Przekładaniec, special issue, "(Post)colonial Translation" 2018, pp. 108–124
doi:10.4467/16891864ePC.18.005.9827
www.ejournals.eu/Przekladaniec

BARTOSZ WÓJCIK
Centre for the Meeting of Cultures in Lublin
bartosz.wojcik@spotkaniakultur.com

"*POLISH* UP YOURSELF AND BE NO DRAG": ANGLOPHONE CARIBBEAN LITERATURE IN POLISH*

Abstract

Caribbean literature is still under-represented in Eastern Europe, an error of exclusion that the present paper ventures to discuss. For decades Polish publishers have been understandably replicating metropolitan canons, zig-zagging between European and American bestsellers. It is only when a Caribbean or Caribbean-British writer gains an international distinction (Walcott, Naipaul) or becomes a worldwide publishing sensation (Zadie Smith, Andrea Levy) that their books are translated. Exceptions to this rule, such as the solitary Polish editions of Caryl Phillips's *A Distant Shore* (Muza, 2006), Monique Roffey's *The White Woman on the Green Bicycle* (Nasza Księgarnia, 2011) and Kei Miller's *The Last Warner Woman* (Świat Książki, 2012), or single Francophone Caribbean novels, are few and far between.

Arguably, it seems that this politics of translation and publishing stems from the systemic, colonially foisted peripherality of West Indian literature, side-lined by the cultural production of the UK as well as the USA, which dominates the curricula of English departments in more culturally homogeneous countries such as Poland. However, what constitutes a major problem for the dissemination (and popularity) of Caribbean Creole literature in Polish is exactly what makes West Indian writing so engaging, multi-layered, polyphonous and intertextual – it is the cultural component (for instance, the translation of "Creole folkways") that is often misread, misconstrued and, as a consequence,

* This article was originally published in Polish in *Przekładaniec* 2016, vol. 33, pp. 159–175. The English version was published with the financial support from the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education (DUN grant).

mis-rendered. For that reason, using a number of literary sources, the present paper will attempt to showcase a selection of translatological strategies for coping with, to quote Benjamin Zephaniah, "decipher[ing]/de dread chant" into Polish.

Keywords: Caribbean literature, creolisation, West Indies, Kamau Brathwaite, nation language

> One good thing about him was that he never said "I just love your accent and I just love reggae music". And he never asked tiresome questions about "the islands". In her first year of university, she'd got sick of responding to such things as "Do you eat with sticks in your country?" "Do you have cars in your country?" And "Are you taking the bus home for the weekend?" Walter had open contempt for people who asked such questions.
>
> Alecia McKenzie, "The Grenada Defense League" (1992c: 131)

> Poland is hardly in the tropics. We are as non-tropical as it is humanly possible, and for that reason alone the tropics entice us so much. Our reality and our everyday life are muddy. Lined by fields of rye, they abound in oak wood and bristle with wild forests; they are like traffic-worn roads: dark, snowy and squelchy.
>
> Ziemowit Szczerek, "Polskie kolonie zamorskie" [Polish overseas colonies] (2015: 56)[1]

Contexts

It is clear that in 2018, over a quarter of a century after Derek Walcott received the Nobel Prize for Literature and over fifteen years after Vidiadhar Surajprasad Naipaul was awarded his accolade in Sweden, the observation of Montserratian Edward Archibald Markham (2001) that Caribbean authors "no longer have to put the old case that the[ir] work is invisibilised" (13) seems even more justified than in 1989 when it was originally made. Researched thoroughly by West Indian as well as by "outernational" scholars, Caribbean multilingual literature constantly provides literary critics with uncharted territory that requires the attention of translators and readers,

[1] Unless stated otherwise, all Polish texts included in the present essay have been translated into English by its author.

both in the region itself and worldwide. Literature of West Indian descent[2] and authored by writers born in the former British colonies and/or dependencies, is a vital, ever-mutable component of what Bruce King terms "the internationalization of English literature" (2005).[3]

The steadily growing visibility of Caribbean writers in Anglophone countries and the critical acclaim heaped on them by metropolitan reviewers,[4] as well as the rise of the artistic gravitas and marketability of West Indian literature,[5] did not, however, translate into its wider dissemination and popularity in Eastern Europe. Two decades have passed since the publication of Markham's *Hinterland*, an influential collection of West Indian and Black British verse anthologizing the select poetic output of, among others, Louise Bennett, Kamau Brathwaite, and Linton Kwesi Johnson; their reception – in particular, as writers rooted in the oral tradition and making conscious use of the linguistic diversity offered by Anglophone Caribbean creoles[6] – among contemporary Polish readers is negligible. To draw on the metaphor evoked by the title of Markham's anthology, Caribbean literature dwells deep in the provinces of the Polish language – it is cloistered away and as such remains difficult to reach, whether for publishers, translators, or readers. This does

[2] I purposefully use the term "West Indies", which is traditionally understood as the signifier of the Anglophone islands in the Caribbean Sea Basin. Although in fact it perpetrates the faulty, colonialist nomenclature associated with Columbus, it is historically justified due to the vital role it played in the 1950s and the 1960s, in the times of the gradual emergence of political independence in the Caribbean and the rise of autonomous identities, including literary ones, of particular island-nations.

[3] The opening paragraph of the present essay returns to the argument (and its wording) originally posited in my monograph (Wójcik 2015: 9).

[4] In 2014, Jamaican poet Kei Miller became the recipient of the prestigious Forward Prize, while Kingston-born Claudia Rankine was rewarded with the accolade in 2015; in 2016, the award panel was chaired by Malika Booker, a British writer of Caribbean origin.

[5] In October 2017, Amazon Studios announced the commencement of the production work on a series based on Marlon James' *A Brief History of Seven Killings*, the 2015 Man Booker Prize winner. At this juncture, one ought to give Polish publishers due credit and mention that thanks to the efforts of Kraków-based Wydawnictwo Literackie the Polish translation of the novel was published in 2016 (*Krótka historia siedmiu zabójstw*, trans. Robert Sudół).

[6] Quoting Frederick Cassidy's *Jamaica Talk* (Cassidy 1982:162), a signature achievement of Caribbean linguistics, Allen (2002) reminds us that the term "*creole* has no reference to colour, as is commonly supposed by Europeans, but merely means 'native'" (51). With regard to the Caribbean, as emphasized by Edward Kamau Brathwaite in *Contradictory Omens* (1974, 1985), the "native" character of the region is typified by hybridity and intercultural specificity.

not mean that Polish academia ignores vibrant non-Western cultural production. In recent years, post-colonial criticism has been widely represented in Poland, for instance by Kołodziejczyk (2000), Nowak (2007), and Wójcik (2015). Still, with regard to West Indian writing, there has been little critical attention – one exception is Branach-Kallas (2010), who discusses select prose works of Caribbean-Canadian Dionne Brand, also a poet in her own right. It appears that the long-time dominance of Latin American literature, translated and published (often superbly) by renowned Polish printing houses, constituted yet another factor that marginalized the presence and reception of Caribbean writing. The Ibero-American novel, especially epitomized by such prose giants as Gabriel Garcia Márquez and Mario Vargas Llosa, evolved into a shorthand for South and Central American literature, in a way colonizing – as far as general reception was concerned – both Cuba (the island's literary output is thus regarded more as a component of the Pan-Ibero-American creative production than as a Caribbean entity) and other languages (and literatures) spoken (and created) in the Caribbean.

Markedly, since 1989, "Polish publishers have understandably been replicating metropolitan canons, zig-zagging between European and [North] American bestsellers. It is only when a Caribbean or Caribbean-British writer gains an international distinction (…) [as in the case of Naipaul or – to a considerably lesser extent – Walcott, cf. Heydel 2010] or becomes a worldwide publishing sensation (Zadie Smith, Junot Diaz, Andrea Levy) that their books are translated. Exceptions to this rule, such as the solitary Polish editions of Caryl Phillips's *A Distant Shore* (Muza, 2006), Monique Roffey's *The White Woman on the Green Bicycle* (Nasza Księgarnia, 2011) and Kei Miller's *The Last Warner Woman* (Świat Książki, 2012), or single Francophone Caribbean novels[7], are few and far between" Wójcik (2015: 10).

After such a seemingly despondent introduction, due to the scarcity of analytical material, I could be justified in cutting the present article short and

[7] The last decade, primarily thanks to the continued work of the pioneering Kraków-based Wydawnictwo Karakter, saw the publication of Polish translations of titles that are universally considered classics of Francophone Caribbean writing. In 2008, WAB published Guadeloupian Maryse Condé's *Moi Tituba, Sorciere* (*Ja, Tituba, Czarownica z Salem*), translated by Krystyna Arustowicz. It was Karakter that published novels by the Haitian writers, Lyonel Trouillot and Dany Laferrière: respectively, *Les enfants des heros* (*Dzieci bohaterów*, trans. Jacek Giszczak; 2009) and *Pays sans chapeau* (*Kraj bez kapelusza*, trans. Tomasz Surdykowski; 2011). Laferrière, who left Haiti for Quebec, premiered on the Polish market in 2004, when PIW published his novel *Comment faire l'amour avec un nègre sans se fatigue* (*Jak bez wysiłku kochać się z Murzynem*, trans. Jacek Giszczak).

opting to casually await the dawning, among Polish readers, of a fascination with Caribbean literature. Undoubtedly, the politics that has informed translators and publishers in Poland is the outcome of the long-standing, systemic, colonial dominance of Western European educational templates and an entrenched preference for British (English, to be precise) cultural production – all to the detriment and marginalization of literature from the (former) colonies. For decades, this domination materialized as English studies obligatory reading lists or – to put it more broadly – modern languages curricula. One could assume then that the proliferation of the Anglocentric (primarily English) outlook on world culture and the exclusion of local – European (e.g. Scotland) and non-European (e.g. Asia, Canada, and the Caribbean) – linguistic variants, which are the result of the imperial history of Great Britain, in fact diminished the likelihood that books by non-metropolitan authors would be published. If we add the ethnic homogeneity of the population of Poland and the country's almost non-existent cultural links with the Caribbean to the equation, then one could reckon that examples would be few and far between. However, if one analyses the phenomenon in a diachronic fashion, it transpires that the presence of Caribbean literature in pre-1989 Poland differed considerably from the modest domestic representation of West Indian works in translation after the political transformation of Eastern Europe.

The difference is the result of the ideological concept of providing readers, residing in the Eastern bloc, with knowledge kept away from the citizens of capitalist countries by Western governments, i.e., the history of conquest of the so-called New World, the legacy of slavery and the responsibility for colonization on the part of the former trade empires; or, what the Rastafarians describe as "*half* the story has never been told" (Prahlad 2001: 252), the other side of the coin that has never seen the light of day. As publisher and cultural manager Bogna Świątkowska recalls, "the People's Republic of Poland officially supported the emancipation struggle in Africa and in the United States" (Mazur 2016: 114). For that reason, translations of books written by anti-colonial, left-wing intellectuals and African politicians were published in Poland in the 1950s and the 60s. *Ghana: The Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah* premiered in Polish in 1958 (*Autobiografia*, trans. Irena Grużewska and Jerzy Smoliński, Warszawa: Książka i Wiedza), a year after its English publication, while Chinua Achebe's *Arrow of God* (1964) landed in Polish bookshops as early as 1966 (*Boża strzała*, trans. Maria Skibniewska, Warszawa: Instytut Wydawniczy PAX).

In her pioneering doctoral dissertation, entitled *Postcolonial Literature in Polish Translation (1970–2010): Difference, Similarity and Solidarity* (2013), Dorota Gołuch thoroughly analyses a wide array of translation strategies and modes of reception. Drawing on an intercultural point of departure for further, also translatological, deliberations, Gołuch emphasizes that research into the Polish reception of non-European, colonial cultural production is vested with a potential to become an integral ingredient of debates on the Polish post-colonial condition: "Enabled by the perceptions of similarity, solidarity could be forged between nationally, socially, politically and culturally delineated Polish and postcolonial constituencies" (Gołuch 2013: 4). Furthermore, the scholar "recommends that investigation of Polish perceptions of non-European postcolonials be incorporated into debates about Poland's postcoloniality" (4). This is particularly the case if one subscribes to the viewpoints posited by numerous cultural critics, among others Jan Sowa,[8] according to whom "there are planes on which thematic and ideological convergence" (Heydel 2010: 85) is visible beyond the 1989 horizon.[9] And, although Gołuch, who also authored *I Rather Dead: A Spivakian Reading of Indo-Caribbean Women's Narratives* (2012), does not focus on the phenomenon of creolization and the related challenges that Caribbean literature poses to translators, her work points to the need for a decolonizing gesture. What resounds is the echo of the works of Ngugi wa Thiong'o and his emphasis on the importance of post-colonial, including Creole Caribbean, literature in translation as a tool for the decolonization of the minds of readers and – in consequence – of societies. Such literature, as noted by Kołodziejczyk (2008), constitutes "translatological and comparative space" (257) – a site of meetings and transition.

[8] Despite the fact that within "the global division into the affluent North and the destitute South, the unquestioned majority of the territory – which encompasses the regions that are geographically distinguished as Central Europe and, to a degree, as Eastern and Southern Europe – belongs at present to a group of economically advanced countries of the Global North" (Sowa 2015: 29), in many respects "this poorer and peripheral part of Europe does not share many similarities with the continent's prosperous core but rather is reminiscent of other peripheral territories, such as Latin America" (29).

[9] In her essay, serving also as commentary on translations into Polish of two poems by Walcott – "Forest of Europe" (*The Star-Apple Kingdom*, 1979) and "Preparing for Exile" (*Sea Grapes*, 1976), Magda Heydel states that in both texts "the history of totalitarianism in Central Europe is used as an enlightening parallel to the history of oppression in America and in the Caribbean" (2010: 88).

Gołuch's theses tie in with the opinions expressed by Magda Heydel, the editor of the Polish edition of the selected poems of Walcott, who states emphatically that "translation does not serve as a linguistic prosthesis but rather it explains the world, instils meaning in our experience with the Other" (Heydel 2014). Translation, much as it can be ethically problematic (e.g. construed as a tool of cultural aggression) as well as a source of practical technical stumbling blocks, remains an ally of comparativists, such as Kathleen Gyssels. Renowned for her research into Franco- and Anglophone Caribbean literatures, the critic – on the strength of Glissant's thought – advocates a de-balkanization of the region's writing, by means of multilateral translations within the multi-lingual Caribbean, which would subsequently increase the global readability of the literary output (Gyssels, Ledent 2008).

What poses a major challenge to the dissemination and popularization of Caribbean literature in Polish simultaneously makes West Indian writing appealing to readers: given the history of the region, its literary output is understandably inherently polyphonous, multilayered, and intertextual. Specific to the Caribbean, the cultural component defies any attempt at equivalence and, as such, it is often unread (or read partially); in consequence, it is translated askew and rendered amiss. The interplay of senses (and the power play over the symbolic) revolves round "how the native identity is constructed and/or mis-constructed, used and/or abused in translation and reception" (Heydel 2010: 85). The issue is duly noted by Maria Tymoczko, who draws the attention to the difficulty lying in wait for anyone attempting to tackle the task:

> The culture or tradition of a post-colonial writer acts as a metatext which is re-written – explicitly and implicitly, as both background and foreground – in the act of literary creation. The task of the interlingual translator has much in common with the task of the post-colonial writer; where one has a text, however, the other has the metatext of culture itself. (Tymoczko 1999: 21)

Texts

Drawing on the examples of Caribbean literature in translation published in *Literatura na Świecie*[10] in 1994, and in a few full-length books, the present section of the article focuses on selected strategies employed by translators to "decipher/de dread chant" (Zephaniah 2001: 83), to read it and to inscribe it in the Polish language, not infrequently imprinting it with "domestic intelligibilities and interests" (Venuti 2000: 482).

By the same token, the song itself poses difficulty to the inhabitants of Anglophone countries, as illustrated in the poem by St. Lucian Vladimir Lucien. Addressing a friend, the speaking I endeavours to explain to her the differences between *donbwè* (a Creole lexeme used in St. Lucia to denote a type of dough-based food item) and dumpling, a foodstuff more characteristic of European cuisine, but a no less troublesome lexical entry when it comes to translation: "I wish I could get / her to overstand the non-dumplingness of Donbwè" (Lucien 2014: 12). A similar epistemological-semantic burden weighs down the speaker of "At Bay", a poem by Jamaican Ishion Hutchinson. "Coffee," articulated, as one assumes, in accordance with the phonetics typical of Jamaican English, is instantly decoded by his interlocutor, hardly accustomed to Caribbean cadences, as *Cavafy*. The poet's name becomes a synecdoche that replaces agrarian culture with the achievements of immaterial culture, thereby casting suspicion on the possibility of mutual understanding and evoking an image of a stone statue, into which – in an act of inadvertent translation – the misunderstood (misconstrued) speaker transitions: "when I say 'coffee', / she thinks Cavafy, / and my head turns to marble" (Hutchinson 2010: 25).

Although in the beginning was the word, the first challenge to be tackled by the translators of Caribbean literature into Polish is not the fine-tuning of register but the choice of an author. In his oft-quoted essay, Jerzy Jarniewicz (2012) differentiated between two kinds of translators: an ambassador and a legislator. Much as both of them can potentially introduce an unknown – so far non-existent in the target language – writer into the literary bloodstream, they are guided by different motivations. The ambassador represents

[10] Apart from translations of Walcott's poems, the historical issue includes also a selection of prose texts by other popular (Caryl Phillips) and up-and-coming (Alecia McKenzie) West Indian writers.

an institution, an already established literary powerhouse, a canonical author – sanctified by tradition, lauded by critics or ever fashionable, while the legislator

> selects (…) texts to be translated guided not by whether they are representative of the culture of origin, but by whether their translation may engage in a creative dialogue with domestic literature by proposing new models, new idioms, and new criteria. (Jarniewicz 2012: 26)

The history of post-1989 translation of Caribbean literature into Polish features both models: unsurprising choices (an ambassadorial, despite scarce reception, act of publishing a selection of verse by Walcott); legislative gestures – propelled by the momentary interest in the author of *Omeros* – such as attempts at introducing Polish readers to the work of Alecia McKenzie, Nambo Roy, and Caryl Phillips;[11] and accidental ambassadorial duties – the first ever Polish translations of poems by Edward Baugh, a doyen of Jamaican literature, and by Guyanese-born British writer Grace Nichols, appeared in 2012 as epigraphs opening, as they do in the 2011 original, Kei Miller's *The Last Warner-Woman* (*Ostatnia Kobieta-Wyrocznia*, trans. B. Moliborski). At the same time, the selection of these authors confirms the palpable dominance of the largest Anglophone Caribbean island – Jamaica, the home of Baugh, McKenzie, Miller, and Roy – over the entire region. The remaining countries, the so-called "smaller islands", have been sidelined onto the periphery of the periphery (small is reduced to smaller), while Usain Bolt's native land achieves the status of the local arbiter and the Caribbean metropolis that concretizes a hegemonic point of reference and provides fuel for the imagined community, as theorized by Benedict Anderson (1991). Another quintessential (and related) feature of translations of Creole / Caribbean literature is the simplification of the fictional universe and linguistic reality – a reductionist unification of a highly disparate (linguistic and extralinguistic) experience of particular island-states and the amplification of the supposed "legitimacy of discussing the Caribbean as a unit, despite internal diversity" (Allen 2002: 47).

[11] Published by *Literatura na Świecie* (1–2/1994), the translation of an extract of Phillips's *The European Tribe* (1987), by Monika Sujczyńska, may be seen as an attempt to introduce into the Polish language a different, reportage-like reading of the European continent and as an example of writing Europe from the perspective of post-colonial theory and writerly practice alike.

Inevitably, we have made a full circle and returned to the question of language which, to recall the title of Dionne Brand's book (1998), never remains non-partisan or disinterested. Translation from Caribbean Creoles turns into translation from the English. Along the way, nuances intrinsic to local registers[12] are abandoned or lost, various shifts occur (Venuti 2009: 271), the plane of cultural references, which, for instance, Jamaican Creole abounds in, shrinks considerably:

> Natasha spoke good English, which was strange because her mother knew only dialect. When Mrs Jackson brought Natasha, she had tried to speak "properly", but Andrea knew it was beyond her. She herself spoke Creole to the woman, to put her at ease, but Mrs Jackson had been insulted. (McKenzie 1992a: 32)

In the Polish translation of *The White Woman on the Green Bicycle*, Monique Roffey's Trinidad-set novel (*Biała kobieta na zielonym rowerze*, trans. A. Studniarek), Trinidadian Creole at times not only evolves into standard Polish but – domesticated – loses any signature attribute, especially against, e.g., the backdrop of Barbadian Creole. Simultaneously, the translator strives to do Creole-specific phonetic and grammatical phenomena justice, for example by eliminating Polish diacritics and substituting nasal consonants "ą", "ę" with "om", so as to emulate basilect: "De boys here vexed. Dey all want a pop at him. He only want to talk to you" (Roffey 2009: 157)was rendered as *Chłopcy som źli. Wszyscy by chcieli się z nim spróbować. A on chce rozmawiać z tobom* (Roffey 2011: 155).

Even Sławomir Gołaszewski, an aficionado of African cultures and an expert in African philosophy, read (and translated) Jamaican Creole as standard English. Although he attempted to retain the conversational tone and

[12] As observed by Gołuch (2013: 113), translation of post-colonial literature runs the risk of creating a fictional universe that would be far removed from the original book. Drawing on the conclusions by Hélène Buzelin, the scholar emphasizes that, even if the culture of the source language was subjected to similar colonization forces as the culture of the target language, employing the strategy of parallelism remains contestable. Buzelin chose not to use French Creole when she was working on her translation of Sam Selvon's novel *The Lonely Londoners*, in which – due to the writer's country of origin and the plot's focus on the London West Indian community – Trinidadian-Creole-based English stands out, rather than languages typical of Martinique, Guadeloupe or Haiti. At this juncture, it is worth mentioning the analyses of Édouard Glissant and his postulate of working out a methodology that would be adequate to the entire Caribbean region (Allen 2002), i.e., to the overseas territories formerly subjected to the cultural and political influence of Britain, France, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Spain.

lexical colloquialisms of the extracts from Michael Thelwell's *The Harder They Come*, which he quoted in Polish in his own *Reggae Rastafari* (the book is stylized as a spoken narrative, alluding thus on a meta-level to the oral tradition represented by African griots; Gołaszewski 2012: 75), his domestication, of among others lyrics of classic Jamaican songs, triggered the neutralization of the social-political context, on its own a crucial constituent of the reality of island life in the 1970s.

Meanwhile, though translation is relentlessly mired in an "asymmetrical act of communication" (Venuti 2000: 485; 2009: 289), it also transpires that a source text emerges unscathed from "the ethnocentric violence of translation" (Venuti 1995: 20), as is the case with Polish lyrics informed by Jamaican roots reggae and collected on the *400 lat* [400 Years] LP by Paprika Korps/R.U.T.A. Overall, the concept album is founded on the socio-historical parallel between the centuries-long fate of enslaved Blacks, hence the title, and the "hundreds of years of slavery experienced by the European peasant" (Podsiadło 2013). In consequence, although the Jamaican Creole originals of John Holt, Bob Marley, Junior Murvin, and Peter Tosh were translated into standard Polish, their juxtaposition alongside lyrics stylized as peasants' songs (or incorporation of snippets of authentic / historical songs) contributes to the creation of a successful broadening of the semantic field: Caribbean precursors meet their Eastern European associates.

How, then – bearing in mind the mediated, doubly filtered translation that ensues – can one not only convey the voice of the Other, but also convey a voice (and agency) to the Other? In particular, when "[l]ike African-American language, Jamaican (Creole), the devalorised, hybrid language created by African peoples in Jamaica is the preferred medium for rewriting and voicing-over the flipped script of cultural autonomy" (Cooper 2002: 274). Furthermore, as the critic argues, "[c]onservative, Eurocentric, (mis)conceptions of Jamaican as "broken", "bad", "corrupt" English deconstruct the language as pathology, a degeneration of the idealised 'Queen's English'" (Cooper 2002: 274). Purposefully devoid of authorial explication and transcribed phonetically, Creole simultaneously serves as a consciously erected barrier, as one of the "strategies of resistance", de-familiarizing the reading process and referring to its antecedent – to the source culture (Tymoczko 1999).

The body of Polish translations of Caribbean literature includes also some examples that propose convincing linguistic equivalents of Creole

grammar. One of them is "Ukryte źródło", Agata Hołobut's rendering of Grace Nichols' "Hidden Source":

> where Mona choose smile
> she choose laugh (Nichols 2009: 52)
>
> Gdzie Mona – uśmiech
> tam ona – śmiech (Nichols 2015: 282)[[k.cyt.]]

This simple ellipsis-based parallelism constitutes added value, supplementing the present verb forms, which are indicative and typical of creole languages (Pollard 2002: 22–23), and introducing conspicuous artistic qualities. The double – internal and external/end – rhyme (*Mona*/*ona*, *uśmiech*/*śmiech*) is a distinct reinforcement of the motif of the transition from silence to sound: sound is expressed by the erasure of one letter, while subjectivity (name) by the addition of one character. The translator's choice alludes to Modernist traditions, which in turn markedly influenced the evolution of Caribbean poetry (Pollard 2004).

The challenge that Polish translators of post-colonial literature, and in particular of Creole writing, face is of historical nature. Analysing the translatological strategies inherent in *Ślepe tory* – the Polish translation of *Trainspotting*, a novel by contemporary Scottish writer Irvine Welsh, whose output also fits the post-colonial strand – Małgorzata Paprota (2007) notes that "in any other language [with the exception of English] the contact-conflict occurring among the many variants of English will undergo [partial] erasure" (140). In the case of translations of Caribbean literature into Polish, this could result in the substitution of, for instance, Jamaican Creole (*patwa*) or Rastafarian *dread talk* (Pollard 2003) for regionalisms, which in turn frequently constitute augmentation of reductive dichotomies, e.g., city-country, education-ignorance.[13] Given tonal fine-tuning, one could also try juxtaposition of standard Polish and (Upper) Silesian (*ślōnskŏ gŏdka*) as an approximate emulation of Queen's English and Jamaican). As a consequence,

[13] Inscribed in the Polish language, the legacy of Henryk Sienkiewicz poses yet another challenge: "The function of Kali's Polish within Sienkiewicz's novel evokes a quasi-colonial relationship between Europeans and Africans, where the latter develop a rudimentary version of the European language" (Gołuch 2013: 119). Kali – "the black Man Friday character in Sienkiewicz's novel" (119), whose name echoes Caliban / cannibal / Caribe (Koziołek 2015: 65–74), was for decades a patron of the reception of the African, and any other, Other (Allen 2002: 57, Gołuch 2013: 120).

however, one would be inevitably entwined in a series of dilemmas, regarding a complex network of relations between languages and history and the legitimacy of such – no doubt overtly simplistic – correlation of English-Jamaican linguistic interdependencies and their translation into the Polish context. Another proposal would be intentional exoticization, which would reverse the historical roles enacted by Poland, Russia, and Germany, i.e., treating standard Polish as an imperial language (an equivalent of standard English as the language of the colonizer), and assigning to Russian and/or German the role of the carrier of content originally expressed in Creole. Admittedly, the latter, though in principle subversive, would constitute a stylistic exercise rather than an attempt to find an equivalent.

Simultaneously, with regard to semantics rooted in a particular region and connoting folk axiology, such key, culturally rich words are substituted with seeming equivalents, as in *Satellite City*, Alecia McKenzie's short story set in Kingston:

> And Pearl always said, "Sorry fe **mawga** dog, mawga dog turn roun' and bite you". (McKenzie 1992b: 89)

> A Pearl zawsze odpowiadała: "Lituj się nad **wychudzonym** psem, to cię pogryzie" (McKenzie 1994: 82).

Pearl's response is in fact a Caribbean adage, associated with Jamaica and affiliated with reggae culture (Prahlad 2001: 247); the grammar of the very sentence suggests a conversational tone, while the lexeme *mawga* – transcribed also as *maaga* (Cassidy, Le Page 2002: 282) – is an example of creolism (Allsopp 2003). The entire passage may also be construed as an allusion to *Magga dog*, a classic if early song by Peter Tosh, which further foregrounds "the issue of the translation of inter-textual relations" (Markiewka 2013: 136).

Invariably, *john crow* (*Cathartes aura*), turkey vulture or – as it is also known in the Caribbean – carrion crow, constitutes a challenge: native to Jamaica (Cassidy, Le Page 2002: 250), on a symbolic plane this bird of prey represents a figure of misfortune, acts as a harbinger of doom, and constitutes a byword for failure. It was in this traditionally pejorative capacity that the bird was enlisted by Kei Miller in his novel *The Last Warner-Woman*: "stinking old john-crow" (Miller 2011: 65). In comparison, the Polish term of abuse – "obleśny stary piernik" (Miller 2012: 64) indicates a superannuated ladies' man, an over-keen sugar daddy past his prime, as if

the original phrase was "dirty old man" or "dirty old bastard". In contrast, in McKenzie's *Satellite City* the john / carrion crow transforms into a crow (*Corvus*), while the narrative's setting is de-territorialized and dis-located from the Jamaican reality:

> Somebody couldn't rob and kill you and **leave your body at street side for John Crow**? (McKenzie 1992b: 85)
>
> Sądzisz, że ciebie nie mógłby ktoś obrabować i zabić, **a potem zostawić przy drodze wronom na śniadanie**? (McKenzie 1994: 77).

This particular adaptation strategy may potentially result not only in "the blurring of the artistic value of the text but also lead to the incomprehensibility of the translation and the source culture" (Markiewka 2013: 136). The domestication above, employed not as a means of familiarizing readers with creole folk ways, i.e., the axiology / mythology associated with the figure of the bird of prey in question, but as a mode of highlighting the intercultural similarities, contributes to the fortification of the reductivist message and implies a universalist vision of the world.

Conclusion

The above examples clearly demonstrate that, most often, translators of Anglophone Creole literature into Polish come to terms with the Caribbean fictional universe by searching for equivalence. What comes as a suprise is the scantiness of footnotes and para-texts, strongly present in Jerzy Kozłowski's translation of Diaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*. If years ago, when access to explanatory references and analyses of Caribbean literature was limited, such practice was unsurprising, then at present it defies such a simple justification. The present article – due to its intentionally descriptive and contextualizing character – constitutes merely an introduction into this complex topic. My aim was to lay the groundwork for further (and more fruitful) discussion and to collect a handful of observations grounded in my reading experience.

It seems that the Polish premiere of *A Brief History of Seven Killings*, the epic – both in terms of its artistic scope and physical heft (the Polish edition clocks in at 688 pages) – Jamaican novel that brought Marlon James the 2015 Man Booker Prize, may bring about a significant change: a qualitative

and quantitative difference as far as publishers, readers, and translatological strategies are concerned. The translation, which – as I write these words in the summer of 2016[14] – I am yet to read, may perhaps turn out to be the practical application of the postulate of "a non-colonial theory of translation" (Rao 2006: 75). Because of the multiplicity of voices heard throughout James's text, one can expect an attempt at a hybridised solution, which remains in symbiosis with "ethical reflection wherein remedies are formulated to restore or preserve the foreignness of the foreign text" (Venuti 2000: 469; 2009: 267). Most probably in time, though, as in a photograph taken over a century ago that captures the loading of bananas at a railway station in Kingston (Baker 2014: 66), some of the translation templates and far-sighted formulae will fade, just like the figures of manual workers on the train rooftop, while some will appear too tinted, overexposed, too close or too far away.

Bibliography

Allen C. 2002. "Creole: The Problem of Definition", in: V.A. Shepherd, G.L. Richards (eds.), *Questioning Creole. Creolisation Discourses in Caribbean Culture*, Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, pp. 47–63.

Allsopp R. (ed.). 2003. *Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage*, Kingston: U of the West Indies P.

Anderson B. 1991. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, London–New York: Verso.

Baker S. (ed.). 2014. *90 Degrees of Shade: Image and Identity in the West Indies*, London: Soul Jazz Books.

Branach-Kallas A. 2010. *Corporeal Itineraries: Body, Nation, Diaspora in Selected Canadian Fiction*, Toruń: Wydawnictwo UMK.

Brand D. 1998. *No Language Is Neutral*, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart.

Brathwaite E.K. 1974/1985. *Contradictory Omens: Cultural Diversity and Integration in the Caribbean*, Mona: Savacou Publications.

Cassidy F. 1982. *Jamaica Talk: Three Hundred Years of the English Language in Jamaica*, Kingston: Macmillan / Sangsters.

Cassidy F., Le Page R. (eds.). 2002. *Dictionary of Jamaican English*, Kingston: U of the West Indies P.

Cooper C. 2002. "Hip-Hopping Across Cultures: Crossing Over from Reggae to Rap and Back", in: V.A. Shepherd, G.L. Richards (eds.), *Questioning Creole. Creolisation Discourses in Caribbean Culture*, Kingston: Ian Randle Publishers, pp. 265–280.

[14] The present article develops a paper entitled "The Joy and Jeopardy of Reading Anglophone Caribbean Literature in Translation", delivered during the *Translating Creolization* symposium, organized by the University of the West Indies (Cave Hill, Barbados) in May 2015.

Diaz J. 2009. *Krótki i niezwykły żywot Oscara Wao*, trans. J. Kozłowski, Kraków: Znak.
Gołaszewski S. 1990. *Reggae-Rastafari*, Bydgoszcz: Wydawnictwo Pomorze.
——— 2012. *Reggae Rastafari. Regementarz. Dapspolski*, Katowice: Manufaktura Legenda.
Gołuch D. 2012. *I Rather Dead: A Spivakian Reading of Indo-Caribbean Women's Narratives*, London: Roman Books.
——— 2013. *Postcolonial Literature in Polish Translation (1970–2010): Difference, Similarity and Solidarity* [doctoral dissertation], University College London.
——— 2014. "Estetyka, etyka i arytmetyka", *Tygodnik Powszechny* [Supplement] 51–52, 21–28, December, pp. 12–13, https://www.tygodnikpowszechny.pl/estetyka-etyka-i-arytmetyka-25203 [access: 4 April 2015].
Gyssels K., Ledent B. (eds.). 2008. *The Caribbean Writer as Warrior of the Imaginary / L'Ecrivain caribéen, guerrier de l'imaginaire*, Amsterdam: Rodopi.
Heydel M. 2010. "The Polish Walcott. Translating Caribbean Identity", *Kultura – Historia–Globalizacja* / *Culture – History – Globalization* 7, pp. 85–91.
——— 2014. "Tłumacze świata", *Tygodnik Powszechny* [Supplement] 51–52, 21–28 December, http://odnalezionewtlumaczeniu.pl/?czytelnia15=tlumacze-swiata [access: 11 March 2015].
Hutchinson I. 2010. *Far District*, Leeds: Peepal Tree Press.
James M. 2014. *A Brief History of Seven Killings*, London: Oneworld Publications.
Jarniewicz J. 2012. "Tłumacz jako twórca kanonu", in: J. Jarniewicz, *Gościnność słowa. Szkice o przekładzie literackim*, Kraków: Znak, pp. 23–33.
King B. 2005. *The Internationalization of English Literature*, Oxford: OUP.
Kołodziejczyk D. 2000. "Naród w dobie 'post'", *Postkolonialne perspektywy i negocjacje* [doctoral dissertation], University of Wrocław.
——— 2008. "Postkolonialny zamach stanu w literaturze", *Literatura na Świecie* 1–2, pp. 241–257.
Koziołek R. 2015. *Dobrze się myśli literaturą*, Wołowiec: Czarne.
Lucien V. 2014. *Sounding Ground*, Leeds: Peepal Tree P.
Markiewka T. 2013. "Między wersetami. Przekład prozy Salmana Rushdiego w kontekście postkolonialnej teorii translacji", *Przekładaniec* 27, pp. 131–151.
Markham E.A. 2001. *Hinterland: Caribbean Poetry from the West Indies and Britain*, Newcastle: Bloodaxe Books.
Mazur A. 2016. "Gorąca transmisja. Z Bogną Świątkowską rozmawia Adam Mazur", *Szum* 12, pp. 110–123.
McKenzie A. 1992a. "Natasha", in: A. McKenzie, *Satellite City and Other Stories*, Essex–Kingston–San Juan: Longman Caribbean, pp. 31–49.
——— 1992b. "Satellite City", in: A. McKenzie, *Satellite City and Other Stories*, Essex– Kingston–San Juan: Longman Caribbean, pp. 85–103.
——— 1992c. "The Grenada Defense League", in: A. McKenzie, *Satellite City and Other Stories*, Essex–Kingston–San Juan: Longman Caribbean, pp. 124–148.
——— 1994. "Satellite City", trans. K. Hejwowski, *Literatura na Świecie* 1–2, pp. 77–94.
Miller K. 2011. *The Last Warner Woman*, London: Phoenix.
——— 2012. *Ostatnia Kobieta-Wyrocznia*, trans. B. Moliborski, Warszawa: Świat Książki.

Nichols G. 2009. *Picasso, I Want My Face Back*, Tarset: Bloodaxe.
——— 2015. "Ukryte źródło", trans. A. Hołobut, *Literatura na Świecie* 1–2, p. 282.
Nowak K. 2007. *Melancholic Travelers: Autonomy, Hybridity and the Maternal*, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Verlag.
Paprota M. 2007. "Z ziemi szkockiej do polskiej. Trainspotting, Scottish English i jego polska wersja", in: A. Szczęsny, K. Hejwowski (eds.), *Językowy obraz świata w oryginale i w przekładzie*, Warszawa: Instytut Lingwistyki Stosowanej, UW, pp. 137–143.
Phillips C. 1994. "Europejskie plemię", trans. M. Sujczyńska, *Literatura na Świecie* 1–2, pp. 121–148.
Podsiadło J. 2013. "Myśmy przyszli tu z daleka", in: Paprika Korps/R.U.T.A., *400 lat*, Karrot Komando, CD.
Pollard V. 2002. *From Jamaican Creole to Standard English: A Handbook for Teachers*, Jamaica–Barbados–Trinidad and Tobago: U of the West Indies P.
——— 2003. *Dread Talk: The Language of Rastafari*, Barbados–Jamaica–Trinidad and Tobago: Canoe P.
Pollard Ch. W. 2004. *New World Modernisms*, Charlottesville–London: U of Virginia P.
Prahlad S.A. 2001. *Reggae Wisdom. Proverbs in Jamaican Music*, Jackson: UP of Mississippi.
Rao S. 2006. "From a Postcolonial to a Non-Colonial Theory of Translation", in: N. Sakai, J. Solomon (eds.), *Translation, Biopolitics, "Colonial Difference*", Hongkong: Hongkong UP, pp. 73–96.
Roffey M. 2009. *The White Woman on the Green Bicycle*, London: Simon & Schuster.
——— 2011. *Biała kobieta na zielonym rowerze*, trans. A. Studniarek, Warszawa: Nasza Księgarnia.
Sowa J. 2015. "Między Wschodem a Zachodem", in: M. Kozień, M. Miskowiec, A. Pankiewicz (eds.), *Hawaikum: w poszukiwaniu piękna*, Wołowiec–Kraków: Czarne–ASP w Krakowie–Muzeum Historii Fotografii w Krakowie, pp. 27–36.
Szczerek Z. 2015. "Polskie kolonie zamorskie", in: M. Kozień, M. Miskowiec, A. Pankiewicz (eds.), *Hawaikum: w poszukiwaniu piękna*, Wołowiec–Kraków: Czarne–ASP w Krakowie–Muzeum Historii Fotografii w Krakowie, pp. 55–65.
Tymoczko M. 1999. "Post-colonial Writing and Literary Translation", in: S. Bassnett, H. Trivendi (eds.), *Post-Colonial Translation*, London: Routledge, pp. 19–40.
Venuti L. 1995. *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation*, London–New York: Routledge.
——— 2000. "Translation, community, utopia", in: L. Venuti (ed.) *The Translation Studies Reader*, London: Routledge, pp. 482–502.
Wójcik B. 2015. *Afro-Caribbean Poetry in English: Cultural Traditions*, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.
Zephaniah B. 2001. *Too Black, Too Strong*, Tarset: Bloodaxe.