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EUROPEAN IDEA OF TRANSLATION FROM BAKHTINIAN PERSPECTIVE

Diachronic view on European quasi-translation and translation studies reveals their intrinsic coherence to the XVII/XVIII centuries, not always divergent, nonetheless already inconsistent concepts in the ensuing centuries (which is associated with an individualistic desire of states to emphasize the essence of the different languages, cultures, literatures) up until the cultural turn in the humanities, when the studies show renewed tendency towards unification. It is concerned with the ethno-linguistic perspective (proposed e.g. by Philip Riley), according to which 'culture is knowledge, in the widest possible sense, including the traditions and history of the group, its common sense, beliefs, values, attitudes and language. Culture is the knowledge members of a society need if they are to participate completely in the various situations and activities life puts in their way'. In the European macro-scale (largely also in the American one) the essence of the integrated translation studies is a cultural phenomenon, which can be called translation. Although the various components of this phenomenon (sender-author-original text, recipient-translator, recipient-target group, cultural context, relay, determinants, etc.) have a fluctuating character between a peripherality and centralization, holistic and particular attitude in the various countries, geographical areas, methodologies or conceptions, translation is always the fundament. To show either the differences or similarities, not only distinctive but also integrating features, the selected translations from the so-called literary canon would be analysed, which will allow to apply the theory to the practical problems. The main aim of my paper is to clarify the thesis connecting the carnival concept of Mikhail Bakhtin, especially the idea of bodily and material baseness, with the cultural phenomenon a concomitant the translations.

Keywords: translation, Baghtin

The diachronic view of the European translation thought reveals its coherence to the XVII/ XVIII century, not always divergent, although already inconsistent *a natura rei* concepts in the following centuries (which is associated with an individualistic desire of European countries to emphasize the essence of vernacular languages, cultures, literatures), what would be shown by two examples – Polish and English, to a specific return to the modern unification in the era of the cultural orientation in the humanities research.

An extensive section of English theories (very similar in expression to Waclaw Borowy proposal in Poland[1]) is presented by Flora Amos in her publication *Early Theories of Translation*[2]. Medieval principles defined the 'word for word' translation as very narrow, limited and provoking distortions. Thus, it was preferred to present stories more as original compositions, own presentations. Usually a selection of a theme, poem, prose was not unlimited. That was changed in the XVII century. A little earlier in the XV century different forms of translation, depending on the requirements of the original – word for word, sentence for sentence, thought for thought started to be allowed to use, but there was a necessity to write additional comments to obscure paragraphs (usually explanations were introduced by the formulas: as the book says, as the French say, as the Ancient say etc.). These translator's complements began to refer also to the original texts, the individual idea of translation (abandoned fragments), theoretical issues. The XVI century brought the fascination with antique literary works, hence the great need for the translations (by men, women, representatives of different social strata). The tasks for the translator has become more clear and unequivocal (translation should have been smooth so as not to disturb the receiver in reception, usually in the 'thought for thought' form) – perhaps it was caused by the fact that translation was considered as a form of work. Such scholars as Richard Eden, Nicholas Grimald, John Harrington (unlike Polish publications of Borowy and Fuliñska), Philemon Holland, Thomas Fortescue have emphasized that the translator has known his place, constantly has been thinking about 'his' author, has been somehow in his service. They have realized that English was not as developed as Latin, but they have tried to compose the understandable and smooth as possible copy (from linguistic point of view). Because of this difference, the English language has begun to evolve (as neutralization of new words and revitalization of Old English words). Still, it was believed that the translator was a free interpreter maintaining the obligatory respect for the author and original work. The main principle of the classic ancient works translation ordered, however, the closeness to the original. Unfortunately an inexpert, in the fact clumsy, translation was an often result of this rule. Therefore, the XVII century has brought even greater fascination with antiquity (especially with Virgil, Horace, Homer, Hesiod, Anacreon, Pindar, Apollonius Rodius, Lucretius, Tibullus, Statius, Juvenal, Ovid, Lucan). It still did not bring ground-breaking changes in the theory – still non-restrictive translations were popular, because the readability was more important than the recreation of the Latin or ancient Greek grammar. The bringantecedents' assumptions of the translations of ancient works were evaluated literally as absurd and general translation principles were transferred to this part of literary work. Some elements of the above assumptions survived until the XVIII century (wherein Amos substantially no longer occupies)

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[1] W. Borowy, *Dawni teoretycy przekiadu*, [w:] *Studia i szkice literackie*, t. 2, Warszawa 1983, s. 410-431.

[2] F. Amos, *Early Theories of Translation*, New York 1973.

and were the foundation for the translation ideas of e.g. Alexander Tytler[3]. Acceptable translations of this period were either literal translations or a paraphrase, imitation. Freedom was important to properly reconstruct the spirit of the original work. The publication *Early Theories of Translation* separately describes the translations of theological texts. Amos ends her research with the conclusion that it is impossible to prepare an English translation, because there are always elements completely foreign and untranslatable (e.g. Greek religion or the dignified killing a sheep as votive offerings). But it brings a question – isn't a way to get know 'the different', 'the unknown', to enrich with new elements the culture circle, in which we've grown up?

A similar review of the translation strategy and early metatranslation reflection among Polish scholars was made by e.g. Agnieszka Fuliñska, when she was observing the development of the imitation and emulation concepts in her book *Naśladowanie i twórczość. Renesansowe teorie imitacji, emulacji i przekładu* (*Imitation and Creativity. Renaissance theories of imitation, emulation and translation*)[4]. However, one should bear in mind that the author, as she writes, feels entitled to use synonymous words for translation, translation, imitation, emulation in described period, what indeed in some cases is right, but it is also important to remember not to generalize the meanings of these terms.

According to Fuliñska's research the first attempts at formulation of translation theories have remained on the periphery of scholarly interests, but because of the nature of translation they had common points with the issues of imitation (understood as a copying) and emulation (as competition) until the Renaissance. This was because, although in the Middle Ages it was impossible to define the theories of translation, the nature of the descriptive and historical works prepared for educational ipurposes was not only inspired by antiquity, but it was also almost a copy of its writing accomplishments. For Bernard of Utrecht imitation of antiquity was not unusual, what is more – it was a necessity and commonality to extracts from ancient thesaurus. Whereas Bernard of Chartres used this metaphor to describe the situation of that period – dwarfs sitting on the shoulders of giants. It was obvious that they could have not be compared with Cicero, Quintilian, Horace, Donat and the others, neither could Middles Ages works be compared with ancient achievements, but, with the disposal of earlier works, the horizon of their perception was significantly expanded.

Certain derogations from the medieval fascination with antiquity were noticeable at the beginning of the Renaissance, when Petrarch, being an untiring advocate of the close reading continuation of the Ancient, simultaneously postulated radical changes in using the antecedents' achievements – he proposed to extract from antiquity on the basis of the reminiscences, not imitation. It gave rise to many disputes about the nature of imitation and emulation, which influenced the forms of translations. Gradually the number of proponents of emulation and imitation was greater and greater. The polemical and competitive translations soon became more popular, what

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[3] A. F. Tytler, *Essay on the principles of translation*, https://archive.org/details/essayonprinciple00woodiala, [access: 21. 06. 13].

[4] A. Fulińska, *Naśladowanie i twórczość. Renesansowe teorie imitacji, emulacji i przekładu*, Wrocław 2000.

was reflected in the dispute of Pico della Mirandolla and Pietro Bemba – the rivalry ability was proven and necessary, either as an individual category or as an equivalent or element of the imitation. The most important is the fact that there were voices about the obligation to reconstruct in the translation both: *res* – the subject and *verbum* – the language presentation of the same subject (e.g. Bruni Aretino). The interests peripherals did not mean, however, the depreciation of the values of proclaimed assumptions. And so, in 1532, Juan Luis Vives noted that the translation was transferring both the words and meanings. But first, an area/ areas featured in the text should have been explored. In 1556 Fausto da Longiano claimed that there was a possibility not only to translate from one language to another, but also within the same system and, like Vives, he has postulated translation of meanings, and the 'word for word' translation was considered infantile. In 1559 Laurence Humphrey presented the views on the role of the translator as usable mirror, agent, a kind of reflection of the author. The value of translation in cultural transfer and its role in the development of a national language (Thomas Sebillet) was recognized, as well as the transfer of new values (Joachim Du Bellay) and the cultural implications of changing the status of imitation as theft to the category of social correctness (Sir John Harington).

Fuliñska singled out Łukasz Górnicki on home ground, whose *Dworzanin polski* (*Polish Courtier*, Polish version of Baldassare Castiglione's *Il Cortegiano*) is a well-known example of the cultural environment adaptation, which the author had not displaced. On the contrary, he had enumerated and seen the advantages of such a translation in the preface to his literary work. The second character mentioned is Jan Januszewski, who expressed his unprecedented in those times understanding of translation in his foreword to Bessarion's treatise, from many perspectives: the substantive one (understanding the meaning, knowledge of the field), the linguistic one (noticing individualized approach to the texts, the need for using calques, lexical borrowings, barbarisms, differentiation between the original language and the language of translation), as well as the position of the translator, which should have been characterized by modesty and the submission to the original work. The author also mentions the reflections of Polish writers: Jan Kochanowski and Stanislaw Gos³owski.

This community of the European views involves an ethno-linguistic perspective proposed by Philip Riley, according to which the "culture is knowledge, in the widest possible sense, including the traditions and history of the group, its common sense, beliefs, values, attitudes and language. Culture is the knowledge members of a society need if they are to participate completely in the various situations and activities life puts in their way"[5]. In the European macro-scale (but also from US perspective), the essence of this integrated thought is a cultural phenomenon that can be called translation. Such a concept seems to be a logical *continuum* of the diachronic point of view described above. And although the various components of this phenomenon (sender-author-text of the original receiver-translator, receiver-target group, cultural context, relay, determinants etc.) in various countries, geographical areas, methodologies and concepts fluctuate between peripherality, centralization, holistic or particular aspect, translation always remains the foundation.
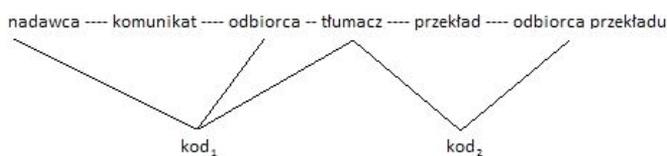
My researches, as a part of PhD thesis, on translations of Latin works into Polish have been indicating that the texts/ literary works determine the structural

horizon of research, due to the primary quest of translators to know the truth, objective truth understood here as immanent, the character of the original work, which is *conditio sine qua non* of translation. The original work has many layers – formal, narrative (both are involved in relations of the historical and cultural grid), and regardless of the dominants, it seems that the translation must be ontologically constituted to in the context of one of them, otherwise it would be an autonomous cultural text.
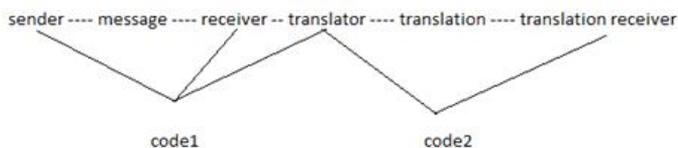
Translation dominants, conscious or not, seem to be dependent on cultural conditions: social, political, historical or scientific – it is a crucial assumption, in particular with regard to the crystallizing definitions, concepts and issues within cultural studies. The attempts to reconcile the achievements of structural and cultural heritage, about which Teresa Walas[6] writes in Poland, are conclusions of Felix Vodièka (about connecting cultural phenomena with an abstracted literary system) and the hypothesis of Elizabeth Fox-Genovese (distancing herself from structuralism defined according to the concepts of Ferdinand de Saussure, Claude Lévi Strauss, Roland Barthes, Lucien Goldmann). Fox-Genovese is an advocate of the design-pattern structure theory introduced by history and this structure is entangled in the systems of social relations, which are exposed and reconstructed.

In the light of the above considerations, a normative categorization seems problematic, even infeasible, because hierarchization of translation is dependent on the original work, which is entangled in social networks and cultural codes[7]. Lower in the negative sense, which diminishes the status of this translation.

Another issue regarding translation with cultural aspect is the approach to the transposition of translation. The translation model of communication based on Roman Jakobson's idea[8], developed by Polish researcher Anna Legeżyńską[9], seems to be an optimal scheme in the context of language, on which, moreover, was planned:

nadawca ---- komunikat ---- odbiorca -- tłumacz ---- przekład ---- odbiorca przekładu

kod_1 kod_2

English version would more or less look like this:

sender ---- message ---- receiver -- translator ---- translation ---- translation receiver

code1   code2

[5] P. Riley, *Language, Culture and Identity*, London 2007, p. 36.

[6] T. Walas, *Historia literatury w perspektywie kulturowej – dawniej i dziś*, [w:] *Kulturowa teoria literatury 2. Poetyki, problematyki, interpretacje*, red. R. Nycz, T. Walas, Kraków 2012.

[7] Ibid., p. 132.

[8] Vid. R. Jakobson, *Poetyka w świetle językoznawstwa*, przeł. K. Pomorska, [w:] *Współczesna teoria badań literackich za granicą. Antologia*. Red. H. Markiewicz, t. II. Kraków 1976, s. 34.

[9] A. Legeżyńska, *Tłumacz i jego kompetencje autorskie*, Warszawa 1986, s. 212-243.

The cultural aspect which is the main idea of my PD thesis, however, reformulates Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of carnival[10], especially the idea of bodily and material baseness, as a visualization of the cultural phenomena concomitant the literary translations. Thus, a vertical hierarchization materializes – the translations, involved in the social connections and the cultural codes, with regard to the originals.

Such a hypothesis has its beginnings in the analytical conclusions formulated on the basis of selected modern translations of Ovid. In the mentioned literary works carnivalesque phenomenon of translation language is clearly noticeable. A representative example might be the translation of Ovid's *Ars Amatoria* by Rościszewski[11]. Polish translator multiplies the fundamental features of the original work and Ovid's plans. Adapting a didactic poem for ludic literary work, which is a guidance for lovers, is a poetic misalliance. Equally, Rośeciszewski compiles high and low culture. Although the translator informs the receiver in the foreword that *otium* and work on Latin distichs are of primary importance to him, there occurs, nevertheless, a charateristic carnivalization (in the form of a spectacle) of translation; its language is transferred into the language of literature.

Ovid's intention was to write a guide, a didactic poem for suitors – not too noble a theme, in Ovid's interpretation, maybe more in Ovid's language, is the optimal poetic work about socio-sexual behavior of people. However, translation is distant from this idea and because of the language – informal, prosaic, colloquial, proposes a different concept of this poem – ribald courtship.

Referring to the concept of translation polyphony formulated by Jerzy Ziomek it can be said, that there is a double voice – the carnivalesque translation and the marginalized original. For Ovid myths were primarily religious parables, for Rościszewski myths are funny tales, narrated in a comic language: Chiron orders Achilles 'bić się po łapach' – slap the hands (in the original: *praebuit ille manus[12]* – he did beat his hands), mężczyźni mają 'nie chodzić rozczochrani' – men can't have disheveled hair (in original: *nec male deformet rigidos tonsure capillos* – 'and let not inappropriate haircut of long hair be blemished'), lover is 'stara praktyczka' – old practician and her lover is 'gałgan' – scamp (in the original *cerva anus* – an old hind and *vilis inferioris honesto* – worse yokels), to get the love you need to 'porzucię fochy' – no sulks (in the original: *exue fastus* – abandon pride), and the heroine of the ancient world Danai is going to be 'stara baba' – crone (in the original *anus* – the old woman, maybe witch). In this way the guide of the mentioned 'art of good manners' becomes a ludic, funny, informal reading, which is the result of translator's *otium*.

The phenomenon of the carnivalesque language translation as a familiarization technique of either a linguistic system or its elements, chosen from the semantic

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[10] M. Bachtin, *Twyrczołьжc Franciszka Rabelais'go a kultura ludowa ньredniowiecza i renesansu*, przei. A. i A. Goreniowie, Krakyw 1975.

[11] Owidiusz, *Kunszt miłosny*, przeł. J. Rościszewski, Warszawa 1922.

[12] All exampes cf. Owidiusz, *Kunszt miiosny*, op. cit.; P. Ovidius Naso, *Amores. Epistulae. Medic. Fac. Fem. Ars Amat. Remedia amoris*, Lipsiae 1908.

ambits, transferres over to them ludic-carnivalesque character. It concerns the stylessness of translations, microlayer of the cultural text. Equivalent to this is the macrolayer pertaining to the phenomenon of translation itself.

Bakhtin's view of the bodily and material baseness evokes a vertical scheme: the top, a synonym of heaven with its spiritual aspects, and the bottom, depth – connected by decentralization, degradation process directed to the depth. But because of its life-giving character (the depth is a synonym of a fecund soil), in spite of its topographic lowliness, it is a regenerative process. It is a downward movement and its tasks are: precipitation, trampling. Thus, the life-giving nature of the bottom, often associated with fertile land , body, materiality, is a resurgent movement, despite the topographical inferiority. The purpose of such a process is to dispose of and give a new life to everything, that is quasi-eternal, antiquated. The hypothesis assimilating the described scheme to the translation researches locates an original on the topographic top, as heaven, an objective truth. Thereby the translation is the renewing bottom, which modernizes, connects, combines and gives another life to the original in a very new cultural and linguistic strata, an effaced form is regenerated from a new, modern point of view. The material aspects correlated highly with baseness are closer to the people, *per analogiam* the translation is usually more understandable for bilingual viewers, which is expectable, and non-bilingual viewers, for whom the translation is the only way to apprehend the original. In both cases it is a closer element, owing to the fact that either because of its interlinguistic or intralinguistic character has been transformed, modernized, adapted.

Bakhtin's example of the analysis of objects turned into bottom-wipers, according to his carnival philosophy, provides new arguments. The elements listed as bottom-wipers are essentially used for a completely different purpose. One selected characteristic (e.g. physical) transforms its essence – e.g. a glove becomes a bottom-wiper. The mono-meaning narrows the wide semantic field, which becomes a one-piece group. The same happens in translation, when the older women become 'stare pudła' – old boxes (meaning beldams) and *multis amata viris* (loved by many men) is a call-girl in translations of Ovid's *Amores* into English by Peter Green[13].

Unequivocally indicating the solution narrows a field of meaning, therefore it is degraded, then renewed, modernized. Using the Bakhtin's description – then ensues matching the thing (its reborn form) to a new place and role – in the case of translations the original text is perceived through the prism of linguistic, cultural, social, historical competences, continuing, the thing-word-meaning is subsequently learned-familiarized (by the bilingual receiver *sensu stricto* from a new perspective, by the nonbilingual receiver – cognition is possible only after the renewal of the text, its familiarization, which allows the receiver to participate in the circle of the initiates).

This opposite 'top-bottom' arrangement does not evaluate the items belonging to these points of delimitation of the vertical scheme. *A contrario* – the center (in

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[13] Ovid, *The Erotic Poems*, trans. Peter Green. London, Penguin 2004.

my researches – the objective truth, immanent value of the literary work, its meaning) is everywhere, because all places are equal, only the decentralized movement is driven from top to bottom to create a new center of rebirth. Translations allow to create a new center – the text of culture comprehensible to a larger audience, to literary work's rebirth, immortality – what can be shown on the examples of Latin works, which nowaday are mainly objects of scientific research. Optimal *exemplum* for my thesis are works written are described by Richard F. Thomas, who finds at least 19 direct references (examples are translated by Peter Green)[14]:

Bob Dylan, "Ain't Talkin'":	Ovid, *Tristia* 1.2.12–13
Who says I can't get heavenly aid?	Who says *I* can't get heavenly aid when a god's angry with me? (original emphasis)
Bob Dylan, "Spirit on the Water":	Ovid, *Tristia* 5.1.80
I want to be with you any way I can.	I want to be with you any way I can.
Bob Dylan, "Ain't Talkin'"	Ovid, *Tristia* 5.8.3–5
They will jump on your misfortune when you're down.	Why jump / on misfortunes that you may well suffer yourself? / I'm down.
Bob Dylan, "Workingman's Blues #2"	Ovid, *Tristia* 5.12.19–20
Now the place is ringed with countless foes.	I'm barred from relaxation / in a place ringed by countless foes.
Bob Dylan, "Spirit on the Water":	Ovid, *Black Sea Letters* 2.4.24:
Can't believe these things would ever fade from your mind.	I cannot believe these things could fade from your mind.
Bob Dylan, "Workingman's Blues #2"	Ovid, *Black Sea Letters* 4.6.42–3
Them I will forget / But you I'll remember always.	*Them* I'll forget, / but *you* I'll remember always. (original emphasis)

Bakhtin's philosophy of carnival is worth reconsidering, reformulating, expanding upon, making another attempt at enlarging it with at first new hypothesis – it can become a new perspective, which I explore in my dissertation. This new perspective can be surprising and can have the descriptive potential for translation in general, although the analysis concerns thesaurus of literary originals and their translations, examined using tools of historical poetics, what excludes *explicite* the efforts to formulate the final normative barriers. Nevertheless, it either offers a new insight into translation or directs attention to the ontological nature of them.

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[14] R. F. Thomas, *The streets of Rome: classical Dylan, Reception and the Classics. An Interdisciplinary Approach to the Classical Tradition*, Yale 2012, p. 37. Cf. Publications of C. Fell.

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