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It is well known that the social role of the translator versus other literary (writer, poet, critic) and paraliterary roles (ideology, leader, propagandist) changes over time as does the role of readers of translations, the significance of translations versus other literary adaptations, and the role of criticism of translations versus criticism as a whole. In the light of histories of translation (Carré, Lévy, Yegunov, and others), the type of communication in translation within the frame of literary communication is always secondary and subsidiary. The role of the writer in an epoch determines the role of the translator; the same criteria for establishing the value of an original work establish that of a translation. ("Translated poetry is subject to the same laws as poetry in general. It is or is not.")¹) Marginal questions of translation technique distinguish the categories of translation.

It is difficult to deny arguments that translations done in 1822–1863 should be called romantic, in 1887–1900 modernist, 1900–1918 Young Poland. A literary historian will always find sufficient reason to equate the writer's and translator's interests. However, the models of original and translated literature are not identical despite their close contact in historical reality.

The model of communication of translation is of interest here because of its relationship to the text. The text of a translation is of interest because of its immanent strategy for communication, which as I wish to show has its own character different from that of literary communication.

¹ Z. Bienkowski, „Grzech poprawności” (The Sin of Correctness), *Twórczość*, 1958, no. 8.

Sender – translator

In undertaking a translation, a translator assumes a role within a larger, *a priori* system, given that no one questions the separateness of his role as a translator from that of a writer, scholar, or politician. I assume the role of translator is sufficiently well established in the social consciousness to have its own social prestige and that the translator has a choice: to be a writer or a translator. As a translator, he faces a number of other alternative roles. In 1765 J. E. Minasowicz wrote:

Translating the selected writings of poets, the translator deserves credit for the smooth text of the translation [the role of translator]; his compatriots and his country, however, gain a more rapid understanding of the original (especially those that used the translation wisely in reading) through the translation [the role of “guide”] and the richness of the vocabulary (clothing the author’s thoughts in them) lavishly enriches their native language [the role of creator in enriching their language, *in nuce* the role of innovators, not known in the 18th century].²

Probably each of the roles of a translator mentioned in this text had its own social prestige in the 18th century; each was a separate title to future fame. The appointments proper to each of these roles lie beyond the realm of a translator proper. (Literary criticism is better equipped to be a guide; great writers are better at enriching a language, etc.) In this context all these roles are peculiarly subject to the translation generic, the transferring of a work from one culture to another.

Receiver – reader

The translator’s strategy toward the reader draws chiefly on the language competence he assigns the latter. Does he know the language of the original? Is he mono- or bilingual? For the theory of translating as a whole this is a primary strategy, but it does not play a primary role in artistic translations. Here the literary competence of the reader would interest us primarily, independent of

² J. E. Minasowicz, “Decyjusza Auzonijusza Burdygalczyka [...] i Gracyjana Cesarza [...] epigramata...” (1765), [in:] *Ludzie Oświecenia o języku i stylu*, ed. by Z. Florczak, L. Pszczołowska, vol. 1, Warszawa 1958, p. 387.

his linguistic competence.³ The problem reduces to the question: does the reader know the convention within which the original was written, and is he capable of performing the elementary metalliterary operations, of seeing the foreign and native codes as equivalent in certain respects? In general, the reader should be able to relate the sense of the translated work to the general rules that are superordinate to it. For such a reader, the work reveals principles without which he cannot exist. The mark of translation in the classical period was that the translator imagined a reader well acquainted with the rules of the art that lay at the root of the work. A knowledge of the rules of the genres was an essential element in the skills of readers of translations, who could call on their knowledge at will and transform themselves into equal partners of the translator or even critics. The consumers of translations in the 18th century were carriers of the literary *langues*. The motivation behind the existence of varying versions of one work (translation, paraphrase, parody, etc.) is explained by the supporting knowledge and competence of the readers. Each of these versions verifies the readers' knowledge and competence in a different way. It is not difficult to imagine how such a strategy influences the text of a work, the shape of the "communicative spectacle" encompassed in the work. The text may use ellipses, draw on privileges granted by the reader's literary knowledge.

As the variation in the level of competence of the reading public increases (a decline in the general level is accompanied by a growing specialization of knowledge), the position of the reader of translations changes. Since he has vaguer notions of how the literature is created, he demands more information from the translator. Commentaries are not peculiar to translation of classical literature,⁴ they exist in all artistic translations. The commentary

³ The concepts of a reader's "competence" and "knowledge" are taken from J. Sławiński, "Socjologia literatury i poetyka historyczna" (Sociology of Literature and Historical Poetics), [in:] *Problemy socjologii literatury*, Wrocław 1973.

⁴ The problem reduces to the controversy: does the commentary constitute an integral part of the text of the translation, or is it separate? This question preoccupies translators of classical Greek and Latin literature to this day, see Aeschylus: "my translation is at time a translation in and of itself" (*Tragedie—The Tragedies*, ed. by S. Srebrny, Warszawa 1954, p. 7); Aristophanes:

is the portion of knowledge necessary for understanding the work's rules of composition and its place in literary history. Every translation contains elements of a reconstruction of the background against which the original first appeared. Every translation attempts to update partially the code(s) that gave the original its meaning. What should the Russian translator of V. Nezval do when he finds no Russian equivalents for the Czech "poeticisms?"⁵ The absence of clear instructions can be equivalent to the non-existence of a literary, historical context for the reader.

The mobile extra-textual connections⁶ expressed in the work points to the apparent, illusory nature of literary, historical reconstructions that translations are. Reading Racine's *Phedra* as a classical work makes it a counterproposal to Romanticism. If we assume the reevaluation of classicism in the 20th century (T. S. Eliot, Valéry, Mandelshtam, Miłosz) affects the reception of this work, then it will take on a completely different meaning, for a richer universe of meanings will be used by the reader and composed into the text as its potential sphere. But the activation of false spheres of extra-textual connections can also be conscious, inspired by definite needs. These cases, as is known, are of particular interest to the literary historian. What is a falsely recognized context against the background of the function of tradition? Rimbaud as translated by various people beginning with Miriam ranges from the romantic tradition as a *poète maudit* through the Skamander group of poets to Expressionism (such poems as *L'Orgie parisienne ou Paris se repeuple* or *Les Assis* translated by Tuwim differ from those by Iwaszkiewicz⁷), to the avant-garde. This happened in Poland only after the Second World War as a result of the efforts of translators and commentators of Rimbaud's works ("this transient meteor awakened the imagination and new forms of non-discursive thought," Ważyk wrote⁸). In each case a new literary,

"the only solution is while translating also to explain, to incorporate a commentary in the text" (*Żaby—The Frogs*, ed. by A. Sandauer, Warszawa 1956, p. 11).

⁵ B. Ilék, G. Venečková, "Zametki o russkikh izdaniyakh Nezvala," [in:] *Masterstvo perevoda*, Moskva 1970, pp. 136–137.

⁶ Cf. Y. Lotman, *Struktura khudozhestvennogo teksta*, Moskva 1970, pp. 65–74.

⁷ J. Kwiatkowski, "Rimbaudyzm Iwaszkiewicza" (I.'s Rimbaudism), *Pamiętnik Literacki*, 1962, fasc. 2.

⁸ A. Rimbaud, *Poezje (Poetry)*, ed. by A. Ważyk, Warszawa 1969, p. 23.

historical context became the frame of reference for Rimbaud. In each case these translations introduce a shift in the canon of the avant-garde tradition; through the context they imply, they bring out some elements and push others to the periphery. The sign of the existence of a tradition is not the historicity of its constituent elements but their significance within the synchronous literary complex. Rimbaud is not an isolated case. Boy-Żeleński's bold language experiments in his translations of Rabelais or Brantôme began a new tradition.⁹ Every literary, historical reconstruction of an original in translation is an appeal to the reader's knowledge and competence.

Criticism of translations

The postulates addressed by criticism to translations reflect to a greater or lesser degree the popular beliefs about translations, the limits of translatability, freedom in translations, etc. The language of criticism is defined by the sanctioned manner of speaking of translations; it is embodied in the obligatory scale of values. Most of all, such criticism confirms beliefs in the heterogeneity of translations even if the translators hide this heterogeneity in embarrassment. The dual nature of translations derives, on the one hand, from their dependence on the original and their flawed nature in comparison with the original and, on the other hand, from their pretending to be artistically independent. Criticism promotes a model of an ideal translation toward which successive translations strive. This ideal, outside of time, cannot find confirmation and recognition in any historical literary reality. It is a model of optimal decisions by the translator that correspond to a fiction of criticism, a so-called masterly translation. Criticism of translations, however, also operates with a historically verifiable model; moreover, a critic, especially a critic *tout court* always stands guard over the canons of style; by respecting these canons a writer gains fame; by ignoring them, disapproval and quick oblivion. A critic mobilizes two scales: one outside of time, the other peculiar to his period.

Let us suppose that translating owes criticism a doubtful fame

⁹ M. Głowiński, "Witkacy jako pantagruelista" (W. as Pantagruelist), [in:] *Gry powieściowe*, Warszawa 1973.

as a transient, hybrid form balanced on the uncertain border between art without any modifiers (to which masterly translations pretend) and slavish imitation, between being a work and a copy, etc. But due to criticisms of translations a constant blurring of the distinction between the literary work and the translation occurs, and criticism (though not just criticism) enables translations to circulate nominally in life and literary culture.

A translation as a message

In the process of literary communication translations take on their peculiar significance as a message primarily because of their relationship to other types of messages: literary (governed by aesthetic functions), political propaganda (primarily aimed to convince others), and others. A basic criterion for evaluating translations is that because of their peculiar semantic function as a signal (representation of another work) they are distinguished from untranslated works. They are translations and not anything else¹⁰. A translation, we must realize, is a translation regardless of the terms with which we formulate its dependence on the original: the existence of such a dependence is fundamental. From the point of view of the needs of social communication, the circumstances in which a translation "is possible but not yet felt as such because it has not yet become reified in the consciousness" (to paraphrase A. N. Vesolovsky) are not important.¹¹ There can be no doubt that when S. Petrycy (1554–1626) included 9 of Kochanowski's songs in a volume of adaptations and alterations of works by Horace, he noted that although ingenuous they were not original works by Kochanowski.¹² But at that time such a distinction had not entered the social consciousness; it had not become reified.

¹⁰ A. M. Pyatigorsky, "Nekotorye obshchiye zameshchaniya otnositelno rassmotreniya teksta kak raznovidnosti signala," [in:] *Strukturno-tipologicheskoye issledovaniya*, Moskva 1962.

¹¹ A. N. Vesolovsky, "Poetyka historyczna" (Historical Poetics, 1899), transl. by H. Karwacka, [in:] *Teoria badań literackich za granicą*, ed. by S. Skwarczyńska, vol. 1, part II, Kraków 1966, p. 333.

¹² W. Ogrodziński, *Polskie przekłady Horacego (Polish Translations of Horace)*, Kraków 1935, pp. 8–9.

The task of a translation is to be a translation; in this lies its generic and semantic "purity" in fulfilling its functions (compare the semantic functions of different texts: prayer, letter, ode, etc.). A translation must meet the condition of being a function of the original, representing the original. Otherwise it cannot fulfil its innovative function. Other functions of a translation (being a model, functioning as a work that hides its origin) are false.¹³

In connection with the last sentence, we could say that an evaluation of a translation because of values independent of its being a translation (informative, propaganda, ideological) place the translation in a different type (arrangement) of social communication in which its value as a translation plays no role. Various secondary functions of a translation then come to the fore.

Translation codes

They are seemingly simple: the mother code that the translator and the reader use for better or worse is the current literary code. Every translation on entering the system of the readers' expectations on whom it counts shares the fate of its original. Without intentions directed toward it, it becomes an empty gesture without meaning, something suspended in a vacuum with an equal chance for recognition and fame or for infamy and quick oblivion.

There is no need to reflect on this subject; its obviousness would force us to use banal phrases. We would, on the contrary, like to show the thesis that the translation code is not identical with the literary code and that the difference, generally speaking, results from the differing ontology of translations. "A translation of a work in a foreign language is always one of many possible statements. The essential characteristic of translations is multiplicity and repeatability." E. Balcerzan's view of the essence of translations ("the peculiarity of their ontology") is correct. A translation "exists within a series of translations. The series is fundamental to the existence of an artistic translation".¹⁴

¹³ A. Popović, "Teoria przekładu w systemie nauki o literaturze" (Theory of Translation in the Knowledge of Literature System), [in:] *Konteksty nauki o literaturze*, ed. M. Czermińska, Wrocław 1973, p. 123.

¹⁴ E. Balcerzan, "Poetyka przekładu artystycznego" (Poetics of Artistic Translation), [in:] *Oprócz głosu*, Warszawa 1971, p. 234.

We propose viewing the series as a translation code differing from the literary one in that it establishes its own rules for understanding the text, projects its own readings and code whose presence determines the peculiarity of communication in translation. We should be aware of the most serious reservations to treating a series of translations as a code.

1. This concept seems valid only when a translation tradition exists, and this is not true of every work. Traditions do occur in trivial, conventionalized methods of translation connected with outstanding works (*Iliad*, *Aeneid*, *Faust*), the output of a famous writer (Shakespeare, Conrad), typical works for a literary school (French symbolists), and even entire literatures (Classical Greek and Latin literature). Preference for some works and discrimination against others also contribute to translation traditions. The history of translations of Horace into Polish shows a preference for his odes, which as W. Ogrodziński writes, distinguishes "our line of development from the English, Italian, or German ones".¹⁵ First, such translations are of particular interest because of their role in the evolution of literature. Second, translation traditions are migrant; we read genetically new works foreign to these codes using them. There is no separate code for Marlowe in Polish; he is perceived within the code for Shakespeare. The earliest translators of Baudelaire certainly committed an abuse in alluding to the style popular for translations of Ceppé or Barbier. Translators of Leconte de Lisle, Adam M-ski (Zofia Trzeszczkowska) and A. Lange, alluded to the style of Polish homerists, etc.

2. Two codes are mobilized in the reception of a translation: the peculiar translation one (inasmuch as the reader notices it) and the literary one, since this reception is subordinated to the current system of interpretation. This constatation, appearances notwithstanding, does not reduce the importance of the translation code; on the contrary, it makes the translation essential to literary communication. The necessity of reading a translation "here and now" becomes completely clear and significant only against the background of a reading that limits its topical connotations in favor of those

¹⁵ Ogrodziński, *op. cit.*, p. 8.

corresponding to the traditional, spectroscoped vision of the work. The translation code stabilizes the reception of the work, while the literary one makes the work category open to ever newer interpretations. Such simultaneous reception within two codes is the optimal reception; in reality one code or the other usually predominates. We shall see that the interferences of the two codes is a very interesting phenomenon for the history of stylistics.

What is the particular translation in terms of the series? Each new translation alters the entire series anew, which lives at each moment with the simultaneity of each of its previous states. Deprived now of their historical stamp, historically unmeasurable, they are of value because of their mutual relationship within the series. The series endures thanks to its constant destructuralizations. Translators usually give these processes a definite character by referring the reader to particular earlier versions. Every multiple series of translations abounds in such islands of borrowings. They are manifestations of the series, conscious elevations of the translation code above the literary code. The effects flowing from placing a translation against the series are more important in this case than subordinating it to the rules of literary discourse.

Criticism and history of translations use the series in a dual sense. First, when they establish the dependencies, similarities, and differences among translations of one work or author. Each element of the series is numbered in order; the particular qualities of a work can be explained by its location in relation to the others that originated earlier or later. This produces a list of borrowings and debts that a translator has accumulated with his predecessors; his stumblings and weaknesses are seen against the background of the achievements of others who achieved the model of the "masterly translation" more completely. Sometimes the historical significance of the successive elements of a series are of no interest to the critic; he rather views the series through the prism of a translation that none of the subsequent translators could ignore. This role is fulfilled by canonical translations (the term in this form comes from Soviet criticism of translation, Waclaw Borowy speaks of classic or ideal translations) that remain continuing sources of a translation tradition. In Poland, J. Paszkowski's translations

of Shakespeare done in the middle of the 19th century are canonical translations¹⁶; among the translations of the *Iliad* F. K. Dmochowski's from the end of the 18th century are canonical ones (as Pope's translations—rather paraphrases—are in England).

Canonical translations are an interesting object for historical literary study. They remain a source for living, current views and visions of the output of a writer or a single work. Thanks to these translations the stereotype of a "Polish Shakespeare", "a Polish Maiakovsky," "a Polish Conrad," "our *Iliad*" function in the popular consciousness arousing successively approval and dissent. Primarily thanks to translations, values in foreign literatures are transplanted onto native traditions. These are not objective values of the foreign literature or, as Roman Ingarden would say, transcendental ones in relation to "the sphere of our perception or their content" but derivative, secondary values ascribed to them because being for a selected literary public they represent particularly favored spheres valued for some reasons, worthy of recognition, etc. Thus, the role of canonical translations is equivocal. As a incarnation of lasting, unchanging values, they petrify established visions and conceptions. They represent the supposedly immutable deposits of literary tradition; their position in relation to the other deposits appears relatively permanent. This position is reserved for the so-called classics. In reality, however, their position is not constant.

What are canonical translations as centralizing elements in a translation tradition? They are a privileged element of this tradition that acts as a frame of reference, the norm for subsequent translations. They provide the first, sometimes the only, instructions for the translator on how translate, for the reader on how to interpret, and for the critic on how to evaluate without colliding with the consensus. Canonical translations always pretend to the role of translation norms.

Transl. by Jan Patrick Lee

¹⁶ S. Skwarczyńska, "Przekład i jego miejsce w literaturze i kulturze narodowej" (Translation and Its Place in National Literature and Culture), [in:] *O współczesnej kulturze literackiej*, ed. by S. Żółkiewski, M. Hopfinger, vol. 1, Wrocław 1973.