan w kitlu' [Man in smock], 'Pani w kitlu' [Woman in smock], 'Pan w mundurze' [Man in uniform], 'Pan w sutannie' [Man in cassock]. This distinction encourages the perception of the named characters as 'human beings', while the characters presented through their professions may be perceived as certain types, roles or even as stock characters, whose behaviour is pre-determined by the uniforms they wear. Their roles function as a form of mask.

This is linked to the way the scenes are written. The speeches of the named characters are quite mimetic in style and often carry a high level of emotion. For example, Adam's fight with Maryjka, after the latter finds out that Adam is transgender (6A), and the dying Ewa's conversation with Lech (6E) show the psychological complexity of the characters' relationships and their struggle to accept one another's point of view. In the scene with Lech ('Leszek' in the diminutive), Ewa asks:

*Ewa:* Do I make you sick? *Lech does not reply.* Leszek, I had to do it.

*Lech:* You had to get your tits done? Damn, it stinks in here!

*Ewa:* I wouldn't have been me otherwise.

*Lech:* So you're you now?

*Ewa:* Sometimes I don't know who I am anymore. This tumour. There's a tumour growing inside of me. Some kind of foreign body. Another foreign body. Get it? That body was like this tumour. My manhood was like a cancer. It was eating me up. A foreign body.

*Lech:* You shouldn't have got involved with Mother.

*Ewa:* But I loved your mother.

*Lech:* You lied to her for so many years. You slept with her. You got her pregnant. If you were a woman you should have been turned on by boys, right?

*Ewa:* It's not that simple.

[transl. Artur Zapałowski]

These 'mimetic' scenes alternate with clearly grotesque scenes involving Adam and Ewa and the masked characters. For example, the scene involving Adam and 'Woman in smock' (7A) presents Adam at a clinic to have sex reassignment surgery. The scene makes no attempt to seem real. Instead of a medical examination, the Woman in smock performs a free-association game:

*Woman in smock:* Tomato or cucumber?

*Adam:* Tomato.

*Woman in smock:* Shopping or reading?

[transl. Zapałowski]

Instead of a professional description of the procedure she delivers marketing babble: "Why does Belgium have the best chocolate? Every country excels at something. When it comes to tits, Thailand beats all the others hands down" [transl. Zapałowski]. On top of this, Holewińska employs the Chorus convention: dialogues and monologues involving Ewa and Adam are intertwined with comments from a Female and Male Chorus. The play on the one hand facilitates emotional engagement with the events during 'mimetic' scenes, while on the other hand it stresses its own theatricality during the formal, grotesque sections.

In performance this heightened theatricality has the potential to highlight the duality of the actor's identity as performer and character, as explained by Bert O. States (1985: 119). In other words, heightened theatricality can serve as a reminder that the actors are performing their roles; they are not their characters. In a hypothetical production of Holewińska's play, heightened theatricality can foreground the fact that the behaviour of the actors playing 'masked' characters is predetermined by the roles they are playing. By extension, the audience realises that the actors playing named characters are also performing. Consequently, it becomes clear that the behaviour of 'named' characters is also predetermined by the roles they play within society. In so doing, the production can facilitate a critical discussion about how much of the audience's behaviour (both as a collective group watching the show and as individuals in their everyday lives) is predetermined by the roles imposed on them by society and the social conventions of performing them. This is crucial because the play engages deeply with the performativity of gender, Judith Butler's idea that one is not simply a 'body', but one performs one's body. The gendered identity is created by the relationship between the performance of the body itself and the pre-existing conventions of how the body should act its gender and how it should be perceived (1990: 271-5).

However, for the audience to relate this to their own lives, the production

of Holewińska's play must make the circumstances of the named characters believable. Because of the play's timeframe and its numerous cultural references, which will obviously be foreign to most Irish audiences, this is extremely hard. The reality of communist Poland may seem to non-Polish audiences as grotesque as the stylised scenes of the play. In short, memories of communism in Poland are crucial in the encounter with the text. This might suggest a need for Venuti's domestication strategy in translation to allow easier audience engagement.

As noted earlier, the production that we are examining was presented by Polish Theatre Ireland (PTI). This company, founded in Dublin in 2008 by Anna Wolf, Helen McNulty, and the author of this article, aims to bring together Polish and non-Polish audiences in Ireland by challenging non-Polish audiences to "interact with the Polish diaspora in Ireland" while at the same time offering "an authentic experience that resonates in the lives of Polish people" (Polish Theatre Ireland, 2008). For that to happen in the production of Holewińska's play, the staged reality of communist Poland must be credible for both Polish and non-Polish audiences. This was repeatedly highlighted during rehearsals by the director, Lianne O'Shea. During a Q&A with Julia Holewińska after the opening night of the PTI production (Project Arts Centre, July 24th 2013) O'Shea also stressed her desire for the staging to resonate with Irish audiences while retaining its Polish roots (so that Polish audiences could still identify with the text and the production). Involving Polish audiences was difficult as the production was staged in English and the entire cast, except the author of this article, were Irish. The following discussion analyses the translation strategies undertaken by the translator, Artur Zapałowski, to transfer Holewińska's text to the Irish stage. It argues that a combination and interplay of foreignisation and domestication can become a performative tool to engage wider audiences and can facilitate an intercultural discussion and various levels of engagement.

In the present context, translation is understood as both a process and an end product that is not only linguistic, but also cultural. Translation can also be used to refer to the processes involved in the transfer of the written text to the performance. Polish and Irish artists were involved in this transfer: Artur Zapałowski (Polish) was commissioned by PTI to translate the play; the director was Lianne O'Shea (Irish); the dramaturge was Kasia Lech (Polish, the author of this article); the producer was Anna Wolf (Polish); the graphic designer was Beata Baryłka (Polish); and the actors were all Irish (except for the author): Amy Therese Flood, Anthony Kihinan, Ciarán Coogan, Fiona Lucia McGarry, Kasia Lech, John Currivan, Paul Travers, Shane Connolly, and Sonya O'Donoghue. Although the process involved close collaboration as a team, all decisions regarding the

translation made in the rehearsal room had to be accepted by the director Lianne O'Shea. This must be borne in mind since our analysis, written from the point of view of an actor and dramaturge involved in the production, rarely engages with direct directorial decisions. First, however, it is important to look at Zapałowski's translation.

The translation uses clearly domesticating strategies to bring the reality of communism closer to English-speaking audiences. Cultural references are usually accompanied by clarifications. For example, in the first scene the characters talk about their friend Gienek being in prison. One of the female characters, Zofia, says: "Wiecie, że Gienka wsadzili" [literally: "You do know that they locked up Gienek"] (1A). Adam answers: "Gdzie jest? Na Białołęce?" [literally: "Where is he? In Białołęka?"]. In Zapałowski's translation Adam replies to Zofia: "Where is he? Białołęka prison?" This one-word difference is extremely important. Białołęka prison in Warsaw is one of Poland's best known prisons and many people interned under martial law in 1981 ended up there. For someone who understands the connotations of 'Białołęka' the message is clear: Gienek is probably in prison for political reasons. The play opens with the characters talking conspiratorially about their hatred of communism, so their political stance is clear. That Białołęka is a prison, however, is key to understanding the situation.

Scene 1A ends with Bogumił, one of Adam's friends, saying: "Za Mury? Za kraty?" [literally: "For Walls? Behind bars?"]. The line refers to a song called 'Mury' ['Walls'], a 1970s adaptation by Jacek Kaczmarski of *L'Estaca* by the Catalan songwriter Lluís Llach that became an anthem of the Solidarity movement. Bogumił refers to the song and the trouble one could get into with the *Milicja* [communist police] for singing it. In his translation, Zapałowski clarifies that the word 'walls' refers to the song-title by translating Bogumił's line as "Behind bars for singing 'Walls'?"

This domesticating tendency is evident throughout the translation. In 2E the Female Chorus says of Ewa: "z krajem Rad walczyła, bo bicepsy miała". A literal translation would be: "she fought *kraj rad*, because she had biceps"; *Kraj Rad* [The Land of Councils] was a pro-USSR propaganda magazine in Poland and also a propaganda nick-name for the USSR itself. Zapałowski translates it as "she fought the Reds because she had the muscles for it". The connotations of 'Reds' and communists is accessible to a wider audience than is *Kraj Rad*, though the line arguably loses its subtle figurativeness.

Later on, in 7E, the Female Chorus says: "W trumnie z Baltony wyglądasz jak żywy" [literally: "In a coffin from Baltona, you will look alive"]. In communist Poland Baltona shops were among the very few places where one could legally buy

Western products. However, the 'privilege' of shopping in Baltona was reserved for people working abroad and paid, at least partly, in western currency (e.g. sailors). Baltona goods were unavailable to most Poles. This suits scene 7E, in which Ewa talks about not being able to afford the coffins she likes, which creates an ironic connection between communist and post-communist Polish reality. In communist Poland normal goods were not available for political reasons; in post-communist Poland one cannot buy them for economic reasons. However such a connotation may not be widely accessible to non-Poles, so Zapałowski translates it with general marketing language: "Our coffins make you look larger than life". As in the case of *Kraj Rad* and 'Reds', this line becomes clearer even though some of its connotations are lost.

Zapałowski's strategies are extremely helpful for the theatrical practitioner operating in an intercultural and multicultural environment, but they cannot address all the cultural references in Holewińska's play. As the production's dramaturge, the author of this article had to track all the domesticating elements and provide an explanation of all cultural references in the play. First of all I created a 'Socio-Political and Cultural Guide to Julia Holewińska's *Foreign Bodies*', consisting of written explanations, images, and quotations from songs and plays relevant to the text. It was given to Lianne O'Shea a few weeks before rehearsals started and, later on, to Paul Travers, who performed Adam and Ewa. It was also made available to all other actors involved in the production. In addition, Anna Wolf, the producer, translated several articles concerning transsexualism in communist Poland for Lianne O'Shea. During the first rehearsals, when we were reading the play, I looked at both the Polish and English scripts in my hand, marked additional aspects that needed clarification, and highlighted all Zapałowski's domesticating changes in the script.

This informed the director's decisions in making changes to Zapałowski's translation. First of all, Holewińska's text has several mentions of 'ubecja' and 'ubek', colloquial names for the secret police in communist Poland. Zapałowski translated them as 'yoob'. After a long discussion it was decided that 'yoob' sounds strange to both Poles and non-Poles. For that reason O'Shea decided to leave the word in the original Polish. In other words, the actors used Polish 'ubecja' and 'ubek'.

Another issue concerned 'Pewex'. Pewex, mentioned by the Male Chorus in 5A and by Adam in 6A, was a chain of shops that sold otherwise unobtainable western goods in exchange for western currency (most commonly US dollars). Prices were high, and obtaining western currency practically illegal. Therefore shopping in Pewex, although theoretically available to all, was a rare luxury. Zapałowski had removed the name 'Pewex' in his translation. In 5A the Male Chorus's line "kupić



może wyłącznie za dewizy w Pewexie” [literally “buyable only for hard currency in Pewex”] became “it being available only for hard currency”. In 6A, Adam’s line when he talks about the baby’s powdered milk running out, “Do Peweksu trzeba będzie iść” [literally “We’ll have to go to Pewex”] was initially translated by Zapałowski as “It’s off to the dollar shop again”. However, for an Irish audience ‘the dollar shop’ might connote a cheap shop (a so-called ‘euro shop’) where very cheap items are sold, which is the opposite of what Pewex was. Therefore, for the sake of clarity and further foreignisation, the dollar shop in Adam’s line was replaced by Pewex. ‘Pewex’, ‘ubek’, ‘ubecja’, and ‘Białółka’ were explained in the glossary ‘Foreign Words in *Foreign Bodies*’ during the production of the programme (Lech 2013: 6).

During the initial readings O’Shea also stipulated that all the proper names should be pronounced in Polish to highlight the Polish roots of the play, which from the point of view of non-Polish audiences can be considered foreignisation. The Irish actors practised Polish pronunciation so they could be clearly understood by Polish audiences, while at the same time foreignising the experience for non-Poles as a reminder that the story takes place in Poland.

The linguistic and cultural aspects of translating single words were only part of the process of translating Holewińska’s play. The other major issue was the transfer of broader cultural and social associations. This was particularly true of ‘Mury’ [‘Walls’] by Kaczmarski, mentioned earlier. Holewińska’s text recalls Kaczmarski’s song in the first scene, when Adam is asked to sing it. However, neither the characters nor the stage directions mention the song actually being sung. This makes no major difference for Polish audiences, who have heard ‘Mury’ and understand its solemn character and importance for the Solidarity movement. To attempt to replicate this effect for non-Polish audiences, O’Shea decided that ‘Mury’ would be sung when Adam is asked to sing it by the other actors. The idea was to present the importance of this song and how it is ingrained in the life of the characters. We aimed to show to the audience the characters’ emotional attachment to the song, rather than, at this stage, marking its Polish source (the Catalan source, because of the context, was not our concern). The song was translated into English by John Currivan and the author of this article. The aim here was to domesticate it into an English-language context as much as possible. Rhythmical conformity of the English version with the Polish lyrics was therefore crucial to avoid coming up with lyrics ‘foreign’ to the music.

Kaczmarski wrote the Polish lyrics in syllabic verse with a caesura and some approximate rhymes (the numbers at the end of the lines denote the numbers of syllables in the line and how they are broken up by the caesura):

On natchniony i młody był, ich nie policzyłby nikt (15 8/7)  
On im dodawał pieśnią sil, śpiewał, że blisko już świt (15 8/7)  
Świec tysiące palili mu, znad głów unosił się dym (15 8/7)  
Śpiewał, że czas, by runął mur, oni śpiewali wraz z nim (15 8/7)  
Wyrwij murom zęby krat (7)  
Zerwij kajdany, połam bat (8)  
A mury runą, runą, runą (9)  
I pogrzebią stary świat! (7)

A literal translation of this text would be:

He was inspired and young; no one would be able to count them [the masses]  
He gave them courage with his song, singing that dawn was near  
Thousands of candles they lit for him, the smoke rose over their heads  
He sang that it was time for the wall to fall and they sang together with him.  
Pull out the bars – those teeth of the walls  
Tear off the chains and break the whip  
The walls will fall, will fall, will fall  
And will bury the old world.

First of all we had to clarify the syntax and meanings of the first and the fifth line. In the case of the first line it was only a matter of syntax. However the fifth line, “Wyrwij murom zęby krat”, is both metaphorical and onomatopoeic. First of all it carries the idea of the bars being the walls’ teeth, which need to be pulled out. The metaphor is quite aggressive because the verb “wyrwij” [pull out] has three voiced consonants (/v/, /t/, and /v/ again). Furthermore, ‘r’ is rolled in Polish. The rolling ‘r’ appears in this particular line three times, which creates an onomatopoeic effect of falling walls, later reinforced by the repeated verb “runą” [will fall]. The English “pull out” does not convey the aggression of Polish “wyrwij”. Together with Currvan we agreed that since the song was a call to arms against communism, the aggression and the onomatopoeic effect took priority over the metaphor. The results were as follows:

He was inspired and young, in front of the countless mass (14 7/7)  
He gave them strength with his song, singing that dawn was near (13 7/6)

They lit thousands of candles for him, and smoke rose over their heads  
(17 10/7)  
He sang it was time for the wall to fall, and they sang together with him  
(18 10/7)  
Rip the bars out of the walls (7)  
Tear off the chain and break the whip (8)  
The walls will crumble, crumble, crumble (9)  
And will bury the old world (7)

One can notice that the first four lines in the English version oscillate between 13-syllables and 18-syllables. The same lines in the Polish version are 15-syllables long with a caesura after the eighth syllable. In the musical score each of these syllables is assigned to one note (mostly crotchets). There is also a crotchet pause in a place of the caesura. Due to differences between both languages (for a start, in contemporary Polish all vowels have the same length), we were not able to adhere completely to Polish syllabic verse. Nevertheless, we agreed it was important to keep the length of the lines as close as possible to 15. Because the number of syllables and musical notes do not coincide, we agreed that certain syllables of key words would be sung over two notes (“young” in the first line and “strength” and “dawn” in the second line). In the openings of the third and fourth lines, we needed to change two crotchets into quavers, so each of the syllables would have a musical note. These were the second and the third crotchet in the third line and the first two crotchets in the fourth line. This worked well with the music and did not sound foreign, except for two lines where the musical stresses moved the synthetic stresses to a position unnatural in the English language (in bold):

He was inspired and young, in front of **the** countless mass (14 7/7)  
He gave them strength with his song, singing **that** dawn was near (13 7/6)

Currihan and Fiona Lucia McGarry (who is musically trained) shifted the musical accents by moving part of the musical notes to the subsequent words. As a result the words “countless” and “dawn” were broken over two notes and, consequently, became stressed. By extension the words worked with the music in a way more natural for the English language.

O’Shea decided ‘Mury’ would be sung three times in the production. In the opening scene Adam and his friends sing a full English language version in the context of fighting for freedom, showing the importance of the song for these

characters. Later on McGarry (Female Chorus) uses the melody of 'Mury' to sing her lines: "Behind bars for singing 'Walls'. Behind bars for singing 'Walls'. She's reminiscing, her friends she's missing. All alone, woe, woe, woe!" [Zapałowski's translation] (1E). This worked to familiarise the non-Polish audiences with the melody of the song, which was crucial for the finale, when 'Mury', sung in Polish by the author of this article, accompanies the image of a lonely Adam/Ewa (Paul Travers). Because of the repetition of the melody and a gradual disconnection of the melody from the English lyrics of 'Mury', the melody (rather than particular words or language) was made important. This made it possible for the audience to read the finale of the show in the context of the opening and to contrast Adam in the opening scene, a hero surrounded by friends, with Adam/Ewa in the finale, dying alone.

At the same time, the fact that Polish was the last language heard in the production marked the importance of the play's Polish roots and offered Polish audiences the experience of their native language. This, together with the two earlier interjections of Polish, meant that only bilingual speakers could fully engage with the show, which could signal both the importance of the Polish context as well as that of the intercultural and multicultural interactions. The finale's 'detranslation' of 'Mury' into a Polish context can also be read as a metaphor for the production itself: it 'detranslates' itself into Polish, especially since earlier in the production the contexts of both languages are confronted when the Female Chorus's monologue is delivered at the same time as the author of this article delivers an extract from Adam Mickiewicz's *Forefather's Eve*, a Polish Romantic drama. In this sense the process of 'detranslation', as staged in the production, mirrors the process undertaken by the production team: from Zapałowski's domesticating translation through the negotiation between foreignisation and domestication, back to the Polish source.

Assessing theatre audience experiences is always difficult and this article will do no more than briefly present the results of an audience survey carried out by the producer, Anna Wolf. We can only conclude that the production facilitated the engagement of at least some non-Polish audiences. 57% of the respondents were from Ireland, 16% from Poland, 6% from Germany, 5% from the UK, 4% from the USA, 2% from Spain and around 1% each from Italy, Korea, Argentina, Colombia, Brazil, Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Hungary, the Netherlands, France, and South Africa. Respondents could evaluate their experience on a scale running from one to five (five being the highest). 30 percent gave it 5; 42% 4; 23% 3; 4% 2; and 1% 1 (Wolf 2013).

There was also a discussion on transsexualism during a questions and answers session with Ewa Hołuszko (whose story was an inspiration for the

play) and Broden Giambrone (the director of Transgender Equality Network Ireland). Aspects concerning transsexualism were discussed in the context of a multicultural society, with many references to Irish society, rather than only to Poland (Project Arts Centre, July 1st 2013). Finally Jesse Weaver, the reviewer for *Irish Theatre Magazine* described the production thus: “Displacement is a primary theme of Polish Theatre Ireland’s production of Julia Holewińska’s *Foreign Bodies*, an unsettling contemplation of identity, politics during and after the fall of communism in Poland” (2013).

Irrespective of the production’s ‘success’ and the definition of the ‘success’ itself, this article shows the potential for interplay between foreignisation and domestication in the context of multicultural theatre and – in particular – in the context of a live performance. It also suggests huge potential for interdisciplinary research on using performativity to explore the borders between foreignisation and domestication. The need for further exploration arises in the context of urgency with which Irish, Polish, and contemporary theatre in general must engage in inter-contextual and multi-contextual creative processes to facilitate its new audiences.

## References

- Butler, Judith (1990) ‘Performative Acts and Gender Constitution: An Essay in Phenomenology and Feminist Theory’, in Sue-Ellen Case (ed) *Performing Feminisms: Feminist Critical Theory and Theatre*, London: Johns Hopkins University Press, 270-82.
- Cieślak, Jacek (2008) ‘Dziady według Holoubka’ [*Forefathers’ Eve* by Holoubek], *Rzeczpospolita*: 21 (January 25th).
- Holewińska, Julia (2010) *Ciała Obce*, unpublished script [the play was published in *Dramatopisarki dekady* (2012), Kraków: Instytut Książki].
- Holewińska, Julia (2013) *Foreign Bodies*, transl. Artur Zapałowski, unpublished script [the play was published in *(A)pollonia: Twenty-First Century Polish Drama and Texts for the Stage* (2014), London: Seagull Books].
- Kaczmarek, Jacek (2007) ‘Mury’, *Arka Noego*, Pomaton Emi. Lyrics available at <http://www.poezja-spiewana.pl/index.php?str=lf&no=532> (Last accessed October 5th 2013).
- Lech, Kasia (2013) ‘Foreign Words in Foreign Bodies’, in *Foreign Bodies: Theatre Programme*, Dublin: Polish Theatre Ireland, 6.
- Mickiewicz, Adam (1925) ‘Forefathers’ Eve’, transl. Dorothea Prall Radin, George Rapall Noyes (ed.), *The Slavonic Review*: 10 (4), 42-66.

- O'Shea, Lianne (2013) 'Q&A with Julia Holewińska', Project Arts Centre: July 24th.
- Polish Theatre Ireland (2008), Mission Statement, Polish Theatre Ireland's website. Available at <http://polishtheatre.wordpress.com> (Last accessed October 5th 2013).
- Polish Theatre Ireland (2013) 'Q&A with Ewa Hołuszko and Broden Giambrone', Project Arts Centre: August 1st.
- States, Bert O. (1985) *Great Reckonings in Little Rooms: On the Phenomenology of Theater*, London: University of California Press.
- Venuti, Lawrence (2008) *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (Second edition) London: Routledge.
- Weaver, Jesse (2013) 'Foreign Bodies. Review', *Irish Theatre Magazine*: 23 July. Available at <http://www.irishtheatremagazine.ie/Reviews/Current/Foreign-Bodies> (Last accessed October 5th 2013).
- Wolf, Anna (2013) 'Foreign Bodies: Audience Survey', unpublished survey. Available at <https://www.facebook.com/polishtheatreireland> (Last accessed October 5th 2013).

# The Rocky Road to Polish: An Overview of Irish-language Literature in Polish Translation

Patrycja Lewków  
Szczecin University

## Introduction

Irish authors using English as their creative medium are usually well represented in translation and generally are fairly popular in Poland. Indeed, some works by Yeats, Joyce, Beckett and Heaney have acquired canonical status in this country and are considered obligatory reading for any literate Pole. Not everyone here realises, however, that the well-known and easily accessible body of Irish literature written in English only represents part of Ireland's literary heritage and that there is a whole different world of poetry and prose written in Irish waiting to be discovered. This literary corpus, surprisingly vast for such a small territory, ranges from some of the earliest extant vernacular poetry and heroic prose cycles, to post-modern experimental writings, and constitutes a substantial contribution to Europe's literary heritage. Few, however, have had a chance to delve deeper into the wealth of what today is a minority language literature in Ireland. It is as a result of the efforts of a small group of translator-ambassadors that some of the gems of Irish-language poetry and prose have been made available to Polish audiences.<sup>1</sup> Particular credit goes to poet Ernest Bryll and his wife Małgorzata, who have published several anthologies of their original translations of Irish-language poetry as well as two volumes comprising Irish-language prose: *Táin czyli uprowadzenie stad z Cuailnge* [*The Cattle Raid of Cooley / Táin Bó Cuailgne*], which offers a glimpse into the great myths of prehistoric Ireland, and *Dwadzieścia lat dorastania* [*Twenty Years A-Growing / Fiche Bliain ag Fás*], an autobiographical account of the hardships of life on the Blasket Islands at the beginning of the 20th century. For his achievements in the promotion of Irish culture in Poland, special mention must

---

<sup>1</sup> I refer here to the concept of 'translator-ambassador' developed by Jerzy Jarniewicz in his article "Tłumacz jako twórca kanonu" ["The Translator as the Creator of a Canon"] (2002: 35-36). A translator-ambassador consciously chooses texts that are representative of a foreign culture and aims to provide the reader with an insight into this culture's characteristics. In contradistinction to a translator-legislator, he or she does not question the system of values in which a text was created and does not try to impose his or her system of values instead.

also be made of academic and poet Jerzy Jarniewicz, who afforded Polish audiences a taste of modern Irish-language verse with a translation of selected poems of Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill as a part of his anthology of modern Irish women's poetry.

Our purpose here is to present an overview of all texts originally written in Irish that are now available to Polish audiences and to review briefly their translations. We have only considered those texts which may be accessed through the catalogue of the National Library of Poland or which are otherwise readily available from libraries and bookshops. It is quite possible, however, that the growing mutual interest and intercultural interaction between Ireland and Poland will soon give rise to new translations, some of them possibly being created at this very moment. The material that we have gathered so far consists of two full anthologies of poetry translated by the Brylls, *Miodopój* [The Honey Well] and *Irlandzki tancerz* [The Irish Dancer], nineteen poems by Ní Dhomhnaill included in Jarniewicz's anthology *Sześć poetek irlandzkich* [Six Irish Women Poets], and one poem translated by Stanisław Barańczak, which was printed in the literary magazine *NaGłos*. Apart from this, I have also looked at three prose works: the aforementioned *Táin czyli uprowadzenie stad z Cuailnge* [The Cattle Raid of Cooley], *Dwadzieścia lat dorastania* [Twenty Years A-Growing], as well as Patrick Pearse's *Opowiadania* [Short Stories] translated by Anna Paluch. These translations form an interesting and remarkably varied body of texts, providing Polish readers with a taste of different genres and styles in Irish-language literature. They all have one thing in common, however: they would not have come into being had it not been for the existence of English translations, which in all cases acted as a bridge between Irish and Polish. With the exception of Paluch, none of the translators had any knowledge of Irish, and they consequently had to rely on English as a pivot language, which left its mark on the final product of this complicated task. Some of the strategies employed by the translators to compensate for their indirect access to the original will be discussed in the next sections and illustrated with examples first from poetry, then prose.

## Poetry

The bulk of Irish-language poetry currently accessible to Polish readers has come from the capable translational tandem of Ernest Bryll and Małgorzata Goraj-Bryll. Apart from propagating Irish culture as a translator-ambassador in Poland from the late 1970s onwards, Ernest Bryll was also the first Polish Ambassador in the Republic of Ireland, between 1991 and 1995. Diplomatic skills, poetic craft, and a knowledge of Irish culture provided a sound basis for his translation



of canonical verse from the Irish tradition. The duo's first anthology, *Miodopój*, published in 1978, features poems dating from the 6th to the 12th centuries and includes such classics of Old Irish poetry as 'Pangur Bán' ['*Messe ocus Pangur bán*'], 'The Scribe in the Woods' ['*Dom-fharcai fídbaide fál*'], 'The Bell' ['*Clocán binn*'], 'The Lament of the Old Woman of Beare' ['*Aithbe dam-sa bés mora*'] and many more. The problems encountered by the Brylls in their translation of Irish-language poetry are numerous and merit a more thorough treatment in a separate article. The most striking challenge, however, and at the same time the most elusive, is the question of orality. All early Irish poetic genres display numerous complicated rhythmical features and alliterative patterns, which seem impossible to reproduce in Polish. Moreover, no suitable equivalents can be found in the Polish literary tradition, because no texts from comparably early periods have survived. The translators of *Miodopój* were well aware of this and even though they describe some traditional metres and genres in detail in the footnotes to the respective poems, their final decision is to favour content over form:

What was left was the choice between worrying about the careful reproduction of the complicated rhythmical patterns, which, while adding charm to the originals, would sound strange in Polish, or working on faithfully transmitting the content of the poems and finding for them such forms that would fit our traditional poetics.<sup>1</sup>

(Bryll 1978: 12)

The translation of the 9th century poem 'Pangur Bán' provides a good example of this. Originally, it was composed in the 'deibhidhe' form, whose main features include stanzaic quatrains, heptasyllabic lines, light rhyme and a complicated alliteration and rhyme pattern: in every fourth line, the final word should alliterate with the preceding stressed word, and there should be at least two cross-rhymes between lines three and four (cf. Stifter 2006: 304, Cooper 2010: 48). While Bryll manages to preserve the number of syllables and verses, he does not try to reproduce the alliteration, and changes the rhyme pattern from *aabb* to *abab*. This shift can be justified, however, since it brings the translation one step closer to the only kind of oral poetry preserved in the Polish tradition – the folk song, which usually displays a similar rhyme scheme.

The later, perhaps intentionally polemic translation by Barańczak shows

<sup>1</sup> „Pozostawała więc albo troska o oddanie skomplikowanej budowy rytmicznej, która dodając urody oryginałom irlandzkim, w polskim tłumaczeniu wyglądałaby obco, albo praca nad możliwie najwierniejszym oddaniem treści wierszy i znalezieniem dla nich, które odpowiadały naszej tradycyjnej poetyce”. All translations from Polish to English are my own, unless otherwise stated – PL.

that it is possible to remain more faithful to the original form by leaving the *abb* pattern unaltered:

### **Kot Pangur**

Kot mój Pangur w mniszej celi  
Obowiązki ze mną dzieli:  
On po kątach szuka myszy,  
Ja – słów szukam w nocnej ciszy.

(Bryll 1978: 15)

### **Mnich i jego kot**

Ja, mnich, z kotem mym Pangurem  
Każdy mistrzem w swojej sztuce  
Pangur z myszy łupi skórę  
A ja ryję się w nauce

(Barańczak 1994: 197)

The formal equivalence comes at a price, however, since the content of the poem is considerably altered. It would be probably more correct to call Barańczak's work an adaptation rather than a translation, since he summarises the content of the eight stanzas in just four, leaving the other half of the original untranslated.

Translators of modern Irish-language poetry have to face another challenge, somewhat different from the metrical constraints of older poetry. The effects of English acting as a pivot between two languages and cultures become most apparent in Jarniewicz's publication of Nuala Ní Dhomhnaill's poetry. Jarniewicz states that he decided in favour of translating via English because the English translations by Paul Muldoon had been authorised by Ní Dhomhnaill and published side by side with the originals as their English versions.<sup>2</sup> And it seems only right that they are called 'versions' rather than translations, since Muldoon often uses poetic license to transform metaphors, images, and other structures in the original. In this way, any Polish translation, even a close one, will only be a

---

<sup>2</sup> Jerzy Jarniewicz: talk given to promote the book *Gościnność słowa. Szkice o przekładzie literackim* at the Adam Mickiewicz University, Poznań, February 27<sup>th</sup> 2013.

translation of an adaptation of the original, deviating more and more from the author's intentions. And while authors' intentions play a minor role in some contemporary literary theories, the distance from the Irish original in the case of Ní Dhomhnaill's poetry has a far greater impact than merely altering the poetic imagery: it gives her poems completely one-sided interpretations. Ní Dhomhnaill's poems, as represented in *Sześć poetek irlandzkich*, are described as primarily feminist. As Jarniewicz claims in his afterword, entitled 'Irlandki, córki faraona' ['Irishwomen, Pharaoh's Daughters']: "Dziś kobiety odzyskały język. Temat języka, utraconego, odzyskanego i problematycznego, wpisany w kontekst irlandzki i kobiecy, przewija się przez twórczość niemal wszystkich poetek" ["Today, women have regained their language. It is language, lost, regained and problematic, embedded in the female and Irish context, which runs through works by nearly all women poets"]. Later on, he suggests that Ní Dhomhnaill's famous poem 'Ceist na Teangan', which he translates as 'W kwestii języka' ['The Language Issue'], is not about the state of the Irish language, but about women regaining their voice after having been silenced for many decades. Such an interpretation may certainly be valid, but it does not take into account the socio-linguistic context in which the poem was created and which is crucial to a better understanding of Ní Dhomhnaill's body of poetry as a whole.

## Prose

As in the case with poetry, none of the Polish translations of Irish-language prose works have been done directly from Irish. One of the most curious examples of difficulties that translators with a knowledge of Irish may encounter is illustrated by the case of Anna Paluch, an academic currently employed at Dublin City University, who as part of her PhD research, translated *Gearrscéalta an Phiarsaigh* into Polish and published it as *Opowiadania*. Despite the fact that Paluch is a fluent Irish speaker, she admits that she had to first prepare an auxiliary English paraphrase of the text before producing a final Polish version. In an interview for the *Irish Independent* she explains that this strategy was necessary due to the lack of Irish-Polish dictionaries (2008). Nevertheless, her comprehension of the original saved her from falling into many of the traps of translating via a third language, which can be spotted in the other Polish prose translations.

Despite the role that Ernest and Małgorzata Bryll played in promoting Irish culture in Poland, they too did not avoid some slip-ups, which might not have occurred if they had had a better understanding of the Irish originals. The most apparent example is found in their editorial note, where the original title of

*Dwadzieścia lat dorastania* is transcribed as *Ficke Blian ag Fas* [sic], containing a typo in almost every word.

The book was printed in 1986, in times when first-hand experiences of Irish culture and literature by Poles were rare. Therefore, the 'Foreword from the Translators' introducing the socio-historical context of the memoir becomes one of its most interesting features. Densely packed with data, it outlines the background necessary for understanding the phenomenon of Ó Súilleabháin's work. Most likely, it is also one of the first popular publications providing a handful of facts about the history of the Irish language that was printed in Poland. The translators stress the importance of the Blasket literature, describing it as something out of the ordinary, a remnant of the old, dying world, and an 'archaeological find', which provided a language model for the linguists and writers of the Irish-language literary revival:

It was there [on the Blasket Islands], far off the beaten track, that real Irish life survived, though undoubtedly in a dwarfish and tattered form. And it is there that the language prevailed in its whole beauty, unknown to those regions of Ireland situated closer to civilisation.<sup>3</sup>

(Bryll 1986: 5)

This somewhat romanticised view of the Irish past may seem anachronistic from today's perspective (especially the opposition between the supposed 'wilderness' of the Blasket Islands as contrasted with the 'civilisation' of the anglicised parts of the country), but it was undoubtedly in line with the stereotype of the Emerald Isle present in Polish culture of the 1980s.<sup>4</sup> Part of this was the perception of Ireland as a land of poetry, where oral literature and traditions had survived longer than in other European countries. This aspect is also incorporated into the Brylls' introduction:

---

<sup>3</sup> „Tam bowiem, daleko od uczęszczanych szlaków, przetrwało niewątpliwie skarłale i zniszczone, ale prawdziwe życie irlandzkie, tam utrzymał się język w całej jego urodzie nieznannej już w innych, bliższych cywilizacji dzielnicach Irlandii”.

<sup>4</sup> One of the most popular songs of this period was 'Kocham Cię jak Irlandię' ['I Love You like Ireland'] by Kobranocka. In an interview, the band's singer Andrzej Kraiński provides an explanation for the lyrics: "Śpiewam o miłości, o niespełnieniu. Irlandia była dla nas wtedy (lata 80.) uosobieniem romantyzmu, krajem zielonym, pełnym bajkowych skrzatów. Mieli podobną historię, podobnie walczyli o niepodległość jak my. Kochaliśmy ich za to. Ja ich kochałem i kocham do dzisiaj" ["I sing about love and unfulfillment. At that time (the '80s) Ireland to us was the embodiment of Romanticism, a green country, full of fairies. We shared a similar history, we had fought for our independence in a similar way. We loved them for this. I loved them and I still do"] (2006).

The popularity of oral literature among the illiterate led to the fact that, even in the most desolate parts of Ireland, a wonderful, lively language was present, the old myths were understood, old songs and legends known and recited, and the rules of the Old Irish law remembered.<sup>5</sup>

(Bryll 1986: 7)

Accordingly, it seems from the text of the translation that preserving oral features of the autobiography was the translators' main goal. The text is thus full of colloquial, dialectal and often archaic lexical items as well as atypical syntactic constructions. Such words as 'wysterkiwujący' and 'bajtlować' would not be used in standard Polish and to some speakers would not be recognisable at all. While the richness of the vocabulary successfully imitates the distinct Blasket dialect, the obscure syntax often has the opposite effect and sometimes turns out to be a calque of the English sentence structure. The same can be observed in the translation of idioms: sometimes they echo the original (this is true of the many emphatic expressions<sup>6</sup>), but frequently they copy English expressions word for word, resulting in awkward and unclear phrases like 'bo taka jest jego droga', meaning 'because this is his road', while the intended meaning was 'because this is his way' (of behaving). The most glaring example of misreading such a common English construction for an original Irish idiom is the repetitive use of the phrase 'skierowali swe twarze na zachód', literally meaning 'they directed their faces west', while what was meant here was simply 'they headed west'. These instances illustrate an unfortunate situation, in which scrupulous translators, hoping to save as much of the 'Irish idiom' of the text as possible, fail to distinguish it from English expressions and fall victim to their own good intentions. Another case in which too literal a translation may turn out to be unclear is the quotation of Irish proverbs. Take, for example, "Żyj jak koń, to zawsze będziesz miał trawę" (29) [literally: "Live like a horse and you'll always have grass"], which corresponds to "*Mair, a chapaiill, agus gheobhaidh tú féar*" or the English "Live, horse, and you'll get grass". In order to become comprehensible, it would need to be either supplemented by a footnote or exchanged with a Polish equivalent.

---

<sup>5</sup> „Ta literatura mówiona i jej powszechność wśród warstw niepiśmiennych doprowadziła do tego, że nawet i w najbardziej odległych zakątkach istniał żywy, wspaniały język, rozumiano mity, znano się i recytowało stare pieśni i legendy, pamiętało kanony prawa irlandzkiego”.

<sup>6</sup> This may be attributed to the fact that Polish and Irish share a lot of phrases relating to religion, God, the devil, etc. (e.g. “Do diabła twoja dusza!” “Your soul to the devil!”).

Other strategies of preserving the 'Irishness' of the text were borrowed directly from the English translations.<sup>7</sup> Hence, some interjections, mostly used in conversation, like 'musha', 'arra' and 'faith', and names for specifically Irish objects like 'curragh', are carried over with the English orthography. Interestingly, one of these words, 'daddo', is used alternating with the Polish 'dziadziu', a colloquial word for *grandpa*, which sounds quite similar to the Irish. The same rule is applied to proper names, which unfortunately preserve the inconsistencies of the English translation, at times rendered with Irish spelling (e.g. 'Tomás'), at others slightly anglicised (e.g. 'Inish-na-Bro', 'Cnoc-a-choma', 'Cos-fe-Chrios'), and at others still replaced by English equivalents (e.g. 'White Furrow', 'Bay of Dingle', 'Kerry Head', 'Bird Cove'). Despite such issues, the translation preserves much of the humour and light-heartedness of the original and, being one of the pioneering Irish-interest publications in Poland, it played an important role in the formation of Poles' perception of the Emerald Isle.

The Brylls encountered an entirely different dimension of translation problems in their translation of the *Táin*. Perhaps surprisingly, this complicated and often ambiguous medieval epic apparently turned out to be more rewarding material for the poet and his wife to work with. Notwithstanding the occasional obscurity, the Polish translation is a real pleasure to read. As before, the text comes with a detailed foreword in which the translators explain some of their choices. They consider a certain degree of obscurity the most distinctive feature of the *Táin* and declare their intention to preserve it in the Polish version:

The compilation of different stories often resulted in a certain obscurity of the text and in excessive repetitions. We made use of many dissertations and editions by Irish, English and German scholars, and aimed at a translation which, without smoothing out these cracks and uneven places, would create a consistent whole. Of course, we remained faithful to the original, or rather to its numerous versions.<sup>8</sup> (Bryll 1983: 8)

Unlike in the case of *Dwadzieścia lat...*, the sources for translation are not only cited, but also elaborated upon. The main edition used by the Brylls is a critical

<sup>7</sup> The editorial note does not give the source text for the Polish translation, but the Moya Llewelyn Davies and George Thomson version of 1933 is the only one that could have been available to the translators.

<sup>8</sup> „Często rezultatem kompilacji przeróżnych opowiadań była pewna niejasność tekstu, nadmierna ilość powtórzeń. Korzystając z – zawartej w wielu rozprawach i edycjach – pracy irlandzkich, angielskich i niemieckich uczonych staraliśmy się, nie zacierając do końca owych pęknięć i niejednorodności, dać takie tłumaczenie, które tworzyłoby zwartą całość. Oczywiście pozostaliśmy wierni oryginałowi, a raczej licznym jego wersjom”.

study of *The Book of Leinster* by Cecile O’Rahilly, published in 1967 by the Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies. A number of other works were consulted as auxiliary sources of reference for translating individual stories. For instance, the spellings of Old Irish personal names and place names were consistently taken from Rudolf Thurneysen’s flagship publication *Die irische Helden- und Königsage bis zum siebzehnten Jahrhundert* from 1921.

Undoubtedly, the biggest challenge the translators had to face while working on the Polish version of the *Táin* was choosing the right style. The Brylls decided on consistently archaizing the text, implementing high-register language and various features of Biblical style. These include paratactic sentences, often abundant in syntactic inversion (e.g. “Gnali otoczonego stadem jałowek byka” instead of the more natural “Gnali byka otoczonego stadem jałowek”), possessive pronouns placed after the noun (e.g. wnuka mojego “grandson of mine”, “imię moje i imię potomstwa mojego” “the name of mine and the name of the children of mine”) and frequent use of polysyndeton. Although these stylistic means do not correspond to the Old Irish structures, they fulfil the same function in the target language, lending the Polish *Táin* an air of antiquity.

## Conclusion

Despite the fact that the body of Irish-language literature translated into Polish is still relatively small, its analysis raises many interesting translation issues. Difficulties in conveying the features of medieval poetic genres and attempts at demonstrating dialectal variety or archaic stylistic features are only some of the challenges that translators have to face when dealing with Irish-language literature. The biggest obstacle, often resulting in minor or serious misconceptions, is the lack of a knowledge of Irish on the part of the translators. It remains to be hoped that the intensified interaction between the two cultures will spark off new translations, at least some of which should preferably be conducted directly from the original, thereby eliminating many of the uneven spots caused by third-language interference on ‘the rocky road to Polish’.

## References

- Barańczak, Stanisław (1994) 'Kot Pangur' ['Pangur Bán'], *NaGłos* (17): 197-198.
- Bryll, Ernest and Małgorzata Goraj-Bryll (eds) (1978) *Miodopój. Wybór wierszy irlandzkich (Wiek VI – XII)* [*The Honey Well: A Selection of Irish Poetry (6th–12th Centuries)*], transl. Ernest Bryll and Małgorzata Goraj-Bryll, Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy PAX.
- Bryll, Ernest and Małgorzata Goraj-Bryll (1981) *Irlandzki tancerz. Wybór wierszy irlandzkich (Wiek XIII – XIX)* [*The Irish Dancer: A Selection of Irish Poetry (13th–19th Centuries)*], transl. Ernest Bryll and Małgorzata Goraj-Bryll, Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy PAX.
- Cooper, David (2010) *The Musical Traditions of Northern Ireland and Its Diaspora: Community and Conflict*, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing.
- Jarniewicz, Jerzy (2002) 'Tłumacz jako twórca kanonu' ['The Translator as the Creator of a Canon'] in Roman Lewicki (ed) *Przekład – język – kultura* [*Translation – Language – Culture*], Lublin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu im. Marii Curie-Skłodowskiej, 35-42.
- Jarniewicz, Jerzy (2012) *Sześć poetek irlandzkich* [*Six Irish Women Poets*], transl. Jerzy Jarniewicz, Wrocław: Biuro Literackie.
- Kraiński, Andrzej (2006) 'Za co dziś Kobranocka kocha Irlandię?' ['Why Do Kobranocka Love Ireland These Days?'], interview with Jacek Kowalski (<http://www.irlandia.pun.pl/viewtopic.php?id=58>) (last accessed August 25th 2013)
- O'Sullivan, Maurice (1933/1983) *Twenty Years A-Growing*, transl. Moya Llewelyn Davies and George Thomson, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- O'Sullivan, Maurice (1986) *Dwadzieścia lat dorastania* [*Twenty Years A-Growing / Fiche Bliain ag Fás*], transl. Ernest Bryll and Małgorzata Goraj-Bryll, Warszawa: Państwowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza.
- Paluch, Anna (2008) 'Pieces of Pearse Are Translated into Polish', *Irish Independent* (November 18th), (<http://www.independent.ie/irish-news/pieces-of-pearse-are-translated-into-polish-26493058.html>) (last accessed August 25th 2013).
- Táin czyli uprowadzenie stad z Cuailnge*. [*The Cattle Raid of Cooley / Táin Bó Cuailgne*] (1986) transl. Ernest Bryll and Małgorzata Goraj-Bryll, Warszawa: Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza.
- Stifter, David (2006) *Sengoídelc: Old Irish for Beginners*, Syracuse: University Press.



# Leabhar na Polainne

Mark Ó Fionnáin

Ollscoil Chaitliceach Lublin, an Pholainn

## Cúlra

Sa bhliain 1916 is ea a céadbhuaileadh Gaeilge ar théacs Polainnise le Adam Mickiewicz (1798-1855), mar a bhí *Księgi Narodu Polskiego i Pielgrzymstwa Polskiego*, a scríobhadh sna 1830í luatha, nó *Leabhar an Náisiúin Pholannaigh agus na nOilitheach Polannach* mar a thiontaigh Liam Ó Rinn (1886-1943) go Gaeilge é. Is maith an seans gurbh é sin an chéad uair a cuireadh Gaeilge ar théacs le Mickiewicz agus ar théacs Polainnise. Cé nach bhfuil sé ar na téacsanna is fearr dár scríobh an Polannach mór le rá, bhí teachtaireacht ann a chuaigh go smior in Aodh de Blácam (1890-1951), an fear a chéadléigh é agus a chéadmhol an téacs a thiontú go Gaeilge, agus sa Rinneach, an fear a rinne an tiontú, mar a bhí: tír Chaitliceach (an Pholainn) a bhí arna slogadh siar ag a comharsana neamh-Chaitliceacha (an Rúis, an Phrúis agus an Ostair) ach a bhí ag troid ina gcoinne agus ag streachailt lena háit cheart ar léarscáil na hEorpa a bhaint amach di féin arís. Chonacthas dóibh araon go raibh Éire sa chás céanna: tír Chaitliceach a d'fhulaing faoi ansmacht tíre neamh-Chaitlicí (Sasana) agus a bhí ag iarraidh a háit féin a bhaint amach i measc náisiúin na hEorpa arís. Measadh go raibh teachtaireacht an téacs seo chomh hionchuí oiriúnach do chor na hÉireann san am sin – tráth na ngealltanais i dtaobh an Rialtais Dúchais, tráth an chéad chogaidh mhóir ‘ar son na náisiún beag’, tráth a raibh na ríochtaí agus na himpireachtaí móra i mbaol a mbasctha agus i gcontúirt a mbuailte – gur eisíodh an dara babhta é, sa bhliain 1920, i rith Chogadh na Saoirse, faoin teideal *Leabhar na Polainne*. Dhá eagrán a clóbhuaileadh, ceann faoi chlúdach bog agus ceann faoi chlúdach crua.

Sa Fhraincis a chéad léigh Aodh de Blácam an téacs, agus a bhí sé chomh gafa sin aige gur ghá, dar leis, é a chur os comhair na nGael mar spreagadh agus mar ghríosú le saoirse na hÉireann a bhaint amach.<sup>9</sup> Eisean a chuir Béarla ar bhlúirí beaga den téacs ar dtús mar bhlaiseadh don lucht léitheoireachta, cé gur ghlac sé air féin pé tagairtí a bhí ann do phearsana agus d’áiteanna i stair na Polainne a fhágáil ar lár, agus laochra agus ionaid na hÉireann a chur ina n-áit. Is ar an tslí sin

<sup>9</sup> Tá cur síos níos míne ar stair na n-aistriúcháin seo in *Translation Ireland*, Volume 17, Number 2, 51-62, agus in Ó Fionnáin (2010).

a rinneadh *Saint Patrick* agus *Saint Colum* de na naoimh Pholannacha *Stanislaw*, *Kazimierz* agus *Józefat*, agus ní raibh ar an léitheoir dianmhachnamh a dhéanamh ar pé eachtraí aisteacha allúreacha a thit amach in *Bar*, *Praga*, *Oszmiana*, *Fischau* ná *Kronstadt*, ach cuimhneamh ina leaba sin ar ionaid na n-eachtraí móra i stair na hÉireann, mar a bhí *Drogheda*, *Wexford*, *Vinegar Hill*, *Antrim* agus *Connaught*. Ba mhínic ina theannta sin de Blácam ag scríobh alt ar nuachtáin éagsúla i dtaobh chor na Polainne an tráth sin, agus i gceann acu mhol sé Gaeilge a chur ar an téacs iomlán. Ba é Liam Ó Rinn a ghlac an dúshlán sin.

An chéad leagan a rinne an Rinneach, is sa chló gaelach a bhí sé, agus foilsíodh ar an nuachtán *Nationality* sna blianta 1916-1917 é, foilsíú a cuireadh ar ceal tar éis Éirí Amach na Cásca ina ndearna Ó Rinn féin (agus a cheathrar deartháireacha) a chion féin, agus dúnadh an nuachtán ar feadh tamaill ina dhiaidh sin. An leagan a cuireadh amach faoin teideal *Leabhar na Polainne* ceithre bliana ní ba dhéanaí, leagan é nár athraíodh ach de bheagán ó thaobh an téacs de, ach buaileadh an cló rómhánach air agus leasaigh Ó Rinn an litriú a bhí ann, ag caitheamh i draipísí roinnt den seanlitríú agus ag cur cruth nua-aimseartha ar an téacs.

Ós rud é nach raibh an Pholainnis ag ceachtar acu, bhí ar de Blácam agus Ó Rinn dul i dtuilleamaí leaganacha Fraincise, agus cé go raibh dhá cheann ar fáil dóibh a úsáideadh i gcomhair an chéad leagain den téacs, is é an ceann a roghnaigh Ó Rinn le haghaidh *Leabhar na Polainne* an t-aistriúchán a rinne Armand Lévy (1827-1891), an rúnaí a bhí ag Mickiewicz féin. Fiú san am sin thuig Ó Rinn an tábhacht a bhain leis an mbuntéacs, agus is é sin an fáth ar roghnaigh sé leagan Lévy, a rá sa *Reamh-Fhocal* dó gur thuig sé nár chóir aistriúchán a dhéanamh ar aistriúchán, ach “go raibh an t-údar féin ag feuchaint chuige go ndeunfadh sé sa cheart e.” (Ó Rinn, lch vi). Bhí séala Mickiewicz le haistriúchán Lévy, mar dhea.

## Fios fátha

Is léir ón mbrollach in *Leabhar na Polainne* cén chúis a bhí ag Ó Rinn lena aistriú, é á thiomnú “don mhuintir atá ag troid agus ag obair ar son saoirse is teanga na hÉireann”. Bhí Ó Rinn ag baint úsáide as an téacs chun críche polaitiúla, ag léiriú go raibh ceart ag muintir na hÉireann ar a dtír féin, agus chun críoch cultúrtha chomh maith. Theastaigh uaidh a thaispeáint go bhféadfaí litríocht a chruthú sa Ghaeilge, agus go raibh ceart ag muintir na hÉireann ar a dteanga féin freisin. Ní fhéadfaí an dá ní sin a scaoileadh ó chéile. Ba í an Ghaeilge teanga dhúchais agus oidhreacht cheart na hÉireann, agus chuige sin ba ghá téacsanna a chruthú inti chun an stádas agus an chéim a bhí ag mórtheangacha na hEorpa a bhronnadh

ar an nGaeilge. Sna tuairimí sin bhí Ó Rinn go mór chun tosaigh ar na tráchtairí atá suas lenár linn féin. Thuig sé go raibh nasc dobhriste idir cultúr agus teanga, mar a thuigeann Snell-Hornby a deir “[...] language is not seen as an isolated phenomenon suspended in a vacuum, but as an integral part of culture” (Snell-Hornby 1995: 39).

Ina cheann sin scríobh Maria Tymoczko, agus í ag plé na n-aistriúchán a rinneadh ar sheanlitríocht na Gaeilge go Béarla, agus an tionchar a bhí acu ar an náisiúnachas a raibh borradh ag teacht faoi go luath sa 20ú haois, go raibh na haistriúcháin sin:

[...] central to the emergence of Irish cultural nationalism – essential to the ability of the Irish to claim a history and culture for themselves [...] and the attempt to construct an identity for themselves that would free them from the English definitions of Irishness [...] The translation movement was central to the Irish cultural revival. (Tymoczko 2000: 27)

Cé go raibh sí ag plé aistriúchán ón nGaeilge, ba thábhachtaí go mór a mhalairt, .i. aistriú go Gaeilge, mar cén tslí ab fhearr lena thaispeáint go bhfuil do chultúr agus do stair féin agat, agus nach Sasanach thú, ach do theanga féin a bheith agat? Tá sé seo le rá ag Anne Brisset i dtaobh ‘Québécois’:

The task of translation is thus to replace the language of the Other by a native language. Not surprisingly, the native language chosen is usually the vernacular, “the linguistic birthright, the indelible mark of belonging.” Translation becomes an act of reclaiming, of recentring of the identity, a re-territorializing operation. It does not create a new language, but it elevates a dialect to the status of a national and cultural language.

(Brisset 2004: 346)

Cé gur cas le Brisset iarrachtaí mhuintir Québec lena chur ina luí ar an bpobal mór gur teanga ar leith nach Fraincis í an ‘Québécois’ agus aistriúcháin a dhéanamh inti, is féidir an bharúil chéanna a chur i bhfeidhm ar an nGaeilge agus ar iarrachtaí Uí Rinn beagnach céad bliain ó shin: an Ghaeilge, teanga dhúchais na hÉireann, a chur in ionad an Bhéarla, chun an stádas a bhíonn ag teangacha móra náisiúnta a bhronnadh uirthi agus Éire Ghaelach a athghabháil i gcomhair na nGael. Chuige sin, ní raibh i ngiotáí beaga de Blácam ach uirlis ‘pholaitiúil’, ach bhí uirlis ‘chultúrtha agus teanga’ in obair mhór an Rinnigh chomh maith.

## Athruithe miona ar an téacs

Cé gur ar leagan Fraincise a bunaíodh an t-aistriúchán Gaeilge, aistritheoir ba ea Liam Ó Rinn a d'fhan dílis don bhuntéacs a bhí aige, cé go raibh an buntéacs féin barclíonta le tagairtí do phearsana móra na Polainne agus d'áiteanna inar tharla eachtraí barrthábhachtacha i stair na tíre boichte sin. Ach bíodh go raibh Ó Rinn tairiseach don téacs, rinne sé corrathrú air, agus níor mhiste súil a chaitheamh ar roinnt díobh, féachaint conas mar a athraíodh ciall an bhuntéacs le Mickiewicz. Is gá a rá gur athruithe iad seo nach féidir i gcónaí a chur síos don leagan Fraincise a bhí faoina lámh, ach gur athruithe agus leasuithe sa bhreis iad ar chinn Ó Rinn féin orthu. Dar ndóigh, ní heol dúinn cén fáth a ndearnadh amhlaidh, pé acu de bharr míthuiscintí ar nithe sa bhuntéacs é nó an de rogha Uí Rinn féin é, ach is suimiúil féachaint conas mar a athraíodh bunbhrí na Polainnise go caolchúiseach, agus ar an méid atá le tuiscint as sin i dtaobh mheon Uí Rinn féin.

Cuid de na hathruithe, níl i gceist leo ach cúrsaí stíle: mar sholáid amháin de seo, sa bhuntéacs Polainnise agus san aistriúchán Fraincise dírtear an téacs ar Pholannaigh i gcoitinne, pé áit ina bhfuil siad. Bhí Mickiewicz ag caint le diaspora mhuintir na Polainne ar fad, agus dá bharr sin bhain sé úsáid as an leagan iolra den fhorainm, .i. *uy* (sibh). Sin an nós a lean Lévy ina shaothar féin, Mickiewicz ag labhairt agus ag caint le *vous*. Ach níorbh annamh i saothar Uí Rinn é ag caint leis an duine aonair, a leithéid seo, mar shampla: “Chó luath is chloisfir a lithéid sin de chaint, dún do chluasa agus imig, agus innis dosna Sinsearaibh é [...]”

Níl dada ina leithéid sin d'athrú a chuirfeadh isteach ar an léitheoir Gaeilge, agus ar bhealach, is cuma cé leis a raibh Ó Rinn ag caint, le duine aonair nó le mathshlua, ach is suimiúil an rud é gur thogh sé labhairt leis an léitheoir ar bhonn pearsanta ó am go chéile, agus ní leis an bpobal ar fad.

## *Náisiún*

Cé gurb é *naród* an bunfhocal Polainnise a úsáideadh, arb í ‘muintir’ an bhunchiall, chloígh Ó Rinn leis an bhfocal *náisiún* mar a bhí ag Lévy. Cé go bhféadfaí an teideal bunaidh a thuiscint focal ar fhocal mar *Leabhar na Muintire Polannai*, roghnaigh Ó Rinn (agus Lévy) cloí le *náisiún*. Seans gur léiriú é sin ar an meon éagsúil a bhí ann sna haoiseanna éagsúla. In aimsir Mickiewicz is maith an seans nach bhfaca an file é féin mar Pholannach ó thaobh theorainneacha na tíre de, ach de bhrí gur labhair sé Polainnis, go raibh sé lonnaithe i dtraidisiúin agus i gcultúr na Polainnise, ba chuma cá raibh sé. Aimsir Mickiewicz, bhí muintir na Polainne scaipthe ar gach

cearn den Eoraip agus bhí sé ag labhairt leo mar phobal a bhí aontaithe ag cultúr agus teanga.

Mar threise leis sin, is í an chéad líne dá mhórshaothar *Pan Tadeusz* ‘An Tiarna Tadeusz’ ná “Litwo! Ojczyzno moja!”, a d’aistrigh Aidan Doyle mar “[...] a thalaimh dhúchais, a thír aoibhinn na Liotuáine” (Doyle 2013: 147). B’ait an rud é mórfhile na Polainne agus na Polainnise a rá gurb í an Liotuáin a fhód dúchais, ach amháin nárbh ann do choincheap na náisiúinstát san aois sin ina mbíodh teorainneacha na dtíortha ag síorathrú agus, mar sin, ba chiallmhaire an rud é tú a lonnú agus a shuíomh i gceantar áirithe a d’fhéadfadh a bheith i dtíortha éagsúla ó aois go chéile. Is maith an seans gur dá bharr sin a roghnaigh sé *Leabhar na Muintire Polannaí* mar theideal ar a shaothar, mar nach raibh an mhuintir Pholannach san aon áit amháin. Os a choinne sin, náisiún, seachas go díreach tír, a bhí in Éirinn le linn Uí Rinn, agus is é sin a chuir sé in iúl.

### *An Ghearmáin*

Mhaolaigh Ó Rinn beagán ar an gcáineadh a rinne Mickiewicz ar an nGearmáin chomh maith. D’fhulaing an Pholainn go mór de dheasca na bPrúiseach agus a gceannairí éagsúla, agus chuir Mickiewicz i leith Frederick na Prúise (1744-1797), siúd is gur ‘síochánta’ ba chiall lena ainm, go mbíodh sé i gcónaí ag cothú aighnis agus imris agus ag síorshéideadh cogai, mar a bhíodh Sátan: “*Fryderyk*, którego imie znaczy *przyjaciół pokoju*, wynajdywał wojny i rozboje przez całe życie, i był jako Szatan wiecznie dyszący wojną [...]”

Is suimiúil an rud é gur roghnaigh an Rinneach in 1916 é a aistriú mar “dáltha Shátain a bhíonn ag síorshéideadh cogaidh”, ach ceithre bliana ní ba dhéanaí chinn sé ar an tagairt don Áibhirseoir a chur san aimsir chaite, á rá go raibh sé ag spreagadh agus ag gríosú daoine chun cogaióichta, ach ní san am i láthair agus ní an t-am ar fad ach oiread. Seo an t-alt iomlán ó *Leabhar na Polainne*: “*Frederic*, ‘na gcialluigheann a ainm Síochánta, ar chogaibh agus ar fhoghlaibh do mhair sé i gcaitheamh a shaoil go léir; dáltha Shátain a bhí ag síorshéideadh cogaidh [...]”.

Dar ndóigh, d’fhéadfadh sé nach raibh ann ach gur cheap Ó Rinn gurbh fhéarr tagairt don Phrúiseach san aimsir chaite, ós rud é go raibh sé marbh le fada, ach ní mar sin a dhéileáil sé leis na pearsana eile sa téacs. Is suimiúil an rud an maolú seo ar an gcáineadh ar an bPrúiseach, agus ba spéisiúil an tuairim go raibh baint éigin aige le cúrsaí cogaidh, leis an Éirí Amach, agus go raibh an Gearmánach ag troid i gcoinne an tSasanaigh (a raibh an tÉireannach ina choinne anois) cúpla bliain roimhe sin.

## **Focail Iasachta**

Maidir le focail iasachta nó smaoineamh nach dúchasach, níor leasc leis an Rinneach iad a fhágáil mar a bhí tríd is tríd, leithéidí *malaria*, *czamara* (aibíd Pholannach a chuirtear ar an gcorpán) nó *esquire*. Ina leithéidí de chásanna ba chuma leis an focal allúrach féin a tharraingt chuige in ionad leagan a chumadh is a cheapadh a bheadh ciotrúnta nó, b'fhéidir, dothuigthe ag an léitheoir Gaeilge, cé go raibh sé breá sásta feidhm a bhaint as leaganacha dúchasacha má bhí siad ar fáil, leithéidí *tiarna* ar an bhfocal Béarla *lord*. Sa tslí sin chomh maith bhí Ó Rinn ag cur ina luí ar dhaoine gur ghá glacadh le focail iasachta sa teanga, nárbh aon díobháil é agus nárbh fhéidir déanamh gan litreacha allúracha (.i. *j*, *k*, *q*, *v*, *w*, *x*, *y*, *z* a bhfuil an Pholainnis, mar shampla amháin, ar maos iontu!) ná coincheapa iasachta, má bhí an Ghaeilge chun a haghaidh a thabhairt ar bheatha nua ina mbeadh sí ag plé le cúrsaí lasmuigh den Ghaeltacht agus d'Éirinn agus den saol inti.

Is suimiúil an rud é, áfach, gur tharraing Ó Rinn chuige leagan Gaeilge ó am go chéile, agus ina theannta sin, gur thapaigh sé an deis chun daoine a chur ag machnamh ar sheanchas agus ar laochra mór na hÉireann, sa tslí sin dó ag nascadh chiall an téacs leis an lucht léitheoireachta. Solaoid de sin is ea an *znak wielki wojskowy* 'comhartha mór an Airm', an bonn a bhronntaí ar na gaiscígh in arm na Polainne. Rinne Ó Rinn an coincheap sin a Ghaelú, agus an léitheoir a chur ag cuimhneamh ar sheanchas na hÉireann, á aistriú mar *curadh-mhír*, an mhír ab fhearr den fheoil a d'fhaigheadh an laoch ba chróga sna seanscéalta. Sa bhealach sin dó bhí Ó Rinn ag úsáid leagan dúchais chun gal agus gaisce ar an mblár catha a aithint, leagan a bhí lomlán le macallaí ó luathstair agus luathshochaí na hÉireann agus leagan a rachadh i gcion ar léitheoirí.

## **An Bád**

Tá tagairt mhór amháin eile arbh fhiú go mór a lua. Tá fabhalscéal ag Mickiewicz sa téacs ina bhfuil dhá bhád ar muir i rith anfa mhóir: bád beag iascaireachta agus long mhór. Is í an Pholainn an soitheach beag, agus is iad a naimhde sise an t-árthach mór. Bristear an bád beag ach tagann an fhoireann i dtír, ach téann an long mhór go tóin poill agus báitear chuile dhuine dá bhfuil ar bord. Is é teagasc an scéil go dtiocfaidh muintir na Polainne slán de bharr a ngrá agus a ndílseachta agus a dtairise dá dtír dhúchais agus dá gcreideamh agus go gcaillfí muintir na dtíortha eile de dheasca iad a bheith mídhílis easumhal. Nuair a scríobh Mickiewicz é sin, d'eachtraigh sé san aimsir chaite é, ós rud é go raibh longbhriseadh na Polainne tar éis tarlú, ach ansin scríobh sé go ndeiseoidh na mairnéalaigh a mbád arís, .i. go

n-éireodh agus go seasfadh an Pholainn ar a boinn arís: “A okręt znowu odbudują” ‘Ach deiseoidh siad an bád arís.’

Ach seo anois an Ghaeilge a chuir Ó Rinn air: “Agus do dheisighedar a mbád arís.” Bhí Ó Rinn ag rá, sa tslí seo, go bhfuil aiséirí na Polainne tarlaíthe cheana féin – agus bhí. Tharla aiséirí na Polainne sa bhliain 1918, tar éis chríoch an chéad chogaidh mhóir, agus sa bhliain 1920, an bhliain a foilsíodh *Leabhar na Polainne*, bhí an Pholainn i lár na hEorpa arís, ina hábhar dóchais do mhuintir na hÉireann. Cé go raibh Mickiewicz ag caint go tréandóchasach, agus dá bharr sin ag caint mar gheall ar an am a bhí le teacht, thogh Ó Rinn an aimsir chaite leis an mbarúil chéanna a chur in iúl, rud a bhí tar éis tarlú cheana, rud a bheadh ina dhíol dóchais agus a thaispeánfadh gur féidir an tsaoirse a bhaint amach agus gur fiú troid ar a son.

### *Leasuithe ar an nGaeilge féin*

Ina cheann sin, is fiú féachaint ar an aistriúchán seo mar léiriú ar mheon Uí Rinn ní hamháin i dtaobh na polaitíochta, ach i dtaobh na Gaeilge chomh maith. I gcruth agus i gcló is mór idir an leagan a foilsíodh i 1916 and an leagan a cuireadh amach i 1920. Roghnaigh Ó Rinn an cló rómhánach le haghaidh an dara heagrán, agus cé is moite de na litreacha ‘iasachta’ a ghlacadh, cuir sé roinnt leasuithe chun simplíochta i bhfeidhm ar an litriú freisin, leithéidí *dlí* in ionad *dlighe*, *gofá* in ionad *gobhtha*, nó *umhlú* in ionad *umhlughadh* (rud, .i. *-ú* in ionad *-ughadh*, ar leas fós leis an Athair Ó Duinnín géilleadh dó ina mhórfhoclóir cúpla bliain ina dhiaidh sin!) Chomh maith leis sin, bhí cúpla litriú simplithe aige nár glacadh leo ní ba dhéanaí ach ar díol suime iad ina ainneoin sin: leithéidí *athir* (*athair*, .i. gan bacadh le ‘caol le caol’ tar éis na fuaime ⟨h⟩), *ele* (*eile*, .i. ‘e’ a scríobh ina aonar i lár focail agus ní ‘ei’), *seolan* (*seolann*, .i. *-an* mar fhoircheann in ionad *-ann*), nó *pósa* (*pósadh*) srl.

Cruthú agus léiriú an dá ní sin ar na tuairimí a bhí aige i leith na teanga, mar a bhí, gur ghá scaradh leis an traidisiún, gur ghá an Ghaeilge a chóiriú agus a chur in oiriúint don bhfichiú haois de bhíthin an ghnáthchló rómhánaigh Eorpaigh a úsáid in ionad an chló ghaelaigh, arbh ionann é agus comhartha gur teanga ar leith, éagsúil, inmheánach í, agus anuas air sin, gur ghá fáil réidh leis na litreacha balbha le go mbeadh litriú na bhfocal ní ba chónagaráí don fhuaimniú féin. Is léir uaidh sin gur mhaith mar a roghnaigh de Valera Ó Rinn sna 30í is sna 40í, tráth a bhí sé ag obair i Rannóg an Aistriúcháin, chun litriú na Gaeilge a leasú go hoifigiúil agus a thabhairt chun simplíochta.

## Clabhsúr

Is ríleir mar sin go raibh cúpla aidhm agus cuspóir polaitiúil ag Liam Ó Rinn agus é i mbun a aistriúcháin, mar a bhí ag de Blácam, agus seans maith go ndearnadh na hathruithe thuas agus leathshúil aige ar chríocha polaitiúla: duine ba ea Ó Rinn a bhí gníomhach i gcúrsaí polaitíochta agus a throid san Éirí Amach, agus roghnaigh sé téacs polaitiúil le tiontú go Gaeilge, ar theanga ‘pholaitiúil’ í féin san am. Ach bhí críocha cultúrtha i gceist aige chomh maith, é ag iarraidh go saibhreach an Ghaeilge de bhíthin litríocht iasachta a chur ar fáil do Ghaeilgeoirí, rud a thaispeánfadh go raibh an Ghaeilge in ann ag an aistriúchán, mar a bhí na mórtheangacha; go bhfeicfeadh scríbhneoirí Gaeilge na leaganacha, rialacha agus caighdeán idirnáisiúnta litríochta, agus go gcuirfeadh sin smacht orthu agus iad i mbun pinn; agus go scaipfeadh an t-aistriúchán smaointe agus barúlacha éagsúla, bíodh siad polaitiúil nó cultúrtha nó eile, gan dul i muinín an Bhéarla.

Fearadh fíorchaoín fáilte roimh an aistriúchán. Mhol ‘Lugh Mac Céin’ stíl Uí Rinn ina léirmheas ar *Misneach* 18 Meán Fómhair 1920, á rá gur léir go ndearna an Rinneach dianstaidéar ar scríbhneoireachtaí agus ar stíl an Athar Peadar (cé eile!) agus go bhfuil sé sin ag teacht amach ina steillebheatha sa téacs agus go gcuirfidh sé seo na Muimhnigh á cheannach go tiubh, ach cuireann sé fainic ar an Rinneach agus an litriú nua leasaithe aige ann, á rá go bhfuil “Connachtaigh ann a bhíon ag léighe na Gaedhilge, leis” (níl tasc ná tuairisc ar Ultaibh, áfach!).

Mí ina dhiaidh sin dúirt ‘Ciarraidheach’ ina thaobh nár dhóigh leis go ndearna Ó Rinn aon aistriúchán ab fhearr riamh ná é, gur ‘cruinn simplí éifeachtamhail’ atá an próis, agus go ndearna sé leabhar ‘so-thuigthe so-léigte’ den téacs, ag cur thairis go cliste gach aon cheap tuisle agus constaic a bhí ann. Cuireann seisean fainic pholaitiúil air an babhta seo, áfach, a rá go bhfuil an Pholainn nua aiséirithe tar éis dul i bpáirt le himpireachtaí an domhain agus go bhfuil sé ag súil nach dtiocfaidh fonn tiorántachta ar Éirinn tar éis a neamhspleáchas a bhaint amach agus go bhfanfaidh sí ar thaobh na saoirse go deo.

Bhain cóip den aistriúchán an Pholainn féin amach, fiú, ó lámha Phiaraís Béaslaí agus a thuirling i lámha Roman Dyboski, Ollamh le Béarla san Ollscoil in Kraków, a scríobh chuig Béaslaí ag gabháil buíochais leis as an gcóip a chur chuige agus á rá gur fhianaise a bhí sa leabhar go raibh “[...] the old traditional sympathies, always so generously manifested in Ireland for the Polish cause, [...] as much alive as ever.” (Daltúin 2013: 42-43).

Bhí an méid sin measa ar an leabhar ag Cormac Ó Cadhlaigh, Ollamh le Nua-Ghaeilge i gColáiste Ollscoile Bhaile Átha Cliath, gur mhol sé athchló a bhualadh ar an leabhar tar éis bhás Uí Rinn, óir:



Ní heol dom aon leabhar ba mhó do thuilleadh é chur i gcló agus d'fhoilsiú arís. Is beag scríobhnóir Gaedhilge is mó atá i dteideal a chuimhne do choimeád beo ná Liam Ó Rinn agus níl aon ní d'ár scríobh sé is mo is aineol d'aos óg an lae indiu ná is mó is fiú a thabhairt dóibh le léigheadh, ná an leabhar so adeirim. (Daltúin 2013: 204-5)

Ina léirmheas seisean ar an *Times Literary Supplement*, dúirt Austin Clarke go raibh aistriúchán Uí Rinn 'admirable', cé nach soiléir cén fáth: an de bharr chaighdeán na Gaeilge nó de bharr gan leagan Béarla den téacs a bheith ar fáil:

As in the case of all young literary movements, there is a good deal of translation from other languages, such as French and Russian, into Gaelic. Such translation will do much to increase a sense of form and to enlarge horizons of interest [...] An admirable translation by Liam O Rinn of Adam Mickiewicz's "Book of the Polish Nation" and of "The Polish Pilgrim," with a commentary by Aodh de Blácam, a bilingual writer, is interesting from the fact that the original has not so far been translated into English.

Bhí dul amú ar Clarke, áfach, mar foilsíodh leagan Béarla den téacs sna 1830í i Sasana, cé gur bheag rath a bhí air. Lean sé air ag maíomh gurbh fhiú aistriúchán a chur os comhair lucht léitheoireachta na Gaeilge, mar go dtí sin ba mhó suim daoine i gcaighdeán na Gaeilge ná san ábhar féin; ba shuimiúil as sin amach an toradh a bheadh ar an nGaeilge a mheascadh le caighdeán idirnáisiúnta scríbhneoireachta. Roimhe sin, dar leis, ní bhíodh ach breacaithe ag scríbhneoirí Angla-Éireannacha ar an nGaeilge, ach anois bhí scríbhneoirí a raibh an dá theanga acu, agus d'fhéadfaí beocht na teanga a fheiceáil sa litríocht nua seo:

In conclusion, it may be said that the best work done in Gaelic reveals a part of Irish life that has long been silent, with a freshness due to sources that have remained comparatively uninfluenced by alien imagination, yet with a lack of form that may be supplied by translation and the increase of bilingual writers. Criticism has been content to encourage and to pay attention to the purity of the language used rather than to its literary value, but growing interest will bring broader standards. It is probable that the meeting of old and new influences will be rich in imaginable results.

In alt ar an *Leader* in 1939, inar cuireadh síos ar Ó Rinn mar cheardaí ildánach,

tagraíodh do *Leabhar na Polainne*, á rá go raibh a aistriúchán ‘beautiful’, agus measadh go raibh an t-aistriúchán féin maith go leor le cur ar chúrsaí litríochta Gaeilge sna hollscoileanna, cé go mbaineann O’Leary as sin nach raibh i litríocht eile na haimsire, daichead bliain tar éis thús na hAthbheochana, ach trufflais:

Thus, in the Department of Irish at University College Dublin in the 1933-4 academic year, the only contemporary prose title read by students in the general course was *Leabhar na Polainne*, Liam Ó Rinn’s translation of a work by Adam Mickiewicz [...]

(O’Leary 1994: 18)

Ina choinne sin, áfach, is léir go raibh Ó Rinn ag súil leis na torthaí ‘rich’ suimiúla céanna seo a luaigh Clarke ón meon a bhí aige i leith thábhacht an aistriúcháin le haghaidh teanga nár úsáideadh agus nár saothraíodh mórán le trí chéad bliain roimhe sin, chun litríocht náisiúnta a chumadh agus ardchéim a thabhairt don Ghaeilge. Ba chéim cheart chóir sa treo sin é *Leabhar na Polainne*.

## Leabharliosta

- Brisset, Anne (2004) ‘The Search for a Native Language: Translation and Cultural Identity’ in Laurence Venuti (ed.) *The Translation Studies Reader*. London and New York: Routledge, 343-75.
- ‘Ciarraidheach’ (1920) ‘Leabhar na Polainne is Leabhar Chlainne Suibhne’ in *Misneach*, Deireadh Fómhair 16.
- Clarke, Austin (1923) ‘Recent books in Irish’ in *Times Literary Supplement*, February 1.
- Daltúin, M. (2013) *Liam Ó Rinn (1886-1943). Scribhneoir Cathrach agus Criticeoir Iarchoilíneach*. Unpublished PhD thesis. Coláiste Phádraig, Baile Átha Cliath.
- Doyle, Aidan (2013) ‘Invocation’ from *Pan Tadeusz*, in *Translation Ireland*, Volume 19, Number 1, 146-49.
- ‘Lugh mac Céin’ (1920) ‘Leabhar na Polainne: Biobla an Tir-Ghra’ in *Misneach*, Meán Fómhair 18.
- Mickiewicz, Adam (1832) *Księgi Narodu Polskiego i Pielgrzymstwa Polskiego*. Paris: A. Pinard.
- Ó Fionnáin, Mark (2007) ‘Adam Mickiewicz agus a thiontú go Gaeilge’ in *Translation Ireland: Translation and Irish in the Twenty-First Century*, Trauben, 51-62.

- Ó Fionnáin, Mark (2010) *Translating in Times of Political Turmoil: Liam Ó Rinn's Irish Language Translations of Adam Mickiewicz's Księgi Narodu Polskiego i Pielgrzymstwa Polskiego*. Unpublished PhD thesis: Katolicki Uniwersytet Lubelski.
- Ó Rinn, Liam (trans.) (1920) *Leabhar na Polainne*. Áth Cliath: An Comhlucht Éireannach um Thráchtáil Eadarnáisiúnta.
- O'Leary, Philip (1994) *The Prose Literature of the Gaelic Revival, 1881-1921: Ideology and Innovation*. Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press.
- Snell-Hornby, Mary (1995) *Translation Studies: An Integrated Approach (Revised Edition)*. Amsterdam: John Benjamin.
- Tymoczko, Maria (2000) 'Translation and Political Engagement' in *The Translator*, Volume 6, Number 1, 23-47.



# Translations



**Thomas Moore**  
**The Meeting of the Waters**  
**translated by Adam Mickiewicz**

## The Meeting of the Waters

There is not in the wide world a valley so sweet  
As that vale in whose bosom the bright waters meet;  
Oh! the last rays of feeling and life must depart,  
Ere the bloom of that valley shall fade from my heart.

Yet it was not that nature had shed o'er the scene  
Her purest of crystal and brightest of green;  
'Twas not her soft magic of streamlet or hill,  
Oh! no, – it was something more exquisite still.

'Twas that friends, the beloved of my bosom, were near,  
Who made every dear scene of enchantment more dear,  
And who felt how the best charms of nature improve,  
When we see them reflected from looks that we love.

Sweet vale of Avoca! how calm could I rest  
In thy bosom of shade, with the friends I love best,  
Where the storms that we feel in this cold world should cease,  
And our hearts, like thy waters, be mingled in peace.

**Thomas Moore**

(from *Irish Melodies*, vol. 1. 1808)



## The Meeting of the Waters

Czyż jest na całym świecie tak miłe ustronie,  
Jak dolina, gdzie jasne zlewają się zdroje?  
Dolino! będą w sercu błyszczeć kwiaty twoje,  
Póki w duszy ostatni promyk życia płonie.

Nie dlatego o tobie tak wspominać miło,  
Że cię szmaragd odziewa i kryształ oblewa,  
Że masz żywe strumienie, urodziwe drzewa:  
Ach, w tobie coś droższego, coś miłszego było!

Tu byli ukochani przyjaciele moi;  
Oni rozleli lubość w lubej okolicy,  
Oni czuli, że piękność, która ziemię stroi,  
Milszą jest, kiedy w miłej odbita źrenicy.

Daj Boże, bym wrócił w to rozkoszne ustronie  
I obok mych przyjaciół spoczął na twym łonie,  
Kiedy przeminą wszystkie życia niepogody  
I zmieszają się serca, jako twoje wody!

**transl. Adam Mickiewicz, 1827/1828**

(taken from *Dziela*, vol 1 – *Wiersze*,  
Czytelnik: Warsaw, 1993).



**Józef Czechowicz**  
**Two Poems**  
**translated by Aidan Doyle**

## Lublin z dala

na wieży furgotał blaszany kogucik  
na drugiej – zegar nucił  
mur fal i chmur popękał  
w złote okienka  
gwiazdy, lampy

lublin nad łąką przysiadł  
sam był  
i cisza  
dokoła  
pagórów koła  
dymiąca czarnoziemiu połąć.

mgły nad sadami czarnymi  
znad łąki mgły.  
zamknęły się oczy ziemi  
powiekami z mgły

**Józef Czechowicz**  
(from *Stare kamienie*, 1934)

## **A Distant View of Lublin**

On one tower a tin weather-cock flapped,  
On the other – a clock hummed.  
A wall of waves and clouds burst  
On the little golden windows:  
Stars, lamps.

Lublin sat down above the meadow.  
It was alone  
Silence.

Round about  
Circles of hills,  
A smoking tract of black earth.

Wisps of mist over the black orchards.  
Strands of mist from above the meadow.  
The eyes of the earth closed  
Their eyelids of mist

**transl. Aidan Doyle**

## Modlitwa żałobna

że pod kwiatami nie ma dna  
to wiemy wiemy  
gdy spłynie zórz ogniowa kra  
wszyscy uśniemy  
będzie się toczył wielki grom  
z niebiańskich lewad  
na młodość pól na cichy dom  
w mosiężnych gniewach  
świat nieistnienia skryje nas  
wodnistą chustą  
zamilknie czas potłucze czas  
owale luster

póki się sący trwania mus  
przez godzin upływ  
niech się nie stanie by ból rósł  
wiążąc nas w supły  
chcemy śpiewania gwiazd i raf  
lasów pachnących bukiem  
świergotu rybitw tnących staw  
i dzwonów co jak bukiet

chcemy światłości muzyk twych  
dźwięków topieli  
jeść da nam takt pić da nam rytm  
i da się uweselić

którego wzywam tak rzadko Panie bolesny  
skryty w firmamentu konkach  
nim przydzie noc ostatnia  
od żywota pustego bez muzyki bez pieśni  
chroń nas

**Józef Czechowicz**  
(from *nuta człowiecza*, 1939)

## Prayer of Mourning

That beneath the flowers there is no base  
We know, we know  
When the fiery ice of daylight melts  
Our eyes will close.  
A mighty peal of thunder will roll  
From heavenly glades  
Over the young fields, the quiet house  
In angry brass waves  
The world of nothing will cover us  
With a watery kerchief  
Time will fall silent time will break  
The ovals of mirrors.

While the need to endure seeps  
Through the flow of time  
Let not the pain increase  
Clasping us in its bind  
We want the singing of stars and reefs  
Woods full of beeches' scent  
The chirping of swallows cutting across a pond  
A whole bouquet of bells.

We want the radiance of your music  
The sounds of the deep  
The beat will give us food the rhythm will give us drink  
And joyfully our hearts will leap

Whom I summon so seldom Lord of pain  
Hidden in the sky's conch  
Before the final night makes its claim  
Save us from a life empty of  
Music and song.

transl. Aidan Doyle





**Kate O'Shea**  
**Two Poems**  
**translated by Kasia Lech**

## Parable of a Polish Émigré

We came from Jews  
from everywhere  
and nowhere  
the accumulated  
and single.

A Polish woman  
with a bouquet  
of flames  
in her breast  
throws me embers.

My mother remembers  
her like stories  
about the lives of saints.  
St. Martin, the Little Flower,  
St. Bernadette.  
She told me how  
they came and  
married in the west.

But they had changed  
her name before that  
because their tongue  
was best.

Four generations on  
I have learned  
to kiss the  
corners of zeroes  
and be satisfied  
with gaseous shapes,  
those have no centre.

It is a sin  
to worship  
the monster's jaw –  
A caterpillar spinning  
on a thread  
to be born again  
without flaw.

## Przypowieść o Polskim Emigrancie

Pochodzimy od Żydów  
zewsząd  
i znikąd  
masowo  
i pojedynczo.

Polska kobieta  
z bukietem  
płomieni  
w piersi  
iskry mi rzuca.

W pamięci mojej matki się mieni  
jako zbiór historii  
o żywotach świętych.  
O Świętym Marcinie, o Małym Kwiatku,  
o Świętej Bernadecie.  
Opowiedziała mi  
jak przybyli  
i na zachodzie ślub wzięli.

Ale wcześniej  
imię jej zmienili, pocięli  
bo ich zachodni język  
był lepszy.

Cztery pokolenia później  
nauczyłam się  
całować  
nieistniejące polskie kąty  
i zadowalać się  
ich gazowymi kształtami  
bez środka.

Jest grzechem  
czcić  
szczęki poczwary –  
gąsiennicy wirującej  
na nitce  
by odrodzić się na nowo  
wolna od przywary.

The Polish woman said:

*You can't abandon me  
now that I am dead*

*I must go home  
I have lived  
in white cities  
with stones  
and birds  
tall people  
and donkeys.*

*Let me  
drink my reflection  
from the stoup  
of melancholy.*

I walked there  
to hear the voice –

*Do you love me?*

What could I say?  
on the shores  
of a Dead Sea.

The waves lap,  
note a lapse.

*Love me,  
love me,  
love me.*

In the warm belly  
a child rotates  
like the universe.

This is my brother  
and all atoms  
swell for the  
uncreated world –

which is perfect  
and useless.

**Kate O'Shea**

Polska kobieta powiedziała:

*Nie możesz mnie porzucić  
teraz gdy już nie żyję*

*muszę wrócić do domu  
żyłam  
w białych miastach  
z kamieniami  
i ptakami  
wysokimi ludźmi  
i osiołkami.*

*Pozwól mi  
sączyć moje odbicie  
w kąpielnicy  
melancholii.*

Poszłam tam  
aby usłyszeć jej głos

*Kochasz mnie?*

Co miałam powiedzieć?  
na brzegach  
Morza Martwego.

Fale chlupczą,  
zanurz się w chwili.

*Kochaj mnie,  
kochaj mnie,  
kochaj mnie.*

W ciepłości brzucha  
dziecko obraca się  
jak wszechświat.

To mój brat  
i wszystkie atomy  
zasilają ten  
niestworzony świat –

który jest idealny  
i bezużyteczny.

## Siberia

The red mark on your shoulder  
is down to a spider bite.  
I need no lamp to see your face,  
the stars lay waste to day and night.  
In theme you are Eros,  
hearts chattering, ninety to the minute,  
we do not say a lot of words,  
the snow melts and takes us with it,  
through the earth, and up into the sky.  
Shamanism pours us into creatures,  
the conversation three-ply,  
insects and birds become our skin.  
I open up my mouth to put you in,  
wait for you to fall from sleep,  
then pinch you with my mandibles,  
and very softly weep.

**Kate O'Shea**

## Syberia

Czerwona blizna na twym ramieniu  
to ślad po pajęczym ukąszeniu.  
Nawet bez lampy widzę twoją twarz,  
gwiazdy pustoszą ślady po nocy i dniu.  
Ty jesteś Erosem,  
serca gadają dziewiędziesiąt na minutę,  
nie używamy wielu słów,  
śnieg topi się i nas rozgrzewa  
topi nas przez ziemię, aż do nieba.  
Szamanizm w stworzenia nas nalewa,  
trzystronna rozmowa,  
owady i ptaki stają się naszą skórą.  
Moje otwarte usta są wrotami  
twego wybudzenia czekającymi,  
by potem szczypać cię wargami  
w cichym szlochu drżącymi.

**transl. Kasia Lech**





**David Toms**  
**Two Sonnets**  
translated by Joanna Malicka

## eight

Consider every curl,  
every clip  
every glimpse  
and every cliff.

Condense a dream into a field,  
hang it upon a wall;  
Command with every figment,  
another frag  
ment.

Fixate on all that is unfixed  
un-wring the wrought and  
fettered. Forget the feted;

Touch with every sinew every  
single touchable thing –  
elate even the lamentable.

Oscillate with the indispensable;  
Orchestrate the overbearing,  
bringing it to its knees, anew.

Anoint for all appointments  
anything of value.

Ask  
askance  
what it is  
that feels askew  
and awkward.  
Draw from accents: acute displacement.

Direct your dirge with grace  
and guile

gingerly

reconfigure the futures.

## **osiem**

Uwzględnij każdy skręt  
każdy ścisk  
każde spojrzenie  
i każdy (u)skok

Wciśnij marzenia między ramki  
powieś je na ścianie;  
każdym wytworem  
wyobraź(ni) kolejny frag  
ment.

Skup się na tym co rozproszone  
ODwróć to co DOkonane i  
okiełznane. Zapomnij to co upamiętniane;

Każdym mięśniem wyczuwaj  
każdą wyczuwalną rzecz -  
nie żałuj nawet tego co żalodne.

Oscyluj między tym co niezbędne  
Orkiestruj to co przytłaczające  
a to co miażdżące zmiążdż.

Wszystkim co cenne  
ubogacaj marzenia.

Badaj  
badawczo  
to  
co niezbadane  
i nieprzeniknione.  
Akcenty: przenikliwy brak miejsca.

Wdzięcznie  
wykrętnie  
snuj smutną opowieść

wnikliwie  
przebudowuj przyszłość.

**transl. Joanna Malicka**

## **fourteen**

it was all I could do to re-imagine  
recolour  
redraw  
re-member  
a past of which I am not a part  
re-assembly  
can be like breaking rocks  
flinting chip by flinting chip

re-telling  
is a leisure  
a pleasure  
pursuit

persisting w/ breaking  
uncovering aiding re-covery

**David Toms**

## **czternaście**

zrobiłem co mogłem by prze-obrazić  
przebarwić  
przerysować  
przy-wołać  
przeszłość do której już nie przy-należę  
prze-budowa  
jest jak rozbijanie kamieni  
odłamek po odłamku

prze[d]-stawianie  
to rozrywka  
rozgrywka  
pasja

nie przestawać (lecz nie) rozbijać  
odślaniać by od-zyskać

**transl. Joanna Malicka**



**Fióna Bolger**

**Three Poems from**  
*The Geometry of Love Between the Elements*  
(Arklow: Poetry Bus Press, 2013)

**Translated by Ewa Stańczyk**

## **The Widow's Song**

I put the flame  
to your mouth  
breathe peacefully

with one last look  
I leave you  
one the pyre

before sunset  
I gather the ashes  
and charred bones

store them  
in a clay pot  
and wait

when the wind  
changes I'll  
scatter them

upon the waves  
free at last

**Fíona Bolger**



## **Pieśń wdowy**

Przykładam płomień  
Do twych ust  
Oddychaj spokojnie

Leżącego na stosie  
Żegnam cię  
Ostatnim spojrzeniem

Przed zachodem słońca  
Zbiorę popiół  
I nadpalone kości

Przechowam je  
W glinianym naczyniu  
I poczekam

Gdy zmieni się wiatr  
Rozrzucę je

Nad wzburzonym morzem  
Wolne wreszcie

**transl. Ewa Stańczyk**

## Oranges are not the only fruit

have you tried mangoes in May  
hottest month sweetest fruit  
warm from the day's heat

lengra long and thin  
bite the skin  
suck out the juice

alphonso golden breast  
dripping honey  
devour whole

plump banganapalli  
pedestrian perhaps  
but the right one is delicious

in her hands  
perfect cubes of orange  
forked from glass bowls

overeager fingers  
rip skin dribble juice  
teeth hit hard stone

**Fíona Bolger**

## Nie tylko pomarańcze

Czy znasz smak mango w maju  
Najgorętszy miesiąc daje najśłodszy owoc  
Ciepły od rozpalonego dnia

Langra jest wydłużona i płaska  
Nadgryź skórkę  
Wysij sok

Hapoos to złota kula  
Ociekająca miodem  
Zjadaj w całości

Kształtne banganapalli  
Wyborne, gdy dobrze wybrane  
Jedz wolno

Nadziana na widelec  
Idealna pomarańczowa kostka  
Wyłowiona z salaterki

Nadgorliwe palce  
Rozrywają miąższ, ociekają sokiem  
Zęby trafiają na twardą pestkę

**transl. Ewa Stańczyk**

## **The Laying on of Words**

calloused and wounded  
from hard battles fought  
our war is not over  
but now is time to heal

let these words  
fall upon your  
bare flesh  
letter by letter  
and bond  
meeting your raw need  
that you may grow again  
a fresh skin  
smooth and glowing

**Fíona Bolger**

## **Nakładanie słów**

Okaleczeni i zranieni  
Od stoczonych bitew  
Nie przestajemy walczyć  
Ale nadszedł czas uzdrowienia

Pozwól, by te słowa  
Spadły na twoje  
Nagie ciało  
Związując  
Literę po literze  
Tak byś pokrył się  
Kiedys  
Nową skórą  
Gładką i promienną

**transl. Ewa Stańczyk**



**Paweł Huelle**

**Arann Islands**

**Translated by Siobhán McNamara**

## Arann Islands

William Butler Yeats nie zgadzał się z Joyce'em we wszystkim, ale tym, co dzieliło ich najbardziej, była koncepcja literatury. Według Yeatsa, irlandzka proza i poezja powinny nawiązywać do tradycji narodowej, czerpiąc zarówno z miejscowego folkloru i celtyckich legend, jak z ducha języka gaelickiego, którym posługiwali się jeszcze wieśniacy na północy. Joyce uznał to za anachronizm. Nie interesował go folklor, a próby wskrzeszenia celtyckiego narzecza w literaturze i życiu społecznym Irlandii określał mianem niedorzeczności. Wyszydział eksperymenty Abbey Theatre, przyszłemu laureatowi Nobla powiedział zaś: „Jest pan już za stary, panie Yeats, żebym mógł pana przekonać”. Z punktu widzenia Yeatsa, James Joyce – ten nieuprzejmy, wiecznie podpity i pyszałkowaty młodzieniec – był dla literatury irlandzkiej stracony.

Ale Yeats nie tylko wobec niego przejawiał apostołskie skłonności. W roku 1896 napisał do innego Irlandczyka, przebywającego we Francji: „Porzuć Paryż, w którym nie stworzysz niczego, czytając Racine'a. Jedź na wyspy Arann i spróbuj tam żyć jako jeden z miejscowych. Właśnie wróciłem z Arann i moja wyobraźnia jest pełna szarości tej wyspy, gdzie mężczyźni muszą żąć nożem z powodu kamieni”. Tym, do którego zwracał się Yeats, był John Millington Synge, wówczas dwudziestopięcioletni i nikomu nieznany dublińczyk, marzący o karierze literackiej w stolicy Europy, Paryżu.

Synge zaprzestał pisania swojej parnasistowsko-symbolicznej prozy, powrócił do Irlandii i odwiedził tak zachwalane przez Yeatsa wyspy. Niezwykła uroda tego miejsca zrobiła na nim ogromne wrażenie. Efektem odwiedzin była bodajże najlepsza sztuka Synge'a – *The Playboy of the Western World* – wystawiona w roku 1907. Jej akcja osadzona została w realiach irlandzkiej wioski, wyjętej żywcem z Wysp Arańskich. Bohaterowie mówili językiem odbiegającym zasadniczo od eleganckich fraz Oskara Wilde'a. Wymiar obyczajowy dramatu okazał się skandalem i wywołał poważne rozruchy na widowni dublińskiej Abbey Theatre.

Podróżny pragnący odwiedzić Arann Islands musi udać się do Galway, skąd na skaliste wyspy zabierze go mały samolot lub niewielki statek. Nie sposób wymówić ich celtyckich nazw bez kaleczenia tego starożytnego języka. Największa – utrwalona w literackiej legendzie – nazywa się Inis Mor. Mniejsze, choć równie piękne, to: Inis Oirr, Inis Meain, Olean na Tui, Oilean Da Bhranóg oraz An t-Oilean Iarthach. Wszystkie, ze względu na przyrodnicze i widokowe walory, są atrakcją turystyczną. Na każdej z nich znajdują się celtycko-irlandzkie starożytności, pamiętające co najmniej czasy świętego Patryka, który – jak głosi legenda – srebrnymi dzwoneczkami zawieszonymi na pasterskiej lasce potrafił



wskrzeszać zmarłych, nawet pogan.

Największe atrakcje ofiarowuje jednak Inis Mor: od strony Galway – płaska i niepozorna, od strony Atlantyku – ucięta idealnie pionowym, czterdziestometrowej wysokości klifem, w który biją nieustannie potężne fale oceanu. Ma około pięciu mil długości, a w najszerszym miejscu osiąga niewiele ponad dwie mile. Można ją przemierzyć wynajętą bryczką (uwaga, dla woźnicy angielski nie jest językiem ojczystym!) albo wypożyczonym w porcie Cill Ronain żółtym bikiem z przerzutkami. Te są niezbędne przy pokonywaniu alpejskich wzniesień i spadków wąskiej, krętej szosy.

Szarość, o której pisał Yeats, daje się zauważyć już od pierwszej chwili podróży po Inis Mor. Szare są murki okalające ubożuchne pastwiska, szare są ściany kamiennych, często opuszczonych chat, szara jest sierść pasących się tu dziko osłów, szare są w końcu skały, niebo i morze, bo nad zatoką Galway rzadko świeci słońce. Drugim kolorem wyspy jest soczysta, głęboka zieleń trawy, wyrastającej nawet w skalistych zagłębieniach klifu.

Samotne gospodarstwa, kamienne krzyże małych cmentarzy, ruiny monasterów z VIII wieku i wielkie mury obronne celtyckiej warowni z czasów mitycznego władania królów-bogów, przypominające budowle Majów – oto, co ujrzymy po drodze, jadąc między skałami Inis Mor. Wszędzie czuć tutaj oddech historii. Tej pradawnej, tej z eposów średniowiecza i tej z okresu narodowych powstań, kiedy cywilizowana Anglia poddała irlandzki naród eksterminacji. Na wyspie nie ma takiego miejsca, w którym nie byłoby słychać uderzeń fal o niebotyczne skały klifu. Jak wyznał mi jeden z Irlandczyków, „to głos przeznaczenia, w którym odnajdujemy echo zamordowanych królestw”. Nie wiem, czy był to cytat z Yeatsa.

Oczekując na powrotny statek do Galway w portowym pubie w Cill Ronain, przysłuchiwałem się rybakom i woźnicom, którzy mówili w języku gaelickim. Niepodległa Republika Irlandii uczyniła wiele, aby go wskrzesić i uczynić językiem narodowym. Ale napisy na publicznych gmachach, mapach i drogowskazach, podobnie jak specjalne programy edukacyjne i lekcje szkolne, nie przyniosły takiego rezultatu jak niegdyś w Czechach czy na Litwie, gdzie umierający i odnowiony następnie język stał się elementem odbudowanej tradycji narodowej. W Dublinie, Galway, Ballinasloe czy Tipperary mówi się po angielsku. Po angielsku pisali Yeats, Synge i po angielsku pisze największy obecnie i prawdziwie genialny poeta irlandzki Seamus Heaney. Stary język Irlandii rozbrzmiewa dziś tylko w takich miejscach jak Inis Mor, w archipelagu Arann.

**Paweł Huelle**

**from *Inne historie*,**

**(Gdańsk: Słowo/Obraz Terytoria, 1999)**

## The Aran Islands

William Butler Yeats did not agree with Joyce on everything, but the thing that divided them most was their conception of literature. According to Yeats, Irish prose and poetry should look to the national tradition for inspiration, drawing from both local folklore and Celtic legends, as well as from the spirit of the Gaelic language which was still in use among country people in the North. Joyce thought this an anachronism. He was not interested in folklore, and he described attempts to resurrect the Celtic dialect in Ireland's literature and public life as nonsense. He derided the Abbey Theatre's experiments, and to the future Nobel laureate he said: 'You are too old, Mr Yeats, for me to convince you'. From Yeats' point of view, James Joyce – that impolite, never quite sober, and stuck-up youth – was a lost cause for Irish literature.

But he was not the only object of Yeats' missionary tendencies. In 1896 he wrote to another Irishman, who was living in France at the time: 'Forget Paris, where you'll create nothing as you read Racine. Go to the Aran Islands and try living there like one of the local people. I have just come back from Aran and my imagination is full of the greyness of the islands, where men have to reap with a knife because of all the stones'. The person Yeats addressed was John Millington Synge, then a twenty-five year old unknown Dubliner who dreamt of a literary career in the capital of Europe, Paris.

Synge gave up writing his Parnassian-symbolist prose, returned to Ireland, and went to visit the islands which Yeats had praised so highly. The extraordinary beauty of the place made an enormous impression on him. The result of Synge's visit was perhaps his best work, *The Playboy of the Western World*, first staged in 1907. It was set in the reality of an Irish village, taken straight out of the Aran Islands. The characters spoke in a language which diverged radically from Oscar Wilde's elegant phrases. The moral dimension of the play proved scandalous and caused major riots in the auditorium of Dublin's Abbey Theatre.

A traveller who wishes to visit the Aran Islands must make his way to Galway, from where he can get to the rocky islands on a light aircraft or small ferry. It is impossible to pronounce the Celtic names of the islands without mutilating that ancient language. The largest, entrenched in literary legend, is called Inis Mór. The smaller ones, though no less beautiful, are: Inis Oírr, Inis Meáin, Oileán na Tuí, Oileán Dá Bhranóg and An tOileán Iarthach. All of them attract tourists because of the nature and views they boast. Each of them contain Celtic-Irish antiquities, dating from at least the time of Saint Patrick, who, as the legend goes, was able to resurrect the dead, even pagans, using little silver bells hung on a shepherd's staff.

It is Inis Mór, however, which offers the greatest attraction. From Galway, it looks flat and inconspicuous, but from the Atlantic it is lopped off by a perfectly vertical, forty-metre high cliff which is constantly buffeted by mighty ocean waves. It is about five miles long, and just over two miles wide at its widest point. You can travel around it on a hired pony and trap (careful, English is not the drivers' native language!) or by renting a yellow bicycle with gears in the harbour, Cill Rónáin. The gears are essential when tackling the Alpine slopes on the narrow, winding road.

The greyness which Yeats wrote about can be seen from the very first moment of your trip around Inis Mór. The walls which surround the meagre plots of grazing land are grey, the stone walls of the often abandoned cottages are grey, the coats of the donkeys which graze wild are grey, and even the cliffs, the sky and the sea are grey because the sun rarely shines over Galway Bay. The other colour of the island is the succulent, deep green of the grass which grows even in the rocky fissures of the cliff.

As you drive between the rocks of Inis Mór, you see isolated farm houses, stone crosses in small cemeteries, the ruins of 8th century monasteries, and the huge defence walls of a Celtic fort, reminiscent of a Mayan temple, from the times when the mythical king-gods reigned. The breath of history can be felt everywhere here. Ancient history, the history of the Middle Ages, and the history of the times of national uprisings, when civilised England subjected the Irish people to extermination. There is not one place on the island where the sound of the waves attacking the towering rocks of the cliff cannot be heard. As one of the Irishmen confessed to me, 'this is the voice of destiny, in which we discover the echo of murdered kingdoms'. I don't know whether that was a quote from Yeats.

As I waited for the ferry back to Galway in a harbour pub in Cill Rónáin, I listened to fishermen and drivers who were speaking the Gaelic language. The independent Republic of Ireland has made great efforts to resurrect it and make it the national language. But neither the signs on public buildings, maps and signposts nor the special educational programmes and classes at school have had the same result as they once had in the Czech lands or in Lithuania, where a dying and then subsequently reborn language became an element of a rebuilt national tradition. In Dublin, Galway, Ballinasloe and Tipperary, English is spoken. Yeats and Synge wrote in English, and the greatest contemporary Irish poet, the truly brilliant Seamus Heaney, writes in English. These days, the old language of Ireland can only be heard in places such as Inis Mór, on the Aran archipelago.

**Paweł Huelle, transl. Siobhán McNamara**



**Marek Gajdziński**

**Irlandzka proza i napitki**

**Translated by Antonia Lloyd-Jones**

## Irlandzka proza i napitki

Status Irlandczyków w Londynie – i generalnie w Wielkiej Brytanii – dopiero od mniej więcej dekady jest w miarę jasny, jawny i społecznie pożądanym. Przedtem, z uwagi na konflikt północnoirlandzki i działalność terrorystów z IRA, było z tym różnie. Pierwsza wielka parada z okazji Dnia Świętego Patryka (17 marca), odczytana przez większość londyńczyków jako oznaka istotnej zmiany, odbyła się w centrum Londynu dopiero w 2002 roku, z inicjatywy majora miasta Kena Livingstona, który na otwarciu się na społeczność irlandzką budował swój program polityczny. Od tego czasu parady kolorowo przebranych ludzi z zielonymi liśćmi wymalowanymi na policzkach, czołach czy nosach odbywają się w centrum regularnie. Mimo tego obecny major Boris Johnson daleki jest od kontynuowania linii politycznej Livingstona – po paradzie w 2011 roku wyraził się pogardliwie o uroczystej kolacji z okazji Dnia Świętego Patryka jako o „lewackim gównie ku pokrzepieniu morale Sinn Fein”.<sup>1</sup> Ocenia się, że obecnie w Londynie mieszka sto siedemdziesiąt tysięcy ludzi określających się jako *Irish*, co stanowi 2,2% wszystkich londyńczyków – choć te oceny nie są łatwe, bo Irlandczycy są rozrzucony i dobrze wtopieni w brytyjską społeczność miasta, a spisy ludności dalekie od doskonałości.

Irlandczyków często porównuje się do Polaków, a Polaków do Irlandczyków. Dwa istotne podobieństwa, które widzą wszyscy, szczególnie na emigracji w Brytanii, to skłonność do pracy na budowie i słabość do alkoholu. Podobieństwo trzecie – dużo rzadziej podnoszone, ale chyba ważniejsze od tamtych – to słabość do literatury i jej mocna pozycja w życiu obu narodów. Od dawna wiadomo, że picie bardzo komponuje się z pisaniem. Widać to w irlandzkich pubach, które nawiązują do literatury nie tylko wystrojem – nie tylko wszystkimi zdjęciami sławnych twórców czy cytatami z *Finnegans Wake* Joyce’a – lecz całą swoją atmosferą – w dobrym pubie niektórym pisarzom pisze się tak, jak w zaciszu własnego gabinetu – a może nawet lepiej. Tak, irlandzkie puby i guinness, tu się Irlandczyk zdecydowanie od Polaka różni, tu go bez wątplenia przewyższa, no bo co my mamy w tej dziedzinie do zaoferowania? Chyba tylko wódkę i tradycyjne bary mleczne, choć tych już i u nas ze świecą szukać. I nawet jeśli nasz najnowszy wynalazek – tanie bary z wódką, piwem i zagrychą, wszystko w jednej cenie – podbije świat, to raczej nie będzie to wymarzone miejsce do pisania wielkiej literatury.

---

<sup>1</sup> Patrz artykuł Dave’a Hilla zatytułowany Boris Johnson and his London Irish problem, zamieszczony w internetowym wydaniu gazety „The Guardian”, 13.02.2012, <http://www.guardian.co.uk/politics/davehillblog/2012/feb/13/boris-london-stpatricks-day-celebrations>.

Irlandzkich pubów w londyńskim City, na West Endzie i po drugiej stronie rzeki całe mnóstwo, ale – rzecz zdumiewająca – nie ma wśród nich ani jednego z widokiem na Tamizę. A że jestem właśnie nad rzeką i widzę, jaka jest dziś wspaniała, w tym młodym, przedpołudniowym słończku, wołałbym jej nie porzucać, bo czuję, że dobrze będzie mi się pisało z nią jako żoną. Wchodzę więc do pubu niezupelnie irlandzkiego, lecz za irlandzki mogącego od biedy robić. Oczywiście mają tu guinnessa, bo rzadko się zdarza, by gdzieś go nie mieli. Nawet u szewca podają dziś guinnessa. Choć nie zawsze:

Przychodzi baba do szewca i od razu od wejścia zamawia guinnessa. „Nie podajemy guinnessa”, odpowiada szewc. To baba robi zwrot na pięcie i wychodzi. Wraca nazajutrz i znowu zaczyna tak samo, że chciałaby guinnessa. „Nie podajemy guinnessa”, odpowiada szewc. Baba wychodzi. Ta sama sytuacja powtarza się kilkanaście razy, darujemy sobie dokładne jej powtarzanie. Dość powiedzieć, że szewc za każdym razem odpowiada spokojnie i grzecznie, bo nie jest tym szewcem, od którego się wzięło powiedzenie o wpadaniu w szewską pasję. Jednak za którymś z kolejnych razów nawet on traci cierpliwość i krzyczy: „Ty głupia babo, ile razy mam ci powtarzać, że nie mamy guinnessa! Jeśli jeszcze raz przyjdiesz tu i poprosisz o guinnessa, przybiję ci nogę do podłogi”. Baba, przestraszona, wychodzi. Szewc cieszy się, że ma ją wreszcie z głowy. Ale ku jego zdumieniu baba znów się pojawia następnego dnia. I od razu od wejścia pyta: „Czy macie tu gwoździe?”. „Nie mamy”, odpowiada szewc, zbity z tropu. A baba na to: „To poproszę guinnessa”.

Taki dowcip kiedyś słyszałem. W jakimś irlandzkim pubie. A pub U Starego Szewca (The Old Cobblers) znajduje się przy Alejce Buta (Shoe Lane) w dzielnicy Holborn, pomiędzy stacjami metra Chancery Lane i St Paul's. Tymczasem pub w dzielnicy Southwark, do którego trafiłem teraz, z uwagi na jego nadrzeczne usytuowanie, nazywa się The Horniman At Hays. Dziwna nazwa, myślę. Horniman, może Horny Man, czyli napalony facet, napalony podwójnie, bo dodatkowo Na Haju? Okazuje się, że nazwa pochodzi od nazwiska właściciela składu z herbata, Fryderyka Napaleńca, którego liczne podróże po świecie są przedstawione na ścianach. A Hay to też od nazwiska, ale innego, Aleksandra Haya, właściciela spichlerzy stojących na tym nabrzeżu, dlatego nazwano je Nabrzeżem Haya (Hay's Wharf).

Podchodzę do baru, zamawiam guinnessa i rybkę dla towarzystwa, z sałatą i pieczonymi ziemniakami. I kawałek *apple cobblera* z lodami i bitą śmietaną na deser. Bo czas ku temu odpowiedni, południe, początek pory obiadowej. Na rybkę muszę chwilę poczekać, więc z guinnessem w dłoni wędruję do stolika przy oknie. Ale po chwili wracam, bo coś sobie właśnie przypomniałem. Że mam jeszcze zamówić szklaneczkę whiskey i poprosić o wodę do niej. Żeby wpuścić kilka kropel

i wyjaśnić, że to po to, by „uszczańć trochę tej jej dziewiczej nieskazitelności”. Niestety, barman nie mówi jak Joemu, że nie chce pieniędzy. Kasuje jak za zboże. To może dlatego zachowali to Hay w nazwie?

Wypijam whiskey jednym haustem i popijam porterem. Przypominam sobie zdanie: „Odetchnął głęboko i poczuł, jak ogień Jamesona miesza się z zimnym kremem guinnessa, przydając mu silniejszych wątków”. Po chwili rybka już gotowa. Jem, popijając porterem i przyglądając się rzece oraz stojącemu na niej HMS „Belfast”, statkowi muzealnemu, będącemu wysuniętym przyczółkiem Imperial War Museum. No proszę, jak to ładnie się składa, myślę, i wyciągam. Z plecaka wyciągam. Książkę Billy’ego O’Callaghana, z tym jego opowiadaniem *Zbaw nas ode złego*, które co prawda dzieje się w Londynie, ale bohater, Joe Leary, pochodzi z Belfastu, i tam też są osadzone sceny z jego przeszłości.

Cały tom nosi tytuł *In Exile*. Dostałem tę książkę jakiś czas temu z prośbą, bym wybrał dwa opowiadania i przetłumaczył do „Blizy”. No to zacząłem czytać i z miejsca mnie ta proza urzekła. Wybrałem opowiadanie o Joem Leary, specjaliście od zamachów bombowych, oraz drugie, krótsze, o pewnej Polce z Poznania. Dlatego postanowiłem je dziś jeszcze raz przeczytać i poczynić pierwsze notatki. Bo mam taki zwyczaj, że zanim zacznę przekładać, czytam cały tekst w poszukiwaniu kawałków, zwrotów, czy nawet pojedynczych słów, które mogą sprawić kłopot. Na przykład słowa związane ze specyficznymi aspektami kultury albo zwroty charakterystyczne dla języka angielskiego. Podkreślam je i zastanawiam się, co z nimi zrobić. No bo jeśli nie uda mi się znaleźć dobrego odpowiednika w polszczyźnie dla któregoś z nich, to może się okazać, że nie ma sensu tłumaczyć całej reszty. Na szczęście nie natykam się na jakieś wielkie wyzwania, raczej drobnostki. Kilka zdań, których znaczenie nie jest dla mnie jasne, więc podkreślam z adnotacją, że trzeba będzie autora zapytać. On powinien wiedzieć. A te drobnostki? Ot, słowo *lunchtime*, na przykład, które pojawia się na samym początku *Zbaw nas ode złego*, kiedy Dan wyznacza Joemu miejsce spotkania.

– Jest takie miejsce, Hawthorn Bar, na Xavier Street.

– Znam.

– *Lunchtime, then.*

Zalóżmy, że lunch to obiad – choć nie jest to takie oczywiste. Wtedy *lunchtime* można oddać jako pora obiadowa. „Pora obiadowa zatem”. W czasach peerelu przyjęło się, że obiad jemy około piętnastej, czyli po tym, kiedy większość pracujących wróciła z domu do pracy. Bo wtedy wcześniej się zaczynało – robotnicy do stoczni jeździli na szóstą i kończyli już o czternastej. Jeśli coś jedli w pracy, to było to raczej drugie śniadanie niż obiad. Zresztą nie wiem dokładnie, nie pracowałem nigdy w stoczni. Teraz ludzie częściej kończą pracę o siedemnastej, to co, jedzą



obiad w domu o osiemnastej? Czy jak Londyńczycy – podczas przerwy na lunch? To może najlepiej będzie zostawić *lunchtime*? I pozwolić polszczyźnie przyswoić to słowo? No bo jeśli lunch przyswoiliśmy, to dlaczego nie *lunchtime*? Tylko czy konsekwencją przyjęcia takiego kierunku nie byłoby przyswojenie wszystkich słów z angielskiego i zastąpienie nimi polskich? To byłoby raczej niebezpieczne. Może więc zostaniemy przy tej porze obiadowej? „Pora obiadowa, powiedział Dan przez telefon, a że była niedziela, południe wydawało się być w sam raz”.

---

Finn, samotny rybak na jednej z irlandzkich wysepek, trzymający się kurczowo wymierającego zawodu, w dzień fotografowany z sieciami przez turystów z łądu, wieczorami upijający się w pubie po to, by wspominać kobietę, która odeszła z wyspy, myśli o tym, jak wyglądałoby jego życie, gdyby potrafił jej we właściwym czasie powiedzieć, że ją kocha (*Sezon turystyczny*). Scruggs, młody żołnierz w Wietnamie, rozpamiętujący traumę swojego pierwszego zabitego wroga. „– No to go ugotowałaś, Scruggs – powiedział ktoś przede mną, ktoś inny się zaśmiał. To był żart, wiadomo, poczucie humoru pomaga w takich warunkach pograć się całkowicie w szaleństwo. Ale nie odpowiedziałem. Myślałem o duchach, o tym jednym, którego właśnie wyprawilem, by tłukł się po tej przeklętej dżungli przez całą wieczność” (*Duchy*). Peadar, z którego Dublin uczynił Piotra, z rodziną z położonej na atlantyckim wybrzeżu wyspy ma kontakt ograniczony – kartka na święta z wetkniętymi do listu kilkuset euro. Jest pierwszym, któremu udało się wymknąć. Pierwszym, który chodził do normalnej szkoły. Pewnego dnia w jednym z dublińskich kloszardów rozpoznaje brata. Ale przecież brat powinien łowić ryby na wyspie. Więc udaje, że go nie rozpoznaje. Wraca nazajutrz, bo sumienie nie daje mu spokoju. To jednak brat. Nadal leży pijany na tej samej ławce. Bierze go do siebie, rozmawiają o dawnych czasach. Brat mówi im, że musiał sprzedać łódź i że ma teraz pracę na statku handlowym. Oni udają, że mu wierzą, dają mu nowe ubranie i trochę groszy, i się żegnają. A kiedy go jakiś czas potem znowu widzą na głównej ulicy miasta, wmawiają sobie, że to na pewno nie on. „Oboje z żoną zrozumieliśmy, że selektywna percepcja to jedna z najistotniejszych cech nowoczesnego człowieka, którego celem jest przystosowywanie się do wciąż zmieniającego się świata” (*Wygnanie*). Bezimienny płatny zabójca, który lubi wcielać się w postać Willy’ego Lomana, tego ze *Śmierci komiwojażera*. Jego amerykański sen to marzenie o przejściu na emeryturę i o normalnym życiu. Ale dzieli go od tego spełnienia jeszcze kilka zleceń, które musi załatwić. Prowadzi korespondencję z pewną zakochaną w nim właścicielką pensjonatu, w którym kiedyś, przed laty, mieszkał przez kilka dni i poczuł się szczęśliwy, kiedy jej ojciec zabrał go na

polowanie (*A Killer Story*). Polka siedząca nocą w barze hotelu, w którym odbywa się festiwal jazzowy, odpierająca zaloty dużo starszego od niej mężczyzny, która zaczyna zdawać sobie sprawę z tego, iż przygodny seks nie jest idealną receptą na doskwierającą jej samotność (*Cały ten zgiełk*). Bojownik IRA, który marzy o tym, by się wycofać z walki, ale jego dowódca domaga się ostatniego poświęcenia dla ojczyzny, przeprowadzenia zamachu bombowego w londyńskim metrze (*Zbaw nas ode złego*). To jedno z moich ulubionych. Kiedy myślę o bohaterze, przypomina mi się Stephen Rea jako Fergus w filmie *Gra pozorów* (*The Crying Game*), w reżyserii Neila Jordana, z 1992 roku. Wspaniale zagrał tam takiego właśnie wątpliwego w słuszość sprawy członka IRA.

Jednym słowem, kawałki irlandzkiej rzeczywistości (choć nie zawsze osadzonej w samej Irlandii, bo w opowiadaniach pojawia się i Londyn, i Ameryka), kawałki ludzkiego życia zawieszono między celtycką przeszłością a tym, co niewiadome. Strach i poczucie wyobcowania. Ludzie, których wyrugowano nie tylko z ich własnej ziemi, lecz również z języka matek i dziadków. „Wystarczy, że tylko otworzę usta, by coś powiedzieć. Czuję te niezdarne, niepasujące do języka słowa i już wiem, że znowu śniłem po irlandzku”, mówi bohater tytułowego opowiadania *Wygnanie*.

Zdumiewa równość poziomu tych opowiadań. Tu nie ma, może poza jednym czy dwoma wyjątkami, złych kawałków, nie ma chwil słabości – choć o słabości i bezradności dużo się tu mówi. Jest słabość ludzka w treści i moc pisarska w formie. Każda historia to kolejny mocny punkt tego narracyjnego krajobrazu. Zdania proste, lecz pełne wdzięku, życia, poetyckiej zadumy. Aż proszą się, by je czytać nie raz i nie dwa, by mogły później wybrzmiewać ci w głowie, kołatać w sercu.

Mamy zwyczaj cenić prozę, w której się coś dzieje. Najlepiej, jeśli bardzo dużo się dzieje. Jak w kryminale. Opowiadania Billy'ego mają wiele z kryminału. Mimo to w wielu z nich nic się nie dzieje. Prawie nic. Niby nic, a tak wiele. I to urzeka. To rodzi tajemnicę. Drobnny wycinek czyjegóż życia. Niby nic się na jego przestrzeni nie dzieje – ale cała reszta, cały dramat można niczym w dobrze napisanym kryminale zrekonstruować. Wybrałem do druku dwa opowiadania. W jednym dużo się dzieje, w drugim prawie nic. Nie wiem, co lepsze. Może o to chodzi, by jedno – niczym te znaki i kolory w chińskim symbolu yin-yang – dopełniało drugie?

Niektóre opowiadania są jak tygrys, uderzają od razu i bez uprzedzenia. Inne są jak narkotyk o powolnym działaniu. Czytasz i nic. Aż nagle, wiele godzin później, łapiesz się na tym, że wciąż powracasz myślami do tej historii, do tych konkretnych zdań. Albo mówisz sobie – w tej historii nie zdarzyło się nic

szczególnego. I kiedy zdajesz sobie sprawę z tego, że powtarzasz to po raz któryś z rzędu, wiesz, że jednak zdarzyło się coś ważnego. Nie tylko w tekście, może nawet bardziej w tobie. Opowiadanie *Zbaw nas ode złego* w przedziwny sposób łączy oba te sposoby oddziaływania. Uderza od pierwszego zdania i pozostaje w nas na długo po lekturze. Albo odwrotnie – to my tam zostajemy, nie potrafimy się uwolnić od tej magicznej, tak sugestywnie opisanej rzeczywistości. Po raz setny pijemy whiskey i popijamy guinnessem. Zastanawiamy się, czy już jesteśmy alkoholikami. Ratuje nas jednak fakt, że to wciąż ta sama szklaneczka Jamesona, ten sam kufel portera.

Publikacja w „Blizie” to pierwsza odsłona prozy O’Callaghana w naszym języku. Ale z pewnością nie ostatnia. Te pisane wprost z serca – i to nie tylko własnego, z serca Irlandii przede wszystkim – opowiadania są warte jak najszerszej popularyzacji i pewnie szybko doczekają się wydania książkowego. A zatem, odwrotnie niż zawarta na głucho brama litości do łoża Polki z Poznania z *Calego tego zgielku*, niechaj nam będą bramy do poznania twórczości Billy’ego otwarte na oścież!

**Marek Gajdziński**

Number 16 in the *Zapiski Londyńskie* series,  
originally published in *Bliza – Kwartalnik Artystyczny*,  
nr 3 (16), 2013.

## Some Irish Fiction and Some Irish Drinks

The status of the Irish in London – and in Great Britain in general – has only been relatively evident and socially desirable for roughly a decade. Before then, because of the troubles in Northern Ireland and IRA terrorist activity, things were different. The first big St Patrick's Day Parade (celebrated on 17 March), seen by most Londoners as a sign of real change, was held in central London in 2002, on the initiative of then Mayor Ken Livingstone, part of whose political policy was to open up to the Irish community. Since then, this parade of people in garish costumes, with green shamrock leaves painted on their cheeks, brows or noses, has been an annual event in the city centre. However, London's present Mayor, Boris Johnson, is far from continuing Livingstone's political line – after the 2011 parade he made disparaging comments about a St Patrick's Day celebratory dinner, describing it as “lefty crap to support Sinn Fein”.<sup>1</sup> The estimated number of people currently living in London who identify themselves as Irish is 170,000, equivalent to 2.2% of all Londoners, though this sort of estimate is hard to come by, because the Irish are widely distributed and well blended into the city's British community, and the population censuses are far from perfection.

The Irish are often compared with the Poles, and vice versa. Two basic similarities that everyone can see, especially among immigrants to Britain, are a tendency to work on building sites and a weakness for alcohol. A third similarity – far more rarely brought up, but perhaps more important than the others – is a weakness for literature and its major role in the life of both nations. We have always known that drinking and writing go well together, as we can plainly see in any Irish pub, where not only the décor makes reference to literature – by featuring pictures of famous authors or quotations from *Finnegan's Wake* – but so too does the entire atmosphere. Some writers find it as easy to work in a good pub as in the privacy of their own study, or maybe even easier. Yes, Irish pubs and Guinness – here the Irishman is quite different from the Pole, here the former is undoubtedly way ahead of the latter, for what do we have to offer in this department? Nothing more than vodka and the traditional *bar mleczny* – literally the “milk bar”, offering inexpensive, traditional Polish food, once ubiquitous in Poland, but pretty hard to find nowadays. And even if our latest invention – cheap bars selling vodka, beer and snacks, all at a single price – were to conquer the world, these places are never going to be the dream location for writing great literature.

There are plenty of Irish pubs in the City of London, the West End, and

---

<sup>1</sup> See Dave Hill's article, *Boris Johnson and his London Irish Problem*, <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/davehillblog/2012/feb/13/boris-london-stpatricks-day-celebrations>

on the other side of the river, but surprisingly not a single one of them has a view of the Thames. And as I'm on the river right now, and it's looking fabulous today, in the youthful, morning sunshine, I'd rather not leave it, because I feel I'll be able to write well with it as my Muse. So I go into a not entirely Irish pub, which for want of an alternative will have to do instead. Of course they've got Guinness here, because it's rare for any pub not to have it. Even at the cobbler's they serve Guinness these days. Though that hasn't always been the case:

An old granny walks into the cobbler's, and no sooner has she entered than she orders a pint of Guinness. "We don't serve Guinness", replies the cobbler. So the woman turns on her heel and leaves. Next day she comes back and starts up with the same thing again, saying she'd like a pint of Guinness. "We don't serve Guinness", replies the cobbler, and the granny leaves. The same thing happens at least ten more times, but we'll spare ourselves the effort of repeating it all – it's enough to say that every single time the cobbler replies calmly and politely, because he's the patient type. However, when she asks for a pint of Guinness for the umpteenth time, he finally loses his temper and shouts: "You stupid woman, how many times do I have to tell you that we haven't got any Guinness? If you come and ask for it one more time, I'll nail your foot to the floor". Terrified, the woman leaves. The cobbler is pleased he's finally got rid of her. But to his amazement, the next day she turns up again, and straightaway, no sooner has she entered than she asks: "Have you got any nails?" "No, we haven't", answers the cobbler, confused. To which the she replies: "Then I'd like a pint of Guinness please".

I was told that joke in an Irish pub. And there's a pub called the Old Cobblers on Shoe Lane in the Holborn district, between Chancery Lane and St Paul's underground stations. Meanwhile the pub in Southwark, which I've gone into because of its riverside location, is called The Horniman at Hay's. What a strange name, I think. Does Horniman mean a "horny man", and is he doubly horny? – because "at Hay's" makes a Pole think of the phrase *na hajju*, meaning "on a high". The name actually comes from a tea merchant called Frederick Horniman, whose many voyages around the world are represented on the walls. And Hays also comes from a name, that of Alexander Hay, who owned the granaries situated on this quayside, which is why it's called Hay's Wharf.

I go up to the bar, ask for a Guinness, and to go with it I order some fish, with salad and roast potatoes. And a slice of apple cobbler with ice cream and whipped cream for afters. Because it's the right time for it, midday – it's lunchtime. I have to wait a while for the fish, so with Guinness in hand I make my way to a table by the window. But I'm soon back at the bar, because I've just remembered something – I must order a single shot of whiskey too, and ask for some water to

add to it. I must pour a drop or two into it and explain that it's "just to take the purity out of it". Unfortunately the barman doesn't say what he says to Joe, that he won't take any money – instead he's happy to rake it in. Maybe that's why they've kept the name Hay?

I swallow the whiskey at a single draught and sip my stout. The following sentence comes to mind: "He drained the whiskey in a long swallow and followed it down with a mouthful of stout, the fire of one lacing threads into the cold cream of the other". Soon my fish is ready. As I eat, I drink my stout, and gaze out at the river, and at HMS Belfast, the museum ship that's anchored there, the foremost bridgehead of the Imperial War Museum. Well, how nicely this has turned out, I think, fetching a book by Billy O'Callaghan out of my backpack, including his story 'Deliver Us From Evil', which is mainly set in London, although the central character, Joe Leary, is from Belfast, and the scenes from his past are set there.

The whole collection is called *In Exile*. I was sent this book a while ago with a request to choose two stories and translate them for the Polish literary quarterly, *Bliza*.<sup>2</sup> So I started reading, and was instantly under the spell of this writing. I chose the story about Joe Leary, an IRA bomber, and a second, shorter one about a Polish woman from Poznań. So I've decided to read them again today and make my first notes, because before I start to translate I usually read the whole text, looking out for pieces, phrases or even individual words that might pose a problem, such as words to do with specific aspects of the culture, or phrases typical of the English language. I underline them and wonder what I'm going to do with them, for if I can't find a good equivalent for any of them in Polish, it may be that there's no point in my translating the rest of it. Luckily I don't come up against any major challenges, just some small things – a few sentences whose meaning isn't clear to me, so I underline them and make a note to say I'll have to ask the author. He should know. What sort of things, you ask? Well, the word "lunchtime", for example, which appears at the start of 'Deliver Us From Evil', when Dan tells Joe where they are to meet:

"There's a place, The Hawthorn Bar on Xavier Street."

"I know it."

"Lunchtime, then."

Let's assume that "lunch" is equivalent to the Polish *obiad*, the main meal of the day, though it's not quite so obvious. Then "lunchtime" could be translated as *pora obiadowa*. In the communist era, it was normal for us Poles to eat *obiad* at three in the afternoon, in other words, when most people came home from work, because

---

<sup>2</sup> [This piece was initially published as an introduction to two of O'Callaghan's stories, which Gajdziński translated into Polish – Eds.]

in those days it started earlier – the shipyard workers started at six am and were done by two pm. If they ate anything at work, it was more like elevenses than *obiad*. In any case, I'm not entirely sure, because I never had a job at a shipyard. Nowadays people are more likely to finish work at five pm, so does that mean they have *obiad* at home at six? Or, like the Londoners, during their lunch break? So maybe it'd be better to leave the word "lunchtime" in English? And let the Polish language adopt it? As we have already adopted the word "lunch", why not "lunchtime"? But if we took this sort of approach, wouldn't we end up adopting every word from English and replacing all the Polish ones with them? That would be rather a dangerous move. So maybe we'd better stick with *pora obiadowa*? "Dan had said lunchtime [*pora obiadowa*] on the phone, and for a Sunday, noon would do just fine."

---

Finn is a solitary fisherman on a small Irish island, clinging on to his dying profession. In the daytime he's photographed with his nets by tourists from the mainland, and in the evening he gets drunk in the pub, in an effort to forget a woman who has left the island; he wonders what his life would have been like if he'd been capable of telling her at the right time that he loved her ("Tourist Season"). Scuggs is a young soldier in Vietnam, brooding on the trauma of the first time he killed one of the enemy. "You sure smoked that mother, Scuggs," someone up ahead said, loud enough for me to hear, and someone else laughed at that. It was a joke, got so that it had to be, if we were going to keep any kind of hold on our sanity. But I made no reply. I was thinking about ghosts, and how I had just sent another ghost to walk in this cursed jungle for all the time to come" ("Ghosts"). Peadar, whom Dublin has made into Peter, has limited contact with his family, who live on an island on the Atlantic coast – a Christmas card with a few hundred euros shoved inside. He's the first to have managed to get away, the first to go to a proper school. One day, in a Dublin tramp he recognises his brother. But his brother should be catching fish on the island, so he pretends not to recognise him. He goes back the next day, because his conscience won't give him peace. It really is his brother, still lying drunk on the same bench as before. Peter takes him home with him, and they talk about old times. The brother tells him he has had to sell his boat, and now he has a job on a commercial ship. Peter and his wife pretend to believe him, give him some new clothes and a bit of cash, and then say their farewells. But some time later, when they see him again in Dublin's main street, they persuade themselves that it can't possibly be him: "...we both understand that...selective perception is an essential character trait if a person is going to adapt

to the ever-changing world” (‘In Exile’). A nameless hitman, who likes to take on the persona of Willy Loman from *Death of a Salesman*, longs to retire and lead a normal life. But he can’t make his dream come true until he has fulfilled a few more commissions. He corresponds with a woman who is in love with him, and who runs a guest-house, where he once spent a few days years ago, and felt happy when her father took him hunting (‘A Killer Story’). A Polish woman sits in a hotel bar at night, where there’s a jazz festival going on, and as she wards off the advances of a much older man, she starts to realise that casual sex is not the ideal prescription for her crippling loneliness (‘All That Jazz’). An IRA soldier dreams of getting out of the fight, but his commander insists he make a final sacrifice for his fatherland by carrying out a bomb attack in the London underground (‘Deliver Us From Evil’). This is one of my favourites. Thinking about the main character, he reminds me of Stephen Rea as Fergus in *The Crying Game*, the 1992 film directed by Neil Jordan. He gave a brilliant performance as exactly the same sort of IRA member having doubts about the justness of the cause.

In short, here we have some slices of Irish reality (though not always set in Ireland itself, because London and America feature too), slices of human life suspended between the Celtic past and the unknown. Here we find fear and a sense of alienation, people who have not only been ousted from their own land, but also dispossessed of the language spoken by their mothers and grandparents. “The first time I open my mouth to speak, I know. The words feel awkward and ill-fitting to my tongue, and it is clear to me that I have been dreaming again in Irish,” says the main character in the title story, ‘In Exile’.

These stories are stunningly even in quality. There are no bad bits, apart perhaps from one of two exceptions, no moments of weakness – though there is a lot about weakness and helplessness in them. There’s human weakness in the content, and literary strength in the form. Each story marks another strong point in the narrative landscape. The sentences are simple, but full of charm, life, and pensive lyricism, until they beg to be read more than once, more than twice, so that they’ll continue to echo in your head, and to throb in your heart.

We generally appreciate fiction in which something actually happens. We like it best if a great deal happens, as in a crime novel. Billy’s stories have many of the same features as a crime novel, and yet in most of them nothing really happens. Well, almost nothing – it seems to be nothing, but actually it’s a lot. And this is bewitching, it gives rise to mystery – a small piece out of somebody else’s life, in which nothing seems to happen, but from which all the rest, the entire drama can be reconstructed, as in a well-written crime novel. Of the two stories I chose for publication in Polish, a lot happens in one, and hardly anything in the other. I don’t



know which is better. Maybe the point is that one complements the other, like the signs and colours in the Chinese yin-and-yang symbol?

Some of the stories are like a tiger, they strike on the instant, without warning. Others are like a narcotic that works slowly. You read them and nothing happens, until suddenly, hours later, you catch yourself constantly going back to the story in your thoughts, to particular sentences. Or you say to yourself – nothing special happened in this story, but when you realise that you’ve just said it for the umpteenth time in a row, you know that actually something major happened. Not just in the text, but perhaps more inside you. The story ‘Deliver Us From Evil’ is extraordinarily good at combining both these ways of having an effect on you. It stuns you from the first sentence, and stays with you long after you finish reading. Or vice versa – it is you who stays there, you can’t break away from this magical, evocative reality. For the hundredth time you take a drink of whiskey and wash it back with Guinness. You wonder whether you’re an alcoholic by now. However, you’re saved by the fact that it’s still the same glass of Jameson’s, still the same mug of stout.

The stories published in *Bliza* are the first of Billy O’Callaghan’s works to appear in Polish translation, but they definitely won’t be the last. Written straight from the heart – and not just the author’s, but above all the heart of Ireland – these stories deserve the widest publicity, and are sure to be published in book form in Polish soon. Meanwhile, now that the “pity door” into the bed of the Polish woman from Poznań in ‘All That Jazz’ is firmly shut, let the door into Billy’s work swing open wide!

**Marek Gajdziński, transl. by Antonia Lloyd-Jones**



**Graham Tugwell**

**We Touch the Sun on Scarlet Stool**

**Translated by  
Magdalena Moltzan-Małkowska**

## WE TOUCH THE SUN ON SCARLET STOOL

(She was my cousin.  
It was wrong.)

There was a scarlet stool before the fire.  
Something our grandfather made.

It stood on three slanting legs of rough wood; the circle of its seat polished by three generations of behinds. Edges become smooth, wood rendered soft and pale.

Red remained brightest in the grain.

It held a fascination for me—the stool was crude and artless and splintered your thighs and fingers when you weren't careful.

But lasting love had made it; it had been passed down, was always used.

And looking at the scarlet stool she came past me, a brush of cloth and scented; she sat down on the stool and turned and watched the flames, birthing themselves in the mouth of the fireplace.

Night-time and bitterly cold outside, behind the curtains frost already drawing leaves and hanging spikes from branches.

Both of us together and alone.

One by one and watching my reaction she'd turned off all the lights, smiled when she pushed the button of the telly in and made it black with a ringing click.

"Boop," a pouting noise.

Leaving us together and alone, in silence. Save for the settling of logs, for the clink ceramic of things unseen in the chimney breast.

The fireplace watched us, a vault of stone and red cement, too big for the room that contained it, too cold and dark for the heat it held.

Somehow too real and too solid, it took up one wall, discolouring wallpaper on either side. All the rest of the room could be backdrop, could be merely painted cloth for all it mattered.

On the mantel, shadow kept the framed faces of our family dark.

Something I was thankful for.

Wouldn't want anyone to watch.

Sitting, her eyes on the fire, knees closed, her arms coming up past her face with wrists together behind her ear. She was made inconstant colour—yellows and ambers and the deepest darkest reds.

Shadows came and went but light always found her eyes, her lips and teeth.

Ran in rounds amid the dark curls of her hair and found gold.

A boy and bending, I came to kneel on the rug beside her, my hands and unshod feet working down into tufts of sheep's wool, tracing patterns of rings in red and black.

I watched the fire.

I watched her.

As she smiled and stared.

At the sparkling grey and crumbling white of ashes.

At the ring.

Lying in the dust of the grate.

Taking the heat of the fire into itself.

Featureless gold, no stone, no inscription.

A cheap band of metal.

Beginning to glow.

This would be the first time.

Our mothers were sisters.

She was my only cousin.

I remember, when I was very young, "You'll get married some day," said my Aunt with a wink, dabbing her cigarette dead in the tray and I blushed and turned into my mother's arm.

"Aw he's shy," mother said with a laugh, messing the flop of my hair.

And Clíodhna, two years older than me, stood in the kitchen door and smiled.

She wore her hair in ponytails but a strand would always free itself and fall, a twist of black across her eyes, across the round of her face.

Freckled, the softest cleft in her chin.

And when she smiled.

Butter wouldn't melt.

What put the idea into our heads?

Had we read of this somewhere?

Does it matter? We were there. This was the way it happened.

She turns away from the fire.

Her face the halving-round of harvest-moon.

A curling strand coming down over one eye as she leans towards me.

The hint of condescension in her voice:  
(A cherry in a field of frost)  
“Are you *scared*?”  
And I’m too scared to deny.  
I just shake my head.  
Let that be words enough.  
“Because it doesn’t matter if you’re scared”.  
Her face too close to mine.  
Can see the fire on the tips of her teeth.  
“It’s a *dare*” .  
“And you can’t say no to a dare” .  
With finger and thumb she flicks the tip of my nose.  
Stinging sets my teeth in baring.  
“Don’t be a *girl*” .  
And with that she reaches past me.  
The brushing of cloth.  
The scent of her.  
The brush of her hair on the side of my face.  
There is the soft sound of the poker taken from its hanging place.  
“I dare you,” she says. “How long will you last?”  
She waves the metal before my face.  
Slowly back and slowly forth.  
A millimetre before my nose, no more.  
Black and cold, unreflecting of fire.  
I swallow.  
She thrusts—  
The poker into ashes, spearing the round of the ring.  
Glowing now the colour of straw.  
Slowly, breathing between her pursed lips, balancing amber gold on  
black.  
She takes the ring out of the fire.  
Dull with the speckle of ashes.  
It comes to me.  
A curl of steam or smoke in rising, whipped and tasselled by my breath.  
The point of the night approaching.  
Her hand goes in a glove to protect.  
Gingerly she twists metal.  
Bit by bit—

With a whine... and a shriek...

In *jerks*.

The ring comes off the end of the poker head.

Can she feel it through the fabric?

Is it burning her?

But there is no cry, no gasp of pain; in thick cloth she rolls the ring  
between finger and thumb.

I watch.

It holds a fascination for me.

With her free hand she grabs three of my fingers, pulling me forward.

She curls them under against the palm—

(One knuckle *cracks*.)

—until only the finger she wants is unfurled

“Make a wish,” she whispers.

*Make a wish.*

But all I can think of is the look in her eyes.

And that softest voice at the back of my mind.

Wanting this to be gentle.

Over the fingertip.

The ring slides on.

Fire.

I burn.

My mouth a crack in the desert, my eyes blisters weeping under the  
pressure of thumbs. I shake and make a soundless gasp.

Curving, my head thrown back to gape, I could have been a landed fish,  
a gutted thing, spitting innards and fat as it cooks—

I slapped my hand against the fireplace, I kicked the rug into valleys and  
rucks—

She holds my hand.

She holds the ring down

No escape.

She laughs.

She shakes with it.

“Don’t be a girl”.

The last word stretches on and on.

I can smell it.

I can smell the sweetness of myself.

O fire.

Seconds of agony.

Such endless seconds.

O fire.

Finally I can take no more and empty the pain and the shame in a scream.

But there is no-one else at home.

So no-one comes.

No-one stops her.

My hand flaps in the air.

Dying bird.

“Take it off, take it off, take it off,” and my voice high and girlish, a string of beads in the dark.

“Not until you beg for it,” she whispers, the cherry bleeding into snow a spread of red, “I want to hear you *beg*”.

The string of beads breaks—

“I’m begging”.

“I’m begging you”.

The dead bird beats against my chest.

“It’s burning me. Burning me up”.

“Oh god *please*”.

My back in spasm, throwing my head forward, my hand flying from her grip and shaking, shaking vainly, trying to rid myself of the thing—

But its part of me.

Melted into me.

She laughs.

A squeeze of hot shameful tears from my eyes.

A frost of sweat on temple.

“Please, Cliodhna”.

Pathetic, weak.

She takes her time in catching my hand, in finally freeing me from the burn.

She leaves the ring for a moment both below and above my knuckle.

Two teasing sizzles to show me who’s boss.

Only then the ring comes off.

Cast down in a scrap of cloth to cool.

And gently, more gentle than ever, she lifts my finger.

Places it against the pursing of lips.

She kisses me better.

Cool and wet and soft in the night.



I look at her through the facets of my tears.  
She shifts in grades of crystal—  
Now clear, now opaque.  
It's a purr of pinkness:  
"Was that so bad?"  
"You did well".  
"Did well," I mutter.  
"Now you can tell all your friends".  
Unworded breath from me in that pause. I look at the ring of red swollen  
flesh at the base of my finger.  
"You've *fed* the dragon".  
"You've *touched* the sun".  
I cradle the wounded thing in the crook of my arm.  
Proud.  
How proud she is, sitting on the scarlet stool.  
Her victory.  
And I look at her, half of her lit by the light of the fire.  
Flames finding her eye and her smile.  
And I say.  
I *croak*.  
"Now you".  
Not a twitch of fear of hesitation.  
Not a waning of her smile.  
Just a single soft nod and the parting of her teeth.  
Showing the rose of the tip of her tongue.  
And time slowed then, slower than when I wore the ring.  
A waft of flames in languid painting.  
A colour caress.  
Cloth of orange, cloth of gold.  
Seeing the whole of her there in that half-light.  
Her feet against the scarlet stool, her knees parting under her dress she  
turns to face me. Teeth on each tip and biting, she unsheathes finger by finger—  
the glove comes off; she places it on my hand, threading it softly down.  
And then: "Watch," she says.  
The ring held in the o of finger of thumb.  
"Hotter... and for longer".  
And flung, it seems to *sing*.  
Into the fire, into the ashes.

Pushed down to heat with the head of the poker.  
I lean in to watch it.  
So close to the fire it feels my face is the thinnest of paper.  
A finger could tear a hole in me.  
All the moisture leaving,  
Petrifying,  
Making me a mask of my amazement.  
I find the ring in the fire and stare, stare until there dances black and blue  
ink in the flames. They danced still in purples and green when I turned away into  
the cool and the dark.  
“It’s ready,” she says. “Do it”.  
Holding the poker in a shaking hand I jab.  
Into the fire.  
Into the ash.  
Missing.  
Jabbing again.  
Spearing.  
The ring.  
Holding it up for her.  
She extends her hand.  
No need to curl her fingers for her.  
Fumbling.  
Almost dropping the ring.  
I slip it onto her finger.  
Tight.  
(Two years older than me, and me with my little girl’s hands.)  
I push it down.  
Her breath catches as I thread the tip of her finger through.  
Teeth down on the side of her tongue as I push the metal.  
Suddenly over her knuckle, down onto the soft between her fingers.  
She gasps.  
Seeming to take in a single perfect breath and rising with it.  
The whites of her eyes...  
She holds my gaze.  
She holds it.  
It was hers.  
And I kneel before her and watch the metal burn.  
Seconds pass, so many seconds.

Already she's beaten me.  
She had me beaten me the second I gave into her.  
Agreed to do this.  
I lean back, taking the weight of all of this onto my folded toes, onto my bare heels.  
Her free hand catches my clothes at the shoulder.  
Turns them, twists them, pulls my pyjama top in and me in with it.  
Her eyes close.  
The little noises she makes, sending the bow of her red mouth flexing.  
And I forgot to ask her to make a wish.  
I forgot to say I dare.  
She holds her hand before her face.  
Her short breaths stud the air between us.  
Landing on me.  
I watch her suffer.  
I watch it take its toll.  
The paling of her face.  
Her fingers swirling in cloth, twisting them to pinch.  
The creak of the scarlet stool.  
"No more," she says so softly.  
"No more".  
And she opens her eyes and smiles.  
"Take it off, please, Benjamin".  
I pull off the ring.  
She shakes out her hair, runs a hand through curls.  
"That's me done. For now".  
She winks.  
The ring is wrapped in a cloth again and hidden somewhere in her nightdress.  
She stands and wipes the ash from her lap.  
Brushing past me.  
(Scented.)  
Turning on each light and leaving the room without looking at me.  
Leaving me kneeling in front of the scarlet stool.  
Leaving me rubbing my burn.  
Relishing the sting of it.  
  
And no sleep for me that night.

Thinking;  
Next time.  
I had to last longer.  
I had to beat her.  
But I never did.  
Two years older than me and taller and stronger.  
I was just a slip of a thing and in her thrall.  
Completely.  
And she knew it.  
Some days she was the sweeter part.  
Some days she was the sour.  
I loved them both.  
I loved her.  
But she was my cousin.  
It was wrong.

It went on for months.  
Burn after burn.  
Sitting on the scarlet stool.  
Daring each other.  
I was *alive*.  
Until it ended.  
We stopped— *she* stopped.  
Nothing happened.  
Nobody died.  
We just... grew up.  
And I lost a part of myself.  
The *best* of me.  
The part that felt the fire.  
I want to come back to that moment.  
To find myself there again.  
I play with the scars on my fingers.  
I play with red and thickened skin.  
Memories fade and fall away.  
We move on.  
Leave something of ourselves behind.

We are sitting in the sun.

A family gathering.  
Granddad ten years dead this day.  
Aunts and uncles and cousins.  
Clodhna shades her eyes with a hand and turns to me.  
“Do you remember,” she says. “When we were young, we’d dare each to  
wear that ring? The one we left in the fire?”  
“We’d time each other?”  
“See who could last the longest?”  
With a hand I hide my fresh red marks.  
“I... I remember,” I say.  
Pretending I’ve had to drag the memory up from some deep place.  
“Yes, I remember”.  
She laughs and shakes her head., “The things we did when we were  
bored!”  
A curl of hair across her eyes and a grin that could swallow.  
“God we were awful idiots, weren’t we?”  
And I laugh too  
Nod my head.  
Say, “Yeah”.  
Pushing down the years of things I’ve wanted to say  
Peeling my words of meaning, layer by layer.  
Putting on my most convincing smile.  
I say, “Yeah”.  
“We were”.  
She sips her wine and turns away, softly smiling with memory.  
We watch her children run across the lawn, shouting, calling to each  
other.  
Maybe they’ll remember this.  
Leave something of their selves here, in the warmth and the sunlight.  
But the sun above is nothing to the heat I used to know.  
Remembering the boy on the rug and burning.  
When will I feel alive again?  
Touch the sun on scarlet stool.

**Graham Tugwell**

## DOTYKAMY SŁOŃCA NA SZKARŁATNYM STOŁKU

(Była moją kuzynką.  
Tak nie należało.)

Szkarłatny stołek stał przy kominku.  
Zrobiony przez dziadka.

Stał na trzech ukośnych nogach z drewna, z okrągłym siedziskiem  
wyslizganym przez trzy pokolenia zadków. Krawędzie się wygładziły, drewno  
przybladło.

Czerwień była najbardziej jaskrawa na słojach.

Fascynował mnie – wystarczyła chwila nieuwagi i kaleczył uda i palce.

Ale powstał z miłości, przekazywany z ojca na syna, zawsze w użytku.

Przeszła obok mnie, bardzo blisko, poczułem jej zapach; usiadła na  
stołku, odwróciła się i zapatrzyła w płomienie zrodzone w czeluści kominka.

Był wieczór, na zewnątrz ziąb, za firanką mróz malował liście na szybie.

Sami, tylko my dwoje.

Obserwując moją reakcję, kolejno zgasiła wszystkie światła i wyłączyła  
telewizor.

Ucichło.

Sami, tylko my dwoje, w ciszy. Nie licząc trzasku drewna w kominku i  
szumu w jego przewodzie.

Kominek patrzył na nas, jama z kamienia i czerwonego spoiwa, za duży  
na pokój, w którym się znajdował, zbyt ciemny i zimny na żar, który w nim był.

Zbyt namacalny i prawdziwy, zajmował jedną ścianę, odbarwiając tapetę  
po obu stronach. Reszta pokoju mogła być tłem, zwykłą akwarelą.

Na półce, twarze naszej rodziny kryły się w cieniu.

Co za ulga.

Nie zniósłbym ich spojrzeń.

Siedziała ze wzrokiem utkwionym w ogień, kolana razem, podparta na  
łokciach. Raz żółta, innym razem bursztynowa i ciemnoczerwona.

Cień przychodził i odpływał, ale blask wiązał w jej oczach, na ustach i  
zębach.

Zataczał kręgi wśród jej ciemnych loków i szukał złota.

Ukląkłem na chodniku obok niej, zanurzyłem ręce i bosa stopy w owczej  
wełnie, wodząc wzrokiem po czarnych i czerwonych słojach.

Spoglądałem na ogień.

Spoglądałem na nią.  
Ona uśmiechnęła się i zapatrzyła.  
Na migoczącą szarość i biel popiołu.  
Na pierścionek.  
Który leżał w kominku.  
Ot, złoty krążek, bez kamienia i grawerunku.  
Tanie kółko z metalu.  
Rozżarzone.  
To miał być pierwszy raz.

Nasze matki były siostrami.  
Była moją jedyną kuzynką.  
Pamiętam, w dzieciństwie, „Kiedys się pobierzecie”, ciotka puszczała oko i miażdżyła niedopałek, a ja chowałem rumieniec pod łokciem matki.  
– Ooo, jaki nieśmiały – mówiła z rozbawieniem i czochrała mi włosy.  
A Cliodhna, dwa lata starsza ode mnie, stawała w proggu z uśmiechem na twarzy.

Nosiła warkoczyki, z których zawsze wymykał się kosmyk i opadał na oczy.

Miała piegi i dołeczek w brodzie.  
A gdy się uśmiechała.  
Miała minę świętoszki.

Co nam strzeliło do głowy?  
Gdzieś o tym przeczytaliśmy?  
Czy to ważne? Byliśmy tam. I do tego doszło.  
Odwraca się od ognia.  
Ma twarz pełni wrześniowej.  
Nachyla się ku mnie i kosmyk opada jej na oko.  
Pobłażliwym tonem:  
(Żeby uspić moją czujność)  
- Boisz się?  
Strach nie pozwala mi zaprzeczyć.  
Potrząsam głową.  
Niech to wystarczy za słowa.  
– Bo nieważne, jeśli tak.  
Jej twarz zbyt blisko mojej.  
Widzę ogień na krawędziach jej zębów.

– Wyzywam cię.  
– Nie możesz odmówić.  
Pstryka mnie w nos.  
Aż piecze.  
– Beksa lala.  
Bardzo blisko.  
Czuję jej zapach.  
Włosami omiata mój policzek.  
Zdejmuje pogrzebacz ze stojaka, słyszę zgrzyt.  
– Wyzywam cię – mówi. – Ile wytrzymasz?  
Macha mi żeliwnym prętem przed nosem.  
Powoli, tam i z powrotem.  
Milimetr od mojej twarzy, nie więcej.  
Czarny i zimny, nie odbija ognia.  
Przełykam ślinę.  
Wbija...  
Pogrzebacz w popiół, nadziewa pierścioneł.  
Rozżarzony do koloru słomki.  
Powoli, z sykiem wciąga powietrze i nakłada bursztynowe złoto na czerni.  
Wyjmuje pierścioneł z ognia.  
Oprószony popiołem.  
Przesuwa w moją stronę.  
Kędzior pary lub dymu wzbija się w górę, smagany moim oddechem.  
To już za chwilę.  
Nakłada rękawicę.  
Ostrożnie zsuwa metal.  
Po kawałku...  
Ze zgrzytem... i piskiem...  
*Konwulsyjnie.*  
Pierścioneł spada z pogrzebacza.  
Czuje go przez rękawicę?  
Parzy ją?  
Ale nic nie słyszę; obraca krążek między kciukiem i palcem wskazującym.  
Patrzę.  
Oczu nie mogę oderwać.  
Wolną ręką łapie mnie za trzy palce, przyciąga bliżej.  
Odwija je na zewnątrz...  
(Aż kostki strzelają.)



... I zostaje tylko jeden.  
– Pomyśl życzenie – szepcze.  
*Pomyśl życzenie.*  
Ale ja myślę tylko o jej oczach.  
I cichym głosem z tyłu głowy.  
Żeby nie bolało.  
Przez czubek.  
Wsuwa mi pierścionek  
Ogień.  
Ja płonę.  
W ustach mam pustynię, kciukiem wyciskam z oczu łzy. Trzęsę się i  
bezgłośnie łapię oddech.  
Kulę się, głowa leci mi do tyłu, jestem rybą wyrzuconą na brzeg i  
wypatroszoną, skwierczę na patelni...  
Uderzyłem ręką o kominek, pod nogami mam góry i doliny chodnika...  
Przytrzymuje mi rękę.  
Przytrzymuje pierścionek.  
Ani rusz.  
Śmieje się.  
Cała aż dygocze.  
– Beksa lala.  
Ostatnie słowo płynie echem.  
Jego woń unosi się w powietrzu.  
Słodka woń mnie.  
Ogniu!  
Sekundy męczarni.  
Sekundy bez końca.  
Ogniu.  
Dłużej nie mogę, uwalniam ból i wstyd w krzyk.  
Ale nikogo nie ma w domu.  
Nikt nie nadchodzi.  
Nikt jej nie powstrzymuje.  
Trzepoczę ręką w powietrzu.  
Konający ptak.  
– Zdejmij, zdejmij, zdejmij – głosem piskliwym, jak paciorki nawleczone  
na sznurek.  
– Błagaj – szepcze słodkim głosem. – Chcę usłyszeć jak błagasz.  
Pęka sznurek...

- Błagam.
- Błagam cię.
- Martwy ptak tłucze o moją pierś.
- Parzy mnie. Parzy mnie.
- O boże, *blagam*.

Przenika mnie dreszcz, szarpię głową, wrywam rękę z jej uścisku, na próżno usiłuję go strząsnąć pierścionek...

- Ale się ze mną zrosł.
- Wtopił się we mnie.
- Ona się śmieje.
- Łzy wstydu cisną mi się do oczu.
- Na skroniach zimny pot.
- Cliodhna, proszę.
- Żalosne.
- Z wolna ujmuje moją dłoń, uwalnia mnie od ognia.
- Na chwilę się zatrzymuje.
- Pokazuje mi, kto tu rządzi.
- I zsuwa pierścionek.
- Na rękawicę, żeby ostygł.
- I delikatnie, delikatniej niż kiedykolwiek podnosi mój palec.
- Przyciska go do ust.
- Do wesela się zagoi.
- Pocałunek w półmroku chłodzi skórę.
- Widzę ją przez mgłę.
- Falująca postać...
- Raz wyraźna, raz się rozmazuje.
- Niewinnie:
- Było aż tak źle?
- Dobrze się spisałeś.
- Spisałem – mruczę.
- Możesz się pochwalić kolegom.
- Bezglębny oddech w odpowiedzi. Patrzę na spuchniętą obręcz wokół

palca.

- Nakarmiłeś smoka.
- Dotknąłeś słońca.
- Przyciskam do siebie obolałą dłoń.
- Dumny.
- Ona jaka dumna, na szkarłatnym stolku.

To jej triumf.  
Patrzę na nią, w połowie oświetloną od ognia.  
Płomienie znajdują jej oko i uśmiech.

I mówię.

*Chrypię.*

– Teraz ty.

Nawet nie drgnie.

Uśmiech nie schodzi z jej ust.

Lekko kiwa głową i rozchyła usta.

Pokazuje czubek języka.

Czas zwalnia bieg.

Słup ognia jak na obrazie.

Pieszczota barw.

Raz złota, raz pomarańczowa.

W półświecie.

Odwraca się do mnie. Powoli, palec za palcem, zdejmuje rękawicę,  
nakłada ją mnie.

A potem:

– Patrz – mówi.

Bierze w palce pierścionelek.

– Gorętszy... na dłużej.

Rzuca go ze świstem.

W popiół, w ogień.

Wpycha głębiej pogrzebaczem.

Nachylam się i patrzę.

Tak blisko ognia, że twarz mam jak najcieńszy papier.

Łza wypaliłaby we mnie dziurę.

Wysycham na wiór.

Zastygam.

W maskę fascynacji.

Znajduję pierścionelek w popiele i patrzę, patrzę, aż przed oczami mam  
cętki. Gdy odwracam głowę od ognia, nadal je widzę.

– Gotowe – mówi. – Do dzieła.

Drżącą ręką unoszę pogrzebacz i dżgam.

Ogień.

Popiół.

Chybiam.

Znowu dżgam.

Nabijam.  
Pierścionek.  
Podnoszę go.  
Wyciąga rękę.  
Nie muszę odwijać jej palców.  
Niezdarnie.  
Mało nie upuszczam.  
Wsuwam jej na palec.  
Ciasno.  
(Dwa lata starsza ode mnie, ja mam ręce jak dziecko.)  
Dopycham.  
Oddech więźnie jej w gardle.  
Zaciska zęby.  
Aż do miękkiej przestrzeni między palcami.  
Łapie oddech.  
Nabiera tchu i zdaje się unosić wraz z nim.  
Białka jej oczu...  
Przytrzymuje mój wzrok.  
Przytrzymuje.  
I nie puszcza.  
Kłękam przed nią i patrzę jak płonie metal.  
Mijają sekundy, zbyt wiele sekund.  
Wygrała.  
Wygrała w chwili gdy jej ustąpiłem.  
Zgodziłem się na to.  
Przenoszę ciężar z podkulonych palców na gołe pięty.  
Wolną ręką łapie mnie za rękaw pizamy.  
Wykręca go razem z ramieniem.  
Przemyka oczy.  
Wydaje cichy odgłos, widzę ruch warg.  
Zapomniałem powiedzieć, żeby pomyślała życzenie.  
Trzyma rękę na wprost swojej twarzy.  
Jej urywane oddechy tną przestrzeń między nami.  
Trafiają we mnie.  
Patrzę jak cierpi.  
Jak dostaje za swoje.  
Blednie.  
Zaciska palce.

Skrzypi szkarłatny stołek.  
– Dosyć – mówi cicho.  
– Dosyć.  
Otwiera oczy i się uśmiecha.  
– Zdejmij go proszę, Benjaminie.  
Zdejmuję pierścionelek.  
Potrząsa włosami, przeczesuje ręką loki.  
– Wystarczy. Na dziś.  
Mruga.  
I chowa pierścionelek w czeluściach koszuli nocnej.  
Wstaje i strzępuje popiół z kolan.  
Przechodzi bardzo blisko.  
(Czuję.)  
Zapala wszystkie światła i nie patrząc na mnie wychodzi z pokoju.  
A ja dalej klęczę przy szkarłatnym stołku.  
Trę spuchnięty palec.  
Rozkoszuję się bólem.

Tamtej nocy nie zasnąłem.  
Myślałem:  
Następnym razem.  
Muszę wytrzymać dłużej.  
Muszę ją pobić.  
Ale nie pobiłem.  
Dwa lata starsza ode mnie, wyższa i silniejsza.  
Zostałem w tyle.  
Nie miałem szans.  
Wiedziała o tym.  
Czasem była słodka.  
Czasem gorzka.  
Kochałem obie.  
Kochałem ją.  
Ale była moją kuzynką.  
Tak nie należało.

Trwało to miesiące.  
Ból za bólem.  
Siadaliśmy na szkarłatnym stołku.

Rzucaliśmy sobie wyzwania.  
Czułem, że żyję.  
Aż się skończyło.  
Przestaliśmy – ona przestała.  
Nic się nie wydarzyło.  
Nikt nie umarł.  
Po prostu... dorośliśmy.  
I utraciłem część siebie.  
Tę *najlepszą*.  
Część, która czuła ogień.  
Chcę wrócić do tamtej chwili.  
Znów się tam odnaleźć.  
Dotykam blizn na palcach.  
Dotykam zgrubiałej skóry.  
Wspomnienia bledną i giną.  
Żyjemy dalej.  
Gubimy się po kawałku.

Siedzimy w słońcu.  
Rodzinne spotkanie.  
Dziesiąta rocznica śmierci dziadka.  
Ciotki, wujowie i kuzyni.  
Cliodhna zasłania oczy ręką i odwraca się do mnie.  
– Pamiętasz – mówi – jak podpuszczaliśmy się w dzieciństwie z  
pierścionkiem? Tym rozżarzonym?  
– Mierzyliliśmy sobie czas?  
– Sprawdzaliśmy, kto wytrzyma dłużej?  
Zasłaniam ręką świeże ślady.  
– Pa... pamiętam – mówię.  
Udaję, że z trudem sobie przypominam.  
– Tak, pamiętam.  
Ze śmiechem potrząsa głową.  
– Czego się nie robi z nudów!  
Kosmyk spada jej na oczy, uśmiecha się szeroko.  
– Ależ byliśmy durni, nie?  
Wtóruję jej.  
Kiwam głową.  
– No – mówię.

Tłumię lata słów, które mam na końcu języka.  
Warstwami pozbawiam je sensu.  
Siłę się na przekonujący uśmiech.  
– No.  
– Byliśmy.  
Bierze łyk wina i odwraca głowę, uśmiechając się do swoich wspomnień.  
Patrzemy, jak jej dzieci gonią się po trawniku.  
Może to zapamiętają.  
Zostawią tu kawałek siebie, w ciepłe i słonecznym blasku.  
Ale słońce w górze nijak ma się do żaru, którego zaznałem.  
Czy jeszcze kiedyś poczuję, że żyję?  
Dotknę słońca na szkarłatnym stołku.

**Graham Tugwell, transl. by Magdalena Moltzan-Małkowska**





**Zenon Fajfer**  
**Widokówka z Dublina**  
**Translated, with a Commentary,**  
**by Katarzyna Bazarnik**

## Widokówka z Dublina

*Pani  
Teresa Nowak  
pierwszy dom nad rzeką  
mieszkania 6*

i znowu jesteśmy na wzgórzu Howth  
na przedostatniej stronie *Ulisses*  
zrywamy rododendrony  
jeden dla siebie  
jeden dla nikogo  
jeden dla Pani

słońce świeci dla ciebie  
Kasia mruży leniwie słowa  
jak wtedy gdy recytowała  
tak chcę Tak  
w tej zimnej auli

to był marzec albo  
luty osiemdziesiątego  
dziewiątego  
nie pamiętam dokładnie  
może Pani  
będzie lepiej pamiętać

Morze Irlandzkie w dali  
wyobraźnią badamy  
dalekie i bliskie  
możliwości

zmęczone jachty niczym foki wytaczają się na brzeg  
susząc mokre podbrzusza

inne podglądają  
nasze cienie na wzgórzu  
jak obrywamy fioletowy krzew  
pachnący literaturą

szesnaście lat temu mój Boże  
tyle ubyło odkąd  
zrywaliśmy z niego po raz ostatni  
obwiązując skałeczoną gałąź  
gumowym bandażem

gdzie jest ten kamień  
na którym zostawiliśmy  
swoje imię

wokół tylko drzewa z imionami innych  
misternie wycięte  
inicjały

musi gdzieś być tylko nie umiemy  
znaleźć

tylko drzew  
kto to wszystko przeczyta

*Dublin, 16 czerwca 2012*

## Postcard from Dublin

*Miss Teresa Nowak*

*Flat 6*

*First house by the river*

and here we are again on the Hill of Howth  
on the penultimate page of *Ulysses*  
we are picking rhododendrons  
one for us  
one for no one  
one for you Miss

the sun shines for you  
Kasia is blinking her words lazily  
just as she did when she recited  
yes I will Yes  
in that cold hall

that was March or  
February nineteen  
eighty-nine  
I don't remember  
possibly you Miss  
will you remember better

the Irish Sea in the distance  
with imagination we explore  
distant and close  
possibilities

tired yachts like seals are rolling onto the shore  
drying their wet underbellies

others are peeping  
at our shadows on Howth  
as we are picking bloom from the purple bush  
that smells of literature

sixteen years ago my God  
so many less since  
we picked it the last time  
fixing a broken branch  
with a rubber bandage

where is that rock  
where we left  
our name

around us only trees with someone else's names  
carefully carved  
initials

must be somewhere only we can't  
find

so many trees  
who will read all that

*Dublin, 16 June 2012*

**transl. Katarzyna Bazarnik**

## Translatorial Choices in Zenon Fajfer's "Postcard from Dublin"

Katarzyna Bazarnik

"Postcard from Dublin" constitutes a turning point in Zenon Fajfer's poetic work. So far this contemporary Polish poet has been best known for *liberature*, a term he invented in 1999 to describe a literary genre in which the verbal content of a book is inextricably connected with the material presentation of the text,<sup>3</sup> and for the emanational form he developed for speaking about the inexpressible (Fajfer 2010). In his emanational poems it is as if the letters of a word "issue forth" a whole line, out of which another line emanates in the same way. Thus a poem obtains a visible surface, and the multilayered depth of invisible texts. In its static, printed form such a poem needs the reader's active collaboration in uncovering the hidden layers. Zenon's programmatic poem "Ars poetica", so apt an example of this form that it even made it to Polish textbooks, can be read on-line also as a kinetic (animated) version both in Polish and English (2004, published on-line in 2007).

Yet "Postcard", written in fairly simple, conversational language, is different. It is a lyrical record of an unexpected trip Zenon and I made on the day of our arrival to Dublin for a Joyce symposium and for a presentation of *liberature* in June 2012. To our surprise Patrick Quigley,<sup>4</sup> who picked us up from the airport, drove us not to the hotel, but outside the city, to an area he thought might be unknown to us. We recognised it immediately, though it had been sixteen years since we had climbed the Hill of Howth. It was in 1996 when we first came to Dublin with our Zenkasi Theatre Company, at the invitation of UCD's James Joyce Summer School, to perform *Finnegans Make*, our adaptation of Joyce's prose works, and it was then when we did the whole *Ulyssean* itinerary. Now we took note of the Joycean tang of the situation: in the closing of her soliloquy (a passage that featured in our performance) Molly Bloom recalls "the day we were lying among the rhododendrons on Howth head (...) and it was leapyear like now yes 16 years ago"

---

<sup>3</sup> He derived the name from Latin *liber*, meaning "book," but it also alludes to liberties writers can take with the material form of their books and points to the organic unity of the material form and verbal content.

<sup>4</sup> Pat is a member of the committee of the Irish-Polish Society, who together with John Kearns of the Irish Translators' and Interpreters' Association, co-organised our visit. He is also a writer, the author of the novel *Borderland* and a biography *The Polish Irishman: The Life and Times of Count Casimir Markievicz*.

(Joyce 1986: 643). It must have been then, at that moment, that Zenon started composing the postcard.

The poem originated as a postcard to our former secondary school Polish teacher, Teresa Nowak, a truly inspirational figure who with time has become our dear friend. As Zenon recounts, her lessons, her readings and her attitude to literature made an indelible impression on the aspiring poet, who dreamt that one day she would read his work. Back then, in the pretty formal atmosphere of the Polish school, we addressed Teresa with respect as “professor”; the distance between pupils and teachers was considerable (and often still is). She also helped me to prepare for a Polish literature competition in which one of the tasks consisted in poetry and prose recitation. My selection of texts included the two final pages of *Ulysses*, starting from “the sun shines for you he said the day we were lying among the rhododendrons on Howth head”. Hesitatingly, the jury picked it up, clearly doubting if I could possibly live up to the challenge. But when Molly’s dreamy words filled the cold university hall where the competition was held, I knew I had won the day. All these memories came back when were walking round the hill with Pat, admiring the view of the sea, the harbour, Ireland’s Eye in the distance, huge, many-branched trees cut with lovers’ initials inside hearts, and purple rhododendrons, so splendidly colouring the slope.

The poem took its final shape on Bloomsday; Zenon copied it neatly on a postcard which we sent to Ms Nowak, of whom we still thought as “our Miss”. This formality is reflected in the Polish text in the capitalised form “Pani”, typically used to address female correspondents. That is why I decided to render it as “Miss,” though this may strike the readers as rather old-fashioned. It appears three times: in the dedication-address opening the poem, then in the line about picking flowers, and finally in the question finishing the third stanza, in this case also to avoid ambiguity. Had I used just the neutral “you,” it could have been confused with the persona’s companion, whereas the question is in fact directed to the teacher who may possibly remember the date of the recitation, which is clear in the Polish version.

Another possibly controversial choice pertains to the line about breaking off twigs from the purple bush. The Polish original contains a verb without a direct object, but the context makes it clear that the persona was picking rhododendron flowers. I could not resist the choice of “bloom” in a poem which, after all, evolved from Molly Bloom’s soliloquy. Additionally, the original neutral “wzgórze” (“the hill”) becomes specified as Howth in my translation. The Joycean spirit also dictated my choice of “no one” rather than “nobody” in the first stanza, as it sounds closer to Odysseus’ answer: “I’m no man” to the Cyclops’ question about the name

of the man who blinded him. Of course, I retained all intertexts, that is, the phrases coming verbatim from *Ulysses*: “the sun shines for you”, “yes I will Yes” and “sixteen years ago my God” (Joyce 1986: 643-644).

The present simple tense of Joyce’s “the sun shines for you” let me play out the temporal complexity of the situation, as the present continuous tense of “Kasia is blinking her words lazily” is intended to stress the immediacy of experience in contrast to the former, general statement. This is continued in the following stanzas in the description of the walk: picking flowers, watching yachts and the sea. So the poem captures an exhilarating experience of returning to the place the persona visited sixteen years before; this triggers off memories of the first walk on the hill, and still earlier memories connected with his youthful love and reading “the blue book of Eccles”.

But this also evokes a bitter-sweet reflection on the passage of time: so many (happy) years have passed, so much has been experienced, hence, less is left to live. That is why I translated the tricky “tyle ubyło” (literally “so much less,” or “so much has disappeared”) as “so many less” because it refers to the passing of sixteen years. A touch of nostalgia can also be felt in the question or questions about the rock on which the lovers left their signature, and which they cannot find now. “Where is the rock on which they left the inscription?”, “where is the name?”, they wonder; my choice of “rock” being another *Ulysean* overtone as Molly Bloom comes from the Rock of Gibraltar; admittedly, the original has a neutral “kamień,” i.e. “stone”. Instead the persona spots many trees with other people’s initials carved in their bark, as if inviting accidental strollers to read them.

As it happened, the postcard poem was soon available not only for the addressee but for the general public. In the autumn of 2012 it appeared in a newly launched literary journal *eleWator*, in an issue devoted to Joyce’s work and its reception. Now we are happy to present it to English-speaking readers in *Translation Ireland*; many thanks to John Kearns for his valuable comments on my translation, including the information that Dubliners actually speak of the Hill of Howth, not Howth Hill, as I first rendered the toponym. Though had I wanted to be faithfully Joycean, I should have made it Ben Howth, as this is the form most frequently occurring in *Ulysses*. Take it or leave it: my “Postcard from Dublin” reverberates more with Joycean overtones than the original and “smells more of literature” than some other translation would.

Incidentally, if someone finds the stone with the signature, let us know, please.



## References

- Fajfer, Zenon (2007) 'Ars poetica', [Online] *Techsty. Literatura i nowe media 3* [http://techsty.art.pl/magazyn3/fajfer/Ars\\_poetica\\_english.html](http://techsty.art.pl/magazyn3/fajfer/Ars_poetica_english.html) [English version], [http://www.techsty.art.pl/magazyn3/fajfer/Ars\\_poetica\\_polish.html](http://www.techsty.art.pl/magazyn3/fajfer/Ars_poetica_polish.html) [Polish version]. Magazine available from: <http://techsty.ghost.pl/techsty/magazyn/magazyn3.html> (last accessed on 29 Dec 2013).
- Fajfer, Zenon (2010) *Liberature or Total Literature: Collected Essays 1999-2009*, ed. and transl. Katarzyna Bazarnik, Kraków: Korporacja Ha!art.
- Fajfer, Zenon (2012) 'Pocztówka z Dublina', *eleWator* 1(1): 28-29.
- Joyce, James (1986) *Ulysses: The Corrected Text*, ed. H. W. Gabler et al. London: Penguin Books.



**Interview Antonia Lloyd Jones in  
Conversation with John Kearns**

## Antonia Lloyd-Jones in Conversation with John Kearns

Antonia Lloyd-Jones is one of the leading translators of Polish literature into English. She has translated many of Poland's most important writers, including Olga Tokarczuk, Paweł Huelle, Jacek Dehnel, Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, Zygmunt Miłoszewski, Tadeusz Dąbrowski, Wojciech Tochman, Mariusz Szczygieł, Wojciech Jagielski, Andrzej Szczeklik, and Janusz Korczak. She was the recipient of the Polish Book Institute's 'Found in Translation' award in 2008 for her translation of Paweł Huelle's *The Last Supper*, and in 2013 became the first translator to win the award twice, this time for the totality of her output in 2012, seven books in all. Her translations of Artur Domosławski's *Ryszard Kapuściński: A Life*, Jacek Hugo-Bader's *Kołyma Diaries* and Witold Szablowski's *The Assassin from Apricot City* received English PEN awards, and the last of these was included among *World Literature Today's* most notable translations of 2013. She is a mentor for the British Centre for Literary Translation's mentorship programme and has given numerous translation workshops.

On February 1st 2014 Antonia was invited to Dublin by the Irish Translators' and Interpreters' Association to give a translation masterclass and a public interview. The interview took place in the Irish-Polish Society, and was supported by the Society and by the Polish Embassy in Ireland.

**John Kearns:** Antonia, during the workshop earlier today one person whom you mentioned several times was your father, Sir Hugh Lloyd-Jones, who was probably *the* pre-eminent scholar of classical Greek drama in Britain in the twentieth century. Do you think he inspired you to become a translator?

**Antonia Lloyd-Jones:** I grew up in an academic household – my father was an Oxford professor and in one of the most esoteric subjects – and he was brilliant, but you wouldn't ask him to lay the table or post a letter for you. But when it came to ancient Greek he was your man. [*laughter*] So there may be something in my blood. When I was about six I used to run around the house with a list of languages I'd written out, and I'd waylay my parents' academic guests and ask: "Which of these can you teach me?" Mostly I was ignored, but there was a kind American academic who took my list seriously and said, "Oh yeah, here we are. I can teach you Hawaiian. Ha-wah-i-i. Say it like that". So he taught me that Hawaiian was just English with a lot of glottal stops. I've since been to Hawaii and found out

that's not quite the full story.

Some people are good at drawing, and they draw as soon as they're able, on everything and with everything. And some people are great at music, and it shows early in life. My party trick seems to be to do with languages. But the flip side of having a father like that is that you can never reach his level. So I knew I wanted to do something with languages, and he started teaching me Greek when I was about six, but he was always correcting me, and it can be soul destroying if your teacher has very high standards.

Somehow I must have worked out that if I studied languages that he didn't know [*laughter*] he could be proud of me but couldn't keep correcting me. He read Turgenev's *First Love* aloud to me in Isaiah Berlin's translation, and I said, "Next time I read that I'm going to read it in Russian". And I did. He used to say to me, "If you want to speak a language you've got to be bold and make mistakes. But when you make mistakes you'll also make friends".

I was once at a party in Poland where the hostess asked me to take care of an American lady who didn't speak Polish. Everyone was chatting away, and this lady took a cigarette out of her bag but couldn't find her lighter. So I offered to ask someone for a light for her; as all the Polish speakers here know, in Polish you say "Do you have fire?" And the word for fire is "ogień". So I said to the nearest man, a complete stranger, "Proszę pana, *excuse me sir*, czy pan ma *do you have* ogon?" instead of "ogień". If there's anybody here who doesn't know what it means, what I said was "Do you have a tail?" And it could be construed as the sort of tail that those of the masculine gender perhaps ought to have. I couldn't get rid of him all evening! [*laughter*] So you make friends by making mistakes.

JK: Of course, you learned Russian because when you went to Oxford you did Russian and you did classics.

ALJ: My degree was in ancient Greek and Russian.

JK: You went to Russia and that gradually brought you to Poland. How did you end up going to Poland initially?

ALJ: I studied Russian all the way through – O-level, A-level, and then at university – and I went to the Soviet Union from the mid-'70s through to the early '80s quite regularly as a student, when life there was fairly grim. I didn't know a huge amount about Poland, though of course we all knew about Solidarity. In 1981, when I was a student, I went to Berlin for the summer with a boyfriend. At that time lots of Poles

were travelling to Germany, because Poland had enormous debts and people were being allowed to go abroad, earn hard currency and bring it home. My boyfriend and I spent our whole time in Berlin with two Polish brothers and their friends, who were working on building sites. We had immense fun speaking bad Russian together [*laughs*], playing cards and getting drunk.

That was the end of my first year at university. I graduated a couple of years later in '83. It was the tail end of martial law – a lot had happened in Poland in the meantime. I had kept in touch with my Polish friends all this time by letter, in Russian, because I still didn't know any Polish. So when I graduated I went to stay with them for the summer in Wrocław. After Gdańsk, Wrocław was one of the most rebellious cities during martial law, and my friends had all been in prison for fighting the police in the streets.

So the first time I went to Poland, by train, was at a time when things were pretty grim and no one could really see what was going to happen. Martial law was about to be lifted, but the situation was depressing. I was embarrassed because I could only communicate in Russian: politically incorrect in the extreme. My main friend was an agriculture student, and we spent a lot of time living out in the fields while he and the other students ran around after some cows. Meanwhile I sat there reading *Teach Yourself Polish*. My Polish friends were very impressed by the fact that the first word you are taught in this book is *kochać* [to love] – they said that's very important. We sat around the bonfire each night, while these lads did a lot of laughing and made jokes about me that I couldn't understand. So I had to learn Polish to understand what they were saying about me – the only girl in this gang of boys. Out in the countryside we had an idyllic time, despite martial law.

This family had a big influence on me. The mother was from Pińsk, which is where Kapuściński was from, and the father was from Łuck, which is near Lwów in Wołyń, and he'd been in the Polish resistance, the Home Army, as a teenager. They educated me about Poland, and the interesting thing was that, after all those years studying Russian and being fascinated by the slightly sinister world on the other side of the Iron Curtain, in Poland, despite all the privations and difficulties, I knew that *this* was what I was looking for. I changed gear completely and did everything I could to learn Polish. But I had finished at university and I couldn't get a grant to go on studying. If you're an English language speaker, and you learn a Slavonic language, it's less difficult to learn a second. Nowadays Russian and Polish have diverged in my mind, but in those days their similarities were helpful to me. So I was able to teach myself. I would buy texts in both languages and battle my way through.

Eventually I got a job working for a Sovietologist called Leopold Łabędź,

who ran a publication about the communist world, and I worked as an editorial assistant there. He would fling texts at me and say “Here, translate that!” And I would work away with the dictionary to make sense of them. Through that job I met a Polish underground publisher who was based in London, Jan Chodakowski, managing editor of Puls publications. Puls had been moved to London when martial law was declared, because some of the people running it in Poland, including Janusz Anderman, had been arrested and were in prison. Puls published books that were banned by the censors in Poland, and then had them smuggled into the country. Through Jan I got to know some Polish writers and to spend time in Polish company.

JK: Am I right in thinking that it wasn't a direct journey from that to translation?

ALJ: I hadn't really thought of being a translator. I was interested in translation, but as many translators will tell you, becoming a translator can happen by accident, rather than choice. It would be a fairly crazy profession to choose. If you want to get rich, don't be a translator, unless someone's prepared to support you financially.

In my case, by 1988, just before the Round Table Talks that were the beginning of the end of the communist regime, I went to a Polish cultural festival in Glasgow. By then I was editor of a Polish language magazine called *Brytania*, which was produced by the British Foreign Office to tell Poles about Britain. [*laughter*] It was very popular among Polish schoolchildren, who couldn't get colour magazines easily at the time, but it was only ever positive about life in Britain – I couldn't publish anything critical or political.

JK: This was still under Thatcher, I suppose.

ALJ: Yes, and at the time in Poland everyone thought she was marvellous, but we loathed her because she was always cutting our budgets and making our jobs impossible. However, her government did introduce the Know-How Fund in 1989, which was an initiative to provide consultancy help to Poland in various areas – not just finance and business, but all sorts of things. I interviewed a lot of people who were involved in these projects and wrote about them for the magazine.

So while I had that job, I went to the festival in Glasgow and met some writers who had been granted passports to attend it. One of them was Paweł Huelle, who had recently published his first novel, *Weiser Dawidek* [*Who Was David Weiser?*], which was very successful in Poland. Jan Chodakowski and I had already been talking about an idea to publish some good Central European novels

in English. I was doing a bit of translation from Russian at the time for Michael Glenny, who was a leading translator, and who occasionally farmed work out to younger translators. He taught me a lot by going through my translations with me and showing me how to do them properly. And he knew lots of publishers. So here was Paweł with his book, and here was Jan wanting to act as his agent, and here was Michael telling me what to do – we put all the pieces together and got a publishing deal. As I had translated some extracts, the publisher offered me the job of translating the whole book. I didn't think I knew Polish well enough, but and the others encouraged me, and I got my first contract.

I was lucky, because the book was a success, and then I translated a set of Paweł's stories. But I knew I'd starve to death if I treated translation as a full-time profession, so I had sensible jobs and for many years I thought of it as a hobby that earned me a bit of extra money. It wasn't my full-time job until much later. I spent a decade working at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, as a secretary, and then in a unit producing speeches and publications aimed at promoting investment in Central and Eastern Europe. I translated in my spare time, then eventually in 2001 I gave up my job at the bank and went to live with my partner in the US. I didn't have a work permit, so it was the perfect opportunity to develop my career as a freelance translator. I didn't know what would happen, but luckily it took off and became my full-time profession.

JK: Looking back at *Weiser Dawidek* [*Who Was David Weiser?*] how do you feel reading those old translations now, having done lots of other translations in the interim?

ALJ: Now and then the question comes up of whether it should be republished, and I wonder if I should revise it. Occasionally I've looked at it and it seems to read alright, but I've never revisited it from a critical point of view.

JK: To me it reads perfectly and it's his most famous work in English. It achieved a very high reputation and has secured a lot of subsequent translation work for you from him.

ALJ: Paweł Huelle and I have a good relationship. We've had some fine adventures here in Ireland. When *Who Was David Weiser?* was published, he came to London to meet our publisher. He was very interested in Ireland and wanted to come here too, but he didn't speak any English so I offered to travel with him. In London the publisher took us out for a drink with Seamus Heaney, who was very kind to us,



and gave us great advice on where to go, which led to us having some extraordinary adventures in Dublin, Galway and the Aran Islands, which were just amazing. It's very interesting being with Paweł, because you can see him processing everything into literature. He's constantly borrowing from life, absorbing things and putting them through his extraordinary mental processor to turn them into this beautiful literature, so the result of that trip was a lovely piece about the Aran Islands, which you'll be able to read in Siobhán Macnamara's impeccable translation in the new edition of *Translation Ireland*...

JK: ...many thanks to Siobhán!

ALJ: ...who's done a lovely job. I think it's bilingual isn't it? You're putting the Polish and the English together.

JK: Yes.

ALJ: Highly recommended – if you haven't been to the Aran Islands it will make you want to rush off there. Paweł and I were both in love with Synge, and we had to see the places he wrote about. Paweł also wrote a story inspired by our visit called 'In Dublin's Fair City', which features, among other places, the James Joyce Tower in Sandycove. It's a very picturesque place: sea lapping on the rocks, beautiful clouds, and lighthouses that you can imagine winking at each other in the night. We were wandering about on the rocks when we suddenly came upon a strange vehicle, a sort of caravan on wheels that can rise up above the water. There was a small group of extremely drunken people in this thing, who when they saw Paweł peering in the back door invited him in for a drink. They asked where he was from and he said in a heavy accent "I am Poleesh", to which they said "Up the Pole! Up the Pole!" which was glorious! [*laughter*] I hardly dared let him off his leash. I thought he'd be kidnapped by these people, and I'd never get him back! It was very funny. The Irish people were happy to meet a Pole. "We've got lots in common, Poles and Irish," they said. "We're Catholics and we have to deal with empires bullying us next door". There weren't many Polish people here then. But I've seen all these adventures come out in literature, when Paweł invents stories that are a kind of fantasy: even if the events he describes didn't really happen to us literally, it's great to see how a writer processes his experiences, and it's exciting to be a part of it.

JK: I think that brings up something that's quite important to you: the fact that your personal relationship with your authors is very important. You get to know

them and many of them have become quite good friends of yours.

ALJ: Some of them insist on being dead, which is an awful nuisance, [*laughter*] but I mainly translate contemporary literature, so most of them are alive. As Polish is basically impenetrable to most foreigners, Polish people are always amazed when one of us speaks Polish. And the Polish authors that I've translated are infinitely grateful, because I'm giving them a whole new audience. I've been very lucky to work with fabulous writers and to have some wonderful friendships as a result. I've had adventures with several of them on book promotion tours.

The funniest thing that happened to me was with Zygmunt Miłoszewski, who writes intelligent crime novels. He researches all the details very carefully and his second crime story, *A Grain of Truth*, is set in Sandomierz. Sandomierz is a picturesque town with an old mediaeval area set on a hilltop overlooking the river, like a scene from the front of a chocolate box. In the book, Zygmunt makes use of some uncomfortable Polish issues, including anti-Semitism and problematic relationships between Poles and Jews. Sandomierz has a large cathedral decorated with some highly imaginative but macabre paintings featuring the grisly deaths of Christian martyrs – one horrible end for every day of the year. At the back of the church there's a painting depicting the Swedish invasion, with soldiers hacking monks to bits. Parallel to it, on the other side of the nave the wall is covered by a curtain and a picture of John Paul II. But behind the curtain there's another gruesome painting, showing Jews buying children and then putting them into nail-studded barrels to drain out their blood before throwing their remains to dogs. Instead of either showing the painting with a notice to explain it, or putting it in a museum, they hide it behind a drape with a picture of the Pope.

Zygmunt thought this was too good to miss, so he used it in his crime book. The murderer finds a way of confusing the police by making the murders look like revenge for the maltreatment of Jews in the past. Just before it was published, Zygmunt told me, "I have to show you the town before the book appears in Polish because afterwards I'll never be able to go there again". So we went to Sandomierz. Zygmunt took me to the local archive, because the first scene in the book features a genealogist searching through the old records kept there. The archive is housed in the old Synagogue, in a large hexagonal prayer hall, which has incredible paintings on the walls. But now there's a metal structure in the middle of it, to house all the old parish registers on shelves reached by a series of staircases. Right at the top there are small drawbridges that can be lowered to reach the windows. At the start of the book, the genealogist is in this creepy place late at night, when one of these drawbridges falls, giving him a terrible shock. He goes over to try and pull it back

up, and through the window sees something glittering outside. He can't see out because the window is dirty, so he opens it and sees a horrible corpse drained of blood. That's the opening scene of the book, so for dramatic effect it's rather good.

When we got to the archive Zygmunt introduced himself to the manager, saying, "My name is Zygmunt Miłoszewski, I'm a writer, you probably don't know who I am..." and at once the manager replied "I know exactly who you are!" [laughter] It turned out that he'd read the first chapter of the book, which had just been published in *Newsweek Polska*. "I've had calls from archives all over the country asking how come I would let someone stay all night in our archive!" As we were looking around, and I was taking photos and investigating this peculiar place, the manager said to Zygmunt "*A jak wygląda wielkomięskie do widzenia?*" meaning "What's a big-town goodbye like?" "Sorry?" said Zygmunt. And the man said "In your book it says 'He threw the waiter a small-town goodbye'. People take offence at that sort of thing you know. And our cleaning lady is very upset". [laughter] So Zygmunt said, "What do you mean?" "You'll have to explain it to Pani Janeczka". Then we were frog-marched off to a cubby-hole under the stairs, where the manager knocked on the door and said, "Mrs Janeczka, it's the writer fellow from Warsaw!" And out came a lady with purple-dyed hair and a blue cleaner's pinny, and a little pointy chin which she poked defiantly at Zygmunt. I've never seen anybody age down so fast, from 35 to 5. He'd written that the windows were dirty! [laughter] "I didn't mean to cast aspersions on your cleaning skills," he stammered. "I'm sure you're a marvellous cleaner – it was just for the sake of fiction, it was necessary for the dramatic tension of the book and, you know – I had to – it's fiction, for God's sake!" And she said "*Ale już poszło w świat*" – "But it's gone out into the world".

JK: Talking about other authors you're good friends with, I suppose one of the other most famous writers you've translated would be Olga Tokarczuk.

ALJ: Olga, yes

JK: How did you come to translate her and get to know her?

ALJ: I met her through a Dutch publisher called Adrian van Rijsewijk, an extraordinary person who grew up on the family farm in Holland, but went off to Poland in the 1970s, fell in love, married a Polish girl and learned Polish. As a publisher he ended up representing a number of Polish authors, including Olga, for whom he had found a British publisher, who commissioned me to translate. So that was how it started with Olga.

I've only done two of her books. Sometimes she writes novels in the conventional sense, like *Prawiek i inne czasy*, which I translated as *Primeval and Other Times*, but sometimes she breaks with convention. She loves playing with form, so her definition of a novel is quite loose. Unfortunately the English-language publishers are generally quite conservative. They have to think commercially, so they want the author to stick to the same successful formulae. Olga always says she's a central European writer and she's right. She belongs to a tradition that includes a lot of Czech and some German writers. But the English-language publishers tend to avoid writing that they perceive as experimental. I'm sorry about that, because she has written some very good books that haven't found publishers, despite my and her agent's efforts. One of these is actually a conventional sort of novel that parodies the crime genre. The title is a quote from William Blake: "Drive your plough over the bones of the dead".

It's set in the south-western corner of Poland, Sudety, where Olga lived for a very long time. Several of her books are set in this strange no-man's land which used to be part of Germany, a place where the borders have often changed, making it a strange, fluid part of the world. The heroine is a woman in her sixties who has had a career, but is a bit of an outsider, living in a tiny village. A series of rather strange deaths occurs, of local, chauvinistic men, all of whom were hunters. This older woman insists to the police that these people have been killed by animals, as revenge on hunters, but of course they think she's mad and tell her to go away. I'm not going to spoil the plot for you, but it's a book that makes a valid and rather beautiful point, which is that there's a certain age and a certain kind of person who gets marginalised and ignored, as if they don't really count any more. So Olga is talking about certain kinds of chauvinism in this book, but she does it with a lot of grace and humour. It's being filmed by Agnieszka Holland right now.

JK: You mentioned earlier today that your favourite writer to translate was Iwaszkiewicz.

ALJ: Iwaszkiewicz is a genius and I've read everything he wrote in prose. I haven't read all the poetry. So far I have only translated one collection of four stories. Iwaszkiewicz was not only a poet and writer, but he spent a great deal of time in the world of music and was a close friend of Szymanowski. His love of music comes through very strongly in his work. I think the most beautiful piece of Polish I've ever translated – I don't know if I did it justice but I doubt it – is his story *Brzezina*, 'The Birch Grove'. It's set in a remote place where a man in his late 30s is the local forester. His wife has died, and is buried in a beautiful birch grove next to the

house where he lives with his little daughter. He's devastated by this death, and is internally dead himself – his soul is dead. His brother comes to stay with him after having a lot of fun living abroad, but he is physically dying of tuberculosis. So there are two brothers, one of whom, in his soul, is bursting with life but is physically dying, and the other who's dead in his soul but is robust, physically strong. In the course of the story there's kind of an antagonism between them. By the end, the one who was ill is dead, but the other one has come back to life in the process. It's beautifully written, composed like a piece of music – it builds up gradually, with themes that recur and are treated in different ways. It's the most incredible piece of writing, so I'd like to do more and one day I will.

JK: Recently, particularly in the last few years, you've been doing more reportage: Jacek Hugo Bader and Wojciech Jagielski...

ALJ: Yes, I now translate five reportage writers. Reportage is an interesting literary genre, with Kapuściński as its spiritual father. The books that I've translated are somewhere between factual news and travel writing. I'm a great traveller myself and I'm fascinated by this sort of literature. I have three translations coming out this year: Jacek Hugo Bader's book *Kolyma Diaries*, which is about how he hitchhiked from Magadan along the Kolyma Highway, which is the road that runs through the part of the Gulag that consisted of gold mines. He made the trip at the beginning of winter, just as it was starting to get dangerous. Inevitably there's a lot about the history of the place, what has shaped it, and also about the people who live there now.

Then there's *The Assassin from Apricot City*, a great book by a young journalist called Witold Szablowski, about Turkey, a fascinating portrait of what's wrong with the country from the viewpoints of various ordinary people. Some of the stories in it have a Polish connection, such as the life of Turkey's great poet, Nâzım Hikmet, who was actually called Borzęcki and had Polish roots. There are also some tough accounts of the fate of women who are forced into prostitution, or who are subject to honour killings, particularly in the Kurdish part of Turkey. They're killed by their own families for behaviour that's considered unacceptable, such as wanting to wear jeans or having a boyfriend. It's quite shocking. There are lighter things in the book too, so for instance one of my favourite chapters is called "Bye Bye Bush". It's about the famous incident from the tail end of the Iraq war, when George Bush appeared at a press conference where one of the journalists threw his shoes at him. It starts with this event, but it's about the Kurd who made those particular shoes, and subsequently made a fortune by marketing them with

the label “Bye Bye Bush”. [*laughter*]

JK: There are loads of other questions that I’d like to ask you but time is moving on. Maybe the audience might have questions?

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I have a quick question. I don’t know much about Polish literature but I’d just like to pick up on what you were saying about experimentalism. Why do you think that our tastes today in the English speaking world are so conservative?

ALJ: I think it’s quite hard to get English natives to read something foreign. People won’t go to subtitled films. We are a bit xenophobic. The British are proud of being tolerant, but at the same time there’s no great interest in foreign cultures. Perhaps it’s easier if you’re translating Spanish or French or Italian or German – those are accepted cultures from places where we go on holiday. But Poland? Hmm. However, Czech literature had a big wave of success in the English-speaking world in the 1980s, thanks to writers like Kundera. That was when I started translating and I thought “Good, there’s hope for us. If the Czechs can do it why can’t we?” But it continues to be difficult, and I’d love to know why.

JK: Recently I’ve been putting together a few classes on Polish literature in translation. Trying to find women writers, and particularly women prose writers and novelists, compared with male writers is pretty tough. I know in Ireland it’s tough as well. There are far more male novelists than female novelists, but in Poland, in terms of who gets translated, it’s largely just Tokarczuk, Masłowska, Tulli...

ALJ: It may be partly that the women writers are having to concentrate on issues that affect women in particular, and these topics have already been covered in western culture, where women aren’t having to fight for their corner in quite the same way. I don’t know – I’m just throwing this out as a possibility – but perhaps some of the literature by contemporary Polish women writers dealing with some of these issues is less attractive to western audiences because it covers ground that’s already familiar to them. I’ve seen this happening with some of the gay literature too, as if the western readers are thinking: “We know all that. We’ve been there before”. They don’t want to hear a foreign version of something they heard 20, 15 years ago.

In London I help to organise a reading group for a publisher called “And Other Stories” as a way of finding books that would be worth publishing

in translation. The group includes people who are interested in Polish literature, some of them for professional reasons. We often choose books by women on the principle that there aren't enough in translation. But quite often we find that – without wanting to generalise – they're about nothing but the grimness of women's lives.

AUDIENCE MEMBER: I have no Polish whatsoever. Would you mind saying something about particular problems that Polish presents for translation?

ALJ: I brought a couple of examples. Now and then there's a phrase that makes you think "Oh no!" In Olga Tokarczuk's *Primeval and Other Times* there's a character called Izydor, who's a bit simple. He tries his best to believe in God, and be happy about it, but he just can't quite get there. And then he discovers that what he finds difficult about God is God's gender. So then he decides that God, instead of being *bóg*, which means "God" is *bożica*. Imagine making the word "god" into a feminine version. But *bożica* isn't the standard word for "goddess". That would be *bogini*. Olga has made up a word. And then further on, Izydor decides that the female idea of God doesn't work for him either, but that God should be neuter. He takes the vocative, *boże*, which means "O God" and decides that God is *boże*, something neutral.

In Polish he considers a whole string of rhyming words prompted by this idea. I'll read the relevant sentence in Polish so you can hear the effect: "*Boże brzmiało tak samo jak słońce, jak powietrze, jak miejsce, jak pole, jak morze, jak zboże, jak ciemne, jasne, zimne, ciepłe... Boże brzmi tak samo jak zawsze, jak pożywienie, jak wszędzie, lecz... nie było go w niczym, nigdzie*". You can hear the repeated "–eh –eh –eh" sounds; so Olga takes this word, which is the vocative of God, "O God," makes it into the name of God, and then takes a whole lot of other words that have that same ending but mean a whole string of different things. Literally they mean sun, air, place, field, sea, grain, dark, light, cold, warm, always, food, everywhere and nowhere.

At first I said to Olga "I can't deal with that", but when she implored me to ask some other translators, I wrote to three of my friends, each of whom came back with something completely different. And although none of their solutions fully worked for me, one of them gave me an idea, and this was how I translated the passage: "One day when Izydor was staring at his piece of sky he had a revelation. He realised that God is neither a man nor a woman. He knew it as he uttered the words 'O God!' Here lay the solution to the problem of God's gender. By making it into one word – Ogod – it sounded neither masculine nor

feminine but neutral, just like oak tree, opal, ocean, odour, oatmeal, omen, open”. So I’ve taken completely different words to make it work, though they are vaguely related to the ones she wrote. “Izydor excitedly repeated the real divine name that he had discovered and every time he did he knew more and more. So Ogod was young and at the same time had existed since the beginning of the world or even earlier, without cease, because Ogod reminded him—” and in Polish what came next was *zawsze*, meaning “always” “– over and over. It was unique and unrepeatable, only, and it was the start and finish of everything: omega”. So sometimes you’re confronted by these poetic phrases, and you think “oh no”, but it can be fun to work them out, like doing a puzzle.

JK: Wonderful – thank you!



# Book Reviews

***Forked Tongues: Galician, Catalan and Basque Women's Poetry in Translations by Irish Writers.* Manuela Palacios (ed.). Bristol: Shearsman, 2012. 184pp, ISBN 978-1-84861-241-9 (pbk), £12.95 / \$20.**

*Forked Tongues*, edited by Manuela Palacios, is an anthology of poetry by Galician, Basque and Catalan women, translated into English by Irish writers. The title is taken from Eavan Boland's line "I speak with the forked tongue of colony", and draws on the bilingual condition of the writers and communities included, in each of which a historic vernacular coexists with a hegemonic, global language; Spanish or English. The title is intended to suggest the relationship between the source and the target languages, that is, between Galician, Basque and Catalan on the one hand and English as a lingua franca on the other. The originals and the translations are both included in the anthology and are presented facing each other, facilitating easy comparison and access to the source culture. While many of the Irish poets had previous experience in translating from the language of the poems they were engaged with, all of them also received a literal translation of the originals and could draw on the expertise of academic specialists. This follows best practice and makes the translations, much as the book itself, a collaborative enterprise.

While the choice of English as the target language has the welcome effect of disseminating this poetry to the widest possible readership, it is perhaps a pity that no translations into Irish were included, as done in *To the Wind Our Sails* (2010),<sup>1</sup> an anthology of Galician women writers in translation, edited by Palacios and Mary O'Donnell, which served as a precursor to *Forked Tongues*. As it stands, Irish surfaces only in the occasional echo in the English translations and, for this reader, Castilian too hovers in the wings.

The anthology begins with a helpful and informative introduction by Palacios and is thereafter divided into three sections, based on the language of the original poems: first Galician, then Basque, then Catalan. Five Galician poets are included and four each writing in Basque and Catalan. While all the poets are women, a number of the translators are men.

The first section of poetry in the anthology includes work by five Galician poets. Ireland and Galicia share both a place on Europe's Atlantic periphery and a national narrative of Celticity. Speaking of the ties between the two territories, Seamus Heaney referenced the stories of the Gaelic poet Amergin in the medieval *Lebor Gabála Éirenn* to describe Galicia as the "first land of our poetic imagination". The poems in this collection do not explicitly address this connection, but generally

<sup>1</sup> O'Donnell, Mary and Palacios, Manuela eds. (2010). *To the Wind Our Sails: Irish Writers Translate Galician Poetry*. Cliffs of Moher: Salmon Poetry.

explore personal and social themes with a vivid energy and a refreshing transgression of traditional forms.

A selection of poems by Pillar Pallarés is translated by Maurice Harmon. While many of the translations in this anthology follow the original quite faithfully, Harmon's translations are at the freer end of the spectrum in terms of content, although he manages to capture the personal, reflective tone of the originals. This is particularly evident in the first poem of the anthology, 'Matéria porosa na mañá' ('Sieved substance of morning'), where the title itself is subtly changed and, for example, "mineral e epiderme" is rendered as "content and shell". In her translations of the poems of Chus Pato, Lorna Shaughnessy treads closer to the originals, bringing out all their rhythmic inquisitiveness.

Four poems by Lupe Gómez Arto are translated by Anne Le Marquand Hartigan. Two of these are short and sparse, while the other two are colourful and raucous prose poems. Of the former, the spirit of the political 'Enfoque Teórico', ("A woman is/ a crystal/ pierced through/ by a fatherland") would perhaps be better captured by the more literal 'Theoretical Focus' than by the translation given here: 'A Clinical Stare'. Of the prose poems, 'Road Movie' works just as well in translation as it does in the original, rolling along, thoughtful yet breathless, as the best films of the genre do.

The poems by Yolanda Castaño, finely translated by Máighréad Medbh, are fragmented and critical and perhaps best read aloud. The work of María do Cebreiro, which concludes the section on Galician poets, seems stately in comparison. Hers are bright and inquisitive poems, brimming with thoughtful reflection. Mary O'Donnell brings the best out of them with her translations.

The Basque section of the anthology begins with five exquisite poems by Itxaro Borda, translated by Celia de Fréine. Two of them are sonnets, which although rhymed in the original, are translated by de Fréine in free verse of great musicality. The poems of Miren Agur Meabe, ably translated by Catherine Phil McCarthy, are described in the introduction as bringing a "still much-needed woman-centred focus". This is carried out here in a wide variety of poetic forms and themes.

The four poems by Castillo Suárez are dark and thought-provoking, written in a style which blurs the distinction between poetry and prose. The translations of Susan Connolly deftly conjure up this mood. The contributions of Leire Bilbao, translated by Paddy Bushe, are lonely yet tender, reflecting critically on themes of alienation in modern society, while remaining intensely personal.

The Catalan section of the anthology begins with five poems by Vinyet Panyella, translated by Michael O'Loughlin. Reflective and evocative, these poems

explore the interface of poetry and visual art, with a rich imagery, full of shapes, colours and textures. They seem to step out of a painting, a mirror, or a café window on to the page. O'Loughlin captures this mood deftly, as in the poem 'Look for me, if you like...': "Look for me if you like, on some café terrace./ When I'm idling in a place like this/ I'm a barfly without haste or schedule/ oblivious to what I was a while ago".

The eloquent and lyrical work of Susanna Rafart is translated by Paula Meehan. The poems are meditative, often drawing on imagery from the natural world. One of her six poems in this anthology – 'Senyor, no m'abandonis a l'amor' – is rhymed in both the original and in Meehan's translation. Although the English tetrameter does not have quite the dignity here of the Catalan decasyllable, Meehan must be applauded for the technical mastery of her translation, which closely shadows the original in both content and form.

The poetry of Gemma Gorga seems to exist on the boundary of this and the other world and the translations of Keith Payne adroitly capture the fluidity of her verse. The anthology is concluded by four poems by Mireia Calafell, translated here by Theo Dorgan. They explore themes of romantic love with open eyes, through the experience of the everyday, on the street, in kitchens and bedrooms. Dorgan's translations are free, but faithfully capture the emotional tone of the originals.

This anthology is to be welcomed for bringing the work of women poets of the Iberian peninsula to a wider readership, and for disseminating poetry in regional and minority languages more broadly. The choice of Irish translators is particularly apt, given the historic links that exist between Ireland and Iberia, and the specific linguistic situations of both Ireland and the communities represented in this book. Given both the legacy of these historical connections and the similarity in contemporary culture between Ireland and the regions represented in this book, *Forked Tongues* should find a ready audience. The book is attractively produced and the poems well chosen, suggesting common themes but with enough diversity to reward repeated reading.

**Cormac Anderson**

***Migrant Birds: Selected Poems by Adam Mickiewicz*, selected, translated and introduced by Anita Jones Debska. Illustrations by Rita Mari Schaeper. Wivenhoe: Wivenbooks Publishing, 2012. xii+133 pp. ISBN 978-0-9570850-2-2 (pbk). Price: on application.**

A new translation of Adam Mickiewicz's poetry is always a cause for celebration and trepidation. Mickiewicz is claimed as a national poet by Poland, Lithuania and Belarus. The mystical Polish nationalism that is the subject of so much of his work is as hard to convey to a Western audience as his rich, complex poetics. Anita Jones Debska has set herself the task of making this enigmatic poet more accessible, and newcomers to Mickiewicz will benefit greatly from her efforts.

Mickiewicz lived a tumultuous life. He was born in 1798 in Nowogródek, a town in the Russian-occupied region of the former Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. As a student activist in Vilnius he was the victim of a government crackdown, and spent the next few years being forcibly moved around the Russian Empire. After escaping Russia in 1829, he spent the rest of his life moving between Germany, Italy, France and Switzerland, agitating for Polish independence from afar. He died in Istanbul in 1855, trying to raise a Jewish legion to fight the Russians in the Crimean War.

Jones Debska's book is divided thematically into sections, each beginning with a short biographical note. The first section deals with Mickiewicz's writing before his exile. These poems draw on local folktales and songs, telling stories of ghosts, mermaids, and magical transformations. The world of these poems is full of mystery and wonder, with the border between the natural and supernatural continually blurred. The second section – poems of exile – covers poems of homesickness and longing, some of Mickiewicz's love sonnets, and selections of the 'digressions' from his epic Romantic drama, *Forefathers' Eve*. Next come the complete Crimean Sonnets, a sequence of exquisite Orientalist poems drawing on Tartar imagery. The book closes with selections from Mickiewicz's best known work, *Pan Tadeusz*, an epic poem on the life of the landed gentry of Lithuania in the early 19th century. Each section is accompanied by a range of beautiful and eccentric illustrations, some period, some original.

The selection is broad and gives an excellent sense of Mickiewicz's poetic range. Jones Debska notes she has avoided Mickiewicz's more nationalistic and mystical writing. This is no doubt wise, although it is a pity she feels compelled to exclude all of *Forefathers' Eve Part III*. A selection from the famous Great Improvisation, when the poet Konrad challenges God for mastery of the universe,

would have been welcome.

The poetry itself poses a serious challenge. Mickiewicz's Polish works hard, with barely a superfluous word or phrase. Both the language and the setting of his poems reflect his upbringing in the Polish borderlands – dialectal usages mix with Eastern imagery of Orthodox churches and Slavic pagan spirits. His verse is formally rigorous, and his language poetic, but always very Polish – Latinisms are uncommon.

In general, Jones Debska has retained the original rhyme schemes while transposing the poems into meters which will be more familiar to an English-language reader. Her prosody is looser than Mickiewicz's, and she occasionally uses awkward syntax or an unusual word to reach for a rhyme, but in general her ingenuity in reshaping the poems is admirable. Her language is plainer than Mickiewicz's, with little trace of dialect, but often slightly stiffer and more formal.

That said, Jones Debska is a skilled poet, and her translations have a warmth and sureness to them often lacking in translations of Polish Romantic poetry. She comes into her own with Mickiewicz's lyric poems and 'tour de force' stanzas, such as this example from Sonnet V:

Ale kiedy się łzami nasze lica zroszą,  
Gdy się ostatki życia w westchnieniach unoszą,  
Luba! czyliż to mogę nazywać rozkoszą?

But when, our cheeks with tears bedewed and bright,  
Life breathes its long last sigh in fate's despite,  
How can I ever, dear, call this delight?

Mickiewicz has a talent for 'tags' at the end of his poems – a neat way of wrapping things up in a single stanza. Jones Debska's ear for these is very good, as in the truly moving 'Reflections on the Day of Departure':

Wsiadajmy, nikt na drodze trumny nie zatrzyma,  
Nikt jej nie przeprowadzi, chociażby oczyma,  
I wracając do domu lica łzą nie zrosi  
Na odgłos dzwonka poczty, co me zejście głosi.

Let us be off: none bids a coffin stay,  
And none will come to see it on its way.  
Nor will it cause a single tear to flow,  
The mail-coach bell announcing that I go.

Mickiewicz sets a frankly impossible bar for the translator and inevitably, some of Jones Debska's translations do not capture all of the magic and charm of the originals. But she has an excellent grasp of Mickiewicz's humour, his passion and his melancholy. Most importantly, her translations are universally beautiful in their own right. By giving a near-complete overview of Mickiewicz's work with simple, accessible biographical notes, she has done much to make Mickiewicz more accessible to new readers.

Sean Bye

*Translation Studies and Eye-Tracking Analysis*, eds. Sambor Grucza, Monika Płużyczka, and Justyna Zajac. Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2013. 213 pp. ISBN 978-3-631-63448-6 hb. (hbk) ISBN 978-3-653-02932-1 (ebk); €42.95 / £32.10 (hbk); €47.72 / £32.10 (ebk)

The book under review arose from translation studies research at the Faculty of Applied Linguistics at the University of Warsaw; its objectives are to outline the theoretical foundations on which the experimental research was based and to present a range of questions that might be answered by eye-tracking supported translation research. The first two chapters endeavour to provide some of the theoretical foundation for the empirical research that is described later. The expectation of this reviewer was that the theoretical foundations would relate to the topic of the book, i.e. eye tracking analysis in translation studies. It was, therefore, disappointing to find that neither Chapter 1 ('Heat Maps, Gaze Plots...and What Next?' by Sambor Grucza) nor Chapter 2 ('Problems, Objectives and Challenges of the [sic] Polish Translation Studies and Theory' by Jerzy Żmudzki) made much reference to the core topic. They were, rather, mostly general discussions about the concept of translation competence and the development of translation theory in Poland.

In Chapter 3, 'Knowledge – Transference – Translation', Marta Małachowicz takes the concept of 'knowledge transference' and argues that it is not possible to *transfer* knowledge, that knowledge cannot be *transmitted*. Knowledge exists independently of the verbal form. The author also challenges the "common and incorrect" (p. 60) claim that texts contain knowledge, asserting rather that they only *represent* knowledge. Transference of knowledge, then, requires the co-ordination of meaning between the sender and receiver of a text. The discussion

then delves into examples of intralingual and interlingual translation in language for specialised purposes (LSP) and language for general purposes (LGP). The core point in this chapter is that the real act of knowledge transfer can only be achieved when the receiver of a text understands the text according to the intention of the sender. This position would be generally accepted in the domain of translation studies and reflects the popular theory known as *skopos* theory, developed by Reiß and Vermeer (1984), though no reference is made to this explicitly. Alas, there is no content in this chapter pertaining to eye tracking either.

In Chapter 4, ‘Could Eye-Tracking Help to Reconstruct the Translation Process?’, by Ewa Zwierzchón-Grabowska, we come to the first chapter that has any substantial content relating to the title of the book. This chapter explains, with some repetition, what eye tracking can be used for in translation studies. A large number of detailed, but ill-defined, research questions are listed. The author commences the chapter by stating that “[i]n recent years several research centres in Poland which deal with issues of translation have launched a new type of instrumental translation studies, that is translation studies employing a video-based eye-tracking device” (p. 67). Unfortunately, there is no mention in this chapter of the significant, international body of publications by other translation studies researchers who have also used eye tracking in recent years (e.g. several papers in Göpferich et al. 2008, Mees et al. 2010, Shreve and Angelone 2010, O’Brien 2011). Such a broader review would have strengthened this chapter.

The chapter by Soluch and Tarnowski provides a discussion about the visual system, types of eye movements and what research has uncovered about these so far. The authors also discuss the pros and cons of different types of eye trackers and the challenges involved in conducting eye-tracking experiments. The list of references is extensive and international, but the information provided is highly advanced and would not easily be digested by a reader who is new to the domain. Disappointingly, there is no mention of research in translation studies where eye tracking has been employed (see references above). At the same time, this chapter is useful for somebody who might like to get an overview of the topic.

This is followed by a number of chapters that are more closely related to the eponymous topic of the book. A chapter by Płużyczka presents a study of Polish-Russian sight translation, with an extensive analysis of the problems encountered. Following this, the chapter by Hansen-Schirra and Rösner describes some new ideas for the use of gaze-assisted interaction in the modern translation workflow, with a primary focus on interaction during authoring with controlled language tools. The interesting idea proposed by these authors is that the presentation of information on errors marked by a controlled authoring tool could be controlled



by gaze data (fixations on a specific error would lead to the information pertaining to that error being displayed). Unfortunately, at the time of writing, the authors were not in a position to provide experimental results for such a system. Some results are provided for comparisons of fixation durations on different parts of two translation memory tools and for different tasks (translation vs. post-editing). The experiments are not described in any detail, however, and the validity of the results presented cannot therefore be evaluated.

A good overview of previous research on subtitling facilitated by eye tracking is provided in a chapter by Agnieszka Szarkowska, Izabela Krejtz, Krzysztof Krejtz and Andrew Duchowski, who go on to describe the project 'DTV4ALL' where the objective was to establish European standards in subtitling for the deaf and hard of hearing. The detailed results from this project are presented in a separate publication, so this chapter focuses on a discussion of the methodology and a presentation of the major findings. While the findings are interesting, the authors warn that generalisation is not possible since there were many contradictions across measurements. They proceed to describe other interesting experiments which, for example, investigate the impact of audio description on the perception of paintings. From this reviewer's perspective, this is the most interesting chapter in the book. The final chapter in the book describes a study of business email discourse in an intercultural and international environment.

The book provides a good overview of the eye-tracking research in translation studies that has taken place recently in Poland. However, it is also disappointing for a number of reasons: several chapters barely touch on the topic of the book; some authors seem unaware of the international eye-tracking related research in translation studies; many of the chapters contain references to Polish publications alone, ignoring other relevant work published internationally; and last, but certainly not least, there are so many language-related issues in almost every chapter (with the exception of two at the end of the book), that it was difficult to really enjoy this volume. The following gives a sample of some of these problems:

Another, for the theory of translation evolutionarily significant aspect of the mentioned holistic formula constitutes a constant level of its receptive sensitivity to the theoretical broadening of research perspective through the appropriate implementation of new interpretational paradigms from other disciplines, and from broadly understood linguistics in particular. (p. 36)

**Sharon O'Brien**

## References

- Susanne Göpferich, Arnt Lykke Jakobsen and Inger M. Mees (eds) (2008) *Looking at Eyes: Eye-Tracking Studies of Reading and Translation Processing*, Copenhagen Studies in Language 36. Copenhagen: Samfundslitteratur.
- Mees, Inger M., Fabio Alves and Susanne Göpferich (eds) (2010) *Methodology, Technology and Innovation in Translation Process Research*, Copenhagen Studies in Language 38. Copenhagen: Samfundslitteratur.
- O'Brien, Sharon (ed.) (2011) *Cognitive Explorations of Translation*. London: Continuum.
- Reiß, Katharina and Hans J. Vermeer (1984) *Grundlegung einer allgemeinen Translationstheorie* Tübingen: Niemeyer.
- Shreve, Gregory and Erik Angelone (eds) (2010) *Translation and Cognition*, American Translators' Association Scholarly Monograph Series XV. Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

***Téarmaíocht don Aontas Eorpach. Taithí na hÉireann: Tionscadal GA IATE / Terminology for the European Union. The Irish Experience: The GA IATE Project.* Úna Bhreathnach, Fionnuala Cloke, agus Caoilfhionn Nic Pháidín. Indreabhán: Cló Iar-Chonnacht 2013. ISBN 978-1-909367-66-1. €12.**

Athbhreithniú lár téarma atá sa leabhar dátheangach seo – Gaeilge agus Béarla – ar thionscadal fíorthábhachtach maidir le téarmaíocht na Gaeilge i gcoitinne, agus go háirithe san Aontas Eorpach. Nuair a tháinig stádas na Gaeilge mar theanga oifigiúil de chuid an Aontais i bhfeidhm sa bhliain 2007, aithníodh go raibh géarghá le dlús a chur le forbairt téarmaíochta sa Ghaeilge, go príomha chun nach mbeadh aon mhoill á cur ag aistritheoirí ar dhréachtreachtaíocht a chaithfeadh a bheith ar fáil go comhuaineach sna teangacha oifigiúla ar fad sula ndéanfaí í a achtú. Tháinig Bulgáiris agus Rómáinis i bhfeidhm mar theangacha oifigiúla ag an am céanna le Gaeilge, ach ba chás ar leith í an Ghaeilge. Tuigeadh gur bhain tábhacht leis an *acquis communautaire* – bailiúchán ollmhór de ghníomhartha dlíthiúla an Aontais – a bheith ar fáil sna teangacha nua. Bhí sé leagtha síos mar choinníoll docht go gcaithfeadh iarrthóir ar bhallraíocht a d'iarr go n-ainmneofaí a theanga náisiúnta mar theanga oifigiúil an *acquis communautaire* ina iomláine a aistriú ar a chostas féin sula nglacfaí leis mar Bhallstát. Mar sin a tharla i gcásanna na Bulgáire agus na Rómáine. I gcás na hÉireann, shocraigh an Rialtas sa bhliain 1972 nach n-iarrfadh

sé stádas oifigiúil don Ghaeilge, agus seachas na Conarthaí, níor aistríodh an acquis, a bhí beag ag an am, go Gaeilge. Nuair a d'iarr an Rialtas stádas oifigiúil don Ghaeilge sa bhliain 2004, níorbh fhéidir aistriú an acquis a chur i bhfeidhm mar choinníoll aontachais, agus níor thairg an Rialtas go n-aistreofaí é. Mar sin féin, mheas an Rialtas go mba chóir cabhair ar leith a thabhairt i bhfeidhmiú stádas nua na Gaeilge, agus is dá bharr sin a tháinig an tionscadal GA IATE, atá faoi thrácht sa leabhar seo, ar an saol.

Sa bhliain 2007, i gcomhar le hinstiúidí an Aontais Eorpaigh, mhaoinig Rialtas na hÉireann, tríd an Roinn Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe agus Gaeltachta, Fiontar (aonad in Ollscoil Chathair Bhaile Átha Cliath) chun soláthar téarmaíochta sa Ghaeilge a chur ar fáil do IATE, bunachar téarmaí ilteangach an Aontais Eorpaigh. GA IATE a tugadh ar an tionscadal, a raibh tréimhse saoil deich mbliana beartaithe dó, agus sa staidéar seo déanann na húdair Úna Bhreathnach, Fionnuala Cloke, agus Caoilfhionn Nic Pháidín, ar comhaltaí iad d'fhoireann Fiontar, cur síos ar a bhfuil bainte amach ag an tionscadal go dtí deireadh na bliana 2012. Is é aidhm na n-údar tionscadal GA IATE a dhoiciméadú agus a athbhreithniú i gcomhthéacs na téarmeolaíochta sa dá theanga dhéag a tháinig i bhfeidhm mar theangacha oifigiúla sna blianta 2004 agus 2007 ("na teangacha nua"), agus i gcomhthéacs na n-institiúidí Eorpacha is gníomhaí i gcúrsaí reachtaíochta – an Chomhairle, an Coimisiún, agus an Pharlaimint. Tá an staidéar seo dírithe go príomha ar na comhpháirtithe tionscadail agus ar na comhlachtaí maoinithe, ach tá súil ag na húdair go mbainfidh pobal níos leithne tairbhe as, go háirithe na haistritheoirí agus na téarmeolaithe atá ag plé le teangacha nua eile an Aontais Eorpaigh.

Is i bhformáid A4 atá an staidéar, leis na leaganacha sa dá theanga cúl le cúl. Tá sé leagtha amach i seacht mír, maille le foinsí, agusíní, gluais téarmaí, agus innéacs oiriúnach. Baineann an chéad dá mhír le haidhmeanna agus modhanna. Tugann Míreanna 3 agus 4 forléargas ar chóras IATE agus ar a ról téarmeolaíochta sna hinstiúidí. Déantar cur síos i Míreanna 5 agus 6 ar an obair théarmeolaíochta sna teangacha nua eile, agus ar Thionscadal GA IATE. Tugtar conclúidí sa mhír dheireanach.

Is staidéar cáis tuairisciúil é seo atá suite i bhfráma riaracháin seachas fráma teoiriciúil, agus freagraíonn na modhanna a úsáideadh chun sonraí a bhailiú agus a anailísiú don chur chuige sin. Úsáideadh agallaimh, ceistneoirí, agus grúpa fócais – ar bhonn leathan a chuimsigh na príomhinstiúidí Eorpacha, Ionad Aistriúcháin Chomhlachtaí an Aontais Eorpaigh, agus an Rialtas agus comhlachtaí ábhartha in Éirinn – mar theicnící bailithe sonraí. Leagtar béim (lgh. 15, 16) ar theirce na litríochta i leith shocrúithe inmheánacha na n-institiúidí don téarmeolaíocht, agus ar an tábhacht dá réir a bhaineann leis an gcur síos i Míreanna 3 agus 4. Cuireann

Wagner et al. (2012) eolas fairsing ar fáil ina n-eagrán nua ar chórais aistriúcháin na n-institiúidí agus ar thionchar theacht na dteangacha nua, agus iniúchann Koskinen (2008), a bhfuil léirmheas ar a leabhar curtha ar fáil ag *Translation Ireland* (2009: 18:1), an creat idirinstiúideach agus timpeallacht oibre agus dearcadh na n-aistritheoirí. Cé nach gcuirtear na leabhair sin san áireamh sa léirbhreithniú ar an litríocht, d'aontóinn go gcuireann an staidéar atá faoi thrácht anseo go mór lenár n-eolas faoi riarachán agus dhul chun cinn IATE óna thionscnamh sa bhliain 2004 go dtí 2012. Más ceadmhach dom a lua mar léirmheastóir, roghnóinn féin caibidil níos déanaí liom (Ó Laighin 2012) de mhalairt ar an gceann a roghnaíodh chun léargas ginearálta ar stádas na Gaeilge san Aontas Eorpach agus go náisiúnta ó thaobh reachtaíochta a chur ar fáil.

Feidhmíonn an bunachar sonraí ilteangach IATE faoi choimirce grúpa bainistíochta a bhfuil ionadaithe air ó institiúidí, ó chomhlachtaí comhairleacha, agus ó Ionad Aistriúcháin an Aontais. Tá an tIonad Aistriúcháin freagrach as tacaíocht theicniúil, cothabháil, agus forbairt an bhunachair. Tá a n-aonaid aistriúcháin agus téarmaíochta féin ag na príomhinstiúidí, agus tá IATE sa lár mar bhainisteoir téarmaíochta dá chomhpháirtithe ar fad. Le breis is ceithre mhíle aistritheoir ag obair do na comhpháirtithe, móide ateangairí agus dlítheangeolaithe, tá IATE riachtanach, ní hamháin chun comhthuisctint idir teangacha i réimsí speisialaithe a chothú, ach chun go mbeadh téacsanna in aon teanga oifigiúil ar leith inchomparáide thar institiúidí agus chomhlachtaí. Déantar cur síos i Mír 4 ar obair théarmeolaíoch na bpríomhinstiúidí. De thoradh ar a cheart tionscnaimh reachtaigh, is é an Coimisiún an fhoinsé is mó de dhréachtreachtaíocht, agus dá bharr sin is ann is géire a bhíonn an brú chun téarmaí nua a chur ar fáil do réimsí nua. Ag éirí as cúinsí stairiúla agus cur chun cinn beartaithe an Bhéarla, is sa teanga sin a dhéantar formhór mór na dtograí reachtacha a dhréachtú. Mar a mhínítear i Mír 4, comhoibríonn aonad téarmeolaíochta an Choimisiúin le tionscadal GA IATE trína chomhordú agus a bhainistiú, trí liostaí téarmaí a chur chuig Fiontar, na sonraí Gaeilge a allmhúiriú in IATE, cruinnithe tionscadail a réachtáil, agus obair leantach a dhéanamh ar ghnéithe praiticiúla den tionscadal.

Úsáidtear an téarma Béarla “*Terminology Coordination Sector*” go minic i Mír 4 sa leagan Gaeilge den staidéar. (Ba é an leagan Gaeilge a léigh mé ó thús go deireadh i gcomhair an léirmheasa, cé gur scrúdaigh mé an leagan Béarla freisin). Ní dóigh liom go bhfuil ná go raibh aonad den ainm sin, le ceannlitreacha, sa Choimisiún. Bhí rannán de chuid Aonad D3 freagrach as téarmaíocht, agus anois tá aonad ar leith téarmaíochta ann (Aonad Comhordaithe Téarmeolaíochta). Ar ndóigh, is le hearnáil na téarmeolaíochta a bhain agus a bhaineann an dá aonad sin faoi seach. Le cois na gné ó thaobh eagair de, cén fáth gur úsáideadh an

téarma Béarla sin aon uair déag sa leagan Gaeilge den Mhír (agus in áiteanna eile sa leagan Gaeilge den staidéar), nuair a bhí an téarma “Earnáil Chomhordaithe Téarmeolaíochta”, a úsáideadh roinnt uaireanta, ar fáil? Faighim locht ar an leagan Gaeilge den saothar as téarmaí i mBéarla a úsáid nuair a bhí na téarmaí céanna ar fáil gan stró sa Bhunachar Náisiúnta Téarmaíochta ([www.focal.ie](http://www.focal.ie)) nó i mbunachar IATE féin – bunachair a chothaigh Fiontar le dúthracht agus le hardchumas. Cén fáth, mar shampla, “*Translation Centre for the Bodies of the European Union*”, nuair atá “Ionad Aistriúcháin Chomhlachtaí an Aontais Eorpaigh” ar fáil in IATE? Baineann an léirmheas céanna le cuid mhór de na hiontrálacha sa ghluais téarmaí ag tús an leagain Ghaeilge. Nílím ag rá gur chóir giorrúcháin ar nós IATE a athrú. Ba chabhair é, freisin, dá mbeadh gluais ar leith ar fáil do na giorrúcháin. Nuair a shroich mé “Cou1” sa leagan Gaeilge (lch. 33), ní raibh a fhios agam cad dó ar thagair sé. Ní raibh “Cou” luaithe sa ghluais ag an tús, agus ba ghá dom na hagusíní a ransú chun teacht ar an eolas gur thagair sé don Chomhairle. Níl a fhios agam ar scríobhadh an staidéar sa Bhéarla agus gur aistríodh an bunleagan sin, nó a mhalairt, nó an raibh cur chuige éagsúil ann do Mhíreanna éagsúla, ach más aistriúchán é an leagan Gaeilge níl comharthaí sóirt dhea-chleachtas an aistriúchán le sonrú ar an ngné seo de, agus más é an bunleagan é, níl sé sásúil ón taobh sin de. Ní fheicim cén fáth, ach an oiread, go dtabharfaí leagan Béarla de shainmhíniú ar an acquis communautaire sa leagan Gaeilge (lch. 8), nuair b’éasca aistriúchán Gaeilge a chur ar fáil, nó athleagan comhchosúil i nGaeilge a úsáid agus an fhoinsé chéanna a thabhairt. Ní miste a lua nach leanann cuid d’abairt ar lch. 56 sa leagan Gaeilge ar aghaidh go dtí an chéad leathanach eile.

Cé go bhfuil athrá agus neamhréireacht áirithe le sonrú iontu, is i Míreanna 3 agus 5 a thagann tábhacht an staidéir agus thionscadal GA IATE féin chun suntais. Bunaíodh IATE ar bhunachair a bhí forbartha ag institiúidí éagsúla cheana féin, agus seoladh sa bhliain 2004 é. Go luath sa bhliain 2005, bhí timpeall 1.5 milliún iontráil ann, agus laistigh de na hiontrálacha sin, timpeall 8.7 milliún téarma sna teangacha éagsúla. Bhí líon na dtéarmaí i mBéarla, timpeall 1.5 milliún, chun cinn ar an líon i bhFraincis agus i nGearmáinis, agus go mór chun cinn ar an líon i dteangacha eile. Faoin am sin, bhí breis is fiche míle téarma (roimh phróiseas glantacháin) i nGaeilge in IATE, ag eascairt ó stádas na teanga mar theanga chonartha, cé nach raibh ach timpeall leathmhíle téarma ann sa Mháltais, a bhí ina teanga oifigiúil cheana féin. Faoin mbliain 2012, fiú le teangacha oifigiúla nua agus réimsí nua reachtaíochta á saothrú de réir a chéile, de bhrí go raibh an bunachar á ghlanadh í gcónaí agus dúblaigh á gcealú, ní raibh aon mhéadú tagtha ar mhóriomlán na dtéarmaí sna teangacha ar fad. Sa tréimhse chéanna, tháinig méadú mór ar líon na dtéarmaí sna teangacha oifigiúla nua. Thar aon teanga nua

eile, ag cur san áireamh luachanna bonnlíne 2005, is sa Ghaeilge is mó a cuireadh le méadú líon na dtéarmaí in IATE, go háirithe ó 2008 ar aghaidh. Cé go raibh ról fíor-thábhachtach ag aistriitheoirí Gaeilge an Aontais sa mhéadú sin, is cóir a aithint gur bh é tionscadal GA IATE ba mhó ba chúis leis.

De réir an staidéir (Fíor 1, lch. 29), bhí 50,135 téarma Gaeilge in IATE faoi dheireadh mhí an Mheithimh, 2012. As an dá theanga dhéag nua a bhí san áireamh (níor tugadh an Chróitis isteach go dtí lár 2013), ní raibh ach an Pholainnis chun cinn ar an nGaeilge maidir le líon na dtéarmaí. Is cóir a chur san áireamh go raibh líon iomlán aistriitheoirí agus téarmeolaithe ag feidhmiú sna hinstiúidí éagsúla sna teangacha oifigiúla nua ar fad, ach amháin sa Ghaeilge. I gcás na Gaeilge, de dheasca an mhaolaithe, ní raibh ach líon beag aistriitheoirí agus téarmeolaithe ag obair don Aontas Eorpach, agus réimse caol den reachtaíocht á aistriú go Gaeilge i gcomparáid leis na teangacha eile. Dá réir sin, d'éirigh thar barr le tionscadal GA IATE an dúshlán acmhainneachta a bhain le téarmaíocht na Gaeilge a fhreagairt.

Tá neamhréireacht gan mhíniú ann idir an staitistic a thugtar don Ghaeilge i bhFíor 1 agus an ceann a thugtar i dTábla 6 (lch. 52; 50 sa leagan Béarla). Sa Tábla sin tugtar 45,823 mar líon na dtéarmaí Gaeilge in IATE de réir agallamh a raibh an ceann deireanach acu an 11 Iúil 2012, agus de réir an Tábla tá an Liotuáinis (le 46,045 téarma) agus an Pholainnis (le 50,004) chun cinn ar an nGaeilge. Níl foinse tugtha don eolas i bhFíor 1 sa leagan Gaeilge mar a d'éileodh dea-chleachtas modheolaíochta. Sa leagan Béarla den Fhíor céanna, tugtar mar fhoinsé ainm agalláí agus giorrúchán comhlachta idir lúibíní. Is cinnte go raibh doiciméad mar bhonn don Fhíor, ar líneghraf é, agus ba chóir an doiciméad sin a lua mar fhoinsé. Gan tagairt chruinn a bheith ann, is deacair, mar shampla, an t-eolas san Fhíor a thabhairt chun réitigh leis na sonraí a thugann Herwig (2011, sleamhnán 12). Ní thugtar le fios ar cuireadh an líneghraf féin i bhFíor 1 ar fáil, nó ar bhunaigh na húdair an líneghraf ar shonraí loma a chuir an t-agalláí ar fáil. Baineann an deacracht céanna le doiciméadú na bhfoinsí i dTáblaí 3 agus 6. D'ainneoin na ndeacrachtaí modheolaíochta seo, glacaim leis an dearbhú san achoimre fheidhmeach (lch. 4) go raibh an Ghaeilge, ag am foilsithe an staidéir, sa dara háit i ndiaidh na Polainnise maidir le líon na dtéarmaí.

Léirítear go héifeachtach le gabhálacha scáileáin próiseas casta shreabhadh na hoibre ó liostaí iontrálacha a fháil go seoladh na dtéarmaí Gaeilge chuig an Aontas Eorpach. Bheadh spéis ag aistriitheoirí agus ag téarmeolaithe i gcoitinne sa léargas a thugtar ar fheidhmiú an infreastruchtúir theicniúil a bhunaigh Fiontar don tionscadal – Fiat – agus sna céimeanna tábhachtacha eile sa phróiseas, ról an Choiste Téarmaíochta agus aiseolas ó aistriitheoirí an Aontais san áireamh.

Baineann tábhacht ar leith leis an soiléiriú ar an *acquis communautaire* a thugtar sa staidéar, bunaithe ar anailís ar bhainistiú na dtéarmaí in IATE agus ar mheasúnú a gcaighdeán, agus ar thorthaí agallamh le téarmeolaithe atá ag obair leis na teangacha nua san Aontas. Sula ndéanfaidh mé cur síos ar an ábhar seo, is gá dom botún fíorasach sa staidéar a cheartú. Deirtear an méid seo a leanas san achoimre fheidhmeach (lch.4): “Thug aistritheoirí theangacha nua an AE uile, seachas an Ghaeilge agus an Mháltais, faoin *acquis communautaire* a aistriú chuig a dteangacha féin sular aontaigh a dtíortha don AE.” Luaitear an t-eolas céanna i Mír 5 (lch. 44; lch. 45 sa leagan Béarla). Níl an méid sin fíor i gcás na Máltaise. B’éigean do Mhálda, mar choinníoll ainmnithe na Máltaise mar theanga oifigiúil, an *acquis* a aistriú go Máltais roimh aontachas leis an Aontas Eorpach, agus rinneadh sin. Ní hionann sin is a rá go raibh an t-aistriúchán sin sásúil. Maidir leis an eolas i bhfonóta ar an leathanach céanna, tháinig an maolú sealadach i leith na Máltaise i bhfeidhm an 1 Bealtaine 2004, an lá céanna a tháinig Málta in aontachas, agus tar éis don *acquis* a bheith aistrithe go Máltais.

Maidir leis an *acquis communautaire*, tá difríocht shuntasach idir caighdeán na téarmaíochta ann sna seanteangacha agus sna teangacha nua. I gcás theangacha na dtíortha a tháinig in aontachas go dtí 1995, cruthaíodh an chuid is mó den *acquis* iontu laistigh den Aontas féin – sé sin, ba iad aistritheoirí an Aontais a d’fhoinsigh an téarmaíocht agus a dheimhnigh a cáilíocht le linn don *acquis* a bheith á mhéadú de réir a chéile. Ní hamhlaidh i gcás na dteangacha nua – iad siúd a tugadh isteach ó 2004 ar aghaidh. Bhí ar thíortha na dteangacha sin *acquis* a bhí forbartha go mór a aistriú roimh aontachas, agus cé go raibh údarás ag an Aontas na téacsanna a cheartú roimh fhoilsiú dóibh, ní raibh na téacsanna deiridh i dteangacha áirithe gan locht. Maidir leis na baisceanna téarmaíochta a allmhairíodh isteach in IATE ó ullmhúchán an *acquis* sna teangacha nua, luann údair an staidéir (lch. 14) gur “cinneadh ina dhiaidh sin i bhformhór na gcásanna iad a bhaint amach arís nó nóta a chur leo ag tabhairt le fios nach raibh siad iontaoifa, ó chuir na haonaid teanga éagsúla leibhéil difriúla míshástachta in iúl maidir le cáilíocht na dtéarmaí sin”. Leagtar béim i gcuid mhaith de na hagallaimh le téarmeolaithe na dteangacha nua ar neamhiontaofacht seo na téarmaíochta san *acquis*.

Dá réir sin, má chuirtear deireadh leis an maolú sealadach i gcás na Gaeilge ón 1 Eanáir 2017, b’fhéidir nach mbeidh easpa leagain Ghaeilge den *acquis communautaire* ina míbhuntáiste ró-mhór d’fhoireann iomlán aistriúcháin sna hinstiúidí éagsúla. Ba chabhair é, ar ndóigh, dá gcuirfeadh Rialtas na hÉireann aistriúchán ar roinnt gníomhartha tábhachtacha ar fáil. Sa leagan Béarla den staidéar, deir na húdair (lch. 55), in abairt atá ar lár sa leagan Gaeilge, nach bhfuil aon phleananna ann faoi láthair an *acquis* a aistriú go Gaeilge de dheasca

an mhaolaithe. I mo thuairimse, níl aon riachtanas dlíthiúil ann go ndéanfaí an mhórchuid neamhaistrithe den acquis a aistriú go Gaeilge sul má thagann deireadh leis an maolú, ná ag am ar bith. Ní réamhchoinníoll é do bhunú seirbhís iomlán aistriúcháin, comhionann leis na teangacha oifigiúla eile, go ndéanfaí aon chuid eile den acquis a aistriú.

Cuirtear i láthair (lch. 57; lch. 55 sa leagan Béarla) tuairim iar-oifigigh sa Roinn Ealaíon, Oidhreachta agus Gaeltachta a mhaíonn go bhfuil “go leor fós le déanamh sular féidir deireadh a chur leis an maolú”. Má tá sé ag cur in iúl nach bhfuil sé indéanta deireadh a chur leis an maolú ag deireadh a thréimhse reatha, ní aontaím leis. Tá téarmaíocht leordhóthanach Ghaeilge curtha ar fáil chun saothar na n-aistritheoirí agus na dtéarmeolaithe a éascú. Is dóigh liom gur féidir líon dóthanach aistritheoirí a chur ar fáil. Chuige sin, bheadh sé tábhachtach go gcuirfeadh aon chúrsa tríú leibhéal d’aistritheoirí a mhaoiníodh an Stát oiliúint shainiúil ar fáil maidir le hábhar réamhthrialacha na gcomórtas Eorpach, chomh maith le saothrú an aistriúcháin féin, agus go gcothódh sé cur chuige réalaíoch – le cúrsaí teanga breise nuair ba ghá – maidir leis an tríú teanga atá riachtanach do phostanna aistriúcháin an Aontais. D’aistritheoirí cáilithe atá ann cheana féin, ag cur san áireamh gur theip ar chéatadán ard iarrthóirí, agus iarrthóirí a raibh cáilíocht MA san aistriúchán Gaeilge bainte amach acu san áireamh, sna réamhthrialacha i gcomórtas Eorpach d’aistritheoirí Gaeilge le déanaí, níor mhiste sainoiliúint a chur ar fáil dóibh maidir leis na réamhthrialacha. Is cóir a lua nach ndéantar cumas aistrithe a mheas sna réamhthrialacha, ach go ndícháilítear daoine nach bhfaigheann pas iontu. Anuas ar an méid sin, is gá go praiticiúil go dtabharfadh Rialtas na hÉireann le fios don Aontas Eorpach go luath sa bhliain 2014 go bhfuil sé i gceist aige a mholadh go gcuirfí deireadh leis an maolú, cé nach ndéanfar an cinneadh foirmiúil go dtí an dara leath den bhliain 2015.

Maidir le hábhar a luaitear in agallaimh eile (lch. 56; lch. 54 sa leagan Béarla), is spéis liom go dtugtar aitheantas anois do thábhacht stádas idirnáisiúnta na Gaeilge san Aontas Eorpach do chothú na teanga in Éirinn, téama a pléadh go fairsing i bhfoilseacháin agus i gcruinnithe le hoifigigh an Stáit le linn an fheachtais ar son stádas oifigiúil sna blianta 2003-4.

Leagtar béim sna Míreanna deiridh den staidéar ar láidreachtaí thionscadal GA IATE – líon agus cáilíocht na dtéarmaí a chuir sé ar fáil, glantachán agus forbairt na n-iontrálacha in IATE, an nuálaíocht teicneolaíochta a bhain leis agus an corpas ailínithe ábhar reachtaíochta a cuireadh ar fáil, agus sochair na comhpháirtíochta le hinstiúidí Eorpacha agus a n-aistritheoirí Gaeilge agus leis an gCoiste Téarmaíochta, le Foras na Gaeilge, agus leis an Rialtas. Aontaím go hiomlán leis an measúnú inmheánach sin ar láidreachtaí an tionscadail. Ar ndóigh,



tá cúlra cumasach ag Fiontar i mbainistiú tionscadal comhoibríoch a bhaineann le cúrsaí teanga i gcomhthéacs teicniúil – an Bunachar Náisiúnta Téarmeolaíochta agus Bunachar Logainmneacha na hÉireann ([www.logainm.ie](http://www.logainm.ie)) go háirithe. Cé gur luadh foclóirí éagsúla i gcás teangacha nua eile, agus foclóir Uí Dhónaill i gcás na Gaeilge, sa staidéar, is ionadh liom nár luadh Foclóir uí Bhraonáin (2004) a d'fhoilsigh Fiontar, foclóir Acadamh Ríoga na hÉireann agus an leagan leictreonach de (eDil), ná na corpais éagsúla atá ar fáil.

Tá Fiontar den tuairim gur cóir leanúint le tionscadal GA IATE go dtí go mbeadh na haonaid Ghaeilge in ann an obair théarmeolaíochta a dhéanamh ag an leibhéal céanna leis na teangacha eile (lch. 91; lch. 88 sa leagan Béarla). Ar ndóigh ní bheidh na haonaid Ghaeilge in ann é sin a dhéanamh go dtí go gcuirtear deireadh leis an maolú, agus beidh deis ann é sin a dhéanamh ag deireadh 2016. Idir an dá linn, mar a mholann an staidéar, d'fhéadfaí cur le líon na dtéarmaí Gaeilge agus leis an eolas a chuirtear leo, na téarmaí a rangú agus a shoiléiriú, cur le cáilíocht na dtéarmaí, agus b'fhéidir deasc chabhrach a chur ar fáil d'aistritheoirí an Aontais. Níl téarmaí Gaeilge ar fáil in EuroVoc, teasáras a bhfuil na teangacha oifigiúla eile ar fad ann – fiú an Chróitis a tugadh isteach in Iúil 2013 – agus an tSeirbis nach bhfuil ina teanga oifigiúil ar chor ar bith, ná in ECHA-term, bunachar téarmaíochta ceimicí a seoladh sa bhliain 2011 (Féach Rummel 2012). B'fhéidir go bhféadfadh tionscadal GA IATE téarmaíocht Ghaeilge a bhainistiú don dá bhunachar sin. Fiú le deireadh an mhaolaithe, beidh gá le comhoibriú idir téarmeolaithe an Aontais agus téarmeolaithe na hÉireann, agus bunaithe ar a chumas i gcur i bhfeidhm thionscadal GA IATE, d'fhéadfadh ról tábhachtach a bheith ag Fiontar i gcomhoibriú dá shórt.

Maidir leis an staidéar seo, is dóigh liom gur éirigh leis na húdair na haidhmeanna a chur siad rompu a bhaint amach. Tá athbhreithniú inmheánach cuimsitheach ar an tionscadal ag lár a théarma ann. Is staidéar uathúil é sa mhéid is go gcuireann sé go mór lenár n-eolas ar théarmeolaíocht na Gaeilge sa chomhthéacs Eorpach. B'fhoinsé thábhachtach freisin é do dhaoine ar spéis leo cur isteach ar phostanna d'aistritheoirí agus do théarmeolaithe Gaeilge san Aontas Eorpach.

**Pádraig Breandán Ó Laighin**

### **Tagairtí**

Herwig, Christine (2011) 'IATE: EU tool for translation-oriented terminology work'. Cur i láthair ag an gCeathrú Siompóisiam um Chumarsáid Ghnó Idirnáisiúnta, Ollscoil Wirtschafts, Vín, Aibreán 2011. Ar fáil ag: [http://www.wu.ac.at/bizcomm/symposien/symposium2011/herwig\\_iate\\_](http://www.wu.ac.at/bizcomm/symposien/symposium2011/herwig_iate_)

- vienna\_2011\_symposium\_final.ppt [Léite 21 Deireadh Fómhair 2013].
- Koskinen, Kaisa (2008) *Translating Institutions: An Ethnographic Study of EU Translation*. Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing.
- Ó Laighin, Pádraig Breandán (2012) 'Reachtaíocht Teanga'. Lgh. 151-176 in Ó hÍfeárnáin, Tadhg, agus Máire Ní Neachtain, eagarthóirí, *An tSochtheangeolaíocht: Feidhm agus Tuairisc*. Baile Átha Cliath: Cois Life.
- Rummel, Dieter (2012) 'The ECHA-term project: Multilingual REACH and CLP Terminology'. Cur i láthair ag an Séú Comhdháil um Théarmaíocht, Osló, Deireadh Fómhair 2012. Ar fáil ag: [http://www.eaft-aet.net/fileadmin/files/EAFT\\_Summit\\_2012/Rummel\\_ECHA-term\\_for\\_EAFT\\_Oslo\\_-\\_11-10-2012.pptx](http://www.eaft-aet.net/fileadmin/files/EAFT_Summit_2012/Rummel_ECHA-term_for_EAFT_Oslo_-_11-10-2012.pptx) [Léite 21 Deireadh Fómhair 2013].
- uí Bhraonáin, Donnla, eagarthóir (2004) *Foclóir Fiontar Gaeilge-Béarla / Fiontar Dictionary of Terminology English-Irish*. Baile Átha Cliath: Fiontar.
- Wagner, Emma, Svend Beck, agus Jesús Martínez (2012) *Translating for the European Institutions*, Dara hEagrán. Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing.

***Game Localization: Translation for the Global Digital Entertainment Industry* by Minako O'Hagan and Carmen Mangiron.**

**Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2013. 374 pp. ISBN 9789027224569 €99.00 / \$149.00 (hbk); ISBN 9789027224576 €36.00 / \$54.00 (pbk); ISBN 9789027271860. €99.00 / \$149.00.**

The growing importance of video games in today's culture manifests itself on many levels. While James Cameron's *Avatar* needed 19 days to cross the \$1 billion income threshold, thus setting a new record for the film industry, the recently released game *Grand Theft Auto V* did the same in only three days. Critically acclaimed works such as the abstract philosophical fable *Journey* (thatgamecompany, 2012) or *Fatale* (Tale of Tales, 2009), a subversive refashioning of Wilde's *Salome*, have shown that video games can also be viewed as a rapidly developing artistic medium. Because of the growing popularity of mobile devices, playing video games is more widespread now than ever before. Most importantly, video games are an increasingly global business – thanks to the rise of digital distribution a European gamer can easily access products created not only in the US or Japan, but also in Kenya or Saudi Arabia. It is due to all these factors that the subject of Minako O'Hagan's and Carmen Mangiron's book *Game Localization* is becoming one of the more promising and complex fields connected with translation.

The sole previous book on the issue, *The Game Localization Handbook* by Heather Maxwell Chandler and Stephanie O'Malley Deming, was an exhaustive description of the practical aspects of localization. O'Hagan, a lecturer at Dublin City University (DCU), and Mangiron, formerly of DCU and now based at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, have a different, more academic aim – they want to provide a theoretical background for game localization and situate it in the landscape of contemporary translation studies and practices. The authors point out that the discipline of video game localization is often dismissed either as a branch of software localization in general or as an inferior example of audiovisual translation, while in fact it is neither. As a cultural product, a game is not the same as productivity software; as an interactive work, which includes the user's input, it forces the translator to consider much broader perspectives than in AVT. O'Hagan and Mangiron show localizing video games to be an altogether separate domain, unique also in the variety of its methods, which have to take into account the multiple kinds of assets (written text, voice-overs, text in cinematics, text and symbols present within the virtual world, packaging and documentation, etc.) converging to form today's games.

In the theoretical sections of the book, the authors explore the relationship between translation and localization. They point out that the latter has never gained much respect within the translation studies community. The original scope of localization, concentrated on productivity software, does not usually yield interesting translation problems, as it tends towards almost mechanical, standardized procedures. However, modern video games, being complex cultural products, require much more sophistication and necessitate a reconsideration of the traditional paradigms of localization. According to the authors, the most important problem here is the fact that localization usually disregards the importance of the translator's agency, an attitude understandable when dealing with productivity software, but very problematic in the case of video games, where the creativity of the translator can make a crucial difference. Ultimately, O'Hagan and Mangiron propose to regard video game localization in terms of transcreation, where the translator's task is not simple transfer from one language to another, but the recreation of a complex work within a new linguistic, cultural and technological context. The theoretical framework concerning translation studies is very robust. However, at the outset, O'Hagan and Mangiron write that their methodology is also rooted in game studies. This aspect proves to be slightly disappointing – mentions of video game theory are few and far between, and their actual contribution to the book is insignificant, limited only to the basic distinction between narrative and play.

The emphasis on theory does not mean that the authors neglect the practical sphere of game localization. They describe the details of the localization process, including the difficulties caused by its technical aspects (such as procedures which require the translators to work without knowing the context of the utterances they translate), or the influence the structure of the gaming industry has on the whole process. They show what translation problems emerge from the fact that parts of the translated text can be modified by the game program depending on the context emerging from the player's actions (e.g. by changing the character the text refers to). In particularly interesting sections they explore the ways in which localization may also involve radical manipulations of the game interface in order to better introduce the game into the target culture. Sometimes O'Hagan and Mangiron notice fascinating problems reaching into the future of video games and localization, such as the difficulties posed by games relying on natural language processing, which generate text rather than perform previously written dialogue. The discussion of all these problems is illustrated by very well-chosen examples, many of which are taken from the authors' own experience as game localizers.

The book is focused on localizations of Japanese console games into English, which in many respects proves to be an excellent choice, due to their popularity among European and American customers and the distance between the source and target cultures, making for many interesting problems and even more interesting solutions. However, it is this narrow focus that ultimately becomes the book's biggest weakness, as it leads to some omissions and simplifications. Some of them are minor details (like the claim that the stealth game genre stems from Hideo Kojima's *Metal Gear Solid*, which ignores the equally important PC game *Thief: The Dark Project*), but some have a much more serious impact. Most notably, the account of the history of video game localization presented in the book hardly mentions the localizations of PC games, which until the late 1990s were much more advanced than those of their console counterparts. The focus on big-budget Japanese console games also means that the authors almost ignore some of the most interesting trends in today's gaming industry, where the fastest growing tendencies are the development of low-budget indie games and massive multiplayer online games, which require different strategies and procedures of localisation (especially in the case of online games, where the product is never finished, but is constantly updated throughout its lifetime). *Game Localization* also neglects possibly the most significant factor in the current situation of the industry – the rapid growth of the international mobile market, where the cycle of producing, localising and promoting games is much faster than in the case of high-budget console titles.

However, these shortcomings are fairly minor when compared to the

book's strong points. It is currently the most complete monograph on the subject. It shows possible ways of developing research on localization within translation studies. It even includes a chapter devoted to professional training in the field of localization. Thus, it is easy to recommend *Game Localization* to anyone interested in the subject, both in its theoretical and practical aspects.

**Paweł Schreiber**

*Translation and Philosophy*. Lisa Foran (ed.)

**Intercultural Studies and Foreign Language Learning, Vol. 11 Oxford: Peter Lang, 2012. 188 pp. ISBN 978-3-0343-0794-9 (pbk) / ISBN 978-3-0353-0250-9 (ebk). €38 (pbk) / €42 (ebk).**

The volume *Translation and Philosophy* contains a selection of essays originally presented at a conference held in 2010 at University College Dublin. All the texts concern some aspects of the interaction between the two practices indicated in the title. Four essays are basically practical in their concern, investigating specific translational problems (e.g. Whitehead's comparison of various translations of 'The Middle of Autumn and No Moon' by Ikkyū Sōjun), while the remaining seven focus on abstract issues (e.g. Foran's discussion of translation involved in the self's encounter with the Other).

Taken as a whole, the collection testifies to the diversity of approaches that can be adopted when examining either the philosophy of translation or translation of philosophy, to cope with problems which, even if they arise in these borderlands, have meaningful consequences reaching far beyond them. Suffice it to say that some of the essays take advantage of research conducted within linguistics (Denman), sociology (Tyulenev), theology (Lapidot) or anthropology (Erdinast-Vulcan) and many are interdisciplinary. Also, the theoretical background of the essays is impressive in its variety. The authors draw on theories of translation offered by Cicero, Walter Benjamin and Roman Ingarden among others, theories of the self and the Other by Jacques Derrida and Paul Ricoeur, concepts of language associated with Noam Chomsky, George Lakoff and Mikhail Bakhtin, Jürgen Habermas's theory of communication, Niklas Luhmann's theory of social systems, Georg Simmel's theory of social mediation, and the thought of Sigmund Freud, George Steiner, Emmanuel Lévinas and many others. Thus equipped, the authors try either to solve practical problems such as the proper treatment of ambiguities found in philosophical texts (Harden), the translation of terms whose meaning

evolves throughout the text (Charlston), and divergences between the vocabulary of source and target languages (Dvorakova), or they approach puzzling aspects of human existence: how by translating itself to the Other in a language that belongs to the Other, the self has a chance to come to know itself (Foran), how by learning a foreign language one loses hold of reality that until then, in one's native tongue, was close at hand and meaningful (Erdinast-Vulcan) or how pleasures as conceived of by John Stuart Mill fail to give us pleasure. Obviously, the standard problems in translation studies, such as the faithful vs. beautiful dilemma, translatability vs. untranslatability, the need for interpretation in translation, the question of meaning (stable and inscribed in the text vs. generated in the process of interaction between the text and its reader or translator), as well as the ethical obligations of the translator, have not been neglected, either.

Most important for the overall meaning of the book are perhaps two ideas which, reappearing in some essays, affect the reader's reception of them all. Firstly, translation is not merely a professional occupation consisting in trying to express in one language what has already been successfully expressed in another. It is a basic and constant activity of the human mind, which by means of one or many languages struggles to make sense of itself, other people and the world. Secondly, all the problems that one encounters when translating need not be thought of as unwelcome inconveniences. On the contrary, they might be taken as opportunities for deeper engagement with language, the text, the Other, the self and the world. The collection itself epitomises this attitude when, challenging as it might be (some essays require basic acquaintance with contemporary philosophical and linguistic thought, others demand much concentrated attention), it invites the reader to ponder such issues as the benefit of semantic richness inherent in verbal ambiguity, the myths of the kinship of all languages and of one, universal, pure, culturally unbiased language (both paradoxically inspired by the phenomenon of linguistic diversity), or the thought that the world is in a state of deconstruction and all translation does is help us become aware of the fact.

As regards the specific texts, Theo Harden's article, which opens the collection, focuses on the specific translational problem posed by the word *geistige* in the title of Wilhelm von Humboldt's work. While considering various options (*mental, intellectual, spirit, spiritual, esprit, and ghostly*), the author introduces Ingarden's concept of ambiguity in philosophical texts, formal and dynamic equivalence, Katharina Reiß's category of content-focused texts (to which philosophical texts might belong), Gerald Parks's argument that philosophical texts (in terms of translation) constitute a category of their own, and Jonathan Réé's claim that they contrast with literary texts as the former, unlike the latter, naturally

transcend the limits of national languages. All these theories seem relevant but this relevance and the author's own opinion might perhaps be stated more clearly; also missing is some annotation of the table (pp. 19-20).

The next essay, by David Charlston, examines two issues: the ambiguity of philosophical texts and the impact of translators' ideological and philosophical background on their work. The author seeks to examine this impact by comparing three translations of Georg Hegel's *Phänomenologie des Geistes*. He identifies their individual *contextual frameworks* as Christian philosophy and British Idealism in the case of Sir James Baillie; a right-Hegelian, anti-Marxist approach in the case of Arnold Miller and communitarianism in the case of Terry Pinkard (apart from which all the three remain under the influence of Anglo-American analytical philosophy). Charlston then moves on to explain that Hegel's notoriously ambiguous style is an asset and was the philosopher's conscious choice, dictated partly by the contemporary aesthetic fashions, partly by his wish to avoid the trap of oversimplifying dogmatic philosophy. Unfortunately, the project being still in progress, the climax – a demonstration of how the translation of the key words (*Geist* and *aufheben*) is subordinate to each translator's specific ideological background (which, incidentally, might reveal the weakness of ambiguity, whether intentional or not) – is missing.

Daphna Erdinast-Vulcan's essay concerns what she calls the *dynamics of self-translation*. By way of introduction the author points out how the notion of the *uncanny* (*das Unheimliche*) is related to that of the *double*, and how *transference* in analytical therapy is akin to *translation*. In 'The Uncanny', as she reports, Sigmund Freud speaks of "translating oneself" and speaking "a language that is foreign" presumably to oneself. The *uncanniness* of both language and the self make self-translation necessary. This is most visible in the case of people who live in an alien culture and use a foreign language, as exemplified by Tzvetan Todorov (who speaks of "reading oneself in quotation marks"), Eva Hoffman (who confesses to feeling alienated both from the foreign language that she is obliged to use and from reality, which the foreign language fails to render meaningful: the self translated into a foreign language becomes alien to itself), Jacques Derrida (who argues that the condition is universal since everybody speaks language and is constituted by language that is not one's own but the Other's) and Joseph Conrad (whose sense of *uncanniness* and alienation in a foreign language, according to Erdinast-Vulcan, is transformed into the theme of *strangeness within* in his fiction). On first reading, the opening three pages, packed with highly abstract notions, may overwhelm the reader; otherwise the essay's argumentation is clear, its message poignant: speaking many languages need not only mean multiple lives, as promised by Goethe, it

might also entail a considerable loss of feeling at home in the world.

Andrew Whitehead argues that the translation of a philosophical text should be philosophically informed and illustrates this thesis with a discussion of four translations of the medieval poem 'The Middle of Autumn and No Moon' by Sōjun, a Japanese Zen thinker. Referring to James Heisig's belief that translation should not deprive the text of the sense of its otherness and that it should strike the right balance between recreating the author's original experience and the translator's response, Whitehead highlights the shortcomings of the translations. He then offers his own translation, which being sensitive to the relevant philosophical context, i.e. the Zen doctrine of emptiness, captures the original message more successfully. The reader has to trust the author as the Japanese original is not provided and even if it were, most readers would still be in need of a translator.

Angelo Bottone explores Ricoeur's philosophy of translation and justice and the parallels between the two. Apparently, as a paradigm for an attitude towards otherness, translation can serve as a model for ethical thinking. It can also serve as a model for interpretative (hermeneutical) activity since there is much affinity between interlingual translation and intralingual interpretation. It follows that, in Ricoeur's opinion, philosophy can profit from investigating the practice of translation. In particular, the practice of translation consists in mediation. It is driven by the desire to meet the Other in one's language but it also offers the translator an opportunity to understand him- or herself better and recognise strangeness in him- or herself. Further, translation requires distance which, though it may appear unhelpful, is necessary for self-understanding. Having no direct cognition of ourselves, we require encounters with others and the mediation of works of culture. It is in the act of interpretation, necessitated by this distance, that the self is constituted and comes to know itself. All this is well presented and of great interest. The essay loses some of its force when investigating the relation between jurisprudence and translation (for Ricoeur, in both the practices an act of judgment is necessary, i.e. one needs to apply a general rule in a specific situation; both entail elements of *distantiation* and mediation; both are essentially ethical). Bottone, intent on explaining the close relationship between the practices of translation and of justice, does not try to approach Ricoeur's ideas in a critical way but apparently the same kind of closeness might be found between translation and other practices, given that translation may serve as a paradigm for all ethical and interpretive practices.

Lisa Foran examines Derrida's and Ricoeur's thought on language and translation with passing references to Lévinas, Steiner and Georges Mounin. In particular, the author indicates ways in which this thought might be further



developed, especially as regards the self in its relation to the Other. The analogies between the self and text noted by Derrida (the self and narrative in Ricoeur's theory) justify this kind of extension. Thus, Derrida's idea that language is both translatable and untranslatable and Ricoeur's belief that the translator is inevitably guilty of betrayal when trying to be faithful to both the text and the reader might be said to imply that the self needs to be both open (translatable) and closed (untranslatable), or that the self cannot help being guilty when trying to be faithful to both itself and the Other (though the latter consequence is not explicitly articulated in Foran's essay). Translation, which takes place in language and beyond it, leads to understanding, which equals being (this idea Foran borrows from Steiner); it also facilitates an exchange of offerings with the Other (this she owes to Lévinas). This brief synopsis of the main argument cannot do justice to the text, which abounds in highly complex and closely interrelated ideas. It is all the more worth noting that Foran manages to present them in a clear, comprehensible way.

In Elad Lapidot's essay the story of the Tower of Babel (and its Rabbinic interpretations), the theme of human (verbal) creativity and Derrida's intuitions concerning proper names all come together to justify the linguistic diversity as well as the practice of translation, which promotes it. Lapidot argues that, as shown in Genesis, the essence of humanity consists in the ability to create by means of words. Words, however, in particular proper names when meaningless, can also be powerful, granting the name-bearer an existence of its own, independent of the creator's intentions. That is why when in the Babel myth people wish to give the tower under construction a proper name, God intervenes by introducing a variety of languages. In this way, Lapidot explains, people gain the ability to undo their creation, which averts the threat that they will be dethroned by their artefacts. Referring to Derrida's theory of proper names and their untranslatability, Lapidot argues that only in translation can proper names gain their power (if the alien term is retained) or be undone (if the translator finds some native counterpart). Thus the linguistic diversity, which makes translation possible, gives the translator the power of deconstruction. The text is thought-provoking. In particular, the reader might wonder whether the author does not underestimate the non-verbal creative power of people while overestimating the ontological effect of proper names and the translator's ability to neutralise it. In any case the evidence presented by the text (interpretations of biblical passages) does not seem conclusive, while the discussion of the ontology of proper names seems somewhat deficient in logical coherence.

Alena Dvorakova discusses the challenge of translating Mill's 'Utilitarianism' into Czech. It is the term *pleasure* that appears most problematic. The term is crucial because for Mill a morally right action produces the greatest

amount of good for the greatest amount of people, where good is identifiable with happiness, and happiness means pleasure without pain. Mill differentiates lower and higher kinds of pleasure (e.g. sex and philosophy). Lower pleasure is pleasant in a commonsensical way; higher pleasure is gratifying in virtue of its being consistent with human dignity. But Mill's discussion is far from clear (higher pleasures might be less pleasant than the lower ones), partly because, as Dvorakova argues, in English he can use one and the same term in various contexts (to refer to a variety of activities as well as feelings derived from them). Any attempt to translate Mill into Czech reveals the imprecision of the term, as depending on the specific meaning and linguistic context, the translator has to choose between *slast*, *požitek*, *zážitek*, *potěšení*, *radost* and *potěcha*. The essay presents the technical problem and the related philosophical ambiguity in a clear and detailed manner. Interestingly, the discussion of Mill's theory and Czech vocabulary leads Dvorakova to suggest that a preferable way of treating pleasure might be as "qualitatively distinct complexes of memorable, self-affirming or rather life-affirming experiences" (p. 122) so as to avoid the risky analysis of the experience into pleasant and valuable activities and feelings.

According to Veronica O'Neill, all too frequently translation is depicted in terms that imply struggle for power, violence and antagonism (cf. the source vs. target language), the focus falling on the difference between languages, whereas the practice also reveals their kinship in origin and purpose. Referring to Benjamin's 'Task of the Translator', O'Neill suggests that the translator might be a *passive* (refraining from interpretation) *facilitator* who – by providing them with an annotated word-for-word translation – helps readers get actively engaged in the task of both interpreting and translating. Tracing the origin of the dualistic view of translation, O'Neill goes back to Cicero and contrasts his assumption that the aim of translation is to transfer meaning with Benjamin's belief that translation might serve to disclose the kinship of all languages as well as an ideal language. The project sounds unrealistic: mystical experience of linguistic unity seems of marginal interest to the contemporary reader. Also, it does not seem as if Benjamin's thought were the only means to oppose the use of power-relations language in translation. Focusing on the verbal encounter of the author and the reader, in which the translator acts as mediator, seems a more down-to-earth alternative. Even so, the problem of ideological assumptions inherent in the language and practice of translation as well as some of Benjamin's ideas (e.g. annotated translations) seem worth reconsidering.

Sergey Tyulenev approaches the problem of politics and the ethics of translation as a sociologist. Employing Luhmann's theory of social systems, Habermas's theory of communicative action and Simmel's theory of social

mediation, Tyulenev tries to examine how translation (taken as a social system built of communication events that consist in mediation) functions in the modern world. It appears that originally (both in terms of less developed social systems and less experienced translators) translation is oriented ethically (towards mutual understanding of the people involved); later, however, this ethical orientation gets lost as the evolving social system loses touch with the *lifeworld* and translators forget their initial wish to help people as they become professionals motivated by personal gain. More ethics in the translator teaching programme seems to be Tyulenev's advice, though he disclaims any intention to offer solutions. Even though the essay is sociologically oriented and examines the practice rather than theory of translation, it seems slightly overloaded with technical vocabulary, sociological theory and scholarly digressions.

In the last paper of the collection, Feargus Denman problematises the two basic concepts of language and translation. In the opening paragraph he quotes Steiner, who equates human communication with translation. Denman concurs, arguing that we can speak of translation whenever we deal with diverse ways of saying things, while the concepts of language and of differences between languages are far from clear. Further, discussing Kwame Appiah's definition of translation and various theories of language (Chomsky's, Lakoff's and Bakhtin's), Denman emphasises the processual character of meaning, the intralingual variety of verbal expression, and the social and live character of language as well as the importance of constantly renewing translational attempts. This is the most difficult text to follow in the collection, both because of highly technical vocabulary and lack of clear focus.

To conclude, the phrase with which Foran expresses the main thesis of the book, namely "translation is inherently philosophical" while "philosophy not only demands, but also itself engages in, a type of translation" (p. 11), very aptly sums up its contents. The collection is beyond any doubt a very rich source of thought-provoking ideas on the subject, even if argumentation in some cases might verge on the inconclusive, far-fetched or excessively complex. A disoriented reader will find assistance in the editorial introduction, which provides an overview of the main issues covered by the collection and a reliable one-paragraph-long presentation of each paper. Additionally, the book contains a collective bibliography (a useful resource for further research), notes on individual contributors and an index (from which Lévinas is somehow missing).

*Translation and Philosophy* might be of interest to practising translators of philosophical texts for reasons that do not require explaining. It might also be of interest to translators working with other texts, since their occupation, the book

makes it quite clear, has important philosophical implications. Finally, it might be of interest to anybody who uses language in contact with other people and reality, for – as many essays in the volume convincingly demonstrate and as the editor argues in her introduction – the practice of translation is omnipresent in human life, irrespective of how many languages one can speak.

**Joanna Klara Teske**

## What We've Been Up To: A Report on ITIA Activities 2013-2014

Since the last issue of the journal we've been particularly active in organising a wide range of events for the translation and interpreting communities in Ireland.

Arguably the highpoint of 2013 was the visit to Dublin in May of Edith Grossman, one of the world's leading literary translators. As well as translating the work of two Nobel Prize-winners – Mario Vargas Llosa and the recently deceased Gabriel García Márquez – Grossman has also translated Cervantes, Carlos Fuentes, Ariel Dorfman and many other Spanish-language writers, and is the author of *Why Translation Matters*, a book providing a unique insight into the work of the contemporary literary translator. Edith gave a literary translation masterclass and later a public interview, in which she discussed her life, work, and ideas about translation. At the end of the evening she was conferred with honorary membership of the ITIA.

Spanish literary translation was also in the spotlight at the ITIA Christmas Party, when we had another interview, this time with Irish translator and poet Michael Smith. Smith is one of Ireland's foremost literary translators, having translated many Spanish-language writers including Federico García Lorca, Pablo Neruda, Miguel Hernández, Gerardo Diego, Claudio Rodríguez, and Rosalía de Castro, along with the two Spanish masters of the baroque, Francisco de Quevedo and Luis de Góngora. Perhaps most notably, he has translated the complete poems of César Vallejo in four volumes, with the Peruvian scholar Valentino Gianuzzi. As well as reading from his work, Michael discussed his life as both a translator and a poet in his own right, giving particular insights into his work with Trevor Joyce, the journal *The Lace Curtain* which he edited, and the New Writers' Press.

Also on the topic of literary translation, the past year has seen several ITIA events and initiatives concerning Polish translation (not least the volume you are currently reading). In February 2014 Antonia Lloyd-Jones, the renowned English translator of Polish literature, was our guest in Dublin, again delivering a translation masterclass and giving a public interview (printed in this volume). Lloyd-Jones has translated many of Poland's most important writers, including Olga Tokarczuk, Paweł Huelle, Jacek Dehnel, Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, Tadeusz Dąbrowski, Mariusz Szczygieł, Wojciech Jagielski, Andrzej Szczeklik, and Janusz Korczak – a vast output, making it no surprise that in 2013 she became the first translator to win the Instytut Książki's 'Found in Translation' award for a second time, this time for the totality of her output in 2012 – seven books in all!

This event was one of a number on which we collaborated with the Polish Embassy and the Irish Polish Society – we also worked with the latter on an evening in May 2013 devoted to the work of Polish poet Jerzy Harasymowicz, at which Ewa Stańczyk launched her book *Contact Zone Identities in the Poetry of Jerzy Harasymowicz: A Postcolonial Analysis*, a study concentrating on the ways in which Harasymowicz's shifting perspectives on the Carpathian Lemko Region address dilemmas of power, hybridity and interethnic contact. The evening also featured a discussion of the translation of some of Harasymowicz's poems by John Kearns.

In cooperation with the European Commission Representations in Ireland and Malta and with the Directorate General for Translation we welcomed another guest in June 2013 – the author and former Prime Minister of Malta, Alfred Sant. The evening featured Sant reading his work in the original Maltese, with translations read in English and Irish by Annette Schiller and Lillis Ó Laoire respectively.

In the past year our Continuing Professional Development subcommittee has been particularly active in organising events. In June 2013 Dr Agnieszka Szarkowska of the University of Warsaw provided a very interesting and practical introduction to audio-description (AD) – a topic that generated considerable interest, particularly considering the recent EU directive increasing pressure on European broadcasters to provide their programmes with AD, along with subtitling and sign-language interpreting.

In October 2013 Dáithí Mac Cárthaigh, a barrister who works through both English and Irish and oversees Advanced Diploma courses in Lawyer-linguistics and legal translation at King's Inns, as well as an Advanced Diploma in Legal Practice through Irish, shared his experience at a workshop on 'Translation, Interpretation and the Practice of Law'.

In March 2014 Alda Gomez delivered a training session entitled 'Interpreting in Mental Health Situations'. Her workshop cast light on how the patients and doctors may feel while working together, so that the interpreter can better understand their speech and gain a better idea of what his/her role should be in therapy rooms. Of particular importance in this respect is the issue of self-care and Alda had the opportunity to provide us with many insights into topics like vicarious traumatisation, also addressed in her article in the last edition of *Translation Ireland*.

In 2013 we said goodbye to two ITIA Honorary Members. Seamus Heaney's passing in August 2013 occasioned a vast number of tributes at national and international level. Of course, our most famous twenty-first-century poet and Nobel laureate was also an accomplished translator, having produced versions of

the Old English epic *Beowulf*, the *Laments* of the Polish poet Jan Kochanowski (with Stanisław Barańczak), *Sweeney Astray* from the Irish, and Henryson's *The Testament of Cresseid* from the Middle Scots, among others. He was conferred with Honorary Membership of the Association in 2000 and, in the October edition of the *ITIA Bulletin* last year, fellow Honorary Member Máire Nic Mhaoláin published a moving tribute in which she recounted her memories of him in Queens University Belfast in the 1960s.

Sadly, 2013 also saw the passing of the renowned Italian translator William Weaver, ITIA Honorary Member since 1999. In a career which spanned more than half a century, Weaver translated many of the most important Italian writers, such as Umberto Eco, Primo Levi, and Italo Calvino. He was also famous as a translator of libretti, and was well known as a commentator on Metropolitan Opera broadcasts.

The past year also saw us confer honorary membership on two new translators – in addition to Edith Grossman (see above) our long-standing committee member Giuliana Zeuli was given the honour in October. A member of the ITIA committee for over 25 years, Giuliana has been a major force behind the Association, as well as being a highly valued interpreter and translator. She has translated numerous Irish writers into Italian, including Roddy Doyle, Catherine Dunne, and Bernard McLaverty, in addition to other major novelists such as Irvine Welsh and David Peace. She has also been very active as our representative on CEATL, the European Council of Literary Translators' Associations.

The ITIA continues in its efforts to promote the highest professional standards for translation and interpreting in Ireland by assessing candidates for Professional Membership and ITIA Certified Translator status. Each year Sarah Jane Aberásturi gives a workshop for those considering applying to become an ITIA Certified Translator. For more on certification, see the article by Miriam Watchorn in the last issue of *Translation Ireland*. If you are interested in becoming a professional member, or if you already have professional membership and are interested in applying for certified translator status, see the ITIA website for further details.

Members of the ITIA executive committee are currently working on a submission to the Department of Justice in relation to the transposition of directive 2010/64/EU of the European Parliament and the Council of 20 October 2010 on the right to interpretation and translation in criminal proceedings. Two statutory instruments have been introduced by the Minister for Justice to transpose the directive into Irish law. SI 564 of 2013 applies to interpreting and translation in Garda stations, while SI 565 of 2014 applies to the courts. The ITIA is disappointed

that the issue of quality of translation and interpreting has not been addressed in the statutory instruments. In addition, a number of issues covered in the directive are not addressed in SI 565 for the courts. Some of the shortcomings of SI 565 may be addressed by the Courts Service in the form of rules of the court but this has not happened yet.

The ITIA continues to be represented at most of the main international professional translation and interpreting forums. We are now a full member of EULITA, the European Legal Interpreters and Translators' Association and we were represented at their general assembly in London on 6th April 2013 by Mary Phelan. Meanwhile, Máire Nic Mhaoláin represented us at the annual general meeting of CEATL, the European Association of Literary Translators, which took place in Vienna on April 25th to 27th and wrote a report about the event in the June edition of the *Bulletin*.

We continue to communicate our activities through our website and mailing lists, as well as through the *ITIA Bulletin*, which is free and available to all – to subscribe, simply send a blank email to [itia-ezine-subscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:itia-ezine-subscribe@yahoogroups.com). You may unsubscribe at any time by sending a blank email to [itia-ezine-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com](mailto:itia-ezine-unsubscribe@yahoogroups.com). Current and back issues of the *Bulletin* are available from our website. We also maintain a presence on Facebook – you can 'like' our Facebook page 'Irish Translators' and Interpreters' Association' and, for further updates and invitations to events, become friends with our profile page, 'Irish Translators'. We are also on LinkedIn and Twitter.

**John Kearns**



## Notes on Contributors

**Cormac Anderson** is a native of County Galway and has a BA in European Studies from Trinity College Dublin and an MA in Old and Middle Irish from NUI, Galway. He has spent many of the last fifteen years outside of Ireland, having worked as a language teacher and translator in Italy, Spain, Scotland, Iran, Poland, and Germany. He is currently teaching Irish and working on a PhD in Irish phonology at the University of Leipzig.

**Katarzyna Bazarnik** lectures in the Comparative Literature and Culture Department in the School of English at the Jagiellonian University in Kraków. She is among the leading Polish authorities on James Joyce: since completing her doctoral thesis on the topic of spatiality in Joyce, she has edited several publications on the writer, notably with reference to his oeuvre and the transgenre of 'liberature', the development of which she has been closely involved in with Zenon Fajfer.

**Fióna Bolger's** work has appeared in *Headspace*, *Southword*, *The Brown Critique*, *Can Can*, *Boyne Berries*, *Poetry Bus*, *The Chattahoochee Review*, *Bare Hands Poetry Anthology* and various other publications. Her poems first appeared in print on placards tied to lamp posts (UpStart 2011 General Election Campaign). They have also been on coffee cups (The Ash Sessions). Her grimoire, *The Geometry of Love between the Elements*, is available from Poetry Bus Press: <http://thepoetrybusmag.wix.com/change#!grimoires/c1lov> . She maintains a Facebook page at: <https://www.facebook.com/fiona.poetry>.

**Sean Bye** is Humanities Programmer at the Polish Cultural Institute in New York. He is also a literary translator, actor and theatre director and his translations of Polish fiction, drama and reportage have been published in *Words Without Borders*, *Continents*, and *In Other Words*. He is an artistic director of the London-based radio theatre company Invisible Theatre, for which he regularly acts, produces and translates. He studied Polish, French, and German at University College London from 2005-2009. He won a competitive space on the 2013 British Centre for Literary Translation mentorship program and spent six months working with Antonia Lloyd-Jones.

**Patrick John Corness** is Visiting Professor of Translation at Coventry University and Honorary Research Fellow at the Centre for Translation Studies, University of Leeds. He is a practising literary translator from Czech, German, Polish, Russian,

and Ukrainian with research interests in applications of parallel translation corpora. Polish authors he has translated include Cyprian Norwid, Princess Franciszka Urszula Radziwiłłowa, Olga Tokarczuk, Jan Twardowski, Rafał Wojasiński, and Stanisław Wygodzki. Professor Corness is a member of the Society of Authors and the Translators Association, London and of the European Society of Authors.

**Józef Czechowicz** (1903-1939) was a leading avant-garde poet in Poland. Born in Lublin, he lived there and later in Warsaw, though he returned home following the outbreak of World War II. He had a highly innovative approach to rhyme and metrics (posing difficulties for translation) though Czesław Miłosz has noted that “all of his poetry is intrinsically linked to the so-called ‘bourgeois lyricism’ of the seventeenth century and to folk songs.” He was killed in a bombing raid in Lublin shortly after the start of the war.

**Aidan Doyle** taught for many years in Lublin, Poland and co-authored the Irish-language textbook *An Ghaelige: Podręcznik języka irlandzkiego* with Edmund Gussman. Since 2002 he has been lecturing in the Department of Irish, University College Cork. He is currently writing *A Short History of Irish, 1200-1922*. His translation into Irish of the ‘Inwokacja’ from Adam Mickiewicz’s *Pan Tadeusz* was published in the last issue of *Translation Ireland*.

**Zenon Fajfer** is the progenitor and theoretician behind the Polish literary transgenre ‘liberature’. This refers to a type of literature where the material form of the book or other medium is considered to be an integral part of the work itself and essential to its understanding. With Katarzyna Bazarnik he has published the books *Oka-leczenie* (2000), *(O)patrzenie* (2003), and *dwadzieścia jeden liter / ten letters* (2010) – all examples of liberature. His essays on liberature have been edited by Bazarnik in the bilingual volume *Liberatura, czyli totalna literatura / Liberature or Total Literature* (2010). For more information on liberature in Polish see [www.liberatura.pl](http://www.liberatura.pl)

**Marek Gajdziński** is a Polish writer, translator and teacher. As well as novels and short story collections, he has written and adapted drama for the radio, winning a Polish Television and Radio Theatre Festival “Two Theatres” award for best original radio playscript in 2004 and another award in 2010 for his radio adaptation of Paweł Huelle’s *Castorp*. He lives in Sopot.

**Paweł Huelle** is one of the leading contemporary Polish prose writers. His novels

include *The Last Supper*, *Mercedes Benz*, *Castorp* and *Who Was David Weiser?*, all of which have been translated into English by Antonia Lloyd-Jones. He has also published short stories and co-written film scripts. His latest novel, *Śpiewaj ogrody*, appeared in 2014. Much of his work is intimately associated with the city of Gdańsk, where he lives.

**Barry Keane** holds a PhD from Trinity College Dublin, and is a lecturer in Translation and Comparative Studies at both the University of Warsaw and the Warsaw University of Humanities and Social Sciences. He is the author of works on the Polish Renaissance poet Jan Kochanowski, the Baroque poet Anna Stanisławska, and the modernist Skamander Poets. He has recently completed postdoctoral research with Dublin City University in partnership with An Foras Feasa (the Institute for Research in Irish Historical and Cultural Traditions at National University of Ireland, Maynooth) on the staging of Irish drama in Poland, the publication of which is forthcoming.

**John Kearns** is general editor of *Translation Ireland*. He has translated extensively from Polish into English and has written widely on translation. For several years he taught translation in Poland (most recently at the Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz) and up to December 2012 was Programme Co-ordinator at the Irish Writers' Centre in Dublin. He holds a PhD from DCU in translator training and edited the collection *Translator and Interpreter Training: Issues, Methods, Debates* (Continuum, 2008). His own poetry and translations have been published in *EscZine*, *Penduline Press*, *T-JoLT* and other journals and he has recently been involved in a poetry translation exchange with Mexican poets, which will be published in 2014.

**Kasia Lech** is co-founder of Polish Theatre Ireland and Lecturer in Performing Arts at Canterbury Christ Church University. She holds a doctorate in Theatre Studies from University College Dublin. Her research on the importance of verse structure in theatrical performance was supported by the Irish Research Council. Kasia completed her MA in acting at the Ludwik Solski State Drama School in Wrocław. She started her professional career in theatre in Poland and has been continuing it in Ireland and UK in both theatre and film. She is also a storyteller and has worked in voiceover.

**Patrycja Lewków** graduated from English with a specialisation in Celtic Studies, at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. She is currently a PhD student at the

English Department of the University of Szczecin. In her thesis she is researching contemporary Irish- and Welsh-language poetry. She is also an amateur translator of literary texts.

**Antonia Lloyd-Jones** has translated many of Poland's most important writers, including Olga Tokarczuk, Paweł Huelle, Jacek Dehnel, Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, Zygmunt Miłoszewski, Tadeusz Dąbrowski, Wojciech Tochman, Mariusz Szczygieł, Wojciech Jagielski, Andrzej Szczeklik, and Janusz Korczak. In 2013 she became the first translator to win the Instytut Książki's 'Found in Translation' award twice, this time for the totality of her output in 2012 – seven books in sum. Her translations of Artur Domosławski's *Ryszard Kapuściński: A Life*, Jacek Hugo-Bader's *Kołyma Diaries* and Witold Szablowski's *The Assassin from Apricot City* received English PEN awards. She is a mentor for the British Centre for Literary Translation and occasionally leads translation workshops.

**Robert Looby** holds a PhD from Trinity College Dublin and lectures in English at the Catholic University of Lublin, Poland. He has worked as an interpreter in Ireland and is the translator of *Towards a United Europe: An Anthology of Twentieth Century Polish Thought on Europe* and *Polska. Historia: X–XXI wiek, (Poland: A History)*. His research interests include the plays of Tadeusz Różewicz and Brian Friel. He is currently completing a book on censorship and translation, a subject on which he has published various articles and reviews.

**Joanna Malicka** lectures in English Literature in the Department of English at the Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz and is currently completing a PhD on the work of the experimental British writer Christine Brooke-Rose. She has also published on writers such as Tom Stoppard, Arnold Wesker, and Woody Allen. She has co-edited (with Paweł Schreiber and Jakub Lipski) the collections *Art or Commodity? Studies on High and Popular Culture* (Bydgoszcz: Wydawnictwo UKW) and *The Central and the Peripheral: Studies in Literature and Culture* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing).

**Siobhan McNamara** studied Russian in Trinity College Dublin and completed an M.Phil in Literary Translation there in 2005. After graduating she learnt Polish at evening classes in TCD and in summer schools in Cieszyn, Kraków and Warsaw. As well as doing freelance translations from Russian and Polish into English and Irish, she has also worked for the past seven years as school librarian in Gonzaga College SJ, and has recently completed an M.Ed degree. Her research focused on the needs

of multilingual students, and her other areas of interest are children's literature in translation and Irish-language children's literature.

**Adam Mickiewicz** (1798–1855) is widely regarded as Poland's greatest poet and a major figure in nineteenth-century European literature, alongside Byron and Goethe. He is perhaps most famous for his national epic poem *Pan Tadeusz* and his poetic drama *Dziady* [*Forefathers' Eve*].

**Magdalena Moltzan-Malkowska** is a Polish translator of English literature. Following completion of a degree in English at the Nicolaus Copernicus University in Toruń, she has gone on to translate a wide range of writers including Philip K. Dick, Jim Crace, A.S. Byatt, Barry Unsworth, Peter Carey, Sarah Waters, Jane Austen, Jerome K. Jerome, John Irving, and Henry James. Other works of Irish literature she has translated include Deirdre Purcell's *Last Summer in Arcadia* and Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, as well as a book of Irish fairy tales. For more information, see <http://moltzan-malkowska.com/>

**Thomas Moore** (1779–1852) was Ireland's most famous Romantic poet, now best remembered for his *Irish Melodies*, lyrics he wrote to Irish tunes. His output includes such songs as *The Minstrel Boy*, *The Last Rose of Summer* and *Oft, in the Silly Night*.

**Sharon O'Brien** lectures in Translation Studies at Dublin City University, where she completed a PhD on controlled language and post-editing effort in 2006. Her research interests include translation technology with a specific focus on controlled language, Machine Translation, post-editing, and localisation. She has also done extensive empirical research using keylogging and eye-tracking to investigate the cognitive aspects of human interaction with translation technology. She is the co-author, with Gabriela Saldanha, of *Research Methodologies in Translation Studies* (St. Jerome, 2013), and has edited the collection *Cognitive Explorations of Translation* (Continuum, 2011).

Tá **Mark Ó Fionnáin** ag teagasc na Gaeilge agus an Bhéarla san Ollscoil Chaitliceach in Lublín na Polainne, agus is ann a scríobh sé a dhochtúireacht ar na haistriúcháin a rinne Liam Ó Rinn ar *Księgi Narodu Polskiego* le hAdam Mickiewicz. Ina cheann sin, is aistritheoir cáilithe Gaeilge é a bhfuil ábhar ón Rúisis (*Folcadán Aircimeidéis* le Daniíl Kharmas agus Aleksándr Vvedénski, *Amón-Rá* le Víktor Pelévin) agus ón bPolainnis (Sławomir Mrozek in *Bliainiris* 2003) araon tiontaithe go Gaeilge aige.

**Pádraig B. Ó Laighin** is a sociologist and Research Associate in the Social Science Research Centre, University College Dublin. He has an MA in Psychology and a PhD in Sociology. Formerly Head of the Social Science and Social Research Methodology Departments at Vanier College, Montréal, he played a leading role in the successful campaign to have Irish designated an official language of the European Union. His recent publications include *An Ceart Comhfhreagrais i nGaeilge le hInstitiúidí an Aontais Eorpaigh: Cás Ombudsman Eorpaigh 2580/2006/TN* (2013); his second collection of poetry, *Ní Ionntas go bhFuil an Spideog ag Gearán* (2011); and *Catullus Gaelach* (2010), translations into Irish of the complete works of Catullus, which he edited, all of which are published by Coiscéim (Baile Átha Cliath) and Éditions de Lis (Montréal).

**Kate O'Shea** is an Irish poet living in Dublin. Her work has appeared in *Icarus*, *Electric Acorn*, *Poetry Ireland Review*, *The Burning Bush*, *Riposte*, *Poetry on the Lake – Silver Wyvern Anthology* (Italy), *Out to Lunch Anthology*, *Poetry.com*, *Outburst Magazine*, *First Cut*, *Can Can*, *Angle Poetry Journal*, and many other publications. In 2013 she published her first collection *Crackpoet* with the Wurm im Apfel poetry organisation. She has recently been shortlisted for the Patrick Kavanagh Award.

**Paweł Schreiber** completed a PhD on post-war British historical drama at the University of Łódź and now lectures in English literature in the Department of English at the Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz. He has a particular interest in video games and frequently writes about them on the group blog [jawnesny.pl](http://jawnesny.pl). He has edited the collection *Into the Past: Studies in Literature and Culture* and has co-edited *Art or Commodity? Studies on High and Popular Culture* (both Bydgoszcz: Wydawnictwo UKW) and *The Central and the Peripheral: Studies in Literature and Culture* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing).

**Ewa Stańczyk** is Adjunct Assistant Professor in the Department of Russian and Slavonic Studies at Trinity College Dublin. She has parallel interests in Polish and East European literature, contemporary history, and anthropology. Her first book *Contact Zone Identities in the Poetry of Jerzy Harasymowicz* was published by Peter Lang in 2012. She has also published numerous articles on Polish culture, history and politics which appeared in *Slavonic and East European Review*, *Central Europe* and *Modern Language Review*, among other journals.

**Joanna Klara Teske** is assistant professor in the Department of English Literature and Culture at the Catholic University of Lublin. She teaches contemporary British

fiction and has published the monograph *Philosophy in Fiction* (Lublin: Maria Curie-Skłodowska University Press, 2008) as well as various articles concerning the methodology of the humanities, cognitive theory of art, and the presence of philosophical ideas in fiction. She has translated into Polish philosophical texts by writers such as Peter van Inwagen, Philip L. Quinn, Linda Zagzebski, Robert Merrihew Adams and David Lewis. She has also written some works of fiction, including *Wschód i zachód słońca* (2008) and *Pies w krainie wędrującej nocy* (2010).

**David Toms** is an occasional lecturer in the School of History in University College Cork, where he completed a PhD thesis on sports history in 2013. His poetry has appeared in a wide range of print and online journals across Ireland, the UK, Europe and the USA in recent years, including *Dusie* and *The Penny Dreadful* as well as *Poetry Salzburg Review*, *Default*, *Past Simple*, *Can Can*, and *BlazeVOX* among others. His first collection, *Soma | Sema* (2012) is available from the Knives, Forks and Spoons Press.

**Graham Tugwell** is an Irish writer and performer, recipient of the College Green Literary Prize 2010. Over eighty of his short stories have been published across five continents, appearing in *Anobitium*, *The Missing Slate*, *The Quotable*, *Pyrra*, *Jersey Devil Press*, *L'Allure Des Mots* and *Poddle*. In 2013 he published his first collection *Everything is Always Wrong*. He has also written and acted in several plays with the Risky Proximity Players, most recently *Three Holes (I Love You)* at the Bewleys Café Theatre. He has lived his whole life in the village where his stories take place. He loves it with a very *special* kind of hate. His website is [www.grahamtugwell.com](http://www.grahamtugwell.com).

***The Irish Translators' and Interpreters' Association***

*www.translatorsassociation.ie*

*Executive Committee 2013-2014*

Mary Phelan (Chairperson)

Graziano Ciulli (Treasurer)

Annette Schiller

Máire Nic Mhaoláin (CEATL Representative)

Adam Brożyński (*ITIA Bulletin*)

Anne Larchet (*ITIA Bulletin*)

John Kearns (*Translation Ireland*)

Giuliana Zeuli

Ilaria Furlan

Tatiana Kovalenko

Justyna Maćkowska

Miriam Watchorn

*Chair of Professional Membership Sub-Committee:* Graziano Ciulli

*Chair of Continuing Professional Development Sub-Committee:* Annette Schiller

*Chair of Interpreting Sub-Committee:* Mary Phelan

*Chair of Certification Sub-Committee:* Miriam Watchorn