CROSSROADS
A Journal of English Studies

ISSUE 11
4/2015

CrossRoads

A Journal of English Studies

ISSUE 11

4/2015

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Against *dechoukaj*: the trauma of Haiti in Edwidge Danticat's *The Dew Breaker*

Abstract. Diaspora writers add to a long American literary tradition of engaging with political issues, a rich body of literature focused on themes of occupation, persecution, dictatorship, repression and trauma. This paper focuses on a political protest in the form of personal narrative of Haitians whose forgotten or ignored stories were reinscribed by Haitian-American author Edwidge Danticat in *The Dew Breaker* (2004).

The paper examines the representation of Haiti's history and the collective experience of violence and trauma during the Duvaliers' dictatorship, and revisits the terror instilled by a paramilitary police – the *Tonton Macoutes*. In *The Dew Breaker* Danticat offers a compelling portrait of individuals haunted by pain, trauma and loss. Their stories function as a testimony of the generations of Haitians who experienced abuses and atrocities committed during the era of "Papa Doc" and "Baby Doc". The book presents the effects of trauma on the individuals and the community, shows what is destroyed by trauma and offers solutions to deal with the traumatic experience. The aim of the paper is to analyze how *The Dew Breaker* gives a unique access to Haitian history, how it deals with its legacy of violence, how the subaltern articulate their traumas and how literature creates a voice for victims of political violence and psychological terror.

Keywords: Edwidge Danticat, trauma, Haiti, dictatorship, Francois Duvalier, Jean Claude Duvalier, Tonton Macoutes

> Who cares why, at this distance? A disaster is a disaster; those hurt by it remain hurt, those killed remain killed, the rubble remains rubble (Atwood 1993: 3).

Literature often confronts official discourse critically and harshly, and rewrites that discourse and history to include the perspectives of the marginalized or excluded. It explores social questions and often speaks on behalf of a "collective unaware and largely silenced and buried under a heap of false and perverted rhetoric" (Ramirez in Craft, 10). Contemporary authors create new genres and try to move beyond existing national, traditional, globally-used forms, which are simultaneously political and literary. This type of writing makes a political problem fundamental to the story and serves as an intermediate step in a process directed toward producing change in the world, pro-

moting justice by continuous examination of personal histories of all the people and discourses[1]. David Shields, in his book *Reality Hunger* (2010), argues that contemporary fiction is enlivened by efforts to make the readers "interested, empathetic, questioning, or even antipathetic to what they are seeing" (Shields 2010: 51). New hybrid genres, which combine different stylistic categories open up debates and stimulate discussion.

Haitian-American author Edwidge Danticat reinscribed forgotten and often ignored stories of Haitians in the hybrid form of personal narrative entitled *The Dew Breaker* (2004). The book offers a compelling portrait of individuals haunted by pain, trauma and loss. Their stories function as a testimony of the generations of Haitians who experienced abuses and atrocities committed during the era of "Papa Doc" and "Baby Doc". The paper focuses on the effects of trauma on the individuals and the community, and the healing of trauma as mediated by Danticat's work. It examines the representation of Haiti's history and the collective experience of violence during the Duvaliers' dictatorship, and revisits the terror instilled by a paramilitary police – the Tonton Macoutes. The aim of the paper is to analyze how *The Dew Breaker* gives unique access to Haitian history, how it deals with its legacy of violence, and how the subaltern communicate their traumas and heal them.

To argue the role of literature in creating a voice for victims of political violence and psychological terror, the historical context of *The Dew Breaker* needs to be discussed. In 1957 a fifty-year-old country doctor won elections in Haiti and soon turned his presidency into a fourteen-year dictatorship. Francois Duvalier, as he is referred to here, was known to the world as 'Papa Doc'[2]. In his quest for absolute power he forced his presidency-for-life, and introduced an authoritarian regime. Duvalierism was known for its endemic brutality, and it was a period of terror and hysteria. Duvalier's Haiti was a byword for state terrorism, corruption, extortion and underdevelopment. Governed by a tyrant voodooist and his irrational personal whims, the Caribbean republic became a social and economic ruin, the poorest country in the Western hemisphere, where people had a life expectancy of forty years. The terror was institutionalized through Duvalier's personal armed civilian militia, which infiltrated every area of Haitian society (Abbott 1988: 98-105). The Volunteers of National Security were known almost exclusively as the Tonton Macoutes[3], and constituted an effective network of repression. They inherited the name from the Haitian folk belief in a boogeyman who prowls at night to hunt down errant children and kidnaps them in his straw satchel bag (*macoute*). The Macoutes acted as political cadres, secret police and instruments of terror. The members of the Macoutes came from the most disadvantaged classes. They were often

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1 For more discussion on this subject see: *Toward the Geopolitical Novel. U.S. Fiction in the Twenty-First Century* by Caren Irr, 2013, Columbia University Press.

2 Familiar names have often been given to Haitian presidents to reflect the mixture of authority and paternalism which surrounds the office. The element of paternalism, where the dictator appears either fatherly or avuncular, acts as an emollient for their horrendous crimes.

3 The Creole phrase Tonton Macoute means Uncle gunny sack.

illiterate criminals who were elevated to positions of power. Not only did they execute Duvaliers' orders, but they also committed crimes of their own volition. The reign of terror and the process of Macoutization infested every niche of the society (Ferguson 1987: 40-41, 52-53)[4]. The sadism of the Macoutes and the corruption that legitimized them were exposed by Graham Greene in his powerful novel *The Comedians* (1966), which was banned in Haiti. The county was, in the words of the author, "The Nightmare Republic" (Greene 2005: 32).

The regime continued when power was handed to Papa Doc's feckless 19-year-old son Jean Claude (Baby Doc)[5]. With another fifteen years of Duvalier rule, Haiti sank further into agricultural and economic ruin, despair, numbing poverty, and sleepy decay. Finally, people's desire for change and a new social order created an ad hoc movement. In 1986 massive waves of protests, demonstrations, riots, and days of violent unrest[6] caused the regime to disintegrate and Baby Doc was forced to flee the country. Duvalier's departure was followed by a gruesome episode which Haitians called 'operation *dechoukaj*' (operation uproot in Haitian Creole). It was the process of ridding the country of Duvalierism, which meant destroying buildings and the Duvalier family mausoleum, at the same time erasing the dynasty from the country's architecture. *Dechoukaj* also implemented hideous executions of Tonton Macoutes (Wilentz 2010).

Edwidge Danticat engages with such socially–defining events of her homeland's history in her book *The Dew Breaker.* The author investigates the violence of those times, its indelible legacy and lingering effects in the collective consciousness. The books' fictionalized stories are, in some ways, a collage of real events, so *The Dew Breaker* displays the collective memory that haunts Haitians both in Haiti and in the diaspora.

The Dew Breaker is not exactly a novel. It is a short story cycle, a memoir, *testimonio*, a hybrid form of life writing. The story is told from multiple points of view. The text also contains resonant cultural sources. There are fragments from *Life* and *Le Monde,* and allusions to Graham Greene's *The Comedians.* In this way Danticat translates her country's traumatic history into a different form, an intertext that, in a sense, converses with the aforementioned elements and fragments. The author moves easily back and forth in time and place, and combines multiple tales "that come together like jigsaw-puzzle pieces to create a picture of one man's terrible history and his and his victims' afterlife" (Kakutani 2014). Some of the puzzle pieces are missing, the stories are sketchy,

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4 "The Duvaliers […] claimed more than 40,000 human lives. They developed a coercion network made up of the Macoutes, the Haitian army, right-wing paramilitary groups, and rural magistrates to prevent civilian resistance to authoritarian rule and repress political opposition activity, while censoring or castigating any critique of the state". See: Steeve Coupeau, p.95.

5 The nickname was the scornful invention of foreign journalists.

6 The seeds of the downfall of the Duvalier regime can be found in its incapacity to deliver economic prosperity and political freedom, and its inability to reform public finances and to deliver on the basic demands of the Haitian population; pro-democracy groups were encouraged by the speech of Pope John Paul II upon his arrival in Port-au-Prince, and radio stations raised public awareness; a fever epidemic among porcine livestock and repressions of hunger riots provoked further incentives to revolt. See: S. Coupeau, p.105-106.

the cinematic plot resembles evocative snapshots, the protagonists' memories are broken and discontinuous. Apparent randomness has a clear design, as Danticat, by means of her limpid, understated prose and looping structure, recreates reactions to the traumatic events (Kakutani 2014). What is more, "the fragmented form of the text mirrors the fragmented and scarred Haitian people, whose country has been marked by political instability since its founding in 1804" (Bellamy 2012: 177-197). The tales in *The Dew Breaker* are stories of political and personal intersection. They present the effects of trauma both on the individual and the community, and they give a voice to victims of political violence and psychological terror. They revisit traumatic memory and try to help understand the processes of victimization, remembering, witnessing, and recovery. Trauma narratives are sites of social critique. They reconstruct histories, promote new forms of political action, open up new international debates on human rights. According to Gayatri Spivak, each great narrative is a program "which tells how social justice is to be achieved" (Spivak 1990: 19). In this connection *The Dew Breaker* may also stir the conscience of people, especially in view of the fact that it was inspired by newspaper articles, in recent years, concerning many former Haitian torturers living in the United States. In 2003 many of them were deported to Haiti by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (Valbrun 2004: 42-43).[7]

The Dew Breaker is a series of nine interrelated short stories that mirror the lives of individuals united by pain, trauma and loss, and who try to voice their past suffering. Danticat depicts the lives affected by a 'dew breaker'[8], a torturer of Haitian dissidents during the Duvaliers' reign. The eponymous dew breaker remains nameless throughout the book because, as the author suggests, there were many people like him. The book's other characters, his victims, intermingle with real people as well (Danticat 2004). Other protagonists are members of the dew breaker's family, his former victims and their family members, who are also haunted by the period that left no-one untouched or unharmed. The protagonists share the burden of the past that left them with marred bodies, broken families or destroyed hopes. Mariselle's husband ("The Funeral Singer")[9] was murdered after he drew an unfavorable picture of the president. Beatrice ("The Bridal Seamstress") was the victim of a Tonton Macoute who "whipped the bottom of [her] feet until they bled. Then he made [her] walk home, barefoot. On tar roads. In the hot sun. At high noon" (Danticat 2005: 132); Rezia ("The Funaral Singer"), when she was a girl, was raped by a "uniformed man", who must have been the Tonton Macoute; Freda's father ("The Funeral Singer") committed suicide after he was tortured and his property was confiscated:

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7 To date, none of the Macoutes were imprisoned for their actions. Their victims have waited in vain for justice and even seen former Duvalierist officials recycled in succeeding, supposedly "democratic," governments.

8 Dew breaker was a name given to members of the Tonton Macoutes ("The term "dew breaker" is a Creole expression for a representative of the dictatorship in a rural area—a person with free reign in the area, acting as judge, jury and executioner. A dew breaker comes in the early morning to claim his victims, breaking the dew on the grass.") See: http://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2004/06/grappling-with-haiti-s-beasts/303391/

9 The title in the brackets refers to a particular story from *The Dew Breaker*.

He'd had a fishstall at the market. One day, one macoute came to take it over and another one took my father away. When my father returned, he didn't have a tooth left in his mouth. In one night, they'd turned him into an old, ugly man. The next night he took his boat out to sea and, with a mouth full of blood, vanished forever (Danticat 2005: 172).

Danticat shows here a double impact of the loss of property and, far more important, family in the space of one day. The protagonist of the story "Monkey Tails" also loses his father, which makes him "part of a generation of mostly fatherless boys" (Danticat 2005: 141) as the fathers either died in the dictatorship's prisons or abandoned their families to serve the regime. The oppressive system of the Duvaliers touched the whole population of Haitians. Even those who left the country or were only indirectly touched by the torturers' cruelties do not seem totally free from the violent legacy. There are passive victims of traumatic events who suffer the trauma of being raised by traumatized parents, or by living in close proximity to the pain of people who survived massive historical terror. There is also a third group of people who suffer on an individual and national level - that of perpetrators and those related to them. Danticat shows that they are not excluded from the collective trauma; they live with the burden of the past and their guilt. All of them are socially bound by their personal experience, which is also connected with the history of the Haitian community. They are "men and women whose tremendous agonies filled every blank space in their lives. […] men and women chasing fragments of themselves long lost to others. […] palannits, night talkers, people who wet their beds, not with urine but with words" (Danticat :139-138, 98). They find an immense void in their lives. They are full of unutterable grief and repressed memories. What the protagonists experienced appears accessible outside the realms of their conscious memory. They communicate their traumatic experience in nightmare, hallucination and unwanted repetition, only then do they relieve and confess. (Ibarrola Armendariz 2010: 32). Danticat appears to be perfectly aware of what Cathy Caruth, who builds her theory on the work of contemporary clinical trauma specialists Judith Herman and Bessel van der Kolk, claims. Caruth maintains that trauma causes amnesia and is ineffable[10], that the reactions to the traumatic events are not to be found in the immediate aftermath of the atrocities experienced but, rather, "occur in the often delayed, uncontrolled repetitive appearance of hallucinations and other intrusive phenomena" (Caruth 1996: 11). The traumatic past determines the everyday life of the book's protagonists, and manifests itself in the subconscious with a tendency to resurface in the character's story or haunting memories. Dany ("Night Talkers"), who witnessed his parents' death at the hands of the 'dew breaker', seeks revenge and is obsessed with finding the murderer, yet the question appears of whether vengeance can bring peace of mind. Beatrice ("Bridal Seamstress") suffers from

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10 the suggestion that one may forget—or fail to accurately describe—trauma is a foundational insight for the first wave of literary trauma theorists, among them Geoffrey Hartman, Shoshana Felman, and Cathy Caruth. However, newer clinical studies on the psychology of trauma have challenged the theories on which Caruth relies. According to Harvard's Richard McNally, traumatic amnesia is a myth, and while victims may choose not to speak of their traumas, there is little evidence that they cannot. see: Joshua Pederson, *Speak, Trauma: Toward a Revised Understanding of Literary Trauma Theory*.

paranoia. She never managed to fully recover from the psychic wounds she received in her youth. She imagines her torturer following her everywhere she moves. Anne ("The Book of Miracles") suffers the emotional consequences of her marriage to a former Macoute. Nadine ("Water Child") refuses to interact with her co-workers or communicate with her parents in Haiti. According to Herman, traumatic events call into question basic human relationships. They breach the attachments of family, friendship, love, and community. They shatter the construction of the self that is formed and sustained in relation to others (Bellamy 2012: 187-189).

 Each chapter in the book discusses a different victim's struggle, while three core chapters ("The Dew Breaker", "The Book of the Dead", "The Book of Miracles") concern the dew breaker's family and Ka's (the dew breaker's daughter) discovery of her father's past as a prison guard. The reader meets the dew breaker as an old, peaceful man and a good father. When the story unfolds, the dew breaker's actions, their effects on various characters, and his old identity are revealed:

> The way he acted at the inquisitions in his own private cell at Casernes eventually earned him a lofty reputation among his peers. He was the one who came up with the most physically and psychologically taxing trials for the prisoners in his block. He was suffering, he knew it now, from what one of his most famous victims, the novelist Jacques Alexis, had written was the greatest hazard of the job […] It was becoming like any other job. He liked questioning the prisoners, teaching them to play zo and bezik, stapling clothespins to their ears as they lost and removing them as he let them win, convincing them that their false victories would save their lives. He liked to paddle them with braided cowhide, stand on their cracking backs and jump up and down like a drunk on a trampoline, pound a rock on the protruding bone behind their earlobes until they couldn't hear the orders he was shouting at them, tie blocks of concrete to the end of sisal ropes and balance them off their testicles if they were men or their breasts if they were women (Danticat 2005: 197-198).

A merciless sadist who worked with ruthless efficiency remade himself into a kindly landlord and barber who lives a modest life in Brooklyn, New York. He feels remorse, guilt that manifests in his nightmares, and he lives with the burden of the past and his actions. Danticat, showing a change that can occur in a perpetrator, constructs a more balanced portrait of a man who, as a powerless, impressionable boy joined the Tonton Macoutes. In later years his position was reversed when he mishandled his orders, at a certain point in his career as a torturer, killing the preacher who tore his cheek with a piece of a broken wooden chair. The narrative records the dying preacher's thoughts:

> The battle would be someone else's to fight from now. And yet he had not been completely defeated. The wound on the fat man's face wasn't what he had hoped; he hadn't blinded him or removed some of his teeth, but at least he'd left a mark on him, a brand that he would carry for the rest of his life. Every time he looked in the mirror, he would have to confront this mark and remember him. Whenever people asked what happened to his face, he would have to tell a lie, a lie that would further remind him of the truth (Danticat 2005: 227-228).

A great paradox of the book is that the perpetrator carries the most visible sign of the atrocities he committed in the past. The dew breaker lives with constant guilt and self-loathing, and is tortured by nightmares. Painting a portrait of the former Tonton Macoute, Danticat shows how the effects of the Duvalier dictatorship were equally observable in the victims and supporters of the regime; that the line between hunter and prey in Duvalier-era Haiti was highly situational. When seen in this light, the former Macoute is humanized. He is portrayed as a multi-faceted person, and the duality of his character makes it impossible to judge him easily.

The abuses and atrocities committed in Haiti are a heavy burden for victims, victimizers and people related to them. The story "Monkey Tails" takes the reader to February 7, 1986 in Haiti, while Baby Doc was escaping to France. The protagonist of the story, Michel, was doubly traumatized because that day, for the last time, he saw his best friend, who turned out to be the son of a Tonton Macoute. The fervor created by the upheaval flooded into the days and weeks that followed, and it earned the name "operation *dechoukaj*". A survivor of that chaotic day, Michel, is a twelve-year-old boy who presents his understanding of the day's events:

> Overnight our country had completely changed. We had fallen asleep under a dictatorship headed by a pudgy thirty-four-year-old man and his glamorous wife. During the night they'd sneaked away […] Their departure, however, orphaned a large number of loyal militiamen […] Now the population was going after those militiamen, those macoutes, with the determination of an army in the middle of its biggest battle to date. My cousin Vaval […] told us how on his way to the bus depot he had seen a group of people tie one of these militiamen to a lamppost, pour gasoline down his throat, and set him on fire (Danticat 2005: 140).

It is frequently the case, with such upheavals, that the reaction to the wrongdoers replicates what was done before. The description of that day shows the trauma of an entire group of people. The chaos, anxiety and despair of that day and many others to follow is explained by Arthur G. Neal in *National Trauma and Collective Memory*. The author describes how the enduring effects of a national trauma and collective resentments can be expressed in a violent action. He claims that when collective sadness is accompanied by anger, a volatile situation frequently develops (Neal 1998: 5-6). In this case collective anger was directed toward the Duvalier family and the Tonton Macoutes. Enveloped in a sense of rage and hostility, rioters yearned to destroy the physical reminders of the twenty-nine-year Duvalier dictatorship, and to repress painful memories. However, with such actions, justifiable though they are, the effect might be to extend the pain, and the stories from *The Dew Breaker* make it clear that the memories that haunt Haiti and its people remained. The book seems to offer a solution to deal with the traumatic experience, and to accept the past of Haiti[11]. This solution stands in opposition to *dechoukaj*, which sought to erase every trace of the Duvalier era from the collective memory of Haitians.

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11 Such trauma-writing has clearly figured in recent Haitian Literature (see also Dany Laferrière, or other books by Danticat, e.g. *The Farming of Bones).*

The protagonists of *The Dew Breaker* are caught in the dilemma of denying the events that hurt them so much and proclaiming them aloud to obtain some justice and recognition for the innocent victims. Reading Danticat's book, it can be concluded that the key to overcoming traumatic experience is remembering and commemorating the losses. Silence reflects unresolved trauma, guilt and shame, while speech, however fragmented, facilitates healing and begins the process of resolving trauma. The wife of a reformed murderer, Anne ("The Book of Miracles"), does not want to or cannot speak of her traumatic experiences. She has been haunted by the threat of exposure and she is caught in persistent silence. She refuses to bear testimony to her own traumatic past, and at the same time is trapped in grief and remains alienated from her daughter who recently learned about her father's past. Other characters in *The Dew Breaker* try to relieve their burden by speaking out about some of the truths that have been torturing them for many years. They can find partial redemption and alleviation of psychic wounds and scars by sharing their stories. This is certainly the case of the group of young women in "The Funeral Singer". Instead of suppressing their memories, Rezia, Mariselle and Freda meet regularly to talk about their troubled past. They are in need of mourning, remembering, reconnecting, and building some sort of community. Showing that the three women need a long time to understand each other, Danticat enhances the idea that overcoming a traumatic experience needs a long process and empathetic companions, but after the exposure and sharing of their traumatic memories, they "slowly parcel out sorrows, each walking out with fewer than [they]'d carried in" (Danticat 2005: 170). One of the victims, Dany, in "Night Talkers", also begins to work through his trauma when he hears stories of the support that his aunt gives to people in her village. He realizes that coming to terms with his past involves helping somebody, and emphasizes the ability to empathize with others who were equally hurt. Only then does he understand that perpetuating violence will not change the suffering he has gone through, and his experience emphasizes that seeking revenge may not be the solution with which to work through traumatic memories. There might appear to be some catharsis in the collective reaction to the Duvalier regime, but individuals still have to confront and somehow quieten their own intensely personal traumas.

Danticat's fiction presents the effects of trauma on the individual and the community, identifies what is destroyed by trauma, and indicates new strategies and sensibilities that will help the characters to recover. It is equally valid for perpetrators, who also suffer from a trauma not very different from that affecting their prey.

The characters in *The Dew Breaker* seem to answer the rebellious preacher's question that he asked his followers forty years ago in one of his radio sermons encouraging his followers to fight tyrants: "And what will we do with *our* beasts?" (Danticat 2005: 185). The protagonists find some rituals to pacify their "beasts", their harrowing memories, the pain and grief. They learn to recall in memory the traumatic experience, but also realize that they are living here and now with openings to the future, in which they can find hope and contentment. Some of the characters try to appease their ghosts from the past by being brought into contact with other individuals who experienced catastrophes. It helps them to see their own problems in a new light and to realize that they

are not alone in having to cope with the burden of trauma. *The Dew Breaker* offers a solution to deal with the traumatic experience by revisiting and communicating harrowing experience, and not by destroying the memory or remaining silent.

At this point one might ask the question that appears in Margaret Atwood's *The Robber Bride*: "Who cares why, at this distance? A disaster is a disaster; those hurt by it remain hurt, those killed remain killed, the rubble remains rubble" (Atwood 1993: 3). The same author may be quoted here to answer this question. The disaster, the dead, the rubble must be brought back "into the land of living and allowed to enter time once more – which means to enter the realm of the audience, the realm of the readers, the realm of change" (Atwood 2002: 179-179). Rewriting history, wresting it from the prison of 'the grand narrative' helps give a voice to traumatized individuals and populations. Such texts as Dandicat's become political acts designed to stir the conscience of the people. Personal narratives enable victims to speak truth to power; they are meta-sites for social critique. Further, their recognition in the international community, the unpredictable patterns of official and unofficial dissemination of stories to multiple audiences, the mixed responses to them, contribute to what is developing as a different politics of social change. The multiple forms of remembrance of and witnessing to abuse spur developments in the field of human rights (Schaffer and Smith 2004: 31-32). Literature of trauma may do important work in fostering awareness of and sympathy for different experiences of individuals around the globe. "Literature of trauma is written from the need to tell and retell the story of the traumatic experience, to make it 'real' both to the victim and to the community. Such writing serves both as validation and cathartic vehicle for the traumatized" (Tal 1996: 21). Danticat's protagonists seem to say exactly what Rigoberta Menchú said in her *testimonio*: "This is my testimony. I didn't learn it from a book and I didn't learn it alone. I'd like to stress that it's not only my life, it's also the testimony of my people. […] My personal experience is the reality of a whole people" (Menchú 1984: 1). *The Dew Breaker* acts as a testimony of collective suffering, and it brings Haiti's historical traumas to the attention of a new audience. The author writes of Haiti in English both to "introduce people to Haiti" and to acquaint people like her American-born compatriots with crucial aspects of Haitian history. *The Dew Breaker* provides access to history that would otherwise be unknown and unrepresented in histories. It also, apparently, seeks to build bridges—or at least create some understanding—between victims and perpetrators, and expands Haiti's community of survivors with sympathetic readers who share the weight of this nation's traumatic experiences. What is more, Danticat transforms stories of brutalization into narratives of hope, which is also hope for Haiti's future.

Not only are the stories from *The Dew Breaker* fueled by empathy and enlivened by hope, connection, commitment, and affiliation; not only do they call for justice, and for the reader to be more active and more informed; they are also testimonies that help to deal with emerging fear, trauma and repression. For Cathy Caruth, trauma is an experience so intensely painful that the mind is unable to process it normally. She claims that if the memories of the trauma return, they are often nonverbal, and the victim may be unable to describe them with words. In this connection, Cathy Caruth maintains that fiction can "speak" trauma and may have therapeutic potential,

whereas normal, discursive language cannot. It is partly because, by its very nature, fiction sits at a distance from the actual, raw experiences of human beings—and can thus offer, however briefly, some detachment. Caruth also affirms the significance of writing trauma literature in the process of remembering and communicating the memory of traumatic events (Caruth 1995: 4). Julia Alvarez also believes that readers can immerse in the particular epoch thanks to imagination, and says that "[a] novel is not after all, a historical document, but a way to travel through the human heart" (Alvarez 1995: 324).

Danticat's book forbids forgetting. The stories need to be heard, and for those who tell them there is a redemptive quality. Such stories create a representative voice for victims of political violence and psychological terror who have been silenced. They seem necessary for the process of reburial and grieving, and they can promote healing and solidarity among disaffected groups and expand human capacity for empathy (Mullins 2008: 4-12). To use Homi Bhabha's words from his Oxford Amnesty Lecture: "the quest for freedom and solidarity—draw on the emotions, the imagination, vivid images and moving narratives" (Bhabha 2003:161), and such narratives have "the creative potential to transform human relations and historical disasters" (Bhabha 2003: 161).

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J.R.R. Tolkien's Portrayal of Femininity and Its Transformations in Subsequent Adaptations

Abstract. The aim of the following paper is to examine the portrayal of female characters and femininity in J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. Since Tolkien's heroines have been both praised and severely criticized, this paper will, first of all, investigate and recapitulate the arguments in favor and against Tolkien's depiction of women. Secondly, it will be argued that the ambiguity surrounding these fictional characters stems from the writer's private relationship with women. Finally, the paper will analyze how Tolkien's ambiguous female characters have fared in various adaptations of his works, particularly in the cinematic versions produced by Peter Jackson and in fan-made art.

Keywords: J.R.R. Tolkien; Middle-earth; females; femininity; adaptations.

J.R.R. Tolkien's portrayal of females and femininity—particularly in *The Lord of the Rings* (1954-55)—has long been the object of major criticism. Readers and academics have frequently objected to the scarcity of female heroes and their secondary roles in the narrative, and questioned the author's representations of femininity in general.[12] After the release of Peter Jackson's movie adaptations of *The Lord of the Rings* (2001-2003) and *The Hobbit* (2012-2014), the debate over Tolkien's heroines gained an entirely new dimension, because the movies introduced several changes into the depiction of Middle-earth's women. The aim of this paper is, therefore, twofold: firstly, to evaluate the arguments in favor and against Tolkien's portrayal of women (a portrayal which is grounded in the writer's private relationships), and secondly, to analyze how Tolkien's female characters have fared in various adaptations. Some of these adaptations, particularly Jackson's movies, have been acknowledged worldwide and their imagery may now significantly influence the reception of Tolkien's books. Others, such as fan-made films and fan-fiction stories, are less known, yet they, too, are significant, because they reflect the fans' attitude to Tolkien's creation. The transformations which Tolkien's fiction, particularly its portrayal of women, has undergone in both

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12 See Partridge 1983, Croft and Donovan 2015.

groups of adaptations can be perceived as indicative of the postmodern audience's approach to the topics of gender relations and female empowerment.

Most of the critical comments concerning Tolkien's heroines are made in reference to *The Lord of the Rings*, not *The Hobbit*, for the simple reason that femininity is such a marginal issue in *The Hobbit* that it cannot even be decently criticized. After all, *The Hobbit* is the story of Bilbo Baggins' adventures with a group of dwarves. Females—be it hobbit, elf or dwarf ones—are almost non-existent and apparently not even needed since, in spite of their absence, the dragon is successfully killed, evil goblins defeated, and Bilbo delivered home more experienced. Femininity appears only at the distant margins of the main plot, e.g. as a brief remark about Thorin's sister (mother of Kili and Fili) and Bilbo's mother—Belladonna Took. Belladonna is described as "one of the three remarkable daughters of the Old Took" (Tolkien 1998: 13), and it is said that one of her ancestors had a "fairy wife" (1998: 13), which seems to explain why members of the family are more prone to adventures than other hobbits. Yet even for Belladonna everything changes after she marries Bungo Baggins.

The paragraph about Bilbo's mother is brief, yet it reveals a lot both about the heroes and the author. First of all, because of his mother's heritage, Bilbo is different from other hobbits, a "a bit queer" (Tolkien 1998: 13). In other words, Bilbo is special, and according to the patterns of fairy tales and fantasy fiction that immediately establishes him as the hero. Secondly, a shared trait of character suggests that a closer bond exists between Bilbo and his mother than between him and his father—which could be also said about Tolkien and his own mother, Mabel. Thirdly, the passage on Belladonna becomes a comment on the female nature in general. While masculinity is active, femininity is passive; "the famous Belladonna Took" (Tolkien 1998: 13) is just an exception to the rule, and even she settles down after marriage.

The absence, insignificance, and passivity of female characters—features discernable already in the short *Hobbit*—are the main claims leveled against *The Lord of the Rings*. Several examples from the text seem to firmly support these allegations. First and foremost, even though readers learn a bit about Rosie Cotton and Lobelia Sackville-Baggins, get distant glimpses of Arwen, and briefly encounter Galadriel and Éowyn, they cannot fail to notice that the world of Middle-earth is one of male dominance and patriarchal societies, in which women are scarcely present.[13] John Miller (2003: 188) argues that even the War of the Ring is defined by masculinity because it "is a war of phallic edifices (contesting for, and threatened by, the power embodied in a symbol of the feminine, a ring)."[14] Consequently, there are no female members in the Fellowship whose task it is to destroy the Ring. What is more, even outside the Fellowship, females are scarce. The trilogy shows one or two female representatives of every race, but in the case of ents, dwarves, and orcs there is not even a single one present. Moreover, except for the spider Shelob (and her mother Ungoliant that appears in *The Silmarillion*), there are no female enemies, as if "Tolkien was not comfortable

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13 Gerard O'Connor goes as far as to accuse the trilogy of "institutional male chauvinism" (1973: 49).

14 These "phallic edifices" are, e.g. Minas Tirith, Minas Ithil, Orthanc, and the Tower of Barad-dur.

conjoining the concepts *female* and *enemy*, as if it was not chivalrous" (Frederick and McBride 2001: 109). Finally, apart from Tom Bombadil, none of the major characters has a wife (Aragorn and Sam marry their beloveds only after the quest ends) or the wife is already dead (as in the case of Elrond, King Theoden, and Lord Denethor). With the exception of Aragorn and Sam, none of the heroes even mentions having a love interest.

This scarcity of male-female relationship in *The Lord of the Rings* can be explained, one the one hand, by the shortage of women characters. It is not surprising that with so few available women and with the world's safety at stake, romantic love becomes a marginal issue. Moreover, Brenda Partridge argues that even when there is some interaction between the opposite sexes, it "is for the most part stilted and distant" (1983: 183), and grounded in the ideals of chivalric romances and courtly love. As a result, sexual passion is almost non-existent. The female spider Shelob seems to be the sole reference to female sexuality, and not a very favorable one. Nick Otty argues that the description of Shelob contains reference to the female body made grotesque and disgusting, and that Shelob's attacks on Frodo and Sam "are also attempts upon their Hobbit virginities" (1983: 176). The positive male and female heroes generally seem prone to celibacy and become sexually active only within the bonds of matrimony. Marriage marks the end of adventures and the beginning of new social roles—for Sam as the leader of the hobbit community, and for Aragorn as the King of Gondor.

On the other hand, the male-female relationships are largely substituted by the feeling of male camaraderie. Whether it is the relationship between Frodo and Sam, Merry and Pippin, or Legolas and Gimli, Partridge is right to describe them as "intensely close and supportive" (1983: 183). In the face of Sam's fierce loyalty to Frodo, Merry's and Pippin's mutual care, and Legolas's and Gimli's fondness for each other, the relationships between Sam and Rosie or Aragorn and Arwen seem lukewarm at best. Partridge even argues that Sam's marriage is secondary to what he shares with Frodo: marriage "ensures that Sam, bereft of Frodo, will not be completely alone though the companionship it provides will never reach the depths of passion and spiritual intensity of the relationship of Sam and Frodo" (1983: 187). Candice Frederick and Sam McBride aptly summarize this scarcity of women and male-female relationship by arguing that "Middle-earth is very Inkling-like, in that while women exist in the world, they need not be given significant attention and can, if one is lucky, simply be avoided altogether" (2001: 108).

The female characters that do appear in Tolkien's fiction are criticized for their passivity, insignificance, and stereotypical roles. Kenneth McLeish likens them to cardboard figures (1983: 125) rather than plausible female characters. The delicate Rosie Cotton functions merely as the object of Sam's unrequited love, and then as his hard-earned prize. The other hobbit female, Lobelia Sackville-Baggins, represents the least favorite family member: a greedy relative whom it is best to avoid. Among the eleven women, both Arwen and Galadriel can be summed up as inspiration for male activity. The memory of Arwen—whom Gerard O'Connor calls "lovely, precious, and empty" (1973: 50)—is what keeps Aragorn going, whereas Galadriel's role is to support the Fellowship's quest with her generous gifts. Moreover, both Arwen and Galadriel are restrained

by male power. Arwen's love for Aragorn is curbed by her father, whereas Galadriel is deferential towards her husband, though she is apparently more powerful. In the end, both elven women renounce whatever position they have because of men. Arwen sacrifices her immortality to be united with her beloved, while Galadriel has to sail to the West because she cannot live in the Age of Men. As for the human women, they, too, hardly transgress their stereotypical roles. Though by going to war Éowyn temporarily rebels against her society's norms, eventually she seems content with her place at Faramir's side. As Frederick and McBride argue, "Éowyn's healing is a victory, not only for Faramir but for their civilization; an unruly impulse to transcend prescribed gender roles has been successfully thwarted" (2001: 113). The other human woman, the old nurse Ioreth, is characterized mainly by her wisdom in healing and her talkativeness—two features frequently attributed to women. Finally, even the mysterious and apparently powerful Goldberry, Tom Bombadil's wife, withdraws from conversation and tends to her house duties when her husband gives advice to the hobbits. Though her presence is comforting and reassuring, she has little impact on the course of the adventure. Thus, Otty recapitulates women's roles in *The Lord of the Rings* in the following way:

> The female Hobbits are either scolds or helpmeets of the most humble kind. The female Elves are devotional exemplars to be called on in emergency like the Virgin Mary. Amongst the humans Éowyn does get involved as a shield maiden disguised as a man and actually kills the Nazgul Lord. But she is an exception and is driven by her passion for Aragorn; otherwise the human women are healers and nurses in Gondor. (1983: 176)

In the face of such examples, it might seem viable to claim that while Tolkien's trilogy—with its complex history, languages, and landscapes—is a great work of fantastic subcreation, it severely diminishes women.

Yet this conclusion is true only if readers purposely overlook several examples of female empowerment and Tolkien's deep understanding of male-female relationship. These examples prove that Tolkien's heroines, despite their seeming withdrawal from direct combat and grand politics, are neither insignificant nor helpless. First of all, Lobelia's and Éowyn's deeds prove that in times of crisis women are able to defend their communities. The greedy and unsympathetic Lobelia surprises readers by her brave act of defiance: during an invasion of the Shire, she attacks one of Saruman's men with an umbrella, for which she is imprisoned. Likewise, Éowyn also intends to protect what she holds dear and rebels against her social position not because she wants a career as a swordswoman, but because she cannot ride to war like her kinsmen. The possibility that other women would like to join the battle cannot be ruled out by the argument that Tolkien does not mention any other female warriors. After all, similarly to his beloved sagas, Tolkien focuses on the fate of the mighty and powerful, not the common people (with the exception of the hobbits). Thus, Éowyn, given her royal status and skill in sword-fighting, is better prepared to transgress social boundaries than peasant women. It is also worth pointing out that after her participation in battle Éowyn is not punished for her transgression, but praised and respected—not a likely

outcome if Middle-earth's society were truly so patriarchal as some critics assume. In the end, Éowyn does not insist on remaining a warrior, but redirects her courage and determination to her new social roles.

Secondly, heroines like Arwen, Galadriel, and Goldberry possess wisdom, power, and status which are not diminished by their respect for their husbands. Since Arwen and Galadriel are of great elven descent and Goldberry,[15] "River-woman's daughter," possesses powers related to nature, all three transcend the boundaries between the material and spiritual world. According to Frederick and McBride, "Tolkien based more than one female character on his own veneration for the Virgin Mary, not the earthly, living mother of Jesus, but the distant yet matriarchal comfort of an interceding goddess" (2001: 107), hence the otherworldly nature of these heroines. Other biblical references in Tolkien's portrayal of women can also be identified. While commenting on the figures of Yavanna (the creator of the holy trees) and Varda (the creator of stars), Maureen Thum points out that these females

> reverse the tale of Eve, whose weakness, passivity, and inability to resist temptation led to the Fall […]. In Tolkien's tales, the destruction of Paradise is not brought about by a woman, but by a male figure […]. Instead of playing a negative role, Yavanna and Varda are creators and givers of light and life. (2004: 235)

Consequently, the fact that the lore-wise Galadriel can humble herself for her husband proves how much she has changed since the times of her youth, when she rebelled against the Valar and was sent to Middle-earth as a penitent. Later in the story, it is Galadriel, not her husband, who is tempted by Frodo's offer of the One Ring and who successfully refuses the temptation. By doing so, Galadriel proves her wisdom and goodness, which remains in stark contrast with the behavior of some of the male heroes (e.g. Boromir). Similarly, the fact that Goldberry allows Tom Bombadil—the one who can make the One Ring disappear—to advise the hobbits is also a proof of her wisdom: she can recognize the limits of her own abilities and powers. Examples of empowered females are present also in Tolkien's other texts: Varda, known as Elbereth Gilthoniel, is worshipped by the elves as the Queen of Heaven; Melian the Maia is a wise and powerful ruler, and her daughter, Lúthien Tinúviel, not only saves her mortal beloved, Beren, but also manages to retrieve one of the Silmaril; Ancalimë, the only child of Aldarion and Erendis, becomes the heir of Númenor's throne and the island's first Queen. If all of these examples are taken into consideration, it becomes clear that in Tolkien's universe not only men, but women as well, hold royal power and are granted divine-like status.

What is more, though male-female relationship are scarce in *The Lord of the Rings*, the trilogy—in the story of the ents—emphasizes the value of marriage and provides advice on the proper relation-

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15 Ann McCauley Basso argues that despite her brief appearance, Goldberry is a pivotal figure, because "both her character and her actions are thematically significant, providing symmetry with later events and characters, bridging the gap between the Anglo-Saxon, noble women and the rustic women of the Shire, and providing an Eve figure who parallels the Mary figure Galadriel." (2008: 137) Moreover, Taryne Jade Taylor argues that Goldberry's and Bombadil's first meeting in "The Adventures of Tom Bombadil" is Tolkien's reworking of an episode from Ovid's *The Metamorphoses* in which Pluto/Hades encounters Proserpina (2008: 148-149).

ship between the spouses. In the distant past, the ents and the entwives parted their ways because the former wanted to take care of trees, while the latter preferred to plant gardens. Eventually, the two groups got separated for good and by the time of the War of the Ring the ents cannot find any trace of their mates, without whom they are doomed to extinction. Thus, the tale offers a clear warning: the lack of mutual understating between spouses can lead to separation that will be detrimental for both sides. A similar warning is voiced by the story "Aldarion and Erendis: The Mariner's Wife" from Tolkien's *Unfinished Tales*. Aldarion, the sixth King of Númenor and a great mariner, spends most of his time at sea. Because he makes Erendis, his wife, constantly wait for him and fear his next departure, the woman gradually grows bitter and spiteful. Eventually, their relationship completely deteriorates: Erendis cannot forgive her husband his love for the sea, and Aldarion does not wish to sacrifice his freedom for his wife. They destroy not only their own marriage, but also that of their daughter, Ancalimë, who is equally unable to form a healthy relationship with her husband. Thus, though marriage is only briefly mentioned in *The Lord of the Rings*—when Aragorn and Sam marry their beloveds—and seems hardly more than a clincher to the main plot, the fate of the ents and Aldarion demonstrate that Tolkien recognized martial happiness, based on the spouses' mutual understanding, as a prerequisite for personal happiness. Also the theme of romantic love, which is rather insignificant in *The Lord of the Rings*, reappears in Tolkien's other stories, and the tragic fate of Beren and Lúthien is one of the most compelling tales in Middle-earth's history.

If all of the above-mentioned examples are taken into consideration, the image of females and femininity present in Tolkien's works becomes an ambiguous one, including both passivity and empowerment. Such an ambiguous representation of women may be grounded in Tolkien's private experiences. On the one hand, his perception of women undoubtedly was shaped by the times he lived in. In the early and mid 20th century women were still expected to concentrate on their family life and child raising; even though they received formal education, they were not encouraged to pursue a career after marriage. Such was the environment in which Tolkien grew up, and he did not expect his wife, Edith (a talented pianist), to do otherwise (Carpenter 1977: 156). What is more, as an academic, Tolkien was part of an environment dominated by men. The contact between male and female students was quite limited (Scull and Hammond, vol. 2, 2006: 1109), and women seldom participated in the intellectual discussions of some male clubs. In his own group, the Inklings, Tolkien was exposed not only to male camaraderie, but also to his friends' opinions about the 'proper' place of women. Partridge claims that C.S. Lewis was particularly strict on this issue: "It was an article of his faith that full intimacy with another man was impossible unless women were totally excluded. […] Believing women's minds were not meant for logic or for great art it was his view that women had little to say that was worth listening to" (1983: 180). A quotation from Tolkien suggests that he might have shared that idea of women's intellectual inferiority or, at least, their dependency on men:

> How quickly an intelligent woman can be taught, grasp the teacher's ideas, see his points—and how (with some exceptions) they can go no further, when they leave his hand, or when they cease to take a personal interest in him. It is their gift to be receptive, stimulated, fertilized (in many other matters than

the physical) by the male. (in Carpenter 1978: 169)

Furthermore, Tolkien's meetings with the Inklings seemed to cause tensions between him and Edith, who was not part of the group. Carpenter explains that Tolkien "perceived that his need of male friendship was not entirely compatible with married life. But he believed that this was one of the sad facts of a fallen world: and on the whole he thought that a man had a right to male pleasures, and should if necessary insist on them" (1977: 156). Finally, the passivity and withdrawal of Tolkien's heroines was probably inspired also by the writer's beloved myths and sagas, in which women seldom participated in battle and adventures; any romance was either framed within chivalric conventions or presented only superficially, without emotional or psychological depth. Partridge states that "the ancient, Norse and Christian mythologies in which he was immersed reinforced Tolkien's refusal […] to accept the full and active participation of women in every area of life" (1983: 194).

On the other hand, Tolkien's biographies undermine the claim that he was a chauvinist and that he did not recognize women's achievements. On the contrary, Tolkien acknowledged and respected women who had the strength to follow their own convictions. The most influential example was probably Tolkien's mother, Mabel, who raised her sons after their father's premature death and who withstood her family's rejection after she had decided to convert to Roman Catholicism (Scull and Hammond, vol.2, 2006: 1107). Tolkien's own unrelenting faith in God was deeply grounded in his mother's convictions and her devotion to his and his brother's Catholic education. Mabel's sister, Jane Neave, was an example of an academically successful woman: she had a Bachelor of science degree and was a schoolteacher (Scull and Hammond, vol.2, 2006: 1108). What is more, Tolkien's only daughter, Priscilla, stated that her father always encouraged her education (in Scull and Hammond, vol.2, 2006: 1111). Thus, Scull and Hammond argue that

> it is evident from his friendships and professional relationships, of which there were many, with female students and dons at Oxford, and from personal accounts by female friends, that Tolkien respected women no less than men for their talents, and that he welcomed their company. (vol.2, 2006: 1112)

What is more, Tolkien's relationship with his wife proves that he did not underestimate the importance of romantic love and marriage. Having met Edith Bratt as an adolescent, Tolkien had to endure long years of separation until he could officially propose—a restriction set by his guardian, Father Francis Morgan, after Tolkien had failed to get a scholarship to Oxford. Not surprisingly then, some of Tolkien's major fictional pairs are similarly tested by separation before they can fulfill their love: Beren and Lúthien (whose names are on the Tolkiens' grave), Aragorn and Arwen, Sam and Rosie. Moreover, though Tolkien was constantly occupied by academic life, intellectual disputes, and writing, his biographers believe that he deeply cared for Edith, particularly when her health deteriorated and he had to adjust his work to her needs (Scull and Hammond, vol.2, 2006: 1115). After all, marriage was for Tolkien not only a proper continuation of courtship, but also a vital element of a truly Christian life. If all of these examples of female passivity and empower-

ment witnessed by Tolkien are taken into consideration, it is easy to understand why similarly ambiguous images appear in his fiction.

Such an ambiguous representation has posed a serious challenge for artists who wish to adapt Tolkien's Middle-earth in other forms of art. While some of these adaptations faithfully follow the original storyline, others make significant changes. Consequently, some of them retain female heroes in the background (if the females appear at all)[16] apparently emphasizing their passivity and insignificance, whereas others alter the females and their roles in a striking way, perhaps to make them more appealing for the contemporary audience that expects powerful and well-defined female characters. Among the numerous adaptations of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* Peter Jackson's movie versions[17] seem particularly significant, because they have rekindled people's interest in Middle-earth, made a lasting impression on their viewers, and inspired many to express their engagement with the fictional world and its characters through fan-art. As far as female characters are concerned, by removing, adding or altering the existing heroines, the producers introduced numerous changes into the portrayal of Middle-earth's women.[18] All of these changes can, of course, be somehow justified. *The Lord of the Rings*, being a massive and detailed text, had to be converted into a script of reasonable length and clarity. At the expense of other scenes, significant characters had to be given enough screen time to become memorable and believable. Finally, events and relationships needed to be made obvious even for an audience not well versed in Tolkien's universe. Yet the resulting changes have received mixed criticism. While some viewers express their disappointment with the alterations, others agree that these alterations can be, nonetheless, reconciled with the spirit of Tolkien's vision.

Goldberry and Lobelia are examples of women who almost completely disappear from *The Lord of the Rings* screen version. The entire episode with Goldberry and Tom Bombadil was cut out for the sake of the movie's pace: the hobbits' respite at their house seems but a pause in the main quest, which the script could not afford to include. Thus, the hobbits from the movie never visit the benevolent pair, and a viewer less knowledgeable with the books will not even notice Goldberry's and Bombadil's absence. Similarly, the entire chapter of the Scouring of the Shire, the essential coda to the trilogy and the proof of the hobbits' spiritual growth, has also been removed in order to make room for other scenes. As a result, Lobelia, who briefly appears during Bilbo's birthday party episode, never gets the chance to defy Saruman's henchmen and show the better side of her personality. Though Jackson's movies generally make Tolkien females more active than they are in the books, the absence of Goldberry and Lobelia is a reduction of female energy in comparison to the original story.

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16 For instance, Arwen does not appear either in Ralph Bakshi's animated adaptation of *The Lord of the Rings* (1978) or Rankin/Bass animation *The Return of the King: A Story of the Hobbits* (1980).

17 *The Hobbit*: *An Unexpected Journey* (2012), *The Desolation of Smaug* (2013), *There and Back Again* (2014). *The Lord of the Rings*: *The Fellowship of the Ring* (2001), *The Two Towers* (2002), *The Return of the King* (2003).

18 See David Mullich's "The Complete List of Film Changes for The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings" available on The One Ring.com

While Goldberry and Lobelia disappear, other females appear in both expected and unexpected places. The first example of additional female presence pertains to women in general, as members of Middle-earth's communities. While it is not surprising that in the movie versions women (hobbit, elven, and human) appear in the background of the main events, their presence is quite significant, because Tolkien's fans can finally see the women of Middle-earth and acknowledge their existence—something that is easily dismissed when the books concentrate on the male heroes and their rambling adventures.

While females as members of communities can be expected to appear, Galadriel (played by Cate Blanchett) makes a series of appearance that are inconsistent with the books. In *The Lord of the Rings*, Galadriel narrates the prologue opening the movie, which recapitulates the history of Middle-earth and the Ring. Though other narrators were considered (Frodo, Gandalf), Galadriel was eventually chosen either because her elven longevity establishes her as a witness of the related events or because the quality of Cate Blanchett's voice fits the narration so well. Regardless of the reasons, this act of narration puts Galadriel in a position of power and grants her more authority. In the case of *The Hobbit*, Galadriel suddenly makes an unexpected appearance in the movie adaptation, in the sub-plot about the Necromancer gathering his forces at Dol Guldur. Together with Gandalf, Elrond, and Saruman, she debates how to address the challenge of the Necromancer and provides emotional consolation to other characters. Therefore, the producers again established Galadriel, a female, as a major persona and a figure of power.

The most striking change in *The Hobbit* movie—as far as females are concerned—is the addition of Tauriel, a female Woodland Elf (played by Evangeline Lilly). Her presence is such a striking change for a few reasons. Firstly, Tauriel is not only a skilled warrior who does not hesitate to kill her enemies, but also the head of the Mirkwood Elven Guard, thus, she occupies a typically male position. Secondly, she is strong-willed and impulsive. Having learnt that Kili will soon die from a poisoned arrow, she leaves her kingdom without permission and pursues the dwarves. Thirdly, she is placed in a love triangle with Kili and Legolas. Tauriel's conversation with Kili and her frantic race to save him imply that she develops strong feelings towards the dwarf, despite their racial difference. *The Battle of the Five Armies* proves that Kili reciprocates her love. However, Jackson does not cross the line and ends the 'forbidden' romance by remaining faithful to the original storyline: Kili dies during the battle (which leaves Tauriel to grieve her lost love). All in all, by adding Galadriel's narration in *The Lord of the Rings* and her presence in *The Hobbit*, as well as by inventing Tauriel, the scriptwriters tipped the balance of male and female power in Middle-earth in favor of femininity. Yet while Galadriel's new roles and extended authority generally correspond to Tolkien's vision of her as a powerful elven woman, Tauriel and her complicated love life are undoubtedly more 'Jacksonian' than Tolkienian.[19]

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19 The most hilarious fan-made critique of Tauriel, as well as of some other changes to the plot of *The Hobbit,* appears in the song "Who the 'Ell is Tauriel" sung by The Esgaroth Three (available on YouTube).

Apart from removing or adding female heroes, Jackson's movies have also introduced minor or major changes in the portrayal of Rosie Cotton, Éowyn, and Arwen. Rosie Cotton is shown working as a barmaid in one of the hobbit taverns. While in both the text and the movie Rosie (Sarah McLeod) exists solely for the purpose of being Sam's distant love and then his earned wife, Jackson's idea to turn her into a barmaid of a tavern which Sam frequently visits creates believable background for the hobbit's infatuation. Whether Tolkien would approve of this change remains a question, but such a minor alteration does not seem to disrupt the author's vision.

In the case of Éowyn (Miranda Otto), her cinematic version seems fairly close to Tolkien's vision: the princess of Rohan is both a feminine woman and a fearless defender of her kingdom. The changes which the scriptwriters permitted themselves to make introduce some light humor into Éowyn's character. In the original text, Éowyn is a tragic heroine since she has to passively observe her uncle's withering, suffer Grima's advances, overcome Aragorn's refusal to reciprocate her love, and ride to battle in disguise, before she finds happiness at Faramir's side. While all of this does take place in the movies, elements of humor added by the filmmakers introduce new traits into the princess's character. For instance, in one scene Éowyn offers Aragorn some self-made food. The food must be disgusting since the man tries to secretly throw it away, yet then he mercifully pretends (to the amusement of the audience) to be enjoying his meal. In another scene (at Helm's Deep), Éowyn talks with Gimli about dwarf women and their rumored beards. Inarguably, such scenes make Éowyn more likeable as a character. Nevertheless, while the princess might have wanted to make food for Aragorn to express her affection, her conversation with Gimli about the nature of dwarf women seems less legitimate according to Middle-earth's standards.

The greatest changes appears in the portrayal of Arwen (Liv Tyler). In both the text and the movie Arwen is presented as a noble elven woman of great beauty and dignity. But while in the original text she appears for only a moment and even her marriage to Aragorn is mentioned in the Appendices, in Jackson's movies Arwen receives much more exposition. On top of that, she is presented as a fierce warrior and a figure of power. It is Arwen, not Glorfindel, that finds Aragorn and the hobbits in the wilderness, and rescues the wounded Frodo from the Black Riders. It is Arwen, not Elrond, who calls forth the flood at the Ford of Bruinen after she brandished her sword at them.[20] What is more, the movies add scenes which emphasize Arwen and Aragorn's romantic relationship. In Rivendell, Arwen gives Aragorn an elven jewel called Evenstar as a token of her love; the jewel then reappears through the movies, giving the hero spiritual strength on his quest. In another scene, when Aragorn floats down the river after a battle, he is woken up by a spectral image of Arwen and her kiss.[21] The film also highlights the difficulty of Arwen's decision about

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20 At one point, the filmmakers even planned to have Arwen actively participate in the battle at Helm's Deep (West 2011: 234).

21 A similar scene appears in *The Hunt for Gollum* (2009), a non-profit, fan-made prequel to *The Lord of the Rings*, directed by Chris Bouchard. The movie follows Aragon (Adrian Webster) on his quest to capture Gollum. Arwen (Rita

whether to choose love and mortality or accompany her father to the Undying Lands. All of these scenes required, of course, additional dialogue and events not described by Tolkien. Nevertheless, some critics claim that these additions fit Tolkien's overall vision and match the spirit of the books. For instance, by arguing that "Arwen's role is a logical extrapolation based on the actions of other Elven characters, a reflection of the past power of the Eldar in Middle-earth" (2004: 202), Cathy Akers-Jordan points out that Arwen's heroism in the first part of the movie is similar to that of her brave female ancestors—Lúthien, Idril, and Galadriel—and thus it can be easily reconciled with Tolkien's mythology.[22] When commenting on Jackson's overall depiction of Tolkien's females, Thum adds that "[d]espite sometimes radical alterations in the text, […] Jackson's re-creation remains true to the spirit of Tolkien's writings" (2004: 232), because Tolkien's women "are positive figures whose influence extends far beyond their often brief appearances in the pages of his writings, and Jackson's film reflects that fact" (2004: 254). It can be argued, therefore, that whether one perceives Jackson's rendering of Middle-earth women as either true to the original or not is grounded in Tolkien's own ambiguous portrayal of female characters. Readers who claim that in Tolkien's world women are passive and powerless will see the movie images as a distortion of the original. Yet readers who acknowledge Tolkien's subtle empowerment of female characters will contend that the movie images are Jackson's exploration of the same ideas.

A similar argument pertains to fan-made art. Today, fans frequently express their opinions by creating video clips, drawing, and stories about their favorite series and heroes. Their works often complement the assumed 'shortcomings' of the original text, explore the possibilities not fully developed in the text, or combine the original text with the artist's own ideas and inventions. The ways in which fan-art, particularly fan-made videos and fan-written stories, handle the topic of females and femininity in Middle-earth offer valuable glimpses into the audience's perception of gender relations in Middle-earth.[23]

Ramnani) does not appear in the movie directly, but only in the flashback of Aragorn's memories: she encourages him by reminding him that he is the heir of kings, and when he faints after a battle (because of a poisoned arrow), he has a vision of their meeting and a shared kiss. These scenes, like the ones created by Jackson, highlight Arwen's influence over Aragorn. It remains unknown whether Bouchard consciously emulated Jackson or whether Jackson's rendering of Arwen and Aragorn's relationship has become such an influence on other creators. The full movie is available at www.thehuntforgollum.com

22 Perhaps for a similar reason the authors of *Born of Hope* (2009) decided to show female warriors. *Born of Hope* is another non-profit movie, directed by Kate Madison. It tells the story of Aragorn's parents, Gilraen and Arathorn, and their fight to preserve the line of Isildur's heirs. Like *The Lord of the Rings* prologue, *Born of Hope* is narrated by a woman, Gilraen (Beth Aynsley). Like *The Lord of the Rings*, it shows women as warriors: Gilraen is ready to fight with orcs to protect her family, and she is aided by a skilful female Ranger, Elgarain (Kate Madison). In addition, romantic love is one of the main themes. Viewers observe how Gilrean and Arathorn fall in love, while Elgarain has to hide her own feeling for the man. This love triangle is clearly an emulation of the relationship between Arwen, Aragorn, and Éowyn. Though Elgarain is an original character created by the movie's authors, the influence of *The Lord of the Rings* is easily discernable.

23 For a detailed analysis of fan communities and their approaches to Middle–earth see Booker 2004.

As far as video clips are concerned, fans of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings* use images from Jackson's movies to comment on the cinematic adaptations and to construct alternative stories involving the cast of Middle-earth's heroes. It can be argued that clips devoted to Tolkien's female characters concentrate either on emphasizing their greatest qualities and deeds (thus continuing Jackson's work of strengthening female empowerment) or on exploring their love relationships. Thus, on the one hand, dozens of video clips with Éowyn praise her courage and recount her fight with the Nazgul; works with Arwen affirm her beauty and the magnitude of her sacrifice; Galadriel is shown as a woman of great power, while Tauriel is hailed as the beautiful and merciless warrior. On the other hand, numerous clips are devoted to these women's love interests. While some focus on the relationships present in the story (e.g. Éowyn's unrequited love for Aragorn and her meeting with Faramir, Aragorn's union with Arwen), others recombine various scenes (and add romantic or catchy pop music) to emphasize a different aspect of these relationships—e.g. a tense love triangle between Éowyn, Aragorn, and Arwen—or even entirely alternative pairings, e.g. Arwen and Legolas, Galadriel and Gandalf, etc. After the release of *The Desolation of Smaug*, several clips have focused on the implied love between Tauriel and Kili. Though both varieties of clips are amusing, the ones with alternative pairings transgress (or even violate) the original text in a more serious way that those which only strengthen the idea of female empowerment.

A similar transgression is the basis for many fan-written stories (called fanfiction). Fanfiction.net is one of the largest fanfiction-storing websites, and currently it contains thousands of *The Hobbit-* and *The Lord of the Rings*-related works. Like the video clips posted on YouTube, hundreds of these stories develop alternative pairings or explore the implications of the already existing relationships. Some examples include retellings of the meeting and courtship of Arwen's parents, and analyses of Arwen's insecurities in the face of her newly gained mortality. What is more, other fan-writers further tip the balance of female power in Middle-earth by introducing entirely original heroines. These new women explore the mysteries of Middle-earth, face the hardships of travel, do brave deeds of their own, and frequently pair up with one of the existing male characters. Interestingly, these new characters are not necessarily of Middle-earth origin: there is a separate group of stories that feature modern-day girls transported into Tolkien's realm. Such works concentrate on discovery, exploration, and humor stemming from the contrast between the modern girls' behavior and the dictates of Middle-earth. Regardless of the literary quality of such works, they express their authors' deep sentiment for Tolkien's realm and their need for strong, active, and well-defined female characters. Even though fan stories frequently deviate from the canonical text, they nonetheless involve the writers into their own little acts of sub-creation within the boundaries of Middle-earth and, therefore, keep the realm alive in their minds and hearts. Given all of the examples of female passivity and empowerment present in Tolkien's creation, it can be argued that the writer's ambiguous portrayal of females and femininity simply offers other artists (like Jackson) and aspiring fan-artists plenty of room for analysis and creative interpretation.

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Is (Translational) Hermeneutics of any Use for the (Cognitive) Analysis of Translation Products?[24]

Abstract. Traditionally, translation scholars have analyzed translation products by putting emphasis on the purely linguistic phenomena of a target text as related to a source text. However, the author of this paper claims that in order to analyze a translation product in all its facets, it is necessary to add a phenomenology-oriented approach to it, along with the accounts of the translators who translated the text in question. The aim of the article is to present how a standard way of the analysis of a translation product, including a cognitive one, might be enriched by considering the phenomenological and hermeneutic points of view. By analyzing a fragment of a women's fiction novel, the author tries to demonstrate how a translation critic might evaluate translation products in order to gain insights into how translators go through the translation process. As well as that, the paper aims to refrain from regarding the act of translation and translation products as purely 'objective' phenomena but more on stressing the need for taking into account the subjectivity and inter-subjectivity of the act of translation as embedded in the relationship between a text and its readers (translators).

Keywords: translational hermeneutics; translation product; translation process; Radegundis Stolze; phenomenology.

Introduction

The inspiration for writing this article was, first and foremost, Ludwig Wittgenstein's words of 'language in use' as well as his concept of language games (1953: §7). According to the philosopher, language is composed of a set of devices used in order to participate actively in different kinds of social activities. Thus the meaning of a particular word should be based not on orthographic

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24 The title of the article refers to, and was, to some extent, inspired by, Elżbieta Tabakowska's text, entitled *Is (Cognitive) Linguistics of any Use for (Literary) Translation?* (2000: 83-95). In many of the author's texts, one may find the description of precise tools which a translation critic might use in order to explain and justify his/her strategies and the way of interpreting texts. Tabakowska opted for the search of some specific grammatical markers symbolizing semantic contents of the message being translated. Similarly, the author of this article entitled *Is (Translational) Hermeneutics of any Use for (Cognitive) Analysis of Translation Products?* attempts to demonstrate that the useful tools of translational hermeneutics and factors such as translator's subjectivity, as well as his/her motivations and translational decisions, might be used in order to gain a broader picture of the phenomenon of the act of translation.

principles, but rather on its functional and social dimension (see also Nida 1964). Likewise, due to the high unpredictability of both linguistic and translational phenomena, the act of translation could as well be defined as 'translation in use' and 'translation games.'[25] Accordingly, the latter term should be defined as a concept concerning particular translation strategies that are adopted by a translator as well as of translational decisions made with relation to the translational process. Building on Wittgenstein's philosophy of language, the author of the paper claims that translation (perceived either as a text or as a process) should not be interpreted in terms of an ontological entity but rather as a specific process of creating something new, a means of communication, and a way of understanding. Similarly, scientific writing on the act of translation, including translation criticism, constitutes a specific activity through which the act of translation acquires a new meaning. Therefore, it is impossible to speak of any translation rules that a translator obeys in order to produce a successful translation. Rather, one should attempt to describe 'translation in use' as being determined by the cultural and historical context in which both a particular text and a particular translator occur.

Paraphrasing Stolze (2011: 27), it might be stated that translation products are invariably characterized by the individuality of both the respective situation in which a particular translation is produced and a translator's competence, his/her knowledge of the world, life and professional experience, and the interpretation of a text. As Wilss (1996: 99) claimed, translation is a process based on the strategy adopted by an individual, according to a particular situation in which the process occurs. With regard to the above, it seems reasonable to take into consideration the element of subjectivity in the translation process, so often neglected or even undermined by contemporary translation scholars. It is worth citing Stolze (2011: 34), who is of the opinion that subjectivity should be perceived as an integral element of not only the translational process but also, broadly speaking, translation research:

> Subjectivity in human activity is an ontological given, and it should therefore be reflected upon and integrated into the model. This creates responsibility. And individual variance of texts and situations is an offspring of it, equally not to be eliminated in the studies. In our view, the translator's approach is not a "behavior" but an attitude and outlook towards texts leading to a strategical action.

Nevertheless, a considerable number of contemporary writings concerning the quality and nature of translation products (including translation criticism), even those attempted from a cognitive point of view (see Tabakowska 2015), try to demonstrate, albeit in an indirect way, that a translation product might be objectively evaluated on the basis of established linguistic or grammatical parameters, which are to serve as 'objective' criteria helping a translation critic in the process of evaluating the quality of the final product and the changes that have been made by a translator. However, the author of the paper argues, from a phenomenological point of view, that the analysis of translation products, without taking into consideration the intersubjective and subjective ele-

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25 To the best of the author's knowledge, so far, nobody has used the term in a research paper.

ments of the translational process, is by no means an adequate way of evaluating the activity of a translator. Therefore, it is necessary to consider not only the text itself and its 'inner (grammatical) structure' but also the position of both the text and the translator producing a translation. The significant element is the relationship between the text and the translator as a creative reader decoding the meaning of the source message. The view is also clearly expressed by Iser (1978: 108-109), who described the nature of the text in the following terms:

> In our attempts to describe the intersubjective structure of the process through which a text is transferred and translated, our first problem is the fact that the whole text can never be perceived at any one time. In this respect it differs from given objects, which can generally be viewed or at least conceived as a whole. The 'object' of the text can only be imagined by way of different consecutive phases of reading. We always stand outside the given object, whereas we are situated inside the literary text. The relation between text and reader is therefore quite different from that between object and observer: instead of a subject-object relationship, there is a moving viewpoint which travels along *inside* that which it has to apprehend.

Texts do not constitute objects whose existence and meaning might be verified and proven by empirical means, and although they contain 'things' which exist in the world that are often described as 'real' or 'objective', they might be perceived only by taking into account the context in which they are placed (see Iser 1978: 107-134). Furthermore, according to the phenomenological point of view, the meaning of a text is formed by a reader who, in the consecutive phases of the process of reading, creates the entirety of various senses, in the helical movement of hermeneutical interpretation based on his/her previous knowledge and experience as well as on the expectations which influence the way a text is perceived. In a similar vein, a translation scholar, instead of pointing to translation errors distinguished on the basis of questionable linguistic criteria (without reflecting upon the social and historical setting in which a given text has arisen), should rather ask 'why' a certain phenomenon has taken place and what implications it might have for the perception of a specific translation in a given community. It should be added at this point that it does not make much sense if a scholar attempts to analyze a published target text without taking into account the nature of the publishing process and all possible changes that could have been made by a proofreader, and not by the translator himself/herself.

In what follows the paradigm of translational hermeneutics is presented. The next sections of this article are dedicated to the presentation of the hermeneutical dimensions of the translation production analysis as developed by Stolze (2011), which might serve as the starting-point for further discussion of the analysis of both the source and the target text. The author of this paper attempts to determine to which extent and in what way the categories developed by Stolze might be used in a critical evaluation of a translator's rendering. The third part of the paper complements the second part in that it is devoted to the presentation of two translators' accounts, who were instructed to translate a sample of a source text and to answer retrospective questions concerning the translation process in which they had participated. The main objective of the article is to show

that in any analysis of translation products it is worthwhile taking into consideration the aspect of both subjectivity and inter-subjectivity as they cover the realm of the translation processes.

Translational Hermeneutics Paradigm

Although hermeneutical reflection on the phenomenon of translation has been present both in the philosophy of language and in translation studies for many years now, it may be observed that since 2009, translational hermeneutics has developed rapidly as a relatively new sub-discipline of translation studies. It is now propagated mainly by Radegundis Stolze, Larisa Cercel and John Stanley – German scholars interested in the hermeneutical theory of translation. There are at least three visible ways in which translational hermeneutics is achieving prominence nowadays: 1) a proliferation of journal articles and books pertaining to the main tenets of hermeneutics, including the act of translation; 2) a proliferation of scientific events, namely conferences dedicated either exclusively to the relationship between hermeneutics and translation studies or to hermeneutics as a theory of interpretation and understanding, including associations with themes such as the role of a translator, the nature of the phenomenon of translation, and the interconnection of translation and linguistic issues. Naturally, the sub-discipline is by no means unidirectional (Cercel, Stolze, Stanley 2015: 22-24):

> In the 20th century translational hermeneutics received a dramatic development by its expansion into three different disciplines. In philosophy, the topics of translation have a special standing in the works of Martin Heidegger, Hans-Georg Gadamer and Paul Ricœur. This is now documented in the growing amount of secondary literature on that subject. The interest for translation stands in close connection with the primary linguistic nature of philosophical debates at the time . . .

> In literary studies the hermeneutical approach is present mainly with George Steiner's *After Babel* (1975) and Friedmar Apel's *Sprachbewegung* (The movement of language, 1982). Their theoretical considerations, of course, are limited to the translation of literary texts. Those dealing with the subject of translation in literary studies focus on the historical and dynamic dimension of the act of translating . . .

> Fritz Paepcke, who was strongly influenced by Heidegger and above all by Gadamer, was one of the first scholars to advocate the hermeneutical approach in TS . . .

The hermeneutic theory of translation centers on the personalization of the act of translation, which is perceived as a dynamic task that might be divided into two main stages: translational reading (based on a deep understanding of the source text) and translational writing (concentrated on the principles of rhetorics, the proper usage of native language as well as the use of adequate strategies). The most important concepts of translational hermeneutics are subjectivity, historicity, phenomenology, the process character of translation, the holistic nature, and a critical reflection (see Stolze 2011: 45-67; Cercel, Stolze, Stanley 2015: 26-28). Those concepts have been extensively

used by Stolze; they constitute the basis on which the author focused when creating her own hermeneutical translation theory.[26]

Although translational hermeneutics is a relatively new sub-discipline of translation studies, it is starting to develop rapidly across the globe. It encompasses a wide range of theoretical and methodological approaches, building on philosophical concerns for an ontological category of 'translation.' The tenets of translational hermeneutics might be used for the evaluation of both translation products and translation processes.

Hermeneutical Orientation
in the World of the Source and Target Texts

In what follows, the hermeneutical analysis of the source text as related to the renderings in the target language is presented. A relatively short fragment of a novel entitled *The Ballroom's Café* – written by a contemporary Irish author Ann O'Loughlin and translated into Polish by two professional Polish translators – serves as a point of reference for the discussion of hermeneutical factors determining the way the target text might be evaluated. The source sample is given below:

Rathsorney, Co. Wicklow, March 2008

'You have four more weeks, Miss O'Callaghan. It is the way things are now; the bosses in Dublin want to see some effort towards paying the loan. Otherwise we are going to have to take steps to get our money back.'

Bank manager Peter O'Doherty leaned back on his swivel chair. Raising her head sufficiently to look him straight in the eye, Ella O'Callaghan spoke in a slow, firm voice.

'What do you propose I do: prostitute myself, Mr O'Doherty?'

'Miss O'Callaghan, there is no need to be like that.'

'There is no need to threaten to push me out of my home. I won't let you. Roscarbury Hall is my life. I won't let you take it.'

'Maybe there is something you can sell off to get in some money?'

'Like my extensive jewel collection, I suppose.'

Peter O'Doherty jumped to his feet, impatiently fingering his bunch of keys.

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26 It should be noted that the concepts which characterize translational hermeneutics are, to some extent, compliant with the tenets of cognitive linguistics (see Stolze 2011: 64-67; Gallagher 2004: 162-174).

'Go home, think about it. Come back next week with some sort of plan for repayment.'

He put out his hand to Ella, but she ignored it.

'In all my prayerful life, I have never felt so crucified. I will die before I move out of Roscarbury Hall.'

If O'Doherty intended to answer, she did not give him a chance, sweeping out of his office, banging the door. What did he care about Roscarbury, how the old house folded around them in bad times, how it was the only place where she felt safe? The rooms were so cold in winter you could see your breath, the stairs to the attic creaked like a banshee, and the chill winds rattled the window latches in a din of constant tapping. The parkland dipped and rolled away to the lake, so it was impossible for Sheehy the farmer to get his hay cutter properly across it; the rills silted up every year, long after the cherry blossom flowers had gone dark brown and sodden and the oak and old horse chestnut trees had shed their leaves.

Roscarbury existed for the worn days of summer sun, when warm air lingered in the house and the hens had to be hunted from the open back door. It was the starlings gathering and chattering on the wonky television aerial strapped to the first chimney that woke Ella every morning. The crows and pigeons in the fir trees destroyed the stone slabs around the fountain and she had to scrub it down once a month. The overgrown kitchen garden gave fruit for enough tarts through the summer months and luscious pears in a hot spell. Ella could never leave Roscarbury: the mists of the past shrouding the old house webbed around her, keeping her calm.

Below the two translations, which were done by professional translators, both members of the Polish Association of Literary Translation, are presented. The subjects were instructed to translate the above sample and then to comment on certain aspects of translation process, including translation strategies, translation decisions as well as translation tools.

The first version of the translation	The second version of the translation
Rathsorney, hrab. Wicklow, marzec 2008	Rathsorney, hrabstwo Wicklow, marzec 2008
– Ma pani jeszcze cztery tygodnie, panno O'Callaghan. Tak to obecnie wygląda; szefostwo w Dublinie chce widzieć jakieś starania w sprawie spłaty pożyczki. W przeciwnym razie będziemy zmuszeni podjąć stosowne kroki, aby odzyskać naszą należność.	– Daję pani cztery tygodnie, panno O'Callaghan. Oto, jak wygląda sytuacja: moi zwierzchnicy w Dublinie chcą zobaczyć, że czyni pani starania w kierunku spłaty pożyczki. Inaczej podejmiemy odpowiednie kroki w celu odzyskania pieniędzy.
Dyrektor banku Peter O'Doherty rozsiadł się wygodniej w swoim fotelu obrotowym. Ella O'Callaghan uniosła głowę na tyle, by spojrzeć mu prosto w oczy i wycedziła pewnym tonem:	Dyrektor banku Peter O'Doherty odchylił się na oparcie krzesła obrotowego. Ella O'Callaghan uniosła głowę na tyle, by spojrzeć mu prosto w oczy i powiedziała powoli, mocnym i spokojnym głosem:
– Więc co mam zrobić? Zacząć się sprzedawać, panie O'Doherty?	– I co niby mam zrobić, panie O'Doherty, zostać prostytutką?
– Nie ma potrzeby tak się unosić, panno O'Callaghan.	– Ależ panno O'Callaghan, nie musi pani reagować w ten sposób.

– Nie ma potrzeby grozić mi wyrzuceniem mnie z domu. Nie pozwolę na to. Roscarbury Hall to całe moje życie. Nie dam go sobie odebrać.

– Może posiada pani coś, co można spieniężyć?

– Na przykład okazałą kolekcję klejnotów?

Peter O'Doherty zerwał się z miejsca, ze zniecierpliwieniem pobrzękując pękiem kluczy.

– Proszę iść do domu, zastanowić się i wrócić tu w przyszłym tygodniu z jakimś planem spłaty.

Wyciągnął rękę do Elli, ale zignorowała go.

– Nigdy w swoim pobożnym życiu nie czułam się, tak jak teraz: jakby mnie przybijano do krzyża. Prędzej umrę, niż wyprowadzę się z Roscarbury Hall.

Jeśli O'Doherty zamierzał odpowiedzieć, nie dała mu na to szansy, bo wyszła z jego biura, trzaskając drzwiami. Co go obchodziło jakieś Roscarbury, stary dom, który chronił jej rodzinę w ciężkich czasach i jedyne miejsce, gdzie czuła się bezpiecznie? Zimą w pokojach było tak zimno, że aż widziało się własny oddech, schody na poddasze skrzypiały upiornie, a rygle okienne nieustannie pobrzękiwały, poruszane chłodnymi podmuchami wiatru. Pofałdowany teren parku opadał w kierunku jeziora, więc rolnik Sheehy nie mógł równo skosić trawnika; zbrązowiałe, rozmokłe kwiaty wiśni i liście opadłe z dębów i starych kasztanowców co roku zapychały strumyki.

Roscarbury istniało dla letnich zmierzchów, kiedy dom wypełniało ciepłe powietrze, a do kur wychodziło się tylnym wyjściem, aby zagonić je do kurnika. Każdego ranka Ellę budziło ćwierkanie szpaków, obsiadających przekrzywioną antenę telewizyjną, przymocowaną do komina. Siedzące na jodłach wrony i gołębie paskudziły na kamienne płyty otaczające fontannę, więc raz w miesiącu musiała je szorować. Owoców z zarośniętego ogrodu starczało na wypieki przez całe lato, a podczas fali upałów dojrzewały soczyste gruszki. Ella nigdy nie mogłaby opuścić Roscarbury: mgiełka przeszłości spowijająca ten stary dom otulała ją i napełniała spokojem.

– A pan nie musi grozić, że wyrzucicie mnie z domu. Nie dopuszczę do tego. Roscarbury Hall to moje życie. Nie pozwolę, by ktoś mi je odebrał.

– Może mogłaby pani coś sprzedać, by zdobyć potrzebną sumę?

– Zapewne ma pan na myśli moją ogromną kolekcję biżuterii.

Peter O'Doherty zerwał się z miejsca, niecierpliwie obracając w palcach pęk kluczy.

– Proszę po powrocie do domu spokojnie wszystko przemyśleć. Zapraszam w przyszłym tygodniu z planem spłaty zadłużenia.

Wyciągnął rękę, lecz Ella ją zignorowała.

– W całym swoim pobożnym życiu jeszcze nigdy nie musiałam dźwigać takiego krzyża. Szybciej umrę, niż wyniosę się z Roscarbury Hall.

Nawet jeśli O'Doherty chciał coś powiedzieć, nie dała mu na to szansy, wypadła z biura i trzasnęła drzwiami. Co go w ogóle obchodziło Roscarbury, co on wiedział o tym starym domu, który w trudnych chwilach brał mieszkańców w objęcia, o jedynym miejscu, w którym czuła się bezpiecznie? Zimą w pomieszczeniach panowały takie temperatury, że oddech zmieniał się w parę, schody na strych jęczały jak dusza potępiona, lodowate wiatry grzechotały ryglami przy oknach, czyniąc nieustanny hałas. Teren wokół domu falował i opadał w kierunku jeziora, przez co Sheehy nie mógł porządnie przejechać kosiarką, kamienne kanały rozprowadzające wodę po ogrodzie zatykały się co roku, i to długo po tym, jak kwiaty wiśni zdążyły zbrązowieć i rozmoknąć, a dęby i stare kasztanowce zgubić wszystkie liście.

Roscarbury istniało dla znużonych letnich dni pełnych słońca, kiedy ciepłe powietrze zalegało we wnętrzach i trzeba było przeganiać kury zaglądające do środka przez otwarte drzwi na tyłach domu. Każdego ranka budziło Ellę trajkotanie szpaków, które gromadziły się na rozchwieruytanej antenie telewizyjnej przyczepionej do komina. Gołębie i wrony urzędujące w jodłach niszczyły kamienne płyty wokół fontanny, musiała skrobać je do czysta raz w miesiącu. Zarośnięty ogród przez całe lato dawał owoce na ciasta i soczyste gruszki w okresie największych upałów. Ella za nic nie potrafiłaby opuścić Roscarbury: mgły przeszłości spowijające ten stary dom otulały ją i napełniały spokojem.

| Dla Petera O'Doherty'ego nie miałoby to znaczenia, nawet gdyby mu o tym opowiedziała. Ella O'Callaghan razem z jej zapuszczonym domem była jedynie drobnym utrapieniem w jego napiętym harmonogramie dnia. | Petera O'Doherty, nawet gdyby mu o tym wszystkim opowiedziała, w ogóle by to nie obeszło. Ella O'Callaghan i jej popadający w ruinę dom stanowiły co najwyżej błahy i przykry przerywnik w rozkładzie pracowitego dnia. |

Table 1. Two versions of translation

Building on Stolze (2011), the author of this paper selected three aspects which were then put to a deeper analysis, namely, the situative background, the discourse field, and the meaning dimension.

Situative background

A thorough analysis of the situative background, whose main objective is to activate a sort of 'reflected subjectivity' (Stolze 2011: 105) in a reader, brings in an association with Roscarbury as an old crumbling mansion in Ireland. This impression is crucial here because it influences the way that the above fragment is read and interpreted by a translator. The first associations are strengthened by the next lines of the fragment. A picture of a mansion, an old house surrounded by a kitchen garden, lots of trees and birds, provides the reader with initial orientation, certain content expectations as well as background fore-knowledge. The results obtained by means of the analysis of situative background might serve as further points of reference in the evaluation of a given rendering and guide a critic in the process of the interpretation of the adequacy of a translator's strategy.

As mentioned, the fragment to be analyzed comes from a novel entitled *The Ballroom's Café* by Ann O'Loughlin. The book was published in 2015 by Black and White Publishing. According to the description found on the back cover, the novel is about two elderly sisters, Ella and Roberta O'Callaghan, who live alone in an old mansion called Roscarbury Hall, situated in a small Irish village. The sisters, who are in conflict with one another, communicate only by means of notes. However, due to the fact that the women are threatened with bankruptcy, one of them decides to improve the financial situation and keep the mansion. As a result, Roscarbury's old ballroom is transformed into a café which is to bring in earnings in the near future.

The above description is the basic background knowledge that a translation critic should be equipped with before making an attempt to evaluate the target text. Naturally, a critic might broaden their knowledge by discovering the details of the plot. Deeper analysis of Internet sources reveals that the book is a debut novel about forced illegal adoption of children of unmarried mothers from Ireland to the US. This information is very important with regard to the translation scholar's first encounter with the source text. Building on them, he/she will is able to interpret possible realia (Stolze 2011: 248) as set within the source culture and to focus his/her imagination on rural areas of Ireland. Even such a short fragment as the one given above consists of the following source culture indications: "Roscarbury", "kitchen garden", "tarts", which help to position the text within the cultural and geographical dimensions of the source culture. Besides, they automatically arouse imaginative constructs which are to be exclusively focused on Ireland and Roscarbury. (For

instance, 'kitchen gardens', especially the walled ones, have immense significance for the history of Ireland.) The above-mentioned initial constructs as cognitively present in a translation scholar's mind enable him/her to understand the whole message on the basis of its parts, and vice versa (see Gadamer 1960: 270-305).

With the 'positioning' of the text within the situative background, a translation scholar's cognitive landscape, including some connotations concerning possible personal experience,[27] the knowledge base (as well as the hermeneutic circle) is activated, which, in turn, makes it possible for a grounded understanding of the source message to take place. Here it is worth referring to Heidegger (1962: 191) who once wrote that understanding always takes place from a specific vantage point. The understanding, however, is invariably connected with the process of interpretation which is grounded in what an interpreter already knows about a given situation. Therefore, developing an understanding of the source text on the basis of so-called 'fore-knowledge' might be accessed by a researcher through the hermeneutical analysis of the source text. Such analysis helps to discover those elements in the source text which should be prioritized by a translator. However, in order to acquire the understanding, the researcher has to be open to the message being transferred by the text itself. In other words, a translation critic cannot simply search for translation errors and possible divergences between the source and target texts, but he/she should concentrate on the shape of the final product as it relates to the context in which the product occurs (see also Brzozowski 2011: 7-9). It is worth noting how Gadamer (1990: 269) viewed the processes:

> A person trying to understand something will not resign himself from the start to relying on his own accidental fore-meanings, ignoring as consistently and stubbornly as possible the actual meaning of the text until the latter becomes so persistently audible that it breaks through what the interpreter imagines it to be. Rather a person trying to understand a text is prepared for it to tell him something . . . But this kind of sensitivity involves neither neutrality with respect to content nor the extinction of one's self but the foregrounding and appropriation of one's own fore-meanings and prejudices. The important thing is to be aware of one's own bias, so that the text can present itself in all its otherness and thus assert its own truth against one's own fore-meanings.

Discourse field

The next stage of the so called 'hermeneutical analysis' is the discourse field, determined by the ideological background of the source text, an author's social setting as well as a particular field of communication (Stolze 2011: 114). The main aim of this phase is usually to become familiarized with biographical data relating to the author in order to discover any possible interrelations

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27 It is the knowledge about our familiar world that people start with when attempting to understand something, be it a text or human relations. Only by having a specific knowledge and experience base is it possible to launch the hermeneutic circle consisting in adding new information into the 'stable' knowledge base that is already cognitively stored in people's minds. In other words, it is necessary to have specific pre-understanding connected with a particular theme in order to understand a new input.

between a particular text and the place of ideology. The author of *The Ballroom's Café*, a leading Irish journalist who has been working for many prestigious Irish newspapers for about thirty years now, is a relatively unknown Irish author of women's fiction. In her professional work, Ann O'Loughlin has dealt with the reporting of controversial issues about human existence. Despite a relative lack of experience in writing fiction, her novel, much to the author's surprise, hit Amazon. co.uk's top 20 bestselling ebooks of 2015. As for the genre, this is an example of a modern women's fiction novel mostly oriented towards a female readership. Due to the fact that the whole story is set in a small Irish village, close attention should be devoted to all possible layers of particular elements of Irish culture. The author of this paper is of the opinion that reading the whole source text by a translation critic is not only an option but a necessity. Only by reading the entire text is he/she able to identify the elements of the discourse field properly. In the case of the novel, at this point a researcher should be cognitively oriented towards Ireland and the milieu of women who had participated inadvertently in clandestine and illegal adoptions of Irish children by U.S. families.

Meaning dimension

Every discourse field is reflected in the meaning dimension which is the third stage of the hermeneutical analysis of the source and target texts. Stolze (2011: 116), defining the concept, refers to cognitive linguistics and writes, ". . . meaning dimension . . . recurs in the texts, reflecting in cultural associations, specific metaphors, key words, image schemas, and terminology to be found in a text." The author, building on Schleiermacher, goes on to describe the function of the title or the opening of a text. She defines it as "a clue for understanding", setting the general theme (*ibid*), because what is understood in the process of reading is actually reflected in the structure of the text, especially in the key words which are recognized holistically by searching for an "isotopic semantic network of significant appearance, where concept appear surrounded by neighbouring synonyms and in repetition of the same words." (Stolze 2011: 117)

Isotopic networks are identified on the basis of the recurrence of particular lexemes and the lexical items that surround them. Both the front cover and the title of the novel arouse specific associations that correspond to the emotional sphere of the target readers. *The Ballroom's Café* evokes connotations such as nostalgia, memories, deep emotions, love, joy, sadness, secrets, and conversations. Also, the first line of the novel: Rathsorney, Co. Wicklow, March 2008 conjures certain images in the reader's mind: Ireland, a county, a particular geographical location, which guides the reader cognitively towards Ireland. The associations could be best depicted by a semantic network of connected lexemes and their meaning. In the novel in question we might distinguish three "impressionistic sketches" (Stolze 2011: 119), which create further scenes for the target readership. (The sketches could also be called the "lexical fields" (*ibid*) emerging in the course of reading the source text.) By analyzing the semantic networks, a translation critic is able to evaluate whether the semantic dimension of a target text is close to the original one. The three 'sketches' mentioned above (fight, the mansion, and cultural background) are presented in the table below.

Fight	The mansion	Cultural background
bosses	Roscarbury Hall	Rathsorney, Wicklow
effort	extensive jewel collection	O'Callaghan
paying the loan	old house	O'Doherty
to take steps	bad times	banshee
to get our money back	felt safe	kitchen garden
prostitute	banshee	tarts
look . . . straight in the eye	constant tapping	
threaten	rills silted up	
push me out of my home	cherry blossom flowers	
jumped to his feet	oak	
impatiently fingering	old horse chestnut trees	
plan of repayment	worn days	
prayerful like	summer sun	
crucified	warm air	
banging the door	hens	
	starlings	
	crows	
	pigeons	
	stone slabs	
	fountain	
	overgrown kitchen garden	
	fruit	
	luscious pears	
	hot spell	
	mists of the past	

Table 2. Lexical sketches creating the semantic framework of the novel (on the basis of the sample)

The first lines of the text (Rathsorney, Co. Wicklow, March 2008; a typical Irish surname) are immediately interpreted in cultural terms, with regard to Ireland and Irish culture. Indeed, it is Ireland which, albeit indirectly, becomes the constant theme of the entire source text in regard not only to the cultural references but also to the complex social issues (illegal adoptions) depicted in the text. According to Stolze (2011: 119-120), the semantic network represents the primary semantic content of the text, which is a key to understanding. Let us reiterate, however, that the understanding is built on lexical inferences.

It is beyond the scope of this paper to describe the three fields given above in much detail; however, it might be concluded that the recurring theme in the whole text is Roscarbury Hall which,

to some extent, becomes one of the main protagonists of the story, positioned in the center of the narrative alongside two elderly sisters. Equally important are thematic strings related to religious connotations ('In all my prayerful life, I have never felt so crucified') as well as sensual key words evoking an ethereal and romantic sphere ('luscious', 'hot', 'spell'). Roscarbury Hall is presented by means of a dual set of images: one description is full of regret, sadness, disappointment, and even death (words depicting devastation and destruction of the building, the reference to a 'banshee'), the other evokes nostalgic memories about the past, feelings of safety and comfort, liveliness as well as the pure joy that the house brings to one of the female protagonists.

After having analyzed the meaning dimension a researcher should then focus on the predicative mode, namely, the precision of translation, the rendition of a particular point of view and deixis. In the opinion of the author of this article, at this point the precise tools of cognitive analysis as developed by Tabakowska (2015), built on cognitive grammar (Langacker 2013), could be employed. In this case a cognitive analysis of the description of the Rosarbury Hall (the vantage point) as well as the aspect of iconicity would be particularly revealing.

Translators' Approaches

As mentioned, only by taking into account the phenomenological perspective of a translator in the translation process is a translation scholar able to evaluate the nature of any marked divergences between the message in the source language and within the target language, and specify the reason for such divergences, which do not always have to be regarded as translation inadequacy. The author of the article argues that any translation criticism is complete if and only if it is accompanied by a detailed account of a translator's approach, as seen from the translator's perspective (obtained, e.g., via interviews conducted with translators, introspection and retrospection techniques or so called translation diaries). In what follows, the phenomenological accounts of translational processes are presented, from the perspective of the two translators taking part in the study, who provided comments on the translation process by means of Integrated Problem and Decision Reporting research tool.

In Table 3 below, the two translators' accounts are presented.

The first account	The second account
I was translating a fragment of the text. I translated some of the sentences, or their parts, in a preliminary way, stressing the adequacy and marking some fragments which were to be modified later. *I verified and corrected the fragment that I had translated; however, this time, I paid attention to cohesion and fluency of the target text.* *Then, I read the target text a few times, at different intervals, filling in and polishing up the translation.* *(In practice, the whole process occurs much faster and in a more efficient way than one might think on the basis of the above description . . .)* *I really liked the description of the old house, suggestive vocabulary rendering the atmosphere in the building and accentuating the emotions of the heroines, with regard not only to the past (nostalgia) but also to the present times (frustration).* *When I translate, I usually do my best in order to make the target text fluent and cohesive – the text which sounds right and reads well. The achievement of such an effect sometimes requires lots of trials and stylistic modifications; however, I was satisfied, in the majority of cases, with what I had achieved.*	*The text itself did not pose any serious translation problems. It is a simple narration, written in a nice and proper style. I did my best to maintain the rhythm and the mood of the source text. I usually work within the area of a sentence (probably I connected two sentences into one only once).* *In the case of more challenging fragments, when I deal with the first draft of translation, I usually immediately jot down various translation solutions, a few versions, and only then do I polish the text up, search for the most adequate synonyms, and choose the best solution, which sometimes requires a repeated revision.* *Emotions? The translation process is always accompanied by a feeling of loss and by irritation, usually in its two facets. The first is the question of foreignization and a cultural context. Therefore, I was at pains to have had changed 'banshee' into 'dusza potępiona', which, surely, makes the reference to folklore disappear, but, in the Polish version, such an element would sound much more exotic than in the source text. However, if such elements would appear in the text more often, I would surely emphasis them in some way. The second is the question of clarity and brevity of some languages (e.g. English), which are impossible to be translated into rough Polish. And so lovely "baking her worries away" was lost.*

Table 3. The translators' accounts

The above accounts reveal what was going on in the translators' minds during the translation process. The author of this paper claims (as specified in the opening sections of the text) that any evaluation of a translation product should be accompanied by a detailed analysis of the translator's account, a description of his/her translation decisions, translation strategies and techniques, translation tools as well as his/her emotions accompanying the whole process and attitude towards both the source and the target texts. The author also argues that such a qualitative analysis of both the translation product and the translator's approach might reveal valuable information about the translation process and the relationship between the target text and the translator.

The accounts illustrate interesting – and still under-researched – aspects of how translators address translation problems, prepare for the translation process, and view their own role in the publishing process. Furthermore, the methodology presented in the article provides translation scholars as well as translation critics with an effective tool (albeit by no means objective, because there simply cannot be any objectivization in the evaluation of both translation products and translation processes) which makes it possible to collect valuable data relating to various dimensions of the act of translation.

The scope of the article intentionally restricts the author to discussing only selected issues as identified in the above accounts; however, the data might be interpreted in a number of different ways. Due to the fact that the article is of an exemplary nature, the author decided to focus on one of the dimensions in the translators' accounts, which might help to explain why the translators adopted particular translation strategies. Let us take as an example the question of domestication versus foreignization – central key notions in translation studies, which held sway throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. The notions go back in the history of translation theory to Friedrich Schleiermacher (1992: 41-2), who considered two approaches to be adopted by a translator:

> Either the translator leaves the writer alone as much as possible and moves the reader towards the writer, or he leaves the reader alone as much as possible and moves the writer toward the reader.

The above words exerted an enormous influence on the representatives of modern translation theory, especially on Venuti's ideas of 'foreignization' and domestication' (Venuti 1995: 19-21), which are to serve as points of reference in the discussion of the translators' accounts given above.

Both translators indicated their inclination towards 'polishing the target text up'. Let us quote the first translator's words: "When I translate, I usually do my best in order to make the target text fluent and cohesive – a text which sounds right and reads well." The second translator also stressed the need for domestication: "I was at pain to change 'banshee' into 'dusza potępiona', which, surely, makes the reference to folklore disappear, but in the Polish version such an element would sound much more exotic than it does in the source text." Such an approach might be interpreted in terms of 'invisibility' of the translator, the central notion of modern translation theory. Invisibility has been described by Venuti (1995) as the situation in which translators stick to so called 'fluent' translation of the source text with the aim of producing an idiomatic text. Venuti rightly underlines that the situation is affected by publishers' and readers' expectations towards the style and shape of the target text.

A translated text, whether prose or poetry, fiction or non-fiction, is judged acceptable by most publishers, reviewers and readers when it reads fluently, when the absence of any linguistic or stylistic peculiarities makes it seem transparent, giving the appearance that it reflects the foreign writer's personality or intention or the essential meaning of the foreign text – the appearance, in other words, that the translation is not in fact a translation, but the 'original' (Venuti: 1995: 1).

> The obvious conclusion, then, is that the translators who participated in the study aimed at maintaining dynamic equivalence (see Nida 1964: 159) or, in other words, a covert translation (see House 1997: 69). The style of translating was 'invisible' (Venuti 1995: 1).

The strategy is usually due to publishers' expectations of the shape of the target text, which, to a considerable extent, is driven by marketing reasons. In a wider context, it might be concluded that the adoption of the strategy of domestication is the direct result of post-colonialism, hegemonic norms, and globalization:

> A publishing industry that repeatedly issues fluent, domesticating translations of the latest American bestsellers – written in the standard dialect of the official language – encourages uncritical consumption of hegemonic values while maintaining current asymmetries in cross-cultural exchange (Venuti 1998: 188).

The question that consequently arises here is that of translation ethics; however, the scope of the article restricts the author only to stressing the need for further research on the theme.

The translation strategies applied by the two translators in question undoubtedly point to the domestication philosophy. It can be seen in regard not only to their rationale behind the decisions that they had made but also to the concrete translation solutions that they had adopted when translating, for instance, the item 'kitchen garden'. As can be observed in the translation samples, 'kitchen garden' was rendered by the two translators as 'ogród'. However, the analysis of both the situated background of the item as well as its meaning dimensions indicates a necessity of taking into consideration the full meaning of the item as related to its cultural framework. As mentioned in one of the previous sections of this article, 'kitchen gardens' constitute a very important element of Irish culture and history; therefore, it might be surprising that none of the two translators took it into consideration, although it is clear from their accounts that they were fully cognizant of the situative background of the source text as well as of the presence of cultural references. The divergence might be partially explained by turning to the hermeneutic category of discourse field. Clearly, none of the translators analyzed this aspect in detail. It might be assumed that if the translators had checked Ann O'Loughlin's idea behind the novel in question (especially its references to illegal adoptions of Irish children), they would have made different translation decisions and would certainly conclude that in this case the procedure of adaptation of cultural references to the potential expectations of a target readership is not a proper solution. On the basis of the conclusions presented above it also seems valid to suggest that the two translators did not analyze the semantic network of the sample, which undoubtedly indicates a strong connection between the plot and Irish culture ('banshee', 'tart', 'kitchen garden', 'county', 'O'Callaghan', etc.).

The analysis of the accounts demonstrates that the translators consciously used domestication strategy so that the target text would be more fluent and transparent. By adopting the strategy and devoting much attention to the functional aspects of the renderings, both translators tried to satisfy the publisher's need for a highly readable and idiomatic translation. Due to the fact that recently there has been a strong tendency towards publishing so called 'bestsellers' within the Polish publishing industry, the owners of publishing houses as well as managing editors and editors-in-chief have made deliberate attempts to publish books which are guaranteed to generate substantial profits as well as to dictate the translation methods which should be adopted in a particular case. The author of this paper sees the main factor for this as being the political, ideological, and cultural agenda of the translation and publishing processes. Publishers usually purchase translation rights mostly to those titles which have already achieved bestseller status abroad, particularly in the United States and in the United Kingdom, which is also the reason why translators are expected to provide a final product that purports to be an original and not a translation.

Conclusions

It is worth asking the same questions here which Tabakowska asked when ending her article: "Was the whole thing really worthwhile? Would it not be enough just to read the ST and the TT in order to realize that the Polish translation is not an adequate rendering of the original?" (2000: 94). The author of this article claims that the whole thing which was described above was undoubtedly worthwhile. Firstly, the suggested way for the analysis of both translation products and translators' approaches helps to evaluate the translational process considered a result of a specific relationship between a text and a translator (a reader). Secondly, the presented approach, encompassing a variety of different perspectives (cognitive, hermeneutical and phenomenological), makes it possible for a translation scholar to refrain from undertaking a purely linguistic or grammatical analysis (too often perceived as 'objective') and to adopt a more holistic strategy in the process of evaluating translation products. Thirdly and finally, it is no longer valid to call a particular rendering adequate or inadequate unless a given translator's account and the way the target text is embedded in a cultural and historical context, including publishers' philosophy, are taken into consideration. This contribution should be regarded as a prolegomenon to a more comprehensive study of the ways phenomenological evaluations of translations are conducted, which can only be performed by taking into consideration the importance of the inevitable 'subjectivity' element present in every text.

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THE WRITERS' CORNER

Michael W. Thomas

Only a rose

Only a rose
in an area window
telling the tale
of a sportive yesterday

or pressed in haste on someone
by somebody else in a bar
who'd been stood up but even so
wished love to dance over the evening

the rose knows nothing
of what it was meant to say
how it was dressed to say it
all it wants

is to sing back the glow of the moon
which never says what it's said to say either
but happily listens while nosing apart
the dark of the rose's room

fixing the way an old-gold blouse
pours down the back of a chair
the way a clock-hand
tickles the low hours

only a rose
only a moon
doing what nobody sees

free from mortal chat
of urge and contrition
in all the old co-opted places
platform   calendar   bluff

if the rose dreams
it's of rain's delirium
arching clear
of its birth-soil

if the moon dreams
it's of birthing its own light
no more the cold courier
of sun-sweat

Almost

1961

When you were young, a thousand helpless miles
lay between, say, the tenth of December
and Christmas—which stood there, mule-indifferent,
knowing fine it had you fast in its heart,

that even now you heard the morning roads,
the last shunt in the fire-pluming night
as other than the regulated drone
your breath and bones were made of. Round the school,

the stony faces of alcoved torment
in Friday church, the iron air thinned out
and lifted: something else drew on, ahead
of fidget-arsed nativities, tea-towels

on kingly crewcuts, cards of solder-glue.
Time softened, the blood rose to its face. Bells
almost rang beneath the hoosh of buses,
the clouds were undersides of magic ways

where angels got into first position,
shepherds took form in sputnik-space, prepared
to be unprepared, mithering, scared stiff.
Then all at once the last Wednesday of term

with the ex-Navy barber (Dads and Lads),
and you high in the chair, buffed, clippered, set
to meet the only land you loved. Mirrored,
the brushings of the dead year fell like snow.

Travellers

They are made of mist, a seasoned need
to step light and thin round
the mires of the world. The ends
of unlettered roads will find them,
possibly, if a caravan rocks its green roof,
betrays that it is not after all
the high skirt of midsummer.

But the first steeps of autumn
draw them out: to the broads of grass,
say, beside a rat-run island.
Bits of them appear
with the middle days of October:
a bassinette against a wheel,
tarped horses posted up and back,
a pot to simmer the damps
of another year going.

Bargees, they could be,
but with a course
laid secret through the earth.
Windscreens show them
seeming to be about themselves
on the usual levels of the day.
Only someone in the back, maybe,
with a child's distaste for wherefores,
might see them truly,
flowing where they stand,
their past dropped over a tailboard,
the future not even the first twitch
of a dream.

NOTE ON CONTRIBUTORS

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