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TRANSLATING CANADIAN CULTURE INTO POLISH: NAMES OF PEOPLE AND PLACES IN POLISH TRANSLATIONS OF LUCY MAUD MONTGOMERY'S *ANNE OF GREEN GABLES*

According to Susan Bassnett, the author of the article entitled "The Translation Turn in Cultural Studies", a writer is inevitably influenced by his or her roots:

> A writer does not just write in a vacuum: he or she is the product of a particular culture, of a particular moment in time, and the writing reflects those factors such as race, gender, age, class, and birthplace as well as the stylistic, idiosyncratic features of the individual (136).

Such influences are especially visible among the writers who decide not to deal with foreign countries and distant époques, but rather choose to depict their own homelands and times. One of them is definitely Lucy Maud Montgomery, whose fiction is strongly connected with her mother country, Canada.

However, it is worth noticing that not only the culture of the country influences its fiction, but also the fiction has a considerable impact on the perception of the country abroad. For decades *Anne of Green Gables* and other novels of Lucy Maud Montgomery have been the first source of information on Canadian culture that Polish readers have had access to. For this reason, her works are highly significant for shaping the conception of Canada in our country. Yet, the image of Canadian culture existing in Poland is a peculiar one. Firstly, the picture created by Montgomery is extremely limited. She deals mostly with one social group, the inhabitants of small towns and villages earning their living from farming. Besides, a reader of Montgomery's fiction could easily assume that at the beginning of the 20th century Canada was populated only by people of British descent. Other cultural and ethnic groups are either not mentioned in her fiction (aboriginal people), or relegated to the background (the French). Secondly, our perception of the country is highly influenced by the way Montgomery's novels have been translated into Polish.

The opinion of Lawrence Venuti, who claims that "Translation wields enormous power in constructing representations of foreign cultures" (67), seems to be fully justified. It is visible especially in the situation when a translator chooses the domestication approach, defined by Piotr Kwieciński as " . . . the accommodation of the target text to the established TL/TC concepts, norms and conventions" (13). Reading such a translation, one may easily assume that the difference between the two cultures is almost non-existent. The opposite of "domestication" is the foreignization approach, explained by the same critic as "the introduction into the target texts of concepts and language forms that are alien to and/or obscure in the target language and culture" (Kwieciński 14). This approach to translation stresses the gap existing between the two cultures.

Monika Adamczyk-Garbowska claims that the first approach is generally adopted by translators of books for children, and that such an attitude shows that they underestimate the intelligence of young readers. Adamczyk-Garbowska suggests that children are open to all kinds of innovations, also to foreign elements appearing both in their lives and in the books they read (81). This opinion seems to be justified, since discovering and learning new things that sometimes appear very obvious to adults is an integral part of childhood. Children do not assume that they are omniscient, and thus are not surprised or worried when faced with some novelty.

One of the aspects of Canadian culture that should be analysed before translating *Anne of Green Gables*, is definitely the names of the people and places which appear in the book. They are important for three main reasons. Firstly, they are highly significant for Anne Shirley, whose attitude towards beautiful, romantic names is perfectly stressed by her own words:

> I read in a book once that a rose by any other name would smell as sweet, but I've never been able to believe it. I don't believe a rose would be as nice if it was called a thistle or a skunk-cabbage (37–38).

Secondly, names and name giving are vital elements in Montgomery's fiction. She not only created such characters as Anne Shirley or Emily Star, girls enamoured with naming people and places, but also constantly emphasised the importance of choosing an appropriate name for a child. For instance, *The Magic for Marigold*, another of Montgomery's novels, begins with the scene in which a family gathers to name a new-born baby.

And finally, Montgomery's fiction proves that names are very important to Canadian culture as a whole. They have been significant for establishing the cultural identity of the inhabitants of this relatively new country. It is striking that the names one can find on the map of Canada very often stress its connection with Europe (Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, Southampton). Besides, numerous novels by Montgomery show that at the beginning

of the 20th century, family names were vital not only since they made it possible to identify a particular person, but also to trace one's line of descent. It was essential, since one's origin somehow predestined which social group one would belong to. Moreover, various stereotypes seemed to influence the society described by Montgomery. For instance, people from Scotland were generally believed to have insight. Also first names were very important for the inhabitants of Canada. Children were often named after one of their ancestors, some eminent person, or a doctor present at their birth. What is more, in the world described by Montgomery not only towns and people, but even farms and houses have their names.

Adam Sumera suggests that a translator dealing with a difficult task of translating names should usually follow the strategy chosen for the rest of the text:

> The translating of names may be expected to follow the pattern chosen. Thus, if the translator decides to preserve the local flavour and not to substitute feet and yards with meters, and pounds with kilograms, he should rather keep the names of the characters in their original form, and if he chooses the naturalisation approach, he has more freedom in using adapted forms of the names. However, in many cases neither naturalisation nor foreignization in its pure form is possible, and thus a mixed approach is necessary (227).

Neither of the translators of Anne of Green Gables uses "domestication" or "foreignization" in its pure form. The closest to the domestication approach is definitely Rozalia Bernsteinowa, replacing most names of the characters with their Polish equivalents. In her version 'Matthew' was turned into 'Mateusz', 'Marilla' into 'Maryla', 'Jane' into 'Janka', 'Josie' into 'Józia', and 'Charlie' into 'Karol'. Some of her choices are quite controversial. For instance, there is no explanation for having substituted 'Małgorzata' for 'Rachel'. Also surprising is her decision to render 'Flora Jane' as 'Florcia', not only omitting the middle name of the girl but also using her first name in its diminutive form.

Yet, not all the names in Bernsteinowa's version have been translated. 'Prissy', 'Ruby', 'Walter', 'Lily' and some other names which do not have Polish equivalents remain intact. Since she has changed the spelling of some foreign names ('Hepzibah' into 'Hepziba', 'Cordelia' into 'Kordelia') the way in which they are pronounced is unclear. The reader may also assume that 'Prissy', 'Ruby', 'Walter' and 'Lily' should be read as they are written.

Since Rozalia Bernsteinowa's translation has influenced generations of readers, Przemysław Piekarski and Katarzyna Jakubiak had to take this into consideration when preparing their own translations of the novel. They probably decided that the reader is already accustomed to the Polish equivalents of 'Marilla' and 'Matthew', as they have used the names 'Mateusz' and 'Maryla' in their translations. However, it is clearly visible that

at least Przemysław Piekarski generally supports the foreignization approach, choosing to leave names such as 'Rachel', 'Flora Jane', 'Jane', 'Charlie', and 'Josie' in their original form. It seems justified, as Sumera states:

> One of the aspects a translator should take into account is the reader's awareness of the fact that he has to do with a translation from a given language. The reader, especially one who has already had some contact with the literature of a given country, is ready to accept certain "exotic" elements of reality. What is more, he may also expect to be presented with some foreign names (228).

Both Piekarski and Jakubiak have followed the example of Rozalia Bernsteinowa and translated the name of the main protagonist 'Anne Shirley' as 'Ania'. Unfortunately, such a decision has some serious consequences, as far as the reader's understanding of the text is concerned. The best example is the scene in which Anne introduces herself to Matthew and Marilla:

> 'Anne Shirley,' reluctantly faltered forth the owner of that name, 'but oh, please do call me Cordelia. It can't matter much to you what you call me if I'm only going to be here a little while, can it? And Anne is such an unromantic name.'
> 'Unromantic fiddlestick!' said the unsympathetic Marilla. 'Anne is a real good plain sensible name. You've no need to be ashamed of it.'
> 'Oh, I'm not ashamed of it,' explained Anne, 'only I like Cordelia better. . . . But if you call me Anne, please call me Anne spelled with an *e*.'
> 'What difference does it make how it's spelled?' asked Marilla with another rusty smile as she picked up the teapot.
> 'Oh, it makes such a difference. It looks so much nicer. When you hear a name pronounced can't you always see it in your mind, just as if it was printed out? I can; and A-N-N looks dreadful, but A-N-N-E looks so much more distinguished. If you'll only call me Anne spelled with *e* I shall try to reconcile myself to not being called Cordelia.' (Montgomery 26–27)

It is quite natural that Anne, a stranger in the world where names are significant, since they give a person some sense of belonging and are considered an important part of one's heritage, tries to establish her own role in the society by means of choosing herself a new, romantic name. When she fails to achieve this goal she wants at least to choose the way in which her real name is spelled, even if it does not influence the way it is pronounced. Such a conclusion cannot be reached by a person who knows only the translation of the fragment. Bernsteinowa's version reads:

> – Anna Shirley – wyjąkała niechętnie właścicielka tego imienia. – Ale proszę, niech pani nazywa mnie Kordelia. Wszak dla pani to jest obojętne, jak mnie będzie wołać, jeśli pozostanę tutaj niedługo. A Anna to takie nieromantyczne imię.
> – Romantyczne czy nieromantyczne! – odburknęła prozaicznie Maryla. – Anna to skromne i rozumne imię. Nie masz powodu się go wstydzić.
> – Ja się go nie wstydzę – odpowiedziała dziewczynka – tylko Kordelia więcej mi się podoba. . . . Jeśli jednak pani chce koniecznie nazywać mnie Anną, proszę przynajmniej mówić „Aniu" zamiast „Andziu".

– Myślę, że to wszystko jedno – rzekła Maryla z niedostrzegalnym uśmiechem, podnosząc imbryk z herbatą.
– O, nie, to wielka różnica! To brzmi o wiele, o wiele delikatniej. Wymawiając jakieś imię, widzimy je natychmiast przed sobą, jak gdyby było wydrukowane; przynajmniej ja tak to odczuwam. Andzia wygląda ohydnie, Ania zaś o tyle bardziej dystyngowanie. Jeśli więc pani zechce nazywać mnie Anią, postaram pogodzić się z myślą, że nie noszę imienia Kordelia (29–30).

It is logical that a person very often favours one form of his or her name and rejects the other. 'Ania' and 'Andzia' not only look, but also sound different, and thus there is nothing striking or peculiar in the conversation between Marilla and Anne. The only surprising element may be the fact that Marilla believes that there is no difference between the two forms. Such a version of the scene may influence the perception of the two characters.

Katarzyna Jakubiak has also had some difficulties in translating this section:

– Ania Shirley – wyjąkała z ociąganiem właścicielka imienia – ale proszę mówić do mnie Kordelio. Chyba nie ma to dla państwa większego znaczenia, skoro i tak mam mieszkać tu tak krótko, prawda? A Ania to takie nieromantyczne imię.
– Nieromantyczne bzdury! – powiedziała Maryla bez cienia współczucia. – Ania to dobre, normalne, rozsądne imię. Nie masz co się go wstydzić.
– Och, nie wstydzę się go – wyjaśniła Ania – tylko Kordelia bardziej mi się podoba. . . . Ale jeśli już ma pani mówić do mnie Ania, to proszę pamiętać, aby nigdy nie nazywać mnie Anną.
– A co to ma za znaczenie – spytała Maryla z kolejnym przyrdzewiałym uśmiechem, gdy podnosiła dzbanek z herbatą.
– Och, to ma *ogromne* znaczenie. Wygląda znacznie ładniej. Czy kiedy słyszy pani jakieś imię, to nie widzi go pani od razu w głowie, jakby było wydrukowane? Ja widzę; i A-N-N-A wygląda okropnie, ale A-N-I-A już znacznie milej. Jeśli tylko będziecie państwo pamiętać, aby nigdy nie mówić do mnie Anno, pogodzę się jakoś z tym, że nie nazywacie mnie Kordelią (24).

Although, like in the English version, Anne claims that she prefers to be called 'Ania' because it looks better than 'Anna', the reader may not be convinced by her explanation. Choosing a diminutive of the name and rejecting the form 'Anna', rarely used in Poland for addressing a child, would rather suggest that Anne struggles for tenderness and affection from her foster parents. As is the case with 'Ania' and 'Andzia', not only the look, but also the sounds of 'Anna' and 'Ania' are different.

The image of the girl craving for love of her foster parents emerges also after reading the translation of Przemysław Piekarski:

– Anna Shirley – z oporem wybąkała właścicielka imienia. – Ale proszę mówić mi Kordelia. Przecież nie robi to wam różnicy, jak mnie nazwiecie, bo będę tu tylko chwilę. Anna to takie nieromantyczne imię.

– Nieromantyczne bzdury! – powiedziała Maryla bez zrozumienia. – Anna to naprawdę dobre, sensowne imię. Nie musisz się go wstydzić.
– Och ja się nie wstydzę – wyjaśniła Ania, – tylko wolę Kordelię. . . . Ale jeśli mam być Anną proszę mi mówić Aniu.
– Cóż to za różnica? – zapytała Maryla z kolejnym sztywnym uśmiechem, podnosząc czajniczek.
– Och robi różnicę. Brzmi o wiele milej. Jeśli tylko będziecie mi mówić Aniu, jakoś pocieszę się, że nie jestem Kordelią (21–22).

Piekarski's decision to eliminate the whole section connected with the spelling of the name seems highly controversial. The idea of Anne paying special attention to the way names are spelled is obvious for any person who has read other books by Montgomery. In *Anne of Windy Poplars* adult Anne tells Katherine Brook:

'I'm glad you spell your name with a K. Katherine is so much more alluring than Catherine, just as K is ever so much gypsier a letter than smug C.' (http://gutenberg.net)

It is difficult to explain why its translation reads:

– Jak to miło, że ma pani na imię Julianna, a nie Julia. Julianna brzmi daleko bardziej dystyngowanie i powabnie (Kowalak-Bojarczuk 29).

All the translators have decided to leave the surnames of the characters in their original form. The only exception is the use of 'Linde' instead of 'Lynde'. This decision might be explained by the fact that 'Linde' is much more familiar to Polish readers. However, such changes are difficult to comprehend, since the spelling of all the other names, very often more difficult to pronounce, has not been simplified.

Another interesting cultural element is definitely the custom to call married females by the names of their husbands. The reader of the English version frequently comes across such names as 'Mrs Alexander Spencer' or 'Mrs Peter Blewett'. Only Katarzyna Jakubiak has rendered them as 'pani Aleksandrowa Spencer' and 'pani Piotrowa Blewett'. Piekarski and Bernsteinowa have been less consistent. Bernsteinowa has translated them as 'pani Spencer' and 'pani Piotrowa Blewett', while Piekarski has chosen the versions 'pani Spencer' or 'pani Aleksandra Spencer', and 'pani Blewett'. Such a lack of consistency is difficult to understand, since a similar custom used to be common in our country as well. Such changes not only alter the image of Canadian culture, but also influence the reader's perception of some characters presented in the novel. For instance, an observant reader may notice that Rachel Lynde is never called Mrs Thomas Lynde. It is somehow explained by the author who stresses the fact that "Thomas Lynde – a meek little man" was called in Avonlea "Rachel Lynde's husband" (8).

Another difficulty arises when a translator of *Anne of Green Gables* has to decide whether he or she should translate the names of the places described in the novel or not. The best example is definitely 'Green Gables', important not only since it is the name of the house of the main protagonist, but also because it is a part of the title of the novel. According to *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English* a 'gable' is "the upper end of a house wall where it joins with a sloping roof and makes a shape like a triangle" (579). The word 'gable' is usually translated into Polish as 'szczyt' (*The House of Seven Gables – Dom o siedmiu szczytach*). It seems obvious that the name of the farm could not be translated as 'Zielone Szczyty' and the title as *Ania z Zielonych Szczytów*, since the Polish word 'szczyt' is generally associated with a part of a mountain rather than a part of a building. Also the version *Ania z Domu o Zielonych Szczytach*, although close to the original, does not sound natural in Polish. Yet, *Ania z Zielonego Wzgórza*, the title chosen by Bernsteinowa, is very misleading. In his article "Przekład tytułu: między egzotyką a adaptacją" Jerzy Jarniewicz stresses the fact that one of the functions of a title is making it possible to identify the book (477). This function has definitely been neglected by the translators of the novel. Jarniewicz notices that one of the characteristics of English titles is alliteration, and gives examples like *Pride and Prejudice*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Peter Pan*, *The Great Gatsby*, and *Pickwick Papers*. A similar tendency is also visible among the works of Montgomery. She created such novels as *Anne of Avonlea* and *Magic for Marigold*, as well as collections of short stories such as *Akin to Anne*, and short stories such as "Dorinda's Desperate Deed". Unfortunately, the alliteration in the title *Anne of Green Gables* is not present in the Polish version.

Not only Cuthberts' farm but also many other houses in Avonlea have their names. Such is the case with Barry's dwelling, 'Orchard Slope', which Bernsteinowa has translated into 'Sosnowe Wzgórze'. Since the names of the farms described by Montgomery are usually connected with their surroundings, the Polish version does not fit the picture created by Montgomery. She describes the place as ". . . a little grey house peering around a white apple orchard on a slope beyond" (22). Thus Jakubiak's translation 'Zbocze Jabłoni' seems much closer to the original. Still, this does not sound very natural in Polish. The third translator, Piekarski, has left the name of the farm as it is. He consequently informs the reader that Canadian farms had names, but fails to explain how such names were created, and what was their connection with the natural surroundings.

Still another group of names that are vital to the story, are those of the places, plants and objects invented by Anne. Although they are not so important for creating a fuller picture of Canadian culture, they are significant for understanding the main protagonist of the novel. Thus, such

names should not be left in their original form. It is striking that the same names appear very often in Bernsteinowa's and Jakubiak's versions. For instance, the 'White Way of Delight' has been rendered by all the translators as 'Biała Droga Rozkoszy', and the 'Lake of Shining Waters' as 'Jezioro Lśniących Wód' (Bernsteinowa, Jakubiak), or 'Jezioro Lśniącej Wody' (Piekarski). 'Snow Queen', the name of Anne's beloved cherry-tree, has also been translated in two ways. Bernsteinowa and Jakubiak have rendered it, close to the original, as 'Królowa Śniegu', but Piekarski has changed the name into 'Biała Królowa'. His version has lost the associations with winter and the famous fairy-tale of Hans Christian Andersen, clearly visible in the original.

The last group are the names of towns and villages used in the novel. Some are real places, like Charlottetown, but most are invented by the author. As a rule, Bernsteinowa has tried to postpone using them for as long as possible. For instance, when Montgomery explains that Matthew went to Bright River, in Bernsteinowa's version the man '. . . pojechał na dworzec' (11). A few pages later the name 'Szeroka Rzeka' appears in the novel. Such is also the case with the part in which the author mentions Newbridge people. Bernsteinowa has omitted the name of the town and rendered the whole phrase as 'mieszkańcy tych stron' (23). And again, the name 'Newbridge' appears a page later. Piekarski and Jakubiak have not tried to omit the names of places. In their translations 'Bright River' remains untouched, and 'Newbridge people' are present either as 'ludzie z Newbridge' (Piekarski 16) or 'mieszkańcy Newbridge' (Jakubiak 18).

However, as far as the translation of the name 'White Sands' is concerned, their versions differ. Jakubiak once again has followed Bernsteinowa's example, and translated the name as 'Białe Piaski', while Piekarski has left the English version. Whether the names of towns and villages should be translated or not, is an open question. Yet, the translator should remember that their meaning is not important for a general understanding of the novel. They are in fact supposed to resemble names of real Canadian villages such as Sea View or Park Corner.

Of course the names of people and places used in *Anne of Green Gables* are only a small part of the Canadian culture depicted by Lucy Maud Montgomery. The whole book is full of culturally specific phrases, references to Presbyterianism, or to plants and dishes unknown to Polish readers. Yet, leaving some of the names in their original form, is the easiest way of reminding the reader that the book was not written in his or her mother tongue, and that he deals with a translation not only of words, but also of cultures. Such strategy causes that he or she is more aware of the fact that some decisions made by the characters may be at least partly due to their cultural background, differing from that of Polish readers.

According to David Katan, the author of the book *Translating Cultures: An Introduction for Translators, Interpreters and Mediators*, our culture is simply ". . . what we identify with" (60). Unfortunately, neither of the translators of *Anne of Green Gables* discussed in this appraisal has managed to save Canadian culture in his or her version of the book, and fully present what L. M. Montgomery identified with. It should, however, be emphasised that the task of Katarzyna Jakubiak and Przemysław Piekarski was very difficult as the Polish versions of the names created by Rozalia Bernsteinowa are embedded in our minds to the extent that any daring innovation would probably have been rejected by the reader.

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