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SELF-TRANSLATION: BETWEEN NATIONAL LITERATURE AND "WORLD CITIZENSHIP" (THE CASE OF MARIA KUNCEWICZOWA AND JANUSZ GŁOWACKI)*

Abstract

Around 1949 Maria Kuncewiczowa worked on the project of 'world citizenship' – a remedy for those writers whom circumstances made stateless. In her view, the category of 'world citizenship' allowed to see one's country from the perspective of the world. She also argued that knowledge of a foreign language was a promising way of opening up national, regional and doctrinal 'ghettos'. Following her ideas, the article presents self-translation as a phenomenon that exceeds one national context and creates a discursive space in which literature denies clear linguistic and cultural borders. After a brief outline of self-translation in the 20th-century Polish literature, the article analyses Kuncewiczowa's self-translation of the play *Thank You for the Rose* (1950–1960) and Janusz Głowacki's assisted self-translation of the play *Antygona w Nowym Jorku* (1992). In discussing the two case studies, the article pays particular attention to the idea of 'world citizenship' in relation to the concept of national literature.

Keywords: self-translation, national literature, world citizenship, Kuncewiczowa, Głowacki

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Around 1949, Maria Kuncewiczowa worked on the project of "world citizenship," inspired by the historical-political circumstances as well as Kuncewiczowa's experience of exile. On 25 February 1949, she issued an appeal to the UN, asking for their approval for assigning "world citizenship" to those who became "displaced persons" and "refugees" after the Yalta agreements and at the end of the war.[1] The concept of "world citizenship" was meant to offer a solution for those who found themselves stateless after World War II, including writers unable to return to their country of origin, which shaped them linguistically and literarily. In her appeal to the UN, Kuncewiczowa insisted that the refugees should be heard in the debate on the post-war cultural reconstruction of the world, arguing that "by sheer force of events they have acquired the feeling of belonging to a community larger than one nation (…) history made them citizens of the world, and they should be treated as such".[2] Signed by 26 artists, the appeal echoed widely in the international press, including *The Times*, *New York Herald*, *Le Monde* and *Le Figaro*. Despite much effort, Kuncewiczowa's project was never implemented nor sufficiently debated. Over the years, it has become marginalised and largely forgotten; however, it seems to me that Kuncewiczowa's idea is worth revisiting and examining by literary and translation scholars as well as a wider readership. Kuncewiczowa firmly believed in the importance of the category of "world citizenship", not only as a means of broadening refugees' horizons, but also as a way of seeing one's country of origin from the perspective of the world. According to Kuncewiczowa, mastering foreign languages was "one of the more promising ways of opening up national, regional and doctrinal ghettos" (Kuncewiczowa 1975: 165) and it was increasingly necessary for understanding the unique value of any cultural phenomenon. Interestingly, in the afterword to her novel *Gaj oliwny* [*The Olive Grove*, 1961], which moves away from Polish themes and Polish language, Kuncewiczowa defined literature as a "free-for-all country" (Kuncewiczowa

[1] The information concerning Kuncewiczowa's appeal is drawn from materials held in Wrocław, Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich (hereafter referred to as ZNiO), inventoried manuscripts (inv. mss), fols. 1633/II, 17044/II and 17045/II, as well as from Kuncewiczowa's book *Natura* [Nature] (Kuncewiczowa 1975c: 86–95) and monograph by Alicja Szałagan (1995: 91–94).

[2] See Wrocław, ZNiO, inv. mss, fol. 17045/II. For the Polish version of the appeal see Kuncewiczowa, *Fantomy*, p. 194.

1961: 180).[3] Indeed, Magdalena Zaborowska observes: "Kuncewicz's texts are proof that literature often transcends simplistic dichotomies, cultural clichés, and national identity politics" (Zaborowska 1999: 209). Viewed from this perspective, Kuncewiczowa's act of self-translation might be of greater importance than just a mere experiment.

In the present essay, self-translation is perceived as an integral part of Polish literature, broadening and complementing the conventional approach to the concept of national literature which – due to Romantic ideals – tends to be thought of as a monolingual and monocultural phenomenon. My aim is to illustrate self-translation as a practice surpassing a singular national context and opening a space where literature moves beyond clear language and cultural boundaries. It is not my intention to provide an in-depth analysis of self-translation and its various contexts but rather to present it against the background of the 20th-century Polish context. My goal is to pay closer attention to a practice which has hitherto remained marginalised in the context of Polish literature, and which can help interrogate the boundaries of the notion of national literature. I will focus my analysis on Kuncewiczowa's *Thank You for the Rose* (1950–1960) and Janusz Głowacki's *Antigone in New York* (1992). Although both Kuncewiczowa and Głowacki are household names in Poland, little research has been done on their foreign language output. While the two authors belong to different emigration contexts[4], their respective experiences of self-translation show the ways in which the process of translation and the texts themselves exceed one national context.

In the first part of the essay, I provide a definition of self-translation and attempt to locate this phenomenon in the context of 20th-century Polish literature. Next, I present basic information regarding Kuncewiczowa's and Głowacki's self-translations and draw conclusions based on paratextual material and comparative analysis of the linguistic variants involved. These observations are then used as a basis for discussing self-translation in the light of Kuncewiczowa's ideas discussed above, focusing on the concept of

[3] The novel was inspired by the murder of an English family vacationing in France by a French farmer. Kuncewiczowa started writing the book in English in 1952, yet, the 300-page manuscript was lost in 1955 during her journey to the US. According to Alicja Szałagan, it took nearly five years for Kuncewiczowa to rewrite the text, whereas writing the Polish version took her eight months. Both versions were ready in 1960 (Szałagan 1995: 254–261).

[4] Kuncewiczowa left the country following the outbreak of World War II, whereas Głowacki remained abroad after martial law was declared in Poland in the early 1980s.

national literature in relation to the category of "world citizenship" which, in an intercultural context of increasingly global reach, goes beyond a monocentric way of conceiving national literature.

Self-translation in 20th-century Polish literature

Self-translation is defined as "the act of translating one's own writings into another language and the result of such an undertaking" (Grutman 2009: 257). In the introduction to *The Bilingual Text: The History and Theory of Literary Self-Translation*, Jan Walsh Hokenson and Marcella Munson emphasise that self-translation has been long neglected by scholars. According to Hokenson and Munson, this tendency is attributable to the dominant nationalist paradigm of monolingualism in the European literary histories and traditions, as well as the complexity of the phenomenon of self-translation, which evades binary, monolingual categories commonly applied in literary and translation criticism (Hokenson, Munson 2007: 1–2). Although many 20th-century Polish authors produced self-translations, this phenomenon has never been a subject of consistent critical study. Instead, it is only briefly mentioned in monographs on individual authors, usually with reference to their bilingualism in prose or poetry.[5] There are also several scholarly articles on authors such as Czesław Miłosz, Witold Gombrowicz, Wacław Sieroszewski, Stanisław Przybyszewski, Tadeusz Rittner and Janusz Artur Ihnatowicz, including some comments regarding self-translation. On the whole, however, it can be said that self-translation in 20th-century Polish literature remains invisible and unexplored by academics.

Self-translation is a phenomenon related to authorial bilingualism (Balcerzan 1968: 3)[6] and in 20th-century Polish literature occurs only in cases of the author's temporary or permanent relocation. It is also undoubtedly associated with Poland's specific historic and political situation. In the essay "Autotraduttori polacchi del Novecento: un saggio di ricognizione" [Polish

[5] Suffice it to mention Balcerzan's book on Bruno Jasieński (Balcerzan 1968), Łuczyński's book on Stanisław Przybyszewski (Łuczyński 1982), Kraskowska's book on Stefan Themerson (Kraskowska 1989) and Palej's work on Tadeusz Rittner, Adam Zieliński and Radek Knapp (Palej 2004).

[6] According to Balcerzan, the term "authorial bilingualism" applies to bilingual authors writing in more than one language and producing works of similar literary value in all these languages, as well as self-translations.

writers-translators of the 20th century: A preliminary study], offering the first (and still unique) attempt at describing the phenomenon in the 20th century, Andrea Ceccherelli proposes three caesuras shaping Polish self-translation and its contexts: the period before 1918, the interwar period and the years following World War II. Ceccherelli explains that in the earliest period, self-translations usually involved a language of one of the oppressors and, usually, Polish writers who engaged in the practice did so on a regular basis. This was the case with three authors who Cecherelli describes as the "three towering figures of self-translation" in that period: Stanisław Przybyszewski, Tadeusz Rittner and Wacław Sieroszewski, whose bilingualism can be compared to that of Samuel Beckett. In the interwar period, despite favourable bilingual and multilingual circumstances, self-translation was more rarely practised. Among the authors who undertook self-translation were Stanisław Ignacy Witkiewicz, Debora Vogel, Stanisław Kubicki and Bruno Jasieński. After World War II, self-translation grew popular again and became more systematic. Polish self-translating writers active in this period include Stefan Themerson, Witold Gombrowicz, Czesław Miłosz, Stanisław Barańczak, Jan Brzękowski, Florian Śmieja, Ewa Kuryluk, Adam Czerniawski and Henryk Grynberg. Following Barańczak's ideas, presented in his essay "The Confusion of Tongues"[7], Ceccherelli defines the context of the first period as *espropriazione* [expropriation], the second as *esperimento* [experiment] and the third as *esilio* [exile]. It should be noted, however, that the second category applies to the self-translations themselves rather than their context. Moreover, considering the extended duration of the third period (1945–2000), the complex political situation in Poland at the time and the controversies surrounding some authors' decision to emigrate, the label "exile" seems too broad and over-simplifying. It would be better to describe this particular context as a spectrum between political exile and free migration.

[7] In the essay, Barańczak offers a short discussion of the English words *emigration*, *exile* and *expatriation*, labelling the prefixes *e-* and *ex-* as "sad prefixes of exclusion" (Barańczak 1990: 221).

Maria Kuncewiczowa's and Janusz Głowacki's self-translations

Maria Kuncewiczowa's and Janusz Głowacki's self-translations are linked with the post-war context. While Głowacki translated only his play *Antigone in New York*, Maria Kuncewiczowa translated as many as four of her texts.[8] In the present essay, I focus on the play *Thank You for the Rose*[9], the first original piece written by Kuncewiczowa in English during her stay in England. In the archives of ZNiO, there are seven English-language manuscripts by Kuncewiczowa, four of these preserved in their entirety. Apart from the manuscript from 1950, labelled as a "draft of first version," and two other manuscripts catalogued as produced circa 1960[10], none of the manuscripts is dated. A hypothetical chronology can be deduced based on the differences between individual versions, as well as through analysing letters by Harry C. Stevens[11] (Kuncewiczowa's translator) and Ashley Dukes (playwright, theatre critic, owner of the Mercury Theatre in London).[12] The English version of the play has never been published and it was only staged once, at the Polish Hearth Club in London, in February 1956, thanks to the efforts of the PEN Club Centre for Writers in Exile. The performance was based on the 1950 manuscript, but the remaining English versions, especially the typed manuscripts from 1960, clearly influenced the Polish text as well. Considering the above, and taking into account the role of manuscripts in studying translations (Munday 2013)[13] as well as the "genetic translation

[8] *Klucze* (1943) / *The Keys: A Journey through Europe at War* (1946), *Thank You for the Rose* (1950–1960) / *Dziękuję za różę* (1963), *Gaj oliwny* (1961) / *The Olive Grove* (1963), *Tristan 1946* (1967) / *Tristan: A Novel* (1974). Apart from the unpublished play *Thank You for the Rose*, the dates in parentheses are publication dates, which do not necessarily indicate the order in which the texts were created. For instance, while *The Olive Grove* was originally written in English, it was the Polish version that got published first.

[9] All the comments concerning the English play, as well as comparative analysis of the two language versions, are based on the English manuscripts archived in ZNiO (inventoried manuscripts: fols. 16894/II, 16895/II; accessible manuscripts: Akc. 29/12).

[10] The date is not specified in the manuscripts, so it is impossible to determine the source of this information.

[11] ZNiO, inv. mss, fol. 16979/II.

[12] ZNiO, inv. mss, fol. 16954/II.

[13] Munday stresses the importance of translator's documents, manuscripts and archives in studying individual stages of the translation process. Such materials frequently offer an insight into otherwise obscured aspects of translation and the translator's decision-making

studies" discipline (Cordingley, Montini 2015)[14], my analysis of Kuncewiczowa's self-translation cannot be limited to the 1950 manuscript and the Polish version alone.

Thank You for the Rose

The play is set in London in the 1950s and 1960s[15] and it is strongly rooted in English reality. It tells the story of the love life of Alice/Barbara[16], a twenty-one-year-old woman dominated by her politically involved engineer husband, Richard Biggins, and forty-year-old doctor and MP Dr. Jones, who arranged Alice's/Barbara's and Richard's marriage. Longing for happiness and real love, Alice/Barbara abandons her husband and becomes involved with Alec Hardy, twenty-year-old painter and scaffolder, who later dies in an accident, leaving the pregnant protagonist alone. The perplexing circumstances of Alec's death cast suspicion of a murder of passion on Dr. Jones, as well as on enigmatic window cleaner Mr Cuckoo, utterly devoted to Alice/Barbara. The originality of Kuncewiczowa's play lies in her skilful juxtaposition of the protagonist's story with fantastic elements inspired by Lewis Carroll's *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, which opens much scope for interpretation. Kuncewiczowa herself described the piece as "a sort of travesty of *Alice in Wonderland*".[17] *Thank You for the Rose* is also an indirect censure of English class-based society, questioning the chances of establishing genuine emotional connections in a world full of power-hungry manipulators. Aside from the allusions to Lewis Carroll's novel, the key symbol in the play is the rose that Alice/Barbara receives from Alec. The

process. Munday acknowledges, however, that such analysis is not a standard procedure in translation studies.

[14] Cordingley and Montini define "genetic translation studies" as a field of study centred on examining translators' practices and the process of compiling translation, through analysing manuscripts, drafts and other working documents. It focuses on the reworking of the text throughout the translation process, attempting to reconstruct translators' strategy and cognitive processes.

[15] In all versions of the play, the setting is described as "contemporary London", which indicates the 1960s in the two final English versions as well as the Polish version, and the 1950s in the remaining versions of the text.

[16] In the English manuscript dated 1950, the protagonist's name is Alice; in later English versions she is called Barbara.

[17] ZNiO, inv. mss, fol. 16832/II, Maria Kucewiczowa's Autobiographies.

flower is an emblem of humanity and selfless love, accessible only to those who manage to protect their humanity from the destructive influence of the corrupt class society.

Thank You for the Rose was published in Polish in *Dialog* magazine in 1963. The time span between the English versions and the publication of the Polish text suggests that it must have been an instance of consecutive self-translation (Grutman 2009) from English to Polish; in other words, we are dealing with interlingual self-translation (Desideri 2012) from a major language to a minor one. Sociolinguistically speaking, it falls under the category of exogenous asymmetrical self-translation (Grutman 2013)[18]; additionally, the whole process takes place between an acquired language and the mother tongue. Since there is no information suggesting that Kuncewiczowa collaborated with anyone while translating the text, it can be assumed that we are looking at unaided self-translation (Jung 2002).

Antigone in New York

Antigone in New York was written for Arena Stage theatre in Washington as the main piece within the project Voices of New America. Even though the play was composed outside of Poland, on a commission from an American theatre, and despite its American setting against the background of a police raid in Tompkins Square Park in 1988, Głowacki originally wrote the text in Polish.[19] It is a tragicomedy, or, as the author described it himself, "a comedy about despair" (Głowacki 2004: 212), telling the story of three homeless immigrants living in a park in New York. Implored by Puerto Rican Anita, Flea

[18] The term "exogenous" refers to external bilingualism, namely, a situation in which the change of language correlates with shifting linguistic, cultural and national borders. The term "asymmetrical," in turn, describes a language combination in which the two languages are of an unequal status.

[19] Although the English edition clearly labels the text as a translation, Elwira Grossman has noted a confusion regarding the source language in an article by Elżbieta Baniewicz (Grossman 2013: 244). Indeed, the inaccurate assumption that the play was originally written in English is repeated in Baniewicz's critical texts (Baniewicz 1993: 116; Baniewicz 2001: 362; Baniewicz 2016: 223–225). Similarly, Anna Nasiłowska offers a convoluted and misleading hypothesis: "the primary version has to be the English text, which is, at the same time, a translation (…) the original English version of Głowacki's drama is a translation, subsequent Polish versions, from the one printed in *Dialog* to the final version printed in the book form in *51/2* , are all self-translations. The original, meanwhile, does not exist—this role was once filled by a draft written in English by the author" (Nasiłowska 2013).

(Pchełka) from Poland and the Russian Jew Sasha (Sasza) agree to steal away the body of Paulie (John) from Potter's Field[20] and give him a proper burial in the park.[21] Although Anita replicates the gesture famously performed by Antigone, Głowacki does not reproduce the mythical set of values. Instead, the contrast between human and divine laws is replaced with one between the homeless and the rest of society, completely oblivious to their fate. In the play, the stolen body turns out not to be Paulie's/John's, the police removes the homeless from the park and Anita, raped, hangs herself on the fence. Głowacki undermines the vision of the United States as a "promised land" and democratic paradise. Expelled from the society they were desperate to be part of, the homeless make up an intercultural family, dreaming of better life and sharing their hopes for love, home and respect.

The Polish text was published in *Dialog* in October 1992; the world stage premiere took place a year later in Warsaw's Ateneum theatre and two weeks later, another performance opened in Washington (Trojanowska 2003: 279; Głowacki 2004: 214). The English version did not get published until 1997, therefore it is impossible to establish whether this was a case of simultaneous (Grutman 1998, 2009) or consecutive self-translation. On the one hand, the short time lapse between the Polish and American premieres suggests that the two texts were being composed simultaneously; on the other, the fact that the Polish text was published in 1992 could mean that we are dealing with consecutive self-translation. From a linguistic perspective, it is a case of interlingual translation from Polish into English, and considering sociolinguistic parameters, it can be described as an exogenous asymmetrical self-translation.

Głowacki co-translated *Antigone in New York* with Joan Torres, which makes it conform to the definition of aided self-translation (Jung 2002). In this case, one might potentially question if it should count as self-translation at all; however, both Umberto Eco and Verena Jung agree that the collaboration between the author and translator enables making conscious choices resulting from fruitful discussions and can produce better ultimate results than the author's individual effort (Jung 2002; Eco 2013).[22] Eco even goes so far as to suggest that translation is a thing most suited for company. The American edition is very precise on this topic: "*Antigone in New York* (100%)

[20] A burial place for criminals and unclaimed persons on Hart Island, New York.

[21] The names are listed according to the English and Polish version.

[22] In the case of Głowacki's play, the collaboration was between two writers.

by Janusz Głowacki (50%), translated by Janusz Głowacki and Joan Torres (25%)"; nevertheless this may not reflect the extent of both parties' actual involvement and does not clarify the limits of their respective contribution. Following Anna Nasiłowska's suggestion that Torres does not know Polish, it could be assumed that Głowacki self-translated the text on his own and then relied on Torres's help during the editing process, in order to produce the best possible final version.

The process of translation

Comparative analysis of the Polish and English versions of Kuncewiczowa's and Głowacki's plays shows that in both instances there are certain differences between the texts. The changes can be divided into separate categories, relating to the dramatis personae, as well as the pieces' structure and language. As far as the dramatic personae are concerned, the shifts are mostly linked with the characters' names and ages. The most striking change is to be found in Głowacki's play, where in the Polish version John is an aristocrat from Boston, whereas in the English text Paulie is described as a WASP.[23] In terms of structure, the changes include the order of the characters' appearance on stage, dialogue sequences and stage directions or lines added or omitted in translation. In the Polish text of *Thank You for the Rose*, Kuncewiczowa includes additional information on Chelsea and excludes the word "vicarage," replacing it with two expressions involving the word "pastor". In *Antigone in New York*, Głowacki omits a story of a boiler house proprietor saving money to make a pilgrimage to the Vatican, but includes a new one about Anita urinating into a bottle for 3 dollars for Jenny, who is required to take a drug test at work. In addition, Kuncewiczowa alters the closing scenes in individual acts. In the Polish text, act one, as well as the first and second scenes of act two, introduce all these new endings written into the subsequent English versions; additionally, the ending of act three not only incorporates the endings of subsequent English versions, but also adds an entirely new section. Głowacki, in turn, reshuffles the order of dialogues in act one and merges some of them into one scene. In the Polish version, act one is composed of seven scenes, whereas the English text only has four.

[23] White Anglo-Saxon Protestant. A commentary on this shift, as well as other changes, can be found in Grossman's essay (2013).

The linguistic transformations, in turn, involve lexical substitution (items referring to drinks, food, space, administrative units etc.), fixed phrases and idioms. For instance, in *Thank You for the Rose*, "jałowcówka" [juniper berry vodka] and "wódka" [vodka] replace "gin" and "brandy," "kanapki" [sandwiches] appear instead of "tarts" and "pâtés" and "Związki Zawodowe" [trade unions] substitute the "Trade Union." In *Antigone in New York*, "Havah Nagillah song" is used instead of "kozak" [Kozachok], "three bedrooms" replace "pięć pokojów" [five rooms] and "tuna sandwich" appears in the place of "kanapka z kurczakiem" [chicken sandwich] and "kanapka z szynką" [ham sandwich]. There are also differences to be noticed when it comes to expressing emotions. The Polish versions frequently use diminutives, which in the English texts are either omitted or replaced by simple forms without diminutive meaning. The rich repository of profanities used in the Polish text of *Antigone in New York* is significantly cropped in translation, where expletives are either skipped or limited to a smaller, more repetitive set. In both cases, there are also shifts explicable by neither cultural nor linguistic reasons. Kuncewiczowa's "obscure engineer" becomes "skromny technik" [a modest technician]; moreover, act one is set either in spring (in the English version) or in summer (Polish). In Głowacki's text, Pchełka finds a photograph in his pocket, but Flea spots it on the ground; Polish Anita makes blouses and American Anita makes coats. In addition, the Polish version of Kuncewiczowa's text includes several fragments exhibiting an unconventional use of language, clearly involving syntactic calques from the English.

The above examples show that both instances of self-translation discussed here are target-oriented and the decisions made by Kuncewiczowa, as well as Głowacki and Torres, testify to their acute awareness of the historical and cultural context in which their readers/viewers lived. Making use of ordinary, easily recognisable elements typical of the two cultures, they bring foreign settings closer to their target audience. Avoiding the undesirable effect of strangeness, or foreignness, they opt for solutions facilitating immediate understanding. Some minor language differences in terms of lexis or pragmatics facilitate understanding by the target audiences/readership, as they fit in with certain customary social interactions, cultural norms and standard ways of thinking and acting. Idiomatic expressions, expletives, diminutives, as well as omitted and newly introduced elements, reflect the specific use of language in the society they represent and induce desired responses, making allowances for intercultural differences in terms

of acceptable levels of sentimentality and disparate perceptions. In some cases, even though the form is altered, the meaning stays the same, as long as it is determined by the context.[24] Texts involved in self-translation are subject to re-contextualisation, which influences their interpretation by the target viewers/readers, as well as the way in which they are translated. The context decides potential differences in the subtext of certain passages and of the whole text, and therefore even minor alterations may have a big impact.

The decisions made by Kuncewiczowa, as well as Głowacki and Torres, correspond with Kraskowska's conclusions about Themerson's bilingual output (Kraskowska 1989). Firstly, they seem to move freely between the roles of translator, editor and author. Transferring meanings from one language to another is part and parcel of translating and any problems appearing in self-translation would doubtless emerge in standard translation as well. Nevertheless, reordering and rewriting texts allow self-translators a much wider margin of creative freedom. Secondly, despite various disparities, in both cases the source and target texts represent the same settings, stories and key motifs. Drawing on Kraskowska's findings, it can be said that in both cases all the existing versions are variants of a "prototext", consisting in an "invariant 'semantic nucleus,' composed of stable basic ingredients" recurring in all the texts (Kraskowska 1989: 32). It is thus the linguistic expression, or the level of *parole*, that is adjusted to the norms of the target culture and social-cultural reality of the audiences.

Between national literature and "world citizenship"

It would seem, then, that self-translation involves a certain tension between the uniqueness of a given language and culture and the wider category of "world citizenship". Despite shared elements present in all the versions, the setting in different language versions is never identical. The disparities between Polish and English texts show that each language version is addressed at a different group of readers/viewers. Nevertheless, a holistic consideration of self-translation allows us to view it as a "third form of literature" (Kraskowska 1985: 199), due to the double status of the self-translated work

[24] For instance, in Kuncewiczowa's play, "proszę cię" [oh please] replaces "for heaven's sake", "jak pragnę szczęścia" [literally: as I crave happiness] is used instead of "honestly" and "na litość boską, po co?" [why for God's sake?] appears instead of "what on earth for?".

as translation and original, as well as the double role of the bilingual and bicultural writer, performing both the role of the author writing a new text and the translator interpreting it. Therefore, self-translation creates a space in which two languages and cultures interact and forge an alliance, forming one piece that can be compared to a musical score. Every language variant is like a soprano part, an alto, a tenor or bass. Occasionally, their parts differ, move away from one another, and sometimes they overlap, conveying the same content with their own unique voice. Each one of them has the potential to exist on its own, but it is together that they appear at their richest and most delightful. As a result, a global, comparative look at all texts involved in the process of self-translation offers a valuable insight into the relationships between languages and cultures, allowing us to see the literary work in a wider perspective, surpassing one national language and culture.

Kuncewiczowa's, as well as Głowacki and Torres's, self-translations demonstrate that each instance of self-translation is characterised by a different background, motivations, challenges, potential literary and historic interpretations. Still, both examples show how self-translators and self-translations, similarly to standard translations, constantly travel between two literary and cultural worlds, between national and cosmopolitan. Yet, in the case of texts which are not only written between different languages and cultures, but also come from the desk of one author, clear-cut classifications and definitions in national terms are called into question. The figure of the author-translator lends authority to both versions of a literary work in the same way despite potential disparities. Self-translation raises problems with assigning one nationality to a work written in more than one language (Kippur 2015: 4). National boundaries and literary identities thus become more fluid, while concepts such as the "original" or "canonical version", as well as the tendency to link literary works with the idea of the national literature of the language in which the given work was created, must be questioned. Self-translation also challenges the notions of "home" and "host cultures" as well as the tendency to treat literary works as belonging to the culture of one's origin, since the authors work also in languages and physical spaces that are not native to them (Kippur 2015: 11). National borders are crossed, monolingual self-referentiality is undermined and monolingual and monocultural paradigms are destabilised. Hence, self-translation can help reformulate certain presumptions and complement a conventional approach according to which Polish literature tends to be perceived mainly as a monocultural and monolingual phenomenon.

In view of Kuncewiczowa's concept of literature as a "'free-for-all country'" and her idea of "world citizenship", which broaden the national perspective, self-translation represents a limitless space, an expression of world citizenship and belonging to a community larger than a nation. Texts by authors-translators, written for two different linguistic groups, are by extension inextricably linked with two literary communities (Kippur 2015: 11). Conceptual difficulties associated with self-translation partly explain both its absence from the studies on national literatures and the limited visibility of Polish authors' multilingual output. Thus, self-translation can point us towards a different way of thinking, one that transcends the boundaries of individual languages and cultures. As Mary Besemeres and Anna Wierzbicka put it, "a monolingual perspective on the world is also a monocultural one (…) it brings about an unconscious absolutisation of the perspective on the world suggested by one's native language" (Besemeres, Wierzbicka 2007: xiv). Therefore, the self-translation undertaken by many Polish writers, including some literary icons, can be viewed as a multifaceted way of expression and of looking at the world, as well as what is local, in a way conducive to assuming a deeper, multilingual and multicultural perspective.

Translated by Aleksandra Kamińska

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