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TRANSLATING PARODY AS A DOMAIN OF EXPERIMENT? TWO POLISH POETS AND AN INVITATION TO PLAY THE GAME[1]

Abstract

The author explores the possibilities of parody translation, based on a 1933 Polish literary example. Poet Julian Tuwim imitates with a vengeance the highly idiosyncratic diction of Bolesław Leśmian, including the latter's signature trait, neologisms, while styling the piece as a supposed rewriting of a familiar children's rhyme (folk song) about a kitten. This second hypotext is diagnosed as ancillary and it is argued that a translation of the 'X as would have been written by Y' parody should harness a replacement of X which will be functional for the target culture. As an experiment, possible substitutes are suggested for two cultures: Russian and Anglo-Saxon, corresponding to the languages into which Leśmian, the parodied poet, has been most extensively rendered. The author discusses factors conditioning the translatability of parody, including reception in the target context. The analysis concludes with a call for translations. Two such responses to the challenge are appended.

Keywords: parody, translatability, intertextuality, recipient, Bolesław Leśmian, Julian Tuwim

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[1] Originally published in Polish in *Przekładaniec* vol. 43, 2021, DOI 10.4467/16891864 PC.21.031.15145. The Appendix is extended as compared with the Polish version.

Parody and translation

Parody as a variety of discourse[2] intertextual *par excellence* has earned the reputation of being an untranslatable genre (Wojtasiewicz 1957: 100) or at least the one most difficult to translate (Lefevere 1992: 44). More optimistic approaches assume – which is corroborated by translation practice – that parodic works are translatable under certain circumstances, generally when the parodied basis is recognisable in the receiving culture (Hejwowski 2007: 123; cf. Barańczak 2004: 408). This is what makes feasible staging in Poland a Russian play which parodies Anton Chekhov (Akunin 2012), and hence the march through the publishing markets of various countries of translations of the *Barry Trotter* book series in the wake of the reception success of *Harry Potter*. Nonetheless, scholarly analyses mostly concern the translation of parodies of particular types of discourse (see Majkiewicz 2002; Barańczak 2004: 407–408, among others), rather than of individual works (Kropiwiec 1997 constitutes an exception; Lefevere [1992: 45–48] gives examples of individual parodies, yet without discussing translation possibilities). Instead, the subject of consideration has been the relationship between translation and parody and the use of both as discursive techniques, including in ideological entanglements (e.g. Brisset 1988; Aoyama, Wakabayashi 1999). The issue of parody in the context of translation practice is occasionally taken up in connection with intertextuality (Majkiewicz 2008: 180–232) or as side notes in works concerning the rendering of humour. It is essentially in the latter vein that Robert Looby proposes a translational typology of this phenomenon. He distinguishes parodying of: 1) a subsystem of language functioning in both cultures; 2) a subsystem of language typical only of the source culture; 3) the individual style of a work (2003: 97) – thus focusing on the linguistic dimension of the literary phenomenon and of the translator's task. It should be added that in the case of individual parodies, scholars would often discuss not an existing pair of texts, but the theoretical (im)possibility of translating a given one (Wojtasiewicz 1957: 78–79; Kropiwiec 1997; Looby 2003; Zignani 2008). The present article is also part of this trend.

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[2] The scope of the term remains fluid and contentious. Gérard Genette constructs his understanding of parody, travesty and pastiche in opposition to established concepts (1997, orig. 1982). Concerning definitional controversies, see also e.g. Hellich 2014. Nowadays, parody is typically understood as an aesthetic category or an intertextual strategy, but treating it as a genre is upheld by Genette, among others.

A definitional component of the genre is that the ridiculed source must be borne in mind – it is a prerequisite of a sense-making reading of the secondary text (*condition de lecture*, Genette 1982: 31; for English compare Genette 1997: 18–19). Therefore the factors that affect the functioning of parody translation are the degree of assimilation and recognisability in the target culture of a given work, author or discourse. This is what underpins Olgierd Wojtasiewicz's (1957: 78–79, 100–101) pessimism or Anna Majkiewicz's (2008: 228) concerns about the translatability of works and passages of this kind. Analysing 19th-century Russian versions of Thackeray's novel *The Yellowplush Papers*, Irina Matveyenko and Yulia Azhel have shown (Матвеенко, Ажель 2020) that translators clearly tended to adapt the text to the reception possibilities in the target culture: for instance, they would reinforce the elements which parody the generic features of silver-fork novels – known from translations and having an analogue in the native genre of "novels from the life of the upper classes" – while eliminating (2020: 160) passages specifically mocking the works of Edward Bulwer-Lytton. Although the authors themselves evade the question of translatability (2020: 161), the material they present actually prompts an unambiguous conclusion: the (anticipated) unrecognisability of the individual, of the particular constitutes a significant barrier to translation.

In the present article I will look precisely at the possibilities of overcoming such a barrier. The idiosyncrasy of Bolesław Leśmian's (1877–1937) diction, teeming with linguistic as well as conceptual strangeness, places him among the greatest Polish poets, and at the same time invites, not to say provokes, the creation of pastiches and parodies (authored by representatives of the artistic and academic worlds alike, including Kazimierz Wierzyński, Kazimierz Wyka, Jan Nagrabiecki, Piotr Michałowski or Jonasz Kofta). Yet although his poetry has been quite widely translated, he does not belong among Polish writers well known abroad and recognisable to foreign audiences. Is it therefore possible to translate a poem parodying his poetics? Anna Majkiewicz, writing about parodic elements in Günter Grass's work, states that they force the translator to seek innovative solutions (2002: 143). I propose to radicalise this statement into the claim that **translating parody is possible on the ground of experimentation**. Accordingly, I will offer a certain experimental recipe, taking as a starting point the accumulation of additional intertextual entanglements of the work to be discussed.

The task

The experiment will be performed on the poem "Jak Bolesław Leśmian napisałby wierszyk 'Wlazł kotek na płotek'" [lit.: 'How Bolesław Leśmian would have written the rhyme "A kitten's got on a fence"'[3]] by the acclaimed versatile poet Julian Tuwim (1894–1953), first published in the satirical weekly *Cyrulik Warszawski* in 1933. The poetics of Leśmian is highly idiosyncratic and instantly recognisable – because of the way in which language defamiliarised on lexical and syntactic level combines with a preoccupation with philosophical questions, with fairy-tale or folksy settings, and with the formal perfection of verse. Its description in English, along with an outline of the difficulties of translating out of Leśmianesque is available in Kaźmierczak 2017 (see also Kaźmierczak 2021[2018]). In the piece below, Tuwim imitates his diction with a vengeance, including Leśmian's signature trait, neologisms, while styling the piece as a supposed rewriting of a familiar children's rhyme (folk song) about a kitten:

> Na płot, co własnym swoim płoctwem przerażony
> Wyziorne szczerzy dziury w sen o niedopłocie,
> Kot, kocurzak miauczurny, wlazł w psocie-łaskocie
> I podwójnym niekotem ściga cień zielony.
>
> > A ty płotem, kociugo, chwiej,
> > A ty kotem, płociugo, hej!
>
> Bezślepia, których nie ma, mrużąc w nieistowia
> Wikłające się w płątwie śpiewnego mruczywa,
> Dziewczynę-rozbiodrzynę pod pierzynę wzywa
> Na bezdosyt całunków i mękę ustowia.
>
> > A ty płotem, kociugo, chwiej,
> > A ty kotem, płociugo, hej! (Tuwim 1991: 122)

An attempt (duly undertaken) at providing a philological translation of the parody inevitably results in utter gobbledygook that would put off English readers; therefore, elements of the text are instead explained in the course of the discussion below, as they become relevant for argumentation at a given

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point. A summary which ignores coinages and conveys the apparent narrative layer will sound bizarre enough: A tomcat has clambered a fence and is chasing a shadow. Blinking its eyes, it calls a strapping wench to a bedding for a kissing. Refrain: 'And you, cat, rock the fence, / And you, fence – the cat, hey!'. The piece has been readily adduced in literary-theoretical discussions (e.g. Ziomek 1980; Nycz 2000), but has not, to my knowledge, been subjected to a translation-oriented analysis.

Anyone even vaguely familiar with Leśmian's oeuvre will immediately appreciate both the mastery of the parody and the enormity of the translation challenge. While André Lefevere (1992: 44) justly observes that the translator of a parody has, as it were, two works to translate (presumably, one embedded in the other), in this case the translator's task is even tripled, since Tuwim's text refers to two pre-texts. Addressing more than one hypotext[4] is not something exceptional in parodying. The possibility of mixed practices is emphasised by Gérard Genette (1982: 46; 1997: 30). Looby even claims that parody rarely occurs in a pure form (2003: 98), although he is referring to the frequent co-occurrence of the objects of parody, not to intertwining them in the way Tuwim does.

When choosing a translation strategy, it is important to determine the function which the text fulfils. In this case, we are dealing with parody[5] as gratuitous literary entertainment (the *ludic*, or possibly the humorous, mode of a hypertext – Genette 1982: 43–46; comp. Genette 1997: 27–29) rather than, for example, one charged with a satirical function, or with parody as a developmental factor in the historical-literary process that would give rise to new forms of expression. Consequently, the target text should likewise have the potential to entertain the reader – Urszula Kropiwiec (1997: 185) similarly identifies the preservation of humour as the primary purpose of translating parody.

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[4] The terms *pre-text* and *hypotext* are treated as synonymous here.

[5] The work fits various definitions of parody: Ryszard Nycz's – as a comic imitation of an expressive stylistic model (Nycz 2000: 155), Jerzy Ziomek's – as aimed at a literary model (1980: 366), and Genette's, as, in my view, it achieves *détournement* (sense reversal) by transforming and not merely intensifying the features of the hypotext (Genette 1982: 40–47; compare 1997: 25–30, where, however, the English word employed is 'distortion'). Henryk Markiewicz termed Tuwim's playful take on Leśmian "parodic (*resp.* pastiche) variations" (quoted in Nycz 2000: 233, my translation), a description contested by Ziomek (1980: 370–374).

The source of comedy here, however, lies in invoking certain pre-texts. The very title indicates the non-self-contained nature of the poem which is intended as a kind of literary supposition. The intertextuality that encompasses the entire work, in turn, raises translation difficulties. While parody demands a "community of laughter" to the fullest extent (cf. Lefevere 1992: 44), in this case it can hardly be hoped that the models under transformation will be recognised by a foreign readership.

For the sake of order, it is also appropriate to interrogate the function of the two hypotexts within Tuwim's poem. Undoubtedly, the whole piece represents type 3 in Looby's classification: a parody of individual style (2003: 97). The object of ridicule is Leśmian – it is the features of his poetics that become *iconised* in the hypertext, while the song about the kitten is *intextualised* (terms after Markiewicz 1996: 233–234[6]), absorbed and used as a matrix to show the peculiarity of this poetics. Jerzy Ziomek (1980: 373) refers to such a method as to creating parody by *immutation*.

A preliminary examination yields the following premises for the purposes of further analysis:

– If one considers parody to be a proof of an author's individuality and recognisability (Barańczak 2004: 263) or even a form of homage (Ziomek 1980: 361), then Leśmian's stature makes Tuwim's virtuoso parody of his poetics also worthy of translation.

– The directions of experimental explorations should be limited to English- and Russian-language contexts, i.e. to the languages into which Leśmian's work has been most abundantly translated, which is a necessary – though not a sufficient – condition for a successful semanticisation of the parody in translation.

– Although the directive contained in the title guides the recipient – also the translator as the "first recipient" in a complex communicative act – towards interpretation (e.g. it prevents the poem from being mistakenly attributed to Leśmian himself), if taken literally and applied rigorously, it makes translating exceedingly difficult, since it precludes diverting from the original's intended parody of a particular text and

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[6] In the edition cited above, the author abandons (Markiewicz 1996: 234, footnote 62a) the term 'iconisation' (*ikonizacja*), which he used earlier, in favour of 'mimetic forms' (*formy mimetyczne*, among which he includes stylisations, pastiches, parodies and burlesques); however, in the case of a parody juxtaposing two models, references to both planes have a mimetic character, and it is therefore the earlier terminology set that offers more precise descriptors.

creating a work with an independent poetics which would tend, for example, towards the grotesque, and amuse through its very form, content and linguistic means.

Facing this last issue is the starting point for further considerations. The search for the key to translating parody entails the search for a possible function for the text in the target culture (cf. Fast 1991: 30, in a broader context of the limits of translatability).

The auxiliary hypotext – a space for experimentation

Although it is Leśmian's poetry as a macrotext that remains the parodied object, I will first focus on the second, single hypotext indicated by the title. The song "Wlazł kotek na płotek" will be treated as a key to translating Tuwim's piece.

It derives from folk tradition and was noted down, among others, by Oskar Kolberg (in 1857 in his monumental collection of Polish folklore, vol. I no. 466; 1974: 448) as a popular Warsaw song from the first half of the 19th century. It is known practically all over Poland, due to its folk origins, naturally in a number of variants. The most widespread one reads:

Wlazł kotek na płotek i mruga.
Ładna to piosenka, niedługa.
Nie długa, nie krótka, a w sam raz.
Zaśpiewaj, koteczku, jeszcze raz.

[A kitten's got on a low fence and it's blinking.
A nice song it is, and not too long.
Not long, not short, but just the right length.
Sing, kitty, one more time.]

Tuwim harnesses essentially all the elements of the quoted song, and does so masterfully. At the lexical level, the following correspondences can be observed. The verb *wlazł* ('got onto, clambered') is developed into the predicate *wlazł w *psocie-łaskocie* ('clambered in/into *mischief-tickle'[7];

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[7] Asterisks mark coinages and glosses of coinages – the latter especially when it is not possible to signal or fully convey innovations or peculiarities on morphological level (both Leśmian and his parodist avail themselves of morphology being very flexible in Polish). Occasionally boldface is added to highlight morphemes or syllables.

see comments further in the article). The agent *kotek*, 'kitten', is transformed into a synonymic series with reinforcement: *kot*, *kocurzak, *kociuga – 'cat' and two neological augmentatives from that noun; it also acquires a negated form *niekot* ('no-cat' or 'un-cat'; *niekotem* is inflected for case, functionally an adverbial). *Płotek*, a diminutive of 'fence', appears in the parody as *płot* and its derivate, *płoctwo ('fence' – 'the essence of being a fence'). Instead of just 'blinking'/'winking' (*mruga*), the cat 'blinks/squints his *no-eyes/*blindnesses' (**bezślepia… mrużąc*) into '*non-existences' (*w nieistowia*). Moreover, this action serves to attract *dziewczyna-rozbiodrzyna*, a girl, presumably broad-hipped (*biodro* – 'hip'; *roz-* is a prefix that can carry the semantics e.g. of increasing extent or intensity, of a feature expanding – cf. Szymczak 2002), which activates the sense of 'winking at someone', i.e. looking meaningfully, seductively. The metatextual remark *ładna to piosenka, niedługa*, 'A nice song it is, and not too long', perhaps motivated the conciseness of Tuwim's piece, which is in fact 'just the right length', *w sam raz*. The imperative *Zaśpiewaj, koteczku, jeszcze raz*, 'Sing, kitty, one more time', is put into practice, so to speak, in the parodist's use of the refrain as a structural device. Indeed, by the very fact that he transforms a *song*, Tuwim appealed, as Żaneta Nalewajk (2015: 248) rightly points out, to musicality as an essential feature of Leśmian's poetics.

However, a correct reading of the references present in Tuwim's text should not result in a mechanical transference of the same pre-text to the target text. "Wlazł kotek…", known to every Polish recipient, will remain an allusion completely illegible to recipients of any other cultural background. If the translator were to re-create "Wlazł kotek…" implicitly, as it were, and then reconstruct the links between it and Tuwim's text, the result would be similar to the strategy applied by Maciej Słomczyński when rendering into Polish the absurd rhymes contained in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Lewis Carroll's poetic fantasies parody didactic rhymes perfectly familiar to every young reader of the Victorian era. Meanwhile, as Monika Adamczyk (1986: 70–73) notes, Słomczyński's translations, while maintaining semantic fidelity to the original and undertaking an analogous play with language, do not meet the functional criterion (i.e., they are not adequate on the sociological-literary level). A Polish reader does not perceive them as parodies because s/he lacks a point of reference, i.e. familiarity with the text that is the object of ridicule. The translation does not create an alternative reference point of its own in terms of appealing to some target-culture phenomenon. Thus, a translator of "Jak Bolesław Leśmian napisałby…"

definitely cannot afford the strategy that Słomczyński applied to Carroll, where parodies were only a component of the work. Adamczyk also notes the dangers of the opposite approach, one that consists in parodying works being part of the target culture: "to inquisitive readers it may appear suspicious that English children are brought up on the same rhymes as Polish children" (1986: 73, trans. mine – M.K.). It seems that, in the face of the fundamental absurdity of the "hypothesis" explored by Tuwim, logical constraints of this kind do not apply; the requirement of *cultural plausibility* is therefore generally suspended for the purposes of the discussion, although I will yet return to it (cf. also note 15). Incidentally, an analogous speculation is well known from translation discourse and translators' self-commentaries – in the form of the assumption that one can write as an author would have written had he or she been writing in the language of translation.

A translator dealing with parodic works should, it seems, focus not on their content, but on preserving the mechanism, the very act of parodying (cf. Kropiwiec 1997: 186). Consequently, one should consider what functional significance the song "Wlazł kotek…" has as a reference point for Tuwim's piece, and try to find functional equivalents for it in the target culture. Thus, the hypotext is: 1) very well known; 2) addressed (nowadays) to a child as a primary addressee; 3) linked to music, but at the same time very simple melodically – for young adepts of various instruments, this may be the first piece they master or one on which they practice their skills.[8] The content, on the other hand, is of secondary importance, which is why, for example, the piece that will serve as a reference point for the target parody does not have to feature a cat, especially since cats do not play an important role in Leśmian's poetics – to ridicule which is the main objective of the original, and therefore of the translation. Nor do I include folkloric character among the basic criteria, the reason for which will be explained in the course of the analysis.

Let us, then, consider certain options for this first pre-text for a rendition of Tuwim's poem into English and Russian.

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[8] Cf. the score:

Wlazł ko - tek na pło - tek i mru - ga.

Ła - dna to pio - se - nka nie - dłu - ga.

With regard to Anglo-Saxon culture, I suggest looking for the hypo-text among nursery rhymes. The choice is potentially wide, as they have a remarkably rich tradition in English – *The Oxford Dictionary of Nursery Rhymes* (Opie, Opie 1951/1980) collects five hundred and fifty items, and these are only the most popular ones. Selecting a text of this kind for a trans-textual processing in a translation may be further encouraged by the fact that the genre itself has occasionally been used as a matrix in English-language parodies of the "literary speculation" strand: cf. "A Nursery Rhyme, as it Might Have Been Written by T.S. Eliot" by Wendy Cope (quoted in Dentith 2000: 120); individual rhymes have also been used as an instrument of parody (Opie, Opie 1980: 43–45, 233).

Certain difficulties should be acknowledged as well. In view of the abundance of nursery rhymes, it is impossible to know them all – so it is all the more problematic to determine, even for native speakers, which of them are known universally and which only in a particular region or social sphere. In addition, many of them retain, even if nowadays hardly legible, allusions to English history and society,[9] and thus using one of those as a pre-text in translation could introduce intertextuality with a focus different from that of the original. I will, however, suggest as potential points of reference for the translation of Tuwim's parody two pieces that evade these pitfalls. Both have been reprinted within a narrow selection (Leggett 1978) and their excerpts appear in a dictionary of quotations (Cohen, Cohen 1980), confirming that they belong to the strict canon of the most widely known specimens of the genre. They were written in the 19th century and so are unencumbered by the cultural memory of long ago, and are known in British as well as American usage (which is not uncommon: Opie, Opie 1980: 1, 42).

There is no shortage of cats and kittens among the protagonists of nursery rhymes (see Opie, Opie 1980, nos. 88–91, 213, 288–289, 292, 426–431), but my suggestions will follow other tracks. To begin with, there is the American ditty "Mary Had a Little Lamb", published by Sarah Josepha Hale in 1830 (Opie, Opie 1980: 300), the first stanza of which reads as follows:

> Mary had a little lamb,
> Its fleece was white as snow;
> And everywhere that Mary went,
> The lamb was sure to go (Leggett 1978: 44).

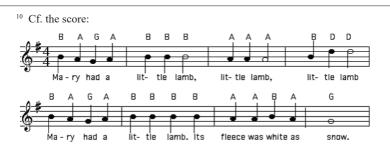
[9] See comments on particular rhymes in: Opie, Opie 1980.

An additional asset that predestines "Mary…" to be used in the translation of Tuwim's poem in question is the existence of a melody, composed by Lowell Manson as early as the 1830s. As with "Wlazł kotek…", the melody is very simple and based on repetitions of certain phrases.[10]

Doubts about the legitimacy of its use, on the other hand, may be raised on two accounts: that the piece is authorial rather than anonymous, and that it has a number of stanzas. However, it has been conjectured that the rhyme originally consisted just of the above-quoted stanza, supposedly authored by the song's protagonist, Mary Sawyer, and only subsequently received a literary elaboration (Opie, Opie 1980: 300). If this be the case, the quoted passage represents authentic children's folklore. In Barbara Leggett's selection, after which I cite this text and the next one, both rhymes are, besides, listed as anonymous. Moreover, it is the first stanza that is immensely popular, provoking intertextual appropriations of a humorous nature. The status of "Mary Had a Little Lamb" as a cultural signifier is evidenced by the span of musical references – from Paul McCartney (1972) to rap.

The next piece which I submit for consideration belongs among the most popular nursery rhymes:

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are!
Up above the world so high,
Like a diamond in the sky (Leggett 1978: 37; as anonymous).
[Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
How I wonder what you are!]

The author of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star", the Romantic-era poet Jane Taylor may now be largely forgotten, but the text itself remains one of the most widely known poems of the English language (Opie, Opie 1980: 398). Like the previous piece, this one is also multi-verse, with the
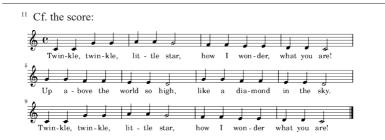
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[10] Cf. the score:

first stanza particularly popular, and the first line is probably recognisable all over the world. Contributing to its wide circulation has also been the catchy melody,[11] taken from the French song "Ah ! vous dirai-je, maman" and popularised by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Variations KV 265 (300e). Moreover, English-speaking children use the same tune for an Alphabet Song to memorise the order of the letters. It is also worth noting that in the French folk song a daughter confesses to her mother how she has "succumbed to love", a theme which would dovetail interestingly with Tuwim's motif of tempting the wench referred to as *dziewczyna-rozbiodrzyna*.

The popularity of "Little Star" has provoked parodic approaches. Its best known travesty is the interrupted recitation by the Mad Hatter in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*:

> Twinkle, twinkle, little bat!
> How I wonder what you're at!
> Up above the world you fly,
> Like a tea-tray in the sky.
> Twinkle, twinkle — (Carroll 2001: 94)

The diffusion and recognisability of the above songs recommend them as potentially suitable for parodic purposes. It is possible, however, that their appropriation by pop culture is actually too great, that they have been removed from the context of the nursery to such an extent that, when juxtaposed with Leśmian's poetics, the gap between the genre of children's verse and the depth of philosophical reflection characteristic of his poetry will not be appreciable. However, "Wlazł kotek na płotek" has also undergone many rewrites and adaptations, not all of them intended *ad usum Delphini*. Its position in the children's canon was cemented by Ewa Szelburg-Zarembina with her rhyme "Jak się kotek uczył śpiewać" ['How the Kitten Was Learning

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[11] Cf. the score:

to Sing'] (Szelburg-Ostrowska 1924), but before her – and before Tuwim – writers had played with it. Take the 1855 song (subtitled "Żarcik" ['A little joke']) with words by Władysław Syrokomla set to music by Wiktor Każyński – here is the first of three stanzas:

> Wlazł kotek na płotek i mruga.
> Piękna to piosenka, niedługa;
> My temu chytremu kotkowi
> I sami odmrugnąć gotowi, –
> A żaden nie zgadnie, nie zoczy,
> Co sobie powiemy przez oczy:
> Tak mrugniem figlarnie i zdradnie,
> Że człowiek sam siebie nie zgadnie;
> W tem sekret, w tem cała zasługa:
> Wlazł kotek na płotek i mruga (Syrokomla 1908: 81).

> [A kitten's got on a low fence and it's blinking,
> A pretty song it is, and not too long.
> And we ourselves are quite ready
> To blink back at this sly kitten.
> And nobody will guess or see,
> What we will say to each other through the eyes:
> We'll wink so archly and insidiously,
> That a person won't guess at themselves;
> That's where the secret is, that's where the merit:
> A kitten's got on a low fence and it's blinking].

The popularity of this variant even gave rise to the erroneous attribution of the folk original to the Syrokomla and Każyński duo (see a refutation in: Matuszewski 1995). What also contributes to the "archness" (which an unrhymed philological translation cannot convey) is that *kotek* can well be a "human" term of endearment, and the addressative *kotku* amounts to 'honey, sweetie'. Similar double entendres feature in "Piosnka" ['A Song'] by Władysław Bełza (1874: 193–194), with music by Bolesław Dembiński, in which 'Zosieńka as lovely as a rose / Was winking at a boy under a fence' ("Zosieńka prześliczna jak róża / Na chłopca pod płotkiem mrugała"). Thus, it can be said that in the case of "Mary Had a Little Lamb" and "Twinkle, Twinkle…", the tension between literary origins and absorption by folklore corresponds in a way to the situation with "Wlazł kotek…", although the vector of the change "the folkloric → the authorial" is reversed.

When considering the Russian cultural context, I will try to point out some other possible avenues to explore. The same problems will be encountered here, such as the uncertainty as to which of the chastushkas, rhymes or chants of such a huge country as Russia are known regardless of location. One can assume that this will be true of those for which children (or parents) draw on books of mass circulation. It would be appropriate, therefore, to refer not to folk, but precisely to authorial writings, moreover – to the ones widely anthologised. Of course, popularity alone is not a sufficient condition: for example, Samuil Marshak's well-known 1923 piece "Усатый-полосатый" (numerous editions, see e.g. Маршак 1948, 1984) – which, incidentally, centres on a kitten, the 'whiskered and striped one' of the title – lacks melodiousness, as verse intertwines in it with prose. Another argument against choosing it could be the substantial length of the story, whose recognisable transformation would probably have to go beyond "just the right" size. A better candidate for the protagonist of the Leśmian/Tuwim poem would perhaps be Kornei Chukovsky's "Муха-цокотуха". Written in 1923, the rhyme about a hospitable fly suddenly finding herself a damsel in distress became the object of various musicalisations, transformations (parodies included) and even the basis of a children's opera composed by Mikhail Krasev in 1942 (recording: e.g. Красев 1964).

When translating an example of a genre as specific as parody, one can also, in my opinion, afford a certain degree of anachronism. The potential pre-texts for translation considered so far all met the criterion of chronological antecedence to Leśmian's poetry (or at least that of being contemporary with it, in the case of Marshak and Chukovsky), just as "Wlazł kotek…" is older than it. Nonetheless, what matters in functional terms is only the antecedence of the pre-text to the target text, not to the original. With this assumption, the field of choice expands immeasurably.

The fact that in the 20th century the role of populariser of many motifs and the source of winged words and quotations was taken over by cinema and television allows one to also turn to these media in the search of a "children's hypotext". Then, the song "В траве сидел кузнечик" could potentially be of use to the translator of the parody. It was written by Nikolai Nosov for the characters of his tale *Приключения Незнайки и его друзей* (*The Adventures of Dunno and his Friends*), and gained additional popularity when performed in an animated adaptation, with music by Vladimir Shainsky (see Голиков, Шаинский 1971). Moreover, "Кузнечик" fulfils the same

function of "a piece for novice musicians"[12] as the Polish song. Thus, what connects "Кузнечик" with "Wlazł kotek…" is its melic character, while an affinity with the works of Leśmian is in the grotesque treatment of death:

В траве сидел кузнечик,
Совсем как огуречик.
Зелёненький он был,
Зелёненький он был.

Он ел одну лишь травку,
Не трогал и козявку
И с мухами дружил,
И с мухами дружил.

Но вот пришла лягушка,
Прожорливое брюшко,
И съела кузнеца,
И съела кузнеца. […] (Носов 1958: 158).

In Margaret Wettlin's translation:

On to a blade of grass he flew,
Grasshopper green with wings of blue
      And amber eyes,
      And amber eyes,
He did not eat the blade of grass,
He let his friend, the beetle, pass,

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[12] Cf. the score:

> Nor touched a fly,
> Nor touched a fly.
> But soon a tree-toad, greedy beast,
> Came hopping by, and made a feast
> Of beetle's friend,
> Of beetle's friend. […] (Nosov 1980: 177–178)

In the lament over the fate of the friendly grasshopper that has been eaten by a frog, the macabre is partly defused by the comic, and this mixture of elements is further emphasised by the music (and the context in the film, altered in comparison with the literary source). In turn, the absurdity of the sudden crossing to the side of non-being makes it easy to imagine the reaction to this insect's drama in one of Leśmian's meadows: "Crickets chirred some welcome songs, beetles hummed some songs of grief" ("Peopleless Ballade", trans. M. Polak-Chlabicz, Leśmian 2017: 45; orig.: "Żuki grały […] potrupne, świerszcze – pieśni powitalne", Leśmian 2000: 227).

If the requirement for the text being set to music is waived (on the ground of trust in the melodiousness of Russian verse alone), and if, moreover, reference is to be made not necessarily to a work originally intended for a children's audience, but to a classic with which children are very familiar, the pool of potential hypotexts expands to include, for example, Ivan Krylov's fables. Or perhaps a Russian version could offer a speculation on "How Bolesław Leśmian would have written the quatrain 'U lukomorya dub zelenyi…'"? After all, the famous opening of *Ruslan and Ludmila* features a cat and the very Leśmianesque "greenness" of the oak, *дуб зеленый*, as well as the equivocal archaism *лукоморье*, and has already proved susceptible to travesties. In addition, the inter- and metatextuality of such a re-creation of the discussed parody would increase because of the brilliant essay in which Tuwim demonstrates the untranslatability of Pushkin's quatrain (incidentally, available also in Russian: Тувим 1965), although this could draw attention away from Leśmian.

The possibilities for choosing the pre-text in either culture are, naturally, much wider and depend on the particular strategy adopted by the translator. Nevertheless, a feature postulated – and accommodated in my proposals – is maintaining a reference to the animate nature, without which it is impossible to imagine Leśmian's poetry, and therefore its parody either.

The parodied hypotext

It is time to move on to the second hypotext, i.e. Leśmian's poetry taken as a whole, and to ascertain which of its components the hypertext transforms, and how. Identifying the markers of intertextuality and the methods of the parodist is important as an offer of specific translation directives, but also because the attempt to translate the parody only makes sense in relation to a language in which there are renditions of Leśmian containing a number of these exponents, or some translational analogues of Leśmian's poetics.

Even viewed in complete isolation, Tuwim's text would pose a considerable translation challenge due to its linguistic shape. In this case, however, all elements of the structure are immanently intertextual – they matter not in themselves, but rather as allusions to the style of the parodied author. It is worth noting that perhaps the only thing which differentiates Tuwim's text from Leśmian's poems is the excessive condensation of the idiosyncratic poetics over the space of a dozen lines and the fact that there is no apparent meaning behind the dazzling linguistic feat. The condensation of stylistic features and the practical absence of elements redundant in terms of effect make virtually all aspects of Tuwim's work translational *dominants* or *invariants*.

Firstly, formal properties deserve attention. Leśmian wrote exclusively syllabotonic and syllabic verse so in the case of alluding to a poet so attached to classical versification, re-creating the metrical regularity of the parody seems obligatory. Yet this can be a problem not only when translating into distantly related languages – in English, for example, the scansion of metres is not as clear-cut as that of Polish ones (cf. Leech 1974: 103ff), and metre is primarily stress-based (Leech 1974: 104–105; Cuddon 1999: s.vv. Meter; Quantity), which makes syllabotonic effects difficult to achieve. Obviously, the functional criterion dictates that the analysed text should be reproduced in a form which in the given target culture is considered classical – but not necessarily replicating Tuwim's thirteen-syllable verse. Moreover, the translation must employ rhymes, and not just any rhymes but full ones, since Tuwim, by inserting neologisms in end-line positions, apparently mocks what critics have sometimes accused Leśmian of, namely that he would twist and distort words in order to achieve exact consonance (cf. e.g. Sandauer 1985: 501 on the apparent sloppiness of the rhymes "*krzakiem – *spojrzakiem*" and "**chłopal – opal*").

Another formal problem is the intertextual dimension of the structure of the work. The refrain deployed by Tuwim not only alludes to Leśmian's penchant for repetitions, but specifically echoes the refrain of the ballad "Mak" ('Poppy'):

> A ty śpiewaj, *śpiewulo –
> A ty zgaduj, *zgadulo!
> [And you sing, *singster –
> And you guess, *guesser!]

This means that the translator of Tuwim's parody should create a link between the text which he or she is producing and the/a rendition of "Mak", if one exists in the target language. If there is none – as far as I know, no English or Russian variant has been published so far – the optimal solution would be to retain the allusion to the original (albeit illegible for the target recipient), so that a later translation of the ballad, if adequate, could activate the connection between the two.

Among the translation problems related to the linguistic fabric of the poem, neologisms undoubtedly come to the fore. Authorial nonce-words or occasional words always pose a serious translation problem, but on the other hand they give the translator an opportunity to display creativity and inventiveness in playing with the target language in a comparable way. In the given text, however, the translator is constrained by the circumstance that these are not simply neologisms, but *potential Leśmianisms*. Potential, because they are not actually encountered in Leśmian's work (not recorded in Stanisław Papierkowski's 1964 "inventory"), and yet they are Leśmianisms, inasmuch as they have been created exactly according to the word-forming patterns favoured by the poet.

The largest group of coinages here comprises words with prefixes expressing negation. A comparison with Leśmian's neologisms proves that Tuwim imitates the former as a wordsmith. Thus, there are nouns with the negating prefix *nie-*: *niekot* and *nieistowia* (cf. *nieżal*, *niepochwyceń*; Leśmian 2000: 218, 476[13]), nouns with the privative prefix *bez-*: *bezślepia*, *bezdosyt* (cf. *beznamysł* and *bezśmiech*; 2000: 61, 165) and one with the

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[13] Comparative material has been taken from texts published by Leśmian before 1933, i.e. before Tuwim produced his parody. Here, from the poem "Eliasz" ('Elijah') which belongs to a later, 1936, collection, but was first printed in a periodical in 1929. The semantics is not explained here, as it is the morphology that is in focus.

prefix signifying incompleteness, *niedo-*: *niedopłot* (cf. *niedowcielenie*, *niedobłysk*; 2000: 165 and 476, 211). The adjective *wyziorne* (cf. Leśmian's formation *wysnuwny*; 2000: 104, 144), in turn, contains the prefix *wy-*, which brings in the meaning of 'outward, upward movement' (see e.g. Szymczak 2002), i.e. transcending, going beyond boundaries. The translators are therefore faced not only with the task of expressing a certain content by means of the neologisms that have to be coined. They should also use the linguistic means available in the target language so as to suggest negativist and transcendental overtones of the parodied vocabulary, which has served Leśmian to create, in the words of Michał Głowiński, "the poetry of negation" (1981: 102–157, trans. mine – M.K.).

Thus, the neologisms deployed by Tuwim relate to Leśmian's vocabulary not only in their formal similarity, but by the sameness of function as well: they are to be carriers of philosophical meanings (see Olkuśnik 1971). Notably, the parody reflects the existential and metaphysical themes of the parodied macro-text by harnessing into the word-formative play the stem *ist(n)-* (compare the standard words *istnieć* – 'to exist', *istota* – 'a being', 'essence'). Tuwim's **nieistowia* are of indeterminate meaning: 'non-existencies'?, 'things that be not'?, additionally coloured by the phonetic closeness of *nieistotny*, 'unimportant, negligible'. Furthermore, the parodist alludes to Leśmian's mode of describing existence by means of tautology. Leśmian often collocates regular nouns with novel verbs or gerunds derived from the same stem, as in *wiosna* – **wiosnuje* ('the season of Spring – is *being-the-Spring'; Leśmian 2000: 261). This kind of, philosophically speaking, predicating things on themselves, according to Jacek Trznadel (1964: 213–214, *annomination* in his terminology), expresses the poet's disbelief in man's epistemic capabilities and his conviction that one names a thing most accurately by defining it through itself. Accordingly, in Tuwim's text the main occupation and purpose of the existence of a fence, *płot*, is being a fence: **płoctwo*. The parody even features a paradoxical *negated annomination*; to appreciate that, it first takes noticing how the cat's catty qualities are underscored through synonyms and attributes: *kocurzak miauczurny* – '*tomcat *meowing', *kociuga* – '*cat', an apparent augmentative, *mruczywo* – a neologism from *mruczenie*, 'purring', but suggestive of a designation of a material or resource. The negated annomination consists in that despite being so very feline, the cat (*kot*) is pursuing the shadow 'by *no*-cat' (or: 'by *un*-cat'), **nie**kotem* (the instrumental case designates manner here; note the absurdist enhancing of what

is being negated: the adverbial phrase *podwójnym *niekotem* amounts to 'by a double/twofold no-cat'). In view of these, similar tautological structures or pseudo-etymological figures should likewise be present in a re-creation of Tuwim's poem.

The composite *dziewczyna-rozbiodrzyna* may prove another translation problem. The first of the two nouns means 'a girl', the other, however, is a lexical neologism ('*broad-hipped she'), this time with the prefix *roz-*, also readily used by Leśmian. A similar use of this affix in the sense of an 'increase in range, scope or intensity' can be seen in the verbal Leśmianisms *rozchyżyć* and *rozbiałośnieżyć*. An additional complication is that the term invented by the parodist takes the form of a twin combination (*zestawienie bliźniacze*, term after Papierkowski 1964: 114, 153). In Slavic folklore, some fixed epithets have an analogous structure, which is why, for example, in a Russian translation the phrase could retain the same composition. In English, however, such a combination would not sound natural and a less mechanical approach would have to be sought. Perhaps the stock of Old English *kennings* (cf. Cuddon 1999) could offer a fitting periphrasis. A final aspect that makes the translation of this lexical unit difficult is its intertextuality, for it is strongly reminiscent of two composites from Leśmian's "original" stock: *dziewczyna szeptucha*, the 'whispering girl' and *skąpico-dziewczuro*, 'you *miser *girl' ("Dżananda", "Świdryga i Midryga", Leśmian 2000: 352, 203). The re-creation of intertextuality in translation is of course desirable, but – as in the case of the refrain – dependent on translations from Leśmian available in the target language.

Even the few words belonging to the neutral register, such as *sen*, *cień*, *zielony*, i.e. 'dream', 'shadow', 'green', acquire a specific meaning in context, since they all are lexemes with a high frequency in Leśmian's oeuvre. In addition, neutral words gain a stylistic markedness when they become part of non-standard collocations. For example, Tuwim creates a novel phraseological unit, *szczerzyć dziury w sen*, 'to bare one's holes into a dream' (this is what the fence "does" in line 2). It is worth noting that this phrase reflects Leśmian's favourite syntax for the preposition *w* ('in/into'), combined with a noun in the accusative case rather than the locative. Michał Głowiński explains the poet's transformations of prepositional syntax and the resulting changes of perspective as a device that served him to "model space directionally" (1981: 76, trans. mine – M.K.).

Other grammatical issues also merit attention. In the second stanza, Tuwim employs a peculiar double negation: *bezślepia, których nie ma*

('*no-eyes, which it [i.e., the cat] does not have') alluding to the fact that tautologies of various kinds are one of Leśmian's favourite devices. The refrain, on the other hand, at first glance gives the impression of being completely devoid of semantics, and focused on the sound layer instead, which was indeed of paramount importance to the parodied author. This effect is brought about by the use of the zeugma in *A ty kotem, płociugo, hej!* ('And you *fence, the cat, hey!'), eloquently reminding the readers of Leśmian's poetic ungrammaticalities.

The inevitable conclusion, then, is that certain deviations from the rules of the target language must be applied in the translation of Tuwim's parody. However, they must not be accidental, but should parallel Leśmian's linguistic licences or, to be precise, the licences practiced by his translators.

Even some neutral words are endowed with parodistic function. In Leśmian's lovemaking staffage, something as mundane as *pierzyna* (feather quilt) would be hard to imagine; in Tuwim's text, it jestingly subverts the sublimity of style attributed to the poet. The incongruity between the commonplace and the defamiliarisation that pervades his poetry is emphasised by the obtrusive internal rhyme: "*dziewczynę-rozbiodrzynę – pod pierzynę*".

The phrase *w psocie-łaskocie* 'in *mischief-*tickle' is, in turn, an element which surprisingly infantilises the utterance by evoking the pet term *kotek-psotek*, or 'impish kitty'. The second component derives from *łaskotać*, 'to tickle', but, thanks to phonetic correspondence, it also evokes *łakocie*, 'sweetmeats'. This is the only element in the parody that reminds us that its point of departure has been a paraphrase of a children's rhyme. Tuwim seems to be suggesting that Leśmian gets "carried away" with the theme and, had he set about writing a children's poem, he would also have overstepped the mark.[14]

From the analysis of linguistic means, let us turn to the subject matter of the piece. As has been mentioned, the poem does not actually hold any content in its own right, but is rather a montage of themes and leitmotifs of Leśmian's work – again, remarkably condensed.

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[14] Indeed, Leśmian's publisher Jakub Mortkowicz, who commissioned from him Oriental and Polish prose fairy tales, was not happy with them and insisted that the latter be adjusted for young readers. His attitude delayed the publication of *Klechdy polskie*, which saw print only after the Second World War (see e.g. Rymkiewicz 2001: 221–223).

Thus, animate nature – the cat and greenness – appear, as well as elements of everyday life steeped in strangeness. Critics have noted in Leśmian's writing not only the psychisation of nature, but even the device of "reciprocal gaze" of the object (Nycz 2001: 122–123). Tuwim, too, undoubtedly noticed that Leśmian goes beyond simple animation or personification, since in his parody he endows the fence with existential dread: *płot, co własnym swym *płoctwem przerażony*, 'a fence that is terrified by its own *being-a-fence'. Another leitmotif brilliantly captured by the parodist is the pursuit of something unattainable, reflected in the action of the feline protagonist, 'by a double no-cat chasing a green shadow'. The epiphanic nature of Leśmian's poetry is alluded to, in turn, by introducing a moment of insight into the unknown: **bezślepia… mrużąc w *nieistowia*" ('squinting his *no-eyes into *non-existences'). Tuwim also recognised the self-reflexive dimension of Leśmian's verse, hence *plątwa śpiewnego mruczywa*, the '*tangle of the singsong *purring/murmur-fabric', which I venture to interpret as poetry. Finally, the erotic *topoi* and the depiction of love as anguish – the latter rather stereotypical of the Young Poland literary movement than typical of Leśmian – are illustrated by **bezdosyt całunków* and *męka *ustowia* (a '*never-enough of kisses' and a 'torment of *mouth-ness').

A translation should therefore, like Tuwim's text, **offer a compendium of themes and motifs characteristic** of Leśmian's writing.

The analysis has demonstrated that none of the elements present in the parody is accidental or has a merely secondary function. They are all vital to reproducing the distinctive linguistic fabric, imagery and themes of Leśmian's poetry. And since omitting any of them from a foreign-language version would have to be judged as a loss, intertextuality constrains the translator to such an extent that it renders the task infeasible.

However, before we declare the parody untranslatable, let us return to the first (matricial) pre-text. Contrary to appearances, it greatly facilitates the translator's work: owing to its presence, the target text does not have to be a translation of Tuwim's text, but only a paraphrase of it. After all, the translators have considerable freedom to choose as an equivalent of "Wlazł kotek na płotek" a rhyme that they deem appropriate and, at the same time, convenient for their purposes. The chosen piece, in turn, will serve as a theme on which to base a free variation. The aim of the latter will be to reflect the motifs and language of Leśmian's poetry as a whole, rather than the specific content of Tuwim's text. Consequently, a proper understanding of the relationship between the hypotexts and the ancillary character of one

of them necessitates a "creative betrayal" as a prerequisite of producing a translation that can be faithful on the pragmatic level.[15]

This allows us to assume that, in the case of the text in question, ultimately all linguistic and intertextual elements are potentially translatable. The really formidable barriers will only be considered in the next section.

Conditions of reception

Another tier of translation issues emerging in relation to "Jak Bolesław Leśmian napisałby…" is the problem of reception in the target culture. Urszula Kropiwiec (1997: 185) regards it as the worst-case scenario, if an unlikely one, that the recipients of a translation will not realise that they are dealing with a parody. A more probable setback is the difficulty of recognising *what* the text is parodying in the language of translation (Kropiwiec 1997: 184).

The factors that condition the functioning of Tuwim's text in translation in a manner similar to that in which the original functions in the polysystem of Polish culture are the degree to which Leśmian's work has been absorbed in a given culture and the quality of existing translations. In a language into which Leśmian's poetry has not previously been rendered to any significant extent, Tuwim's poem will fail to fulfil its parodic function for lack of a pre-text against which it could be read. In turn, an existing point of reference may be falsified. Foreign-language variants more often than not erase the peculiarity of Leśmian's diction and cover up the brilliance of his poetic idiom (see Kaźmierczak 2012). Either out of concern for the acceptability

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[15] A translator is much more constrained in the case of cyclic parodies. Tuwim earlier wrote "Le style c'est l'homme, Czyli wierszyk o Andzi, co ułkuła się i płakała, w interpretacji rozmaitych poetów" (Tuwim 1991: 117–121), also in the "X as would have been written by Y" vein, but this time he runs the same cautionary tale (originally a quatrain) through the pen of seven Polish writers, from a Renaissance one to his contemporaries, as well as two foreign ones – Heine and Maeterlinck (which confirms that parody does not have to respect cultural plausibility). The choice of the first pre-text in a possible translation would be limited, as it would have to fit all parts of the cycle. Also Guillermo Cabrera Infante's novel *Tres tristes tigres* (*Three Trapped Tigers*) discussed by Urszula Kropiwiec contains seven parodic samples of style exercised on a single theme in a chapter in which Lev Trotsky's death is recounted by "various Cuban writers" (Kropiwiec 1997: 185); in this case, however, translating is facilitated by the fact that the common denominator is an event rather than an additional literary model.

of the texts in the target culture, or as a result of translators' helplessness in the face of lexical and stylistic innovations, his writing is often completely stripped of those features which, for the Polish reader, are the quintessence of his style and the recognisable mark of his authorship.

In such a situation, even a masterly translation of Tuwim's poem will not fulfil its ridiculing role. The recipients will not be able to understand what the parody is aimed at. The target text will appear to them nothing more than a grotesque accumulation of linguistic means, completely unjustified at that, since in Leśmian's texts available in their language such devices are absent or are used very sparingly (viz. timidly – by the translators).

Attempting to translate the discussed piece only makes sense, then, if Leśmian is fairly well known in the given target culture. Firstly, this is a precondition of a meaningful and adequate reading of the text. Secondly, disseminating a parody of an unfamiliar poet could be counterproductive, as instead of promoting, it could devalue him in the eyes of the secondary audience.

It would appear that favourable conditions for the reception of "Jak Bolesław Leśmian napisałby…" exist in Russian culture. Firstly, he actually wrote a number of poems in Russian, and not only were they originally published in Russian literary periodicals, but they are also available to contemporary readers in a volume that brings together a significant portion of his oeuvre (Лесьмян 2006: 39–51). The bilingualism of the parodied author makes pondering on how he would have written text X more plausible with respect to a Russian work substituted for X – if a tongue-in-cheek speculation needs any plausibility, that is. Secondly, Leśmian's verse has been being gradually assimilated into Russian over a period of ninety years (the oldest translations date back to 1929); beside numerous scattered publications, the poet's familiarity has been determined primarily by separate volumes of his works, covering all periods of his career (Лесьмян 1971, 2004, 2006). Alongside the older translations, conservative in terms of language, new ones, decidedly more open to linguistic experimentation, have been appearing. In particular, Gennady Zeldovich's renditions stand out as comparable to the originals in terms of displaying creativity and mobilising various language resources. Although they were first published in Poland, in a low-print-run edition (Лесьмян 2004), and one could hardly talk about their greater resonance in Russia, this began to change with subsequent publications (Зельдович 2006: 255–305; Лесьмян 2014); besides, many texts by this translator are available online. Moreover, there is a phenomenon in

Russia similar to what Jarosław Marek Rymkiewicz (2001: 300–301) called the phenomenon of Leśmian's latent popularity in Poland. This can be traced in online forums devoted to poetry and translation: it turns out that Internet users inform each other about the peculiarities of Leśmian's poetry, that even those who do not speak Polish often reach for the originals in order to reconstruct elements obscured in translations, and that they venture their own target variants. Furthermore, Julian Tuwim is also a familiar figure to many readers. His lyrical and narrative poetry as well as children's verse have been made available in Russian, and there is also a considerable awareness of his role as an excellent translator and populariser of Russian literature in Poland. Thanks to his relative popularity, the satirical and mocking line of his writing has also come to be acknowledged.

Thus, in Russia there is a sizeable audience prepared to receive Tuwim's parody. Readers have at least a theoretical knowledge of the specificity of Leśmian's poetic diction, even if they have never encountered translations that fully reflect it. In turn, Tuwim's established authority as not only an eminent poet but also a biting parodist would, in a way, legitimise the piece, making one assume that the parodied object indeed possesses the qualities imputed to it.

The last decade has also seen the emergence of a translator into English who grapples seriously with the Leśmianesque: Marian Polak-Chlabicz. The volumes which he has published already form a fairly substantial body of texts, while the diction proposed in them is distinct and reflects many aspects of the poetics of the author of "Peopleless Ballade" (the most comprehensive of his publications: Leśmian 2017; for an overview of his strategy see: Kaźmierczak 2021). However, the reception conditions for any parody of Leśmian are decidedly less favourable. With Anglo-Saxon audiences, in general not very receptive to translations, translated verse cannot count on widespread popularity – in contrast to Russia, where foreign poetry is still gladly read (judging by continuing publishing practices). Moreover, renditions of Leśmian have appeared in Great Britain, the USA and Australia, and because of the geographical range of English, each of these remains a local incarnation (and often a far-from-complete one, to allude to the poet's own coinage, *niedowcielenie*). The circle of recipients whose reading experience includes a larger and diverse corpus of English-language texts by Leśmian is arguably small.

Thus, it is not so much the accumulation of translation difficulties as the unfulfilled prerequisite of a meaningful reading, *condition de lecture*, that

seems to condemn "Jak Bolesław Leśmian napisałby…" to untranslatability in English. A solution, however, could be worked into the translation by way of a shift in the addressing of the piece.

In view of the fact that the most serious obstacles are related to reception, it seems worthwhile to propose **introducing into parody translation the category of a double addressee**, in parallel to the category already acknowledged in children's literature (e.g. Adamczyk 1986: 62). In the case of parody or travesty it would mean orienting the translation not only towards a recipient who will grasp the allusions to the parodied work, but, in addition, towards one who does not have any knowledge of the pre-text. The disparity of reception circumstances described above also suggests framing this in terms of an opposition: Russian readers may be offered an **overt parody in translation**, English-speaking readers rather a **latent** one.

Making the act of reception independent of the reader's literary competence would broaden the outreach, potentially making the work available to an unlimited audience. However, it imposes other constraints on the translator. The readability for a second, "uninitiated" addressee requires constructing a text that would entertain even in complete detachment from its pre-text.[16] This, in turn, imposes a greater discipline on the fabric of the translated poem, which could no longer be an end in itself; while maintaining its ludic character, resorting to the grotesque, for example, would become undesirable. In the case of the parody in question, it would have to receive some substance in translation, so that the poem would be about something and not just about Leśmian's style. In the given situation, the assumed presence of a second addressee would have the effect of curtailing the linguistic extravagance and the autotelic character of the poetic statement. From the point of view of the first addressee, this arguably constitutes a loss in translation. However, an account of gains and losses entailed by the proposition made here goes beyond the scope of this article, and deserves to be considered on the material of translations which already exist, not just potential ones.

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[16] Looby emphasises – as conducive to translation – the self-sufficient nature of many individual parodies (2003: 98), but in my opinion he overestimates this factor, as can be seen from the example he chooses (2003: 105), in fact incompatible with that category. In "Miniatura Słowackiego" ('A Miniature of Słowacki') A.M. Swinarski parodies not Paweł Hertz's individual poetics but a feature of a certain type of literary biography: an excessive tendency to fill factual gaps with conjecture. In spite of direct references, Hertz's biography of the Romantic *bard* Juliusz Słowacki remains for the parodist just a fine representative of the type.

Instead of a conclusion – an invitation to play the game

It would be fitting to complete the analysis with a practical realisation of the recipe. In fact, an excellent model could be cited: Artur Sandauer concludes (1985: 516) his critical experiment with Leśmian's philosophy with a poem-pastiche, in which he fulfils his postulate of the critic's "intellectual imper-sonation" of the studied object (1985: 500). However, an analogous feat performed by a translation scholar writing about parody translation would look highly ambiguous. Travestying an individual poetics in translation might then give rise to ethical scruples, while the escalation of strangeness, inevitable in the case of parodying Leśmian, might raise doubts as to who in fact is being ridiculed.

Meanwhile, from the reservations outlined, conclusions can be drawn as to the person and qualifications of a/the translator who could undertake to render the parody. Re-creating it apparently requires an even greater profi-ciency in the source and target languages, a higher literary competence and more inventiveness than translating the poems of Leśmian. It seems that it would be optimal if Tuwim's parody were translated by someone who had previously made a certain number of (successful!) translations from Leśmian. This postulate is not only prompted by the fact that it automatically settles the question of the translator's Leśmianological competence. More importantly, such a solution allows one to draw freely from existing renditions without running the risk of being accused of plagiarism or of aiming the blade of satire at the translators rather than at the parodied author.[17] After all, the result would at worst be self-plagiarism or self-parody.

This is why my analytical experiment is also an invitation to a translation experiment, addressed to those translators of Leśmian who have been active in recent years and who have demonstrated word-formative inventiveness and created in Russian and English poetic macro-texts that would lend themselves to trans-textual operations. It is an invitation to translate Tuwim's parody using the clues or lines of action suggested by me, or according to completely different recipes of their own – the quest for which is, after all, the essence of the art of translation.

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[17] The opposite is true of parodies arising in cross-cultural relations, where, by defi-nition, it is not so much the original that is parodied as the style of its translation(s) (see Barańczak 2004: 262–266).

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APPENDIX – Two translation experiments

"A Bug in a Rug", as it might have been written out by Bolesław Leśmian

Julian Tuwim

Into a rug that was ruffled by its rughood there,
Baring its underrugdom in a ruggy dream,
Ran a buzzing bug-buggoon with a buzzy scream
And chased doubly unbuggily a gold wisp of hair.

> And you, ruggo, dust the bug away,
> And you, buggo, dust the rug, oh hey!

Unbeen no-eyes out-squinted at being no more,
Jumbling themselves tanglily in a hum'n'hiss.
A lad called a popsy-hipsy for her bedroom bliss,
For no-plenty of kisses, throes of mouth galore.

> And you, ruggo, dust the bug away,
> And you, buggo, dust the rug, oh hey!

Adapted by Marian Polak-Chlabicz

Postscript: Adopting a minimal hypotext, which Leśmian would have elaborated rather than written, apparently proved conducive to achieving quite a surprising isomorphism with respect to the micro-plot of the Polish parody. Thus, although the cat was replaced by a bug (perchance a relative of the maggot [*czerw*] from Leśmian's ballad "Jadwiga"?), retaining an unquestionable resemblance to Tuwim's original – while at the same time exaggerating the translator's own diction – makes it possible to categorise this text as a translation, and not merely an adaptation (M. Kaźmierczak).

"Mary Had a Little Lamb" – as it might have been written by Bolesław Leśmian

Julian Tuwim

Maiden Mary had a ramling
Whose fleecehood was unsnowily grey'd,
And always, allwheres she was rambling,
The sheepling shambled and sashay'd.

E'er anon to the house of learning –
He followed her, though 'gainst the rule,
The studentdom's heads were turning
To see this ramminess at school.

The schoolmarm sent him to the no-world,
The rambkin waited till she came,
At all of them he crossly lowered –
Athirst for her, with heart aflame.

And then he ran fervently her-ward,
His flocculence was in her hands,
'I durst be brave, daring now thereward',
Bethought the ramkin, 'thout demands.

'Why's Mary loved by the he-sheepling?'
The schoolers did cackle and smile.
'Oh, the lass loves the baa-baa-stripling',
Quoth the pedagogue fill'd with bile.

'Mary's love-struck by the ramling –
His headlet's frizz and ogling eyes.
Mary's love-struck by the ramling',
The teach'ress halfly-half replies.

<div align="right">Adapted by Marian Polak-Chlabicz</div>

The latter parody is published for the first time here.