

<http://dx.doi.org/10.16926/trs.2018.03.11>

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## In search of a reaffirmation of one's own poetic voice through translation: contemporary Polish poetry translated into Spanish

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**Abstract:** The aim of this paper is to show the possible difficulties which might be encountered by the translators who resolve to recreate in the target texts the images related to the reality depicted in the recent Polish poets, such as Marcin Świetlicki, Ewa Sonnenberg, Michał Sobol and Jacek Dehnel. It is an artistic manifestation practically unknown to the Spanish-language reader, so the purpose of our study is also to create the possibility of familiarizing with the poetry that has been published in Poland during the last years. It is proposed to make a comparative analysis between the original verses and the Spanish versions to find out if the stylistic and formal organization of the works from which emerges “the adoption of paths of creative freedom and fidelity to one’s own voice” (Antonio Colinas) by their authors has been preserved in the target texts. When thinking about the specificity of this poetry and the way of revealing it in the translation process, it is used the idea of the translation of lyric texts as a recontextualisation of the original verses in another language put forward by Lawrence Venuti. We also take into account the observations of Antoine Berman and his concept of translation as “the trial of the foreign” to verify if and to what extent the solutions adopted by the translators have distanced the target recipient from the qualities of the original and sometimes distant reality. Finally, and thinking about the recreational aspect of the translation process, we also focus on the notion of “serial thought” described by Umberto Eco and its use in the field of translation. The presented examples sketch the Hispanic reception of the latest Polish poetry and indicate that its aesthetic intentionality reflected in the analyzed translations may be a part of the target literary tradition.

**Keywords:** translation, poetry, serial thought, the trial of the foreign, recontextualisation.

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Contemporary Polish poetry is represented by authors deeply rooted in the great tradition of poetic creation in their vernacular language, but also

has a legitimate vocation for universality<sup>1</sup>. In the same way, many of the “young poets” have made their work:

A kind of manifesto of rupture with the work of the “fathers”, if by “fathers” we understand the generations of consecrated poets who preceded them, others have tried to get away from the tradition of Polish poetry and have come to draw from other sources, between which stand out those of the Anglo-Saxon poetry, and still others, the least, without a doubt, have sought to move away from their own contemporaries<sup>2</sup>.

They are authors who pay attention to the multiform and inexhaustible reality, good and evil, beauty and pain, the individual and the community, Poland and the world, the visible and the invisible<sup>3</sup>. The expressive power of these poems is also reflected in their organization as the main focus is on the separation of verses that constitute true or apparent syntagmas, the dispossession of metaphorical images revealed in particular verses, as well as the ambiguity of semantic relations between verses-syntagmas. The abandonment of the traditional form of the poem and the limited number of rhymes are also characteristic of this poetry. Finally, these are often works without punctuation, capital letters, and if a full stop appears somewhere, it always has an individual character.

All this makes the poetry an issue deserving our special attention, and, above all, the fact that it is an artistic manifestation virtually unknown to the Spanish-language reader. Hence, the idea of offering the target recipient an opportunity to become familiar with the poetry published in the Poland of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century<sup>4</sup>.

Taking into consideration the aforementioned variety of procedures through which the most recent Polish poets depict the observed reality, this paper will refer to the idea of *translation as the trial of the foreign (comme épreuve de l'étranger)*, put forward by Antoine Berman, and to deforming tendencies such as *rationalization, qualitative impoverishment and destruction of rhythms* which distort the source text and might be found in every translation<sup>5</sup>. While contrasting the original verses with their Spanish

<sup>1</sup> *El cerezo crece... Una generación consolidada: cinco poetas cracovianos tras la caída del muro de Berlín*, eds. J. Guatelli-Tedeschi, J. Nawrot, M. Sosiński, Editorial Universidad de Granada, Granada 2015, p. 39.

<sup>2</sup> *Poesía a contragolpe. Antología de poesía polaca contemporánea (autores nacidos entre 1960 y 1980)*, eds. A. Murcia, G. Beltrán, X. Farré, Prensas Universitarias de Zaragoza, Zaragoza 2012, p. 11, [Translation: A. Jackiewicz].

<sup>3</sup> *El cerezo crece... Una generación consolidada: cinco poetas cracovianos tras la caída del muro de Berlín*, eds. J. Guatelli-Tedeschi, J. Nawrot, M. Sosiński, p. 39.

<sup>4</sup> *Poesía a contragolpe. Antología de poesía polaca contemporánea (autores nacidos entre 1960 y 1980)*, eds. A. Murcia, G. Beltrán, X. Farré, p. 10.

<sup>5</sup> In his article Berman singles out twelve deforming tendencies: 1) rationalization, 2) clarification, 3) expansion, 4) ennoblement and popularization, 5) qualitative impover-

versions and emphasizing these three procedures, present in the selected poems, the analysis of the deforming system will be employed, which, according to the French theorist, makes “the experience of the foreign” difficult. The ideas developed by Berman will help assess if and to what extent the translators of Polish poetry have distanced the target recipient from the textual elements related to “the adoption of paths of creative freedom and fidelity to one’s own voice”<sup>6</sup> by each author. Naturally, when reflecting on the possible modifications that the representations of the surrounding reality in the source texts have experienced, it is necessary to clarify that the way of transmitting their metric and rhythmic characteristics will also be studied, since the form and the outline of the content of a work can never be separated, because they constitute the identity and define the expressive power of each poem.

Likewise, and taking into account that, from our point of view, the translation of poetry, in most cases, constitutes an example of creative art, the attention will focus on the idea of Lawrence Venuti on poetic translation as a writing process, starting from the very choice of the source text and including every verbal choice<sup>7</sup>. Issues such as the way of representing the observed reality, the syntactic, rhythmic and metric structures present in the original verses and in their Spanish versions, will be the object of reflection, based on a question that reappears in the theory of translation whether it is possible to translate poetry or whether the poetic text allows for unlimited processes of translation-recontextualisation. The American theorist states that:

The interpretive force of translation means that the source text is not only decontextualized, but recontextualized insofar as translating rewrites it in terms that are intelligible, and interesting to receptors, situating it in different patterns of language use, in different cultural values, in different literary traditions and in different social institutions. The recontextualizing process involves the creation of another set of intertextual and interdiscursive relations established by and within the translation, a receiving intertext. When translated, then, the source text undergoes not on-

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ishment, 6) quantitative impoverishment, 7) the destruction of rhythms, 8) the destruction of underlying networks of signification, 9) the destruction of linguistic patternings, 10) the destruction of vernacular networks or their exoticization, 11) the destruction of expressions and idioms, 12) the effacement of the superimposition of languages. Cf. A. Berman, *Translation and the Trials of the Foreign*, trans. L. Venuti, [in:] *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. L. Venuti, Routledge, London – New York 2000, p. 288.

<sup>6</sup> A. Colinas, *Poesía a contragolpe. Antología de la poesía polaca contemporánea*, “El Cultural”, 12.04.2013, source: <http://www.elcultural.com/revista/letras/Poesia-a-contragolpe-Antologia-de-la-poesia-polaca-contemporanea/32642> [accessed: 20.08.2018].

<sup>7</sup> L. Venuti, *The poet’s version; or, An ethics of translation*, “Translation Studies” 2011, no. 4:2, p. 234.

ly a formal and semantic loss, but also an exorbitant gain: in an effort to fix the form and meaning of that text, the translator develops an interpretation in the translating language that ultimately proliferates cultural differences<sup>8</sup>.

Precisely in this context some translation procedures adopted by the translators of the poems selected for the study will be analyzed. The texts to be discussed include *Prawda o drzewach* [*La verdad sobre los árboles* (The truth about trees)] by Marcin Świetlicki, *Lustro* [*Espejo* (Mirror)] by Ewa Sonnenberg, *Wysiedlony* [*Destierro* (Expelled)] by Michał Sobol and *Symetria* [*Simetría* (Symmetry)] by Jacek Dehnel, along with their Spanish versions made by Abel Murcia, Gerardo Beltrán, Xavier Farré, as well as by two collective translation groups from the University of Granada and the Jagiellonian University in Cracow. The translations come from two anthologies: *Poesía a contragolpe. Antología de la poesía polaca contemporánea* (2012) and *El cerezo crece... Una generación consolidada: cinco poetas cracovianos tras la caída del muro de Berlín* (2015). The reason for such a selection is that each of these poems depicts reality from a different perspective, thus illustrating the diversity of poetic creation qualities of contemporary Polish poets which have been referred to previously.

To begin, our attention will focus on the poem *Prawda o drzewach*<sup>9</sup> [*La verdad sobre los árboles* (The truth about trees)] by Marcin Świetlicki, published in the poetry collection *Zimne kraje* (Cold Countries) in 1992:

drzewa nie mają świętej księgi	los árboles no tienen su libro sagrado
drzewa mają dość światła powietrza i deszczu	los árboles tienen suficiente luz aire y lluvia
cienkich gałązek drżących ku niebu	finas ramas que se estiran hacia el cielo
niebo drzew jest zielone potężne pachnące	el cielo de los árboles es verde potente oloroso
stwórca drzew jest potężny zielony jak one	el creador de los árboles es potente verde como ellos
stwórca drzewom nie wymyślił piekła	su creador no les inventó un infierno a los árboles
nie ma żadnego grzechu nie ma powinności	no hay ningún pecado no hay obligaciones
wystarczy istnieć szumieć dążyć	es suficiente con existir susurrar elevarse

<sup>8</sup> Ibidem, p. 236.

<sup>9</sup> M. Świetlicki, *Wiersze*, Wydawnictwo EMG, Kraków 2011, p. 32.

wystarczy rosnać piąć się rozgałęziać	es suficiente con crecer alzarse brotar
stwórcza drzewom nie wymyślił piekła	su creador no les inventó un infierno a los árboles
fascynująca jest drzew obojętna czułość	es fascinadora la indiferente ternura de los árboles
z jaką małych wisielców przyjmują	con la que reciben a los pequeños suicidas

(Trans. A. Murcia, G. Beltrán, X. Farré<sup>10</sup>)

In the first place it is worth noticing that Świątlicki belongs the nucleus of poets who have exerted a tremendous influence on the direction of contemporary Polish poetry. The specificity of his artistic strategy lies in the idea of creating a semantic-linguistic association to alter the adopted clichés in the reader; to indicate that they are cultural constructs and that they can be seen or analyzed from another point of view<sup>11</sup>. Hence, Świątlicki's verses include vulgarisms, colloquialisms and other linguistic deviations, which aim at producing an effect of strangeness in the recipient.

These peculiarities can be seen in the quoted poem, because it is a text that lacks punctuation, capital letters and the number of syllables in the verses oscillates between eight and thirteen. As for the transmission of these qualities in the translation process, it turns out that the length of lines also varies, due to the fact that they count from twelve to eighteen syllables. In this way, we deal with a partial destruction of rhythms singled out by Berman<sup>12</sup>. However, such modification in no way influences the logical-semantic structure of the original text, given that the translators have scrupulously respected the lack of punctuation and capital letters of the original, which is not usual in the existing collection of translations of Polish poetry, and at the same time has to do with the rhythmic movement of the source verses.

When comparing the translation solutions of the images revealed in this poem, the transmission of some expressions that are typical of trees draws our attention. First of all, it is convenient to look at the verse *cienkich gałązek drżących ku niebu* ('thin branches that tremble towards the sky'<sup>13</sup>),

<sup>10</sup> *Poesía a contragolpe. Antología de poesía polaca contemporánea (autores nacidos entre 1960 y 1980)*, eds. A. Murcia, G. Beltrán, X. Farré, p. 58.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 22.

<sup>12</sup> A. Berman, *Translation and the Trials of the Foreign*, trans. L. Venuti, [in:] *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. L. Venuti, p. 292.

<sup>13</sup> The meanings of Polish and Spanish expressions are literal translations of their lexicographic definitions registered in general Polish and Spanish dictionaries.

translated as *finas ramas que se estiran hacia el cielo* (AM/GB/XF<sup>14</sup>). Interestingly, the Polish verb *drżeć* ('to tremble') is replaced with the term *estirarse* ('to stretch'), which renders the original image to a great extent, maintaining at the same time the logical-semantic structure of the source verse. On the other hand, it should be assumed that the Polish notion concerns the movements of the growing branches, which can reinforce the expressiveness of the original image, since the effort made by the tree is indicated. For its part, the Spanish expression may reduce this palette of different possible interpretations of Świetlicki's verse. Thus, this solution can lead to a simplification of the expressive power of the initial image and to a qualitative impoverishment that refers to the elimination or replacement of terms, expressions and figures in the original with terms, expressions and figures that lack their sonorous, signifying or "iconic" richness<sup>15</sup>. As a consequence, losses can appear in the so-called *surfaces of iconicity* of the original text, with which a good portion of its signifying process and mode of expression, that makes a work *speak* to us, is effaced<sup>16</sup>.

The analysis of the verse *wystarczy istnieć szumieć dążyć* ('it is enough to exist hum strive'), translated as *es suficiente con existir susurrar elevarse* (AM/GB/XF), shows that the verb *dążyć* ('to strive, to endeavour') is replaced with the verb *elevarse* ('to rise'), which conveys the original idea, but again it constitutes an overinterpretation of the original verse by the translators. The Polish and the Spanish terms do not belong to the same semantic field, therefore a qualitative impoverishment is observed once again.

The verse *wystarczy rosnać piąć się rozgałęziać* ('it is enough to grow up ramble ramify'), replaced with *es suficiente con crecer alzarse brotar* (AM/GB/XF) seems to be an equally interesting fragment. Here, it is worth focusing on the verb *rozgałęziać* ('to branch, to ramify'), which is not translated literally, but accurately interpreted, due to the fact that the translators have used the word *brotar* ('to sprout'), which reflects to a large degree the iconic power of the Polish term since it belongs to a similar semantic field. Although both notions refer to plant growth, the original expression comes from the noun *gałąź* ('branch'), which has more to do with the argument of the poem that concerns trees, and it evokes an euphonious effect. However, the Spanish verb, which is also related to 'born or to grow from the plant' (DRAE<sup>17</sup>) or to

<sup>14</sup> The following abbreviations of the names of the translators are used: AM/GB/XF (Abel Murcia, Gerardo Beltrán, Xavier Farré), CT (Collective Translation).

<sup>15</sup> A. Berman, *Translation and the Trials of the Foreign*, trans. L. Venuti, [in:] *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. L. Venuti, p. 291.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 291.

<sup>17</sup> The abbreviation DRAE refers to the 23rd edition of *Diccionario de la lengua española* by *Real Academia Española* (online version, <http://rae.es/>).

'produce leaves or sprouts' (DRAE), does not have the same sonorous and iconic potential as it belongs to a wider semantic field and so is further from the intention of the author. Consequently, this solution can be classified, according to Berman, as a qualitative impoverishment.

Secondly, our attention will focus on the selected fragments of the work *Lustro*<sup>18</sup> [*Espejo* (Mirror)] by Ewa Sonnenberg and its two translations into Spanish:

To ty wybierasz temat ja go tylko akceptuję  
 To ty mi dyktujesz ja tylko zapisuję  
 To ty zakładasz się o nieśmiertelność ja tylko przegrywam  
 [...]  
 To ty żyjesz we wszystkich stuleciach ja nawet nie wiem w którym  
 [...]  
 To ty mnie kochasz ja wypróbuję gdzie leżą twoje granice  
 [...]  
 To ty jesteś Lukrecją w olśniewającej srebrnej sukni  
 [...]  
 To ty jesteś wygraną bitwą  
 [...]  
 To ty jesteś słonecznikiem Van Gogha w złotych efektownych ramach  
 [...]  
 To ty jesteś królewskim motylem ja tylko pyłem na twoich skrzydłach  
 To ty jesteś wisielcem ja tylko twoją pętlą  
 To ja jestem więźniem ty przynętą

Eres tú quien elige el tema yo solo lo acepto  
 Eres tú quien me dicta yo solo tomo nota  
 Eres tú quien apuesta por la eternidad yo solo pierdo  
 [...]  
 Eres tú quien está en todos los siglos yo ni siquiera sé en cuál  
 [...]  
 Eres tú quien me ama yo compruebo dónde están tus límites  
 [...]  
 Eres tú Lucrecia con su deslumbrante vestido plateado  
 [...]  
 Eres tú la batalla victoriosa  
 [...]  
 Eres tú un girasol de Van Gogh en un impresionante marco dorado  
 [...]  
 Eres tú la mariposa monarca yo solo polen en tus alas  
 Eres tú el ahorcado yo solo tu cuerda  
 Soy yo la prisionera tú el señuelo

(Trans. A. Murcia, G. Beltrán, X. Farré<sup>19</sup>)

<sup>18</sup> *El cerezo crece... Una generación consolidada: cinco poetas cracovianos tras la caída del muro de Berlín*, eds. J. Guatelli-Tedeschi, J. Nawrot, M. Sosiński, p. 115–117.

Eres tú quien elige el tema yo tan solo lo acepto  
 Eres tú quien me dicta yo tan solo escribo  
 Eres tú quien apuesta por la inmortalidad yo tan solo pierdo  
 [...]

Eres tú quien vive en todos los siglos yo ni siquiera sé en cuál  
 [...]

Eres tú quien me ama yo compruebo cuáles son tus límites  
 [...]

Eres tú quien es Lucrecia con un deslumbrante vestido plateado  
 [...]

Eres tú quien es la batalla ganada  
 [...]

Eres tú quien es un girasol de Van Gogh en un espléndido marco dorado  
 [...]

Eres tú quien es una mariposa real yo tan solo el polvo de tus alas  
 Eres tú quien es el ahorcado yo tan solo la soga  
 Soy yo quien es el preso tú el señuelo

(Collective Translation<sup>20</sup>)

In this case, it is poetry in which we have ourselves and the space that requires us to loosen the border so that the spirit is not locked in the four walls of our souls. These poems seek the correct word, incarnation and expression. The breath of each phrase develops with each verse that burns like fire, while love is a force that unites reality, giving it meaning and sense. For Sonnenberg, life is like an open wound and the poetic world is extremely sensual. This poetry tries to merge with death, i.e. to establish unity with the universe, inscribing a man in the cosmic order.

These peculiarities are clearly visible in the work studied, because the verses abound in amorous contradictions that reveal the attitude of the lyrical subject; the woman towards her object, i.e. the man. She is a woman dominated by the man who, paradoxically, accepts her situation, since this way she feels more valued. Also, the praise to her partner, represented by the anaphora *To ty* [*Eres tú* ('You are')], illustrates her weaknesses, because she sees in the man, as in the mirror, her true situation in this relationship. The correspondence between semantic and structural elements of Sonnenberg's poetic strategy is also manifested in the formal aspect of the poem, exemplified by the aforementioned use of the *To ty* phrase and the lack of punctuation, both of which are fully preserved in the Spanish versions.

As regards the logical-semantic organization of the verses presented above, our comparison will begin with the verse *To ty zakładasz się*

<sup>19</sup> *Poesía a contragolpe. Antología de poesía polaca contemporánea (autores nacidos entre 1960 y 1980)*, eds. A. Murcia, G. Beltrán, X. Farré, p. 173–174.

<sup>20</sup> *El cerezo crece... Una generación consolidada: cinco poetas cracovianos tras la caída del muro de Berlín*, eds. J. Guatelli-Tedeschi, J. Nawrot, M. Sosiński, p. 114–116.



*o nieśmiertelność, ja tylko przegrywam* ('You are the one who bets for immortality, I only lose'), translated as *Eres tú quien apuesta por la eternidad yo solo pierdo* (AM/GB/XF) and *Eres tú quien apuesta por la inmortalidad yo tan solo pierdo* (CT). Here, our attention will centre on the noun *nieśmiertelność* ('immortality'), literally translated only in the second version, while the authors of the first one replace it with the notion *eternidad* ('eternity'), which also belongs to the semantic field of the original term. Therefore, no blurring of the initial image takes place and, likewise, the target text reader experiences an innovative solution of equal expressive power. Such verbal choice is not simply linguistic, but also transmits the whole of the original's iconic surface and signifying process, so no deforming tendency is observed here.

An example of identical interest is presented by the verse *To ty jesteś słonecznikiem Van Gogha w złotych efektownych ramach* ('You are a sunflower of Van Gogh in an impressive golden frame'), rendered as *Eres tú un girasol de Van Gogh en un impresionante marco dorado* (AM/GB/XF) and *Eres tú quien es un girasol de Van Gogh en un espléndido marco dorado* (CT). In this case, another example of the translation that is less close to the letter can be seen, while the original representation is transmitted in an analogous way, i.e. the adjective *efektowny* ('impressive') is replaced in the second translation with the expression *espléndido* ('splendid'), which is also related to the iconicity of the original.

To finish the study of this poem, our comment will focus on the verse *To ty jesteś królewskim motylem ja tylko pyłem na twoich skrzydłach* ('You are the monarch butterfly I only pollen on your wings'), translated as *Eres tú la mariposa monarca yo solo polen en tus alas* (AM/GB/XF) and *Eres tú quien es una mariposa real yo tan solo el polvo de tus alas* (CT). Here, the rendering of the noun *pył* ('pollen') is of particular interest because, in the first version, it is replaced according to the image of the butterfly of the original verse, since the translators have interpreted it as a 'set of tiny grains contained in the anthers of the flowers, each of which constitutes of two cells surrounded in common by two resistant membranes' (DRAE). However, the other group of translators has used the word *polvo* ('dust'), that is related to the 'smallest and undone part of the very dry land, which with any movement rises in the air' (DRAE) or to a 'set of solid particles that bloom in the air and perch on the objects' (DRAE). This solution can also be considered consistent with the intention of the original since it belongs to the same semantic field. In addition, it enables the Spanish-language reader to experience the iconic richness of the analyzed verse in a different way, but certainly not contradictory to the purpose of the author. Therefore, the

replacement of the original term illustrates, as Berman calls it, the surface of iconicity.

Thirdly, the analysis of the poem *Wysiedlony*<sup>21</sup> [*Destierro* (Expelled)] by Michał Sobol will be offered:

Drzewo wiśniowe rośnie, jak powinno, w kuchni,  
przynosi owoce czarne, soczyste i słodkie,  
jedna zachowana połowa ściany chroni je  
przed zimnym wiatrem z północy, dlatego  
nawet wczesny kwiat nie przemarza wiosną,  
zapewniając urodzaj każdego roku. Pokoje  
to królestwo bezinteresownego piękna kwiatów  
ozdobnych, kilka maków porasta kopczyk  
w rogu, prawdopodobnie zlasowanej gliny pieca,  
a czerwony, obsypany tynkiem tapczan kłóci się  
z pogodnym błękitem bławatka, odpryskiem  
nieba, którego nie było tu wcześniej.

El cerezo crece, como debe, en la cocina,  
da frutos negros, jugosos y dulces,  
la mitad de pared que sigue en pie lo resguarda  
del viento frío del norte, por eso  
incluso su flor temprana no se hiela en primavera,  
asegurando cada año una buena cosecha. Las habitaciones  
son un reino de belleza desinteresada de flores  
decorativas, en el rincón unas amapolas cubren  
un montículo, quizá de barro reblandecido del horno,  
y un sofá rojo, salpicado de yeso, desentona  
con el azul sereno del aciano, ese trozo  
de cielo que antes aquí no estaba.

(Collective Translation<sup>22</sup>)

When considering the poetic creation of Sobol, it can be affirmed that his verses stand out for an efficient interweaving of styles, motives and concepts that allows him to create a discreet poetry, but full of philosophical reflection on the nature of human life and the universe. His poems speak of the time that surrounds us, of progress and a kind of dispossession of unnecessary illusions. These elements are also reinforced by the shape of the poems that are irregular and devoid of rhymes, but at the same time present an iconic harmony. This is the case of the work cited above, whose translation may not seem very problematic due to the lack of metric and rhythmic regularities. However, an increase in the length of the verses that count from ten to twenty syllables is noticed in the target version, while in

<sup>21</sup> Ibidem, p. 91.

<sup>22</sup> Ibidem, p. 90.

the original this number oscillates between eleven and fifteen. Consequently, and referring to Berman's theory, the destruction of rhythmic patterns takes place again.

The aforementioned apparent *translational easiness* is also demonstrated by the content of the analyzed poem, which is quite complicated since the images offered by Sobol present different logical-semantic levels full of poetic tone in which a variety of colors prevails. Then, these representations seem very vivid and plastic, as is the verse *drzewo wiśniowe rośnie, jak powinno, w kuchni* ('the cherry tree grows, as it should, in the kitchen'), which opens the poem and translates as *El cerezo crece, como debe, en la cocina* (CT). In this case, our attention is drawn to the consonant identity of the expression *drzewo wiśniowe rośnie* ('the cherry tree grows'), which is maintained entirely in the Spanish version. The translators have used the phrase *el cerezo crece* ('the sweet cherry tree grows'), which has a sonority analogous to that of the original verse. A semantic modification is observed here, since instead of preserving the original tree *wiśnia* ('cherry tree'), the translators have adopted the noun *cerezo* ('sweet cherry tree'), which in Polish is understood as *czereśnia*. However, it should be remembered that in the Spanish language there also exists another equivalent of the Polish *wiśnia*: the noun *cerezo ácido* ('acid cherry'). Therefore, if this solution is analyzed from the lexical point of view, the decision of the translators cannot be interpreted as an alteration of the original. Moreover, the target recipient experiences the sonority of the Polish phrase so that the effect of foreignness is almost intact in the translation.

Secondly, the fragment *z pogodnym błękitem bławatka* ('with the serene blue of the cornflower'), rendered as *con el azul sereno del aciano* (CT), will be investigated. It is worth noticing that the original alliteration of the expression *błękit bławatka* ('the blue of the cornflower') is literally translated, as we read in the target verse *azul del aciano* ('blue of the cornflower'). Indeed, the euphonic power of the Spanish phrase is not so strong when compared with the Polish version, so it could be classified, according to Berman, as a qualitative impoverishment. However, in a certain way it constitutes the reflection of the sonority of the image offered by the poet. Also, this solution maintains the logical-semantic structure of the Polish text. In the same way, the enjambement used by the author is transmitted in the translation; hence, the analyzed example reflects all the qualities of the original line. It is probably due to skilful use of the Spanish language by the translators, as well as their extraordinary knowledge of the cultural context of poetry submitted to the translation process.

Finally, our attention will turn to the work *Symetria*<sup>23</sup> [*Simetría* (Symmetry)] by Jacek Dehnel, published in the poetry collection *Żywoty równoległe* (Parallel Lives) in 2004:

Leżymy coraz dalej od siebie. To samo  
 łóżko, ta sama pościel, ale coraz dalej.  
 Jak kwiat przez nietoperze zapylany, łóżko  
 rozchyła się co wieczór - my na przeciwległych  
 płatkach. Wciąż coraz dalej. Leżymy od siebie.  
 Nie da się sięgnąć ręką, dotknąć stopą stopy –  
 – z twojego brzegu słyszeć wilgi i mruczenie  
 żbików, na moim widać perkozy i, z rzadka,  
 gronostaja, co czmyhnął w zarośla pościeli.  
 Coraz szerzej. Kasztele i śluzy kamienne,  
 pełne porty, ogrody, bezkresne pustynie.

Każde po swojej stronie nocy. Równolegli  
 w samotności i ciszy. Nie da się przywołać,  
 nie da się nad przepaścią stanąć i usłyszeć.  
 Rozwiązane więzadła, rozluźnione rymy.  
 Bliżej do drzwi i okien niż do siebie. Śpimy.

*Łódź–Warszawa, 8 XII 2003*

Estamos acostados, cada vez más lejos el uno del otro. La misma  
 cama, las mismas sábanas, pero cada vez más lejos.  
 Como una flor fecundada por un murciélago, la cama  
 se entreabre cada noche –y nosotros estamos en pétalos  
 opuestos. Cada vez más lejos. En la cama, alejados.  
 Imposible que se alcancen nuestras manos, que se rocen nuestros pies  
 desde tu orilla se oye a los orioles y el ronroneo de los gatos monteses,  
 en la mía se ven somormujos y de vez en cuando un armiño  
 que huye veloz en la maleza de las sábanas.  
 Cada vez más vacío. Fortalezas y esclusas pétreas.  
 puertos llenos, jardines, desiertos infinitos.

Cada uno en su lado de la noche. Paralelos  
 en la soledad y en el silencio. Imposible llamar,  
 imposible estar al borde del abismo y oír. Lazos  
 sin atar, rimas relajadas. Más cerca de la puerta  
 y de las ventanas que el uno del otro. Dormimos.

*Łódź–Varsovia, 8 de diciembre de 2003*

(Trans. A. Murcia, G. Beltrán, X. Farré<sup>24</sup>)

<sup>23</sup> P. Podlipniak, *Jacek Dehnel*, "Salon Literacki", 29.05.2013, source: <http://salonliteracki.pl/new/prezentacje/45-jacek-dehnel> [accessed: 21.08.2018].

The author of this poem is considered one of the most influential contemporary classical Polish poets<sup>25</sup>. As Winiarski points out, Dehnel's poetry raises a question about time, but not in the sense that it is easy to observe transience, but in its secret relationship with culture and art, whose most outstanding products are manifested in the space where the power of time does not reach or arrives with less force<sup>26</sup>. Czesław Miłosz, reflecting on Dehnel's work, claimed "the appearance of a new and undoubtedly true poet is always something cheerful [...]. The poetic strategy revealed in his poems is close to me and not hidden, that it made me accept this flattering judgement"<sup>27</sup>. The specificity of this creation also has to do with the tendency of the author to introduce traditional metrical structures in verses, which makes these poems stand out from the rest of the compositions written by the poets of his time. This quality is typical of the work mentioned above, since it only consists of thirteen-syllable verses, which contain assonant and consonant rhymes in their clauses. However, as it could be seen, the Spanish verses are irregular. The number of syllables intentionally oscillates between fourteen and twenty-three and hence the target text reader experiences a metric inconsistency, being an example of the aforementioned destruction of rhythms. A similar situation is revealed by the lack of rhyming variety of the original, since we only notice a couple of assonant rhymes.

As for the images depicted in the poem, these reflect a loving relationship described from the point of view of estrangement and loneliness between the two. It should be noted that the poet shows the complexity of this relationship through the use of names of different animals and geographical places, although the scene takes place in a bedroom, thus constituting the core of the conflict between the lyrical subject and her or his partner.

Next, we will study the solutions selected in both texts in which the above-mentioned lexical variety manifests itself more clearly, which can be regarded as a translation difficulty, including Berman's deforming system. Our reflections will begin with the verse *z twojego brzegu słycać wilgi i mruczenie* ('can be heard from your shore the orioles and the purring of'), translated as *desde tu orilla se oye a los orioles y el ronroneo de los gatos monteses* (AM/GB/XF). Before going into details, it is convenient to indicate

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<sup>24</sup> *Poesía a contragolpe. Antología de poesía polaca contemporánea (autores nacidos entre 1960 y 1980)*, eds. A. Murcia, G. Beltrán, X. Farré, p. 376.

<sup>25</sup> P. Podlipniak, *Jacek Dehnel*, "Salon Literacki", 29.05.2013, source: <http://salonliteracki.pl/new/prezentacje/45-jacek-dehnel> [accessed: 21.08.2018].

<sup>26</sup> M. Trojanowski, *Jacek Dehnel – Tytan z plastiku*, "Krytyka Literacka" 2014, no. 12 (62), p. 54.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 53.

that in the target version the enjambement of the original verse is not maintained, so that the Spanish line is longer; hence, the loss of the regularity proper to the Polish poem. This decision could be considered as a sample of the rationalization that refers to the syntactic structures of the original and consists of a recomposition of verses or sequence of sentences, rearranging them according to a certain idea of discursive *order*<sup>28</sup>. Likewise, and as Berman states, such a procedure, which is typical of ethnocentric translation, can be even more pernicious in that it is not *total*, which means that “it causes the original work to undergo a change of *sign*, of *status* – and seemingly without changing form and meaning”<sup>29</sup>. However, this inconsistency does not influence the expressivity of the analyzed fragment. It is also qualified as partial, since the translators have opted for a literal translation of the noun *wilga* (‘oriol’): *oriol*, which does not imply any alteration of the image provided by Dehnel.

A similar situation is observed in the following verse *źbików, na moim widać perkozy i, z rzadka* (‘the wildcats, on my own can be seen grebes and, occasionally’), replaced with *en la mía se ven somormujos y de vez en cuando un armiño* (AM/GB/XF). In this case, it should be noticed that the notion *źbik* (‘wildcat’) is literally translated into Spanish: *gato montés*, but as it is part of the previous verse, it produces the aforementioned loss of enjambement. This same fragment also contains the term *perkoz* (‘grebe’), which likewise is transmitted directly to the target version as we see the use of the noun *somormujo*. Finally, in the Spanish verse the name of one more animal appears, i.e. *gronostaj* (‘ermine’), that is also rendered literally: *armiño*. However, this mammal is present only in the Spanish version, since in the Polish text it is part of the following line: *gronostaja, co czmychnął w zarośla pościeli*, thus being another example of the lack of preservation of the enjambements introduced by the poet. Consequently, the original rhythmic movement, according to the French theorist, is distorted in the translation.

Finally, and taking into account the indicated multidimensionality of the analyzed work, our attention will be directed to one more phrase that belongs to the above-mentioned verse *gronostaja, co czmychnął w zarośla pościeli* (‘an ermine that decamps in the undergrowth of the sheets’), translated as *que huye veloz en la maleza de las sábanas* (AM/GB/XF). Here, the rendering of the expression *zarośla pościeli* (‘the undergrowth of the sheets’) seems to be of particular interest. Characteristically, the translators

<sup>28</sup> A. Berman, *Translation and the Trials of the Foreign*, trans. L. Venuti, [in:] *The Translation Studies Reader*, ed. L. Venuti, p. 288.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 289.

have used the noun *maleza* ('weed'), that adequately transmits the logical-semantic structure of the original, but also adds one more dimension, given that this notion can refer to a 'thicket that forms the multitude of bushes, such as brambles, rock roses, etc.' (DRAE), but similarly carries an obsolete meaning 'evil, iniquity' (DRAE), hence, keeping in mind the space in which the poem passes, the image provided by the translators becomes even more intrinsic. As a result, and accordingly to Berman's concept, the semantic richness of the original is even reinforced here so that no deforming tendency takes place.

By way of conclusion, it is necessary to admit that even this limited contrastive analysis demonstrates that the translators have contemplated in detail the specific qualities for each of the authors. Reflecting on the translation process of the latest Polish poetry, Farré argues that:

Each poet demands his own approach, and the approach that is valid for one author will not be so for the other. This requires constant reflection on the writing process, and maintaining a state of alertness so that no slippage occurs. Each poet should be recognized by his own discourse, individual and non-transferable, despite containing a multiplicity of voices that have preceded him. The weight of tradition is here equally visible. And it is useless to look again for elements that are equivalent, we must not look for any related discourse, the poet translated from another tradition does not have to resemble a poet of the target language tradition. But yes, some allusions can be conveyed from one culture to another. Especially if they share the same foundations, and a history based on avatars sharable in the difference, as is the case of the European countries<sup>30</sup>.

In light of this statement, and referring once again to the observations of Venuti, it seems right to note that the polysemy of the original verses revealed in their translations into Spanish shows that the contemporary Polish poetry accepts the aforementioned variety of interpretations, without prejudice against the iconicity of its logical-semantic or formal structure. Therefore, this poetic decontextualisation should be recognized as a *work in movement* that is characterized by the invitation to *make the work* together with the author, due to the fact, as admitted by Jacek Gutorow, that "the new poetry wants to have a committed and active reader – one who would be willing to co-create a poem. The sense of this poetry is not given once and for all. Quite the contrary: it is created in the act of a single reading"<sup>31</sup>. Furthermore, and as Umberto Eco indicates, every work of art is

<sup>30</sup> *El cerezo crece... Una generación consolidada: cinco poetas cracovianos tras la caída del muro de Berlín*, eds. J. Guatelli-Tedeschi, J. Nawrot, M. Sosiński, p. 21 [translation: A. Jackiewicz].

<sup>31</sup> Cf. K. Janowska, *Przewodnik po polskiej poezji współczesnej. Federacja niepodległych nisz, "Polityka"*, 30.06.2005, source: <https://www.polityka.pl/tygodnikpolityka/spoleczenstwo/150512,1,przewodnik-po-polskiej-poezji-wspolczesnej.read> [accessed: 23.08.2018] [translation: A. Jackiewicz].

effectively open to a virtually unlimited range of possible readings, also in other languages, each of which causes the work to acquire new vitality in terms of one particular taste, or perspective or personal *performance*<sup>32</sup>. The theorist also points out that:

We can say that the “work in movement” is the possibility of numerous different personal interventions, but it is not an amorphous invitation to indiscriminate participation. The invitation offers the performer the opportunity for an oriented insertion into something which always remains the world intended by the author<sup>33</sup>.

Thus, there exist works which, though organically completed, are “open” to a continuous generation of internal relations which the addressee, or in our case the translator, must uncover and select in his act of perceiving the totality of incoming stimuli<sup>34</sup>. And from the purely translational perspective, it is about the realization of a process of translation in which one tries to convert the poem as a semantic and formal whole so that neither sense is diminished by a literalism that destroys the aesthetic harmony and the content in itself, nor the form is praised to the point of betraying the meaning of the original text<sup>35</sup>.

Then, taking into consideration the fact that contemporary Polish poetry reveals “a full expressive freedom that usually carries an obsessive search for the novel and a feeling to foreign influences, but at the same time, an eagerness to reaffirm itself in one’s own roots”<sup>36</sup>, and following the conception of Eco, it is also proposed to contrast the notion of “serial thought” with that of “structural thought”. By introducing the concept of “serial thought”, the theorist emphasizes the effectiveness of the idea of individualizing historical codes and putting them under discussion to generate new communication modalities, given that while “structural thought” tries to *discover*, “serial thought” tries to *produce* and suggest open and ambiguous structures, without imposing any immanent, primitive structure or original codes whose rules would be indisputable<sup>37</sup>. In addition to this:

<sup>32</sup> U. Eco, *The Open Work*, trans. A. Cancogni, Harvard University Press, Cambridge – Massachusetts 1989, p. 21.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 19.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 21.

<sup>35</sup> D.R. Soto Bueno, *Bases para la traducción-recreación al español de poemas escritos en francés*, “Entreculturas” 2014, no. 6, p. 95.

<sup>36</sup> A. Colinas, *Poesía a contragolpe. Antología de la poesía polaca contemporánea*, “El Cultural”, 12.04.2013, source: <http://www.elcultural.com/revista/letras/Poesia-a-contragolpe-Antologia-de-la-poesia-polaca-contemporanea/32642> [accessed: 20.08.2018].

<sup>37</sup> U. Eco, *La estructura ausente. Introducción a la semiótica*, trans. F. Serra Cantarell, Editorial Lumen, Buenos Aires 1986, p. 328.



Serial thought has become a polyvalent thinking process... As such, it is in full contrast to classical thought, according to which form is a preexisting entity and at the same time a general morphology. Here (within serial thought) there are no preconstituted scales – that is, no general structures within which a particular thought could inscribe itself<sup>38</sup>.

Therefore, from the translational point of view, “serial thought” entails a resignation of what is expected and conventional, a look at the original text with different eyes, as we have seen in the analyzed translations. The translators have reorganized the semantic fabric of the originals, proposing a new lexical, grammatical or rhythmic model, which resulted in the creation of something unknown. In addition, the content of the source lines has been shown from a new perspective, not necessarily contrary to the intention of their authors. Thus, despite using some deforming tendencies in the original texts, the totality of the foreignness revealed by each of the poets has not been altered. The images provided in the Spanish versions have by no means weakened the iconic power of the Polish verses. On the other hand, translators have avoided becoming entangled in word and structure schemes once established; hence, they have been able to expose their creativity and seek innovative solutions, different from the original strategies, but similar to them in structure and meaning. Finally, and referring to Berman, they are versions that encourage the Spanish-language reader to experience the strangeness of the source lines, as well as provoke a mirage in him; i.e. the impression that the foreign author wrote in a language that is not his mother tongue<sup>39</sup>.

Taking into account all of the above, it must be admitted that each of the analyzed versions, despite not fully adhering to the original letter and metrics, demonstrates the creative and recreative abilities of their authors, while the modifications observed in the Spanish verses should be regarded as their distinctive features, turning these texts into autonomous poetic works which could safely be a part of the target literary tradition. In addition, the dedication of the translators means that the voices of the works of Świetlicki, Sonnenberg, Sobol and Dehnel, among other “young poets”, can be “listened to with all attention and sympathy by the amateurs, from Granada and other Spanish speaking latitudes, of good poetry”<sup>40</sup>.

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<sup>38</sup> Idem, *The Open Work*, p. 217–218.

<sup>39</sup> L. Pegenaute Rodríguez, *Alexander Fraser Tytler y su Ensayo sobre los Principios de la Traducción: la corriente normativo-prescriptiva en la traductología*, “Hieronymus Complutensis. El mundo de la traducción” 1996, no. 3, p. 30.

<sup>40</sup> *El cerezo crece... Una generación consolidada: cinco poetas cracovianos tras la caída del muro de Berlín*, eds. J. Guatelli-Tedeschi, J. Nawrot, M. Sosiński, p. 39 [translation: A. Jackiewicz].

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## **W poszukiwaniu potwierdzenia własnego głosu poetyckiego poprzez tłumaczenie: współczesna poezja polska w przekładzie na język hiszpański**

### **Streszczenie**

Celem niniejszego artykułu jest ukazanie możliwych trudności, jakie mogą napotkać tłumacze przystępujący do odtworzenia w tekstach docelowych obrazów rzeczywistości przedstawionych w utworach współczesnych polskich poetów, takich jak Marcin Świetlicki, Ewa Sonnenberg, Michał Sobol i Jacek Dehnel. Jest to twórczość praktycznie nieznana hiszpańskojęzycznemu czytelnikowi, stąd realizowane studium ma również za zadanie zapoznanie go z poezją opublikowaną w Polsce w ostatnich latach. Proponujemy analizę porównawczą oryginalnych wersów z ich hiszpańskimi wersjami, mającą na celu zbadanie, czy stylistyczna i formalna organizacja polskich utworów, z których wyłania się chęć „podążania ścieżkami twórczej wolności i bycia wiernym własnemu głosowi” (Antonio Colinas), została zachowana w tekstach docelowych. Myśląc o specyfice tej poezji i sposobie jej ujawnienia w procesie tłumaczenia, punktem wyjścia do naszych rozważań będzie koncepcja tłumaczenia tekstów lirycznych jako twórczej rekontekstualizacji oryginału w tworzywie języka docelowego, autorstwa Lawrence’a Venutiego. Pod uwagę weźmiemy również spostrzeżenia Antoine’a Bermiana i zaproponowane przez niego pojęcie przekładu jako „doświadczenia obcego”, aby zweryfikować, czy i w jakim stopniu rozwiązania przyjęte przez tłumaczy umożliwiły docelowemu odbiorcy doznanie niekiedy odległej rzeczywistości ukazanej w tekstach wyjściowych. Wreszcie, biorąc pod uwagę ideę przekładu jako procesu twórczego, interesującym będzie odniesienie się do zagadnienia „myślenia seryjnego”, w ujęciu Umberto Eco, oraz jego zastosowania w translacji. Zaprezentowane przykłady pozwolą nakreślić hiszpańskojęzycznemu odbiorcy charakter najnowszej poezji polskiej i wykażą, że oddany w analizowanych tłumaczeniach zamysł estetyczny jej autorów może być częścią docelowej tradycji literackiej.

**Słowa kluczowe:** tłumaczenie, poezja, myślenie seryjne, doświadczenie obcego, rekontekstualizacja.

## **Auf der Suche nach der Bestätigung der eigenen poetischen Stimme: moderne polnische Dichtung in spanischer Übersetzung**

### **Zusammenfassung**

Das Ziel des vorliegenden Artikels ist es zu zeigen, auf welche möglichen Schwierigkeiten Übersetzer stoßen können, die die Bilder der äußeren Wirklichkeit aus den Werken polnischer Dichter wie Marcin Świetlicki, Ewa Sonnenberg, Michał Sobol i Jacek Dehnel wiedergeben wollen. Dabei handelt es sich um Werke, die den spanischen Lesern praktisch unbekannt sind, daher hat diese Untersuchung die Aufgabe, sie mit der in den letzten Jahren in Polen veröffentlichten Dichtung bekannt zu machen. Vorgeschlagen wird daher ein Vergleich der originalen Verse mit ihren spanischen Versionen, der sich mit der Frage beschäftigt, ob die stilistische und formale Organisation der polnischen Gedichte, aus denen der Wille „den Spuren der schöpferischen Freiheit und der Treue der eigenen Stimme zu folgen“

(Antonio Colinas) auftaucht, in den Zieltexten beibehalten wurde. Unter Berücksichtigung der Spezifik dieser Dichtung und der Art ihrer Entdeckung im Übersetzungsprozess, ist der Ausgangspunkt der Überlegungen Lawrence Venutis Konzept der Übersetzung lyrischer Texte als künstlerische Rekonstruktion des Originals in der Zielsprache. Eingebunden werden auch die Betrachtungen von Antoine Berman und der von ihm vorgeschlagene Begriff der Übersetzung als „Fremdheitserfahrung“, um zu verifizieren, ob und wie es die übersetzerischen Lösungen dem Zielrezipienten ermöglichten, die manchmal entfernte Realität, die in den Ausgangstexten gezeigt wurde, zu erfahren. In Anlehnung an die Idee der Übersetzung als künstlerischen Prozess sind schließlich der Bezug auf das Konzept „des seriellen Denkens“ von Umberto Eco und seine Anwendung in der Übersetzung interessant. Die präsentierten Beispiele zeigen dem zielsprachigen Leser den Charakter der neuesten polnischen Dichtung und beweisen, dass die in den analysierten Übersetzungen wiedergegebene Absicht ihrer Autoren ein Teil der zielsprachigen Literaturtradition sein kann.

**Schlüsselwörter:** Übersetzung, Dichtung, serielles Denken, Fremdheitserfahrung, Rekontextualisierung.