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Domestication in song translations

Abstract. The presented article examines the notion of domestication as applied in the translation of song lyrics. Since the famous essay *Translation, Community, Utopia* by Lawrence Venuti, who condemned domestication as a form of cultural appropriation, this technique has generally been under attack despite some mitigating voices, such as that of Krzysztof Hejwowski. And this situation did not change when the new idea of translator's authorship appeared. This article takes the stance of Hejwowski's arguments and tries to apply them in the realm of (mostly melic) song translations, presenting positive and negative features of domestications there. It is meant to show that domestication can be used not only for informative purposes for the reader (as is usually assumed), but also as a creative tool in its own right.

Keywords: Hejwowski, domestication, foreignization, song translation, melic translation, lyrics.

1. Domestication: introductory remarks

It would be difficult to find terms more recognisable in contemporary translation studies than foreignization and domestication, used in precisely this form by Lawrence Venuti. In Poland, his classic text *Translation, Community, Utopia* has been translated twice: first by Jolanta Kozak (Venuti 2001: 9–42) and then by Magda Heydel (Bukowski & Heydel 2009: 267–293). In the first translation we may retranslate Venuti's keywords as alienation-domestication/familiarization (*wyobcowanie-oswojenie*), and in the second as exoticisation and domestication (*egzotyzacja-udomowienie*), the terms that are currently used in Poland. This dual concept has been widely discussed and resulted in some changes in our approach to translation.

However, translation theorists and practitioners had already encountered these two phenomena earlier, although they often called them by different names (and Venuti himself referred in his work to the translation methods described by Friedrich Schleiermacher in the early 19th century). Stanisław Barańczak, for example, wrote about domestication, using terms such as “free translation” and “adaptation procedures” (*przekład wolny/zabiegi adaptacyjne*) (Barańczak 1992: 67–68).

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What made Venuti's essay stand out was the wholesale attack on domestication, which, according to him "serves an appropriation of the foreign cultures for domestic agendas" (Venuti 1995: 18–19). And there was also holistic praise of the foreignization of the text, including even the grammar of the target language, which should not result in the "invisibility" of the translator. If the latter, extreme approach has met with some objections, for example Venuti's statement on Thomas Mann's English translations, cited by Hejwowski (Hejwowski 2015: 287–288), the former proposal of the supremacy of foreignization over domestication has received considerable acclaim, and "after Venuti" more informed translators usually have guilty conscience when they decide to domesticate their translations.

This is in spite of the emergence of an important new idea, promoted in Poland mainly by Jerzy Jarniewicz, which speaks of translation as a fact of the target culture, and makes us recognise translators as authors of the texts they translate, which, according to the acclaimed scholar and translator, would be visibly evidenced by placing their names on book covers (Jarniewicz 2012: 7–22). With such an assumption, it is difficult to say that any domestication is inappropriate. Yet Jarniewicz criticises Jacek Dukaj's interpolation of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* (Jarniewicz 2018: 237–252), although on the other hand he likes the completely unfaithful—as the translator of the book himself points out—interpretation of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, which Grzegorz Wasowski renders as *Perypetie Alicji na Czarytorium* (Jarniewicz 2018: 253–265). It may be that the nature of both works is relevant here (to which we shall return), but regardless of that we get the impression that the distinction between good and bad domestication may be purely arbitrary here, depending on the taste of the assessor.

A much more balanced, but definitely less spectacular view on domestication, is presented by Krzysztof Hejwowski:

The harsh criticism of domestication in translation and the promotion of foreignization were to some extent a reaction to the influential theory of dynamic equivalence formulated by Eugene Nida in the 1960s. A reaction that was, in a way, justified, since such "dynamic" translations often involved the impoverishment of the originals and, in particular, the elimination of what the translator considered to be the more difficult cultural elements. Lamenting the "invisibility" of the translator, Venuti suggested that translators use "marginal discourses" such as non-standard language, archaisms, and generally adhere to the principle of "aggressive fidelity" (...) If this advice were to be taken seriously, it would obviously lead to a different kind of deformation of the original texts. As I will try to show in the following chapters, translations are harmed by both unwarranted domestication and unwarranted foreignization² (Hejwowski 2015:13).

² Translated by Krzysztof Puławski

According to Hejwowski, we should examine individual phenomena without reference to one theory or another, and only then can we be tempted to draw broader conclusions. He accomplished this task perfectly in the cited book, giving examples of justified and unjustified domestication. But obviously, Hejwowski was not able to describe all translation phenomena. One of those omitted—probably consciously, as it would require a separate study—is the issue of domestication and foreignization in the translation of song lyrics. I therefore propose to analyse them using the critical approach that we can find in professor Hejwowski's two main books, namely *Kognitywno-komunikacyjna teoria przekładu* and *Iluzja przekładu*.

2. Song translations and melic translations

Before we get to that, it is also worth looking at song translations in general. It is not a very popular subject with traductologists, mostly due to the fact that translating songs in many cases involves non-linguistic elements which “are seen as obstacles for the translator and his/her actual—linguistic—work” (Millán & Bartina 2013: 260), but we still have a few important works on this subject.

First of all, two articles by Peter Low, who in his approach to singable song translations used sporting metaphor and talked about the “Pentathlon Principle” (Low 2003: 92). Low distinguished five criteria in the process, namely:

- singability;
- sense;
- naturalness;
- rhythm;
- rhyme.

All of them form a hierarchy, with singability and sense being the most important. For Low, “singability” means that song translation “must function effectively as an oral text delivered at performance speed” (Low 2003: 93). Low can see that this may change the semantic layer of the song and is willing to make small concessions here, but generally is in favour of retaining the original sense. Then come naturalness of the translated text and its rhythm and rhymes.

Low repeated and reinforced those views in his article “The Pentathlon Approach to translating songs” from 2005, in which he stressed the unity of text and music and the “effectiveness on stage” (Low 2005: 192) of any singable song translation.

Johan Franzon treated song translations in broader terms. He noted that not all of them are singable or melic, and thus offered translators five different choices (Franzon 2008: 376):

- leaving the song untranslated (when it is a part of a longer text);
- translating the lyrics but not taking the music into account;

- writing new lyrics to the original music with no overt relation to the original lyrics;
- translating the lyrics and adapting the music accordingly—sometimes to the extent that a brand new composition is deemed necessary;
- adapting the translation to the original music.

Despite the fact that it is not our main subject, we should add here that although the above list may refer to translators' choices, it does not consist of translation techniques, because “non-translation” or “writing new lyrics” can hardly be considered translation. And by no means is this list complete: we have, for instance, good examples of translations in which only some parts are not translated, like in the famous Polish version of Leonard Cohen's “*Lover, Lover, Lover*”, in which Maciej Zembaty left the original chorus.

Then we have very practical distinctions by Ronnie Apter and Mark Herman, who discuss four techniques of translating songs (Apter & Herman 2016: 31–32), namely:

- foreignization;
- domestication;
- adaptation;
- re-translation.

It should be added here that the authors define “re-translation” not in its original sense (as a back translation into language A via its translation in language B), but as another translation, a “re-creation of different aspects of the original by means of different translations” (Apter & Herman 2016: 65).

Works by Polish scholars on the subject are rarer, and for a long time they concerned musical adaptations of literary works, mainly operas, which are usually different from song translations and involve work with the singers during rehearsals. The classic text on the subject, titled “*Tłumaczenie oper i sztuk pisanych wierszem*”, was written by Jerzy Zagórski, who listed five rules of such translations (Zagórski 1955: 408–412):

- fidelity to ideas;
- fidelity to style;
- fidelity to the original text;
- fidelity to the musical “sketch” (which gave some room for changing the musical scheme);
- rule of dramatizing the phrases.

This topic was taken up by Maria Krzysztofiak, who devoted one subchapter of her monograph “*Przekład literacki a translatoologia*” (1996) to musical adaptations of literary works (Krzysztofiak 1996: 120–132). The scholar analysed the existing translations of such works as “*Ode to Joy*” by Friedrich Schiller, Bertold Brecht's songs from “*The Threepenny Opera*” and others, noting that most musical translations by Gałczyński and

Broniewski do not always follow the fidelity-to-the-original-text rule. However, Krzysztofiak is of the opinion that the acoustic properties of translation are of paramount importance (mają kapitalne znaczenie) not only in song, but also in literary translations (see Krzysztofiak 1996: 132).

The researcher, who dealt primarily with songs as such, was Anna Bednarczyk. She started with expanding the notion of Barańczak's "semantic dominant" into translation dominant (dominanta translatorska), which is "an element of a source text that must be translated (reconstructed) in order to preserve the totality of its subjectively significant meanings" (Bednarczyk 2008: 19). Bednarczyk also stated that there may be more than one translation dominant (Bednarczyk 2012: 45) and used this tool to analyse singable translations of chosen Russian songs.

But as has already been stated, there is a certain misunderstanding in the notion that all song translations are melic. Some are purely informative and relate directly to the content of the lyrics. Others may have quasi-poetic ambitions but with no connection to the music, or in any case not the original music of the translated song.

The popularity of "informative" translations can be testified to by the website *tekstowo.pl*, where we can find not only the original lyrics, but also many of their translations. Usually, translations from *tekstowo.pl* are thought to be unprofessional, although in a formal sense it is difficult to establish what their professionalism should depend on. Obviously, there are no regular courses on song translations at Polish universities. From time to time, there are workshops or courses in song translation—and I have had the pleasure of running a few—but these are occasional and short. And we must remember that professional literary translators with academic training very often stipulate that they do not translate poems and, even less so, songs.

So let us assume that the "professional" song translation is the one printed in a serious source and made by people with good knowledge of both source and target language, and preferably some literary authority.

Then we can assume that Wojciech Mann's translations in *Gazeta Wyborcza*, for example, belong to this category. Mann produced informative translations, but over time his texts began to develop into more poetic pieces, in which he incorporated rhyme and rhythm.

However, even on a purely informative level, Mann's translations showed deficiencies and demonstrated that the translator did not fully understand the idiosyncratic nature of English songs. And this did not at all apply to songs that were difficult to understand, based on some hidden meanings. Let us have a look, for example, at John Denver's song "Take Me Home, Country Roads":

Almost Heaven, West Virginia
Blue Ridge Mountains, Shenandoah River

Life is old there, older than the trees
 Younger than the mountains, growin' like a breeze.
 (Denver 2002: 22)

Mann translated this fragment as follows:

Prawie niebo, zachodnia Wirginia
 Blu Ridge Mountains, rzeka Shenandoah.
 Życie jest tu stare, starsze niż drzewa,
 Młodsze niż góry, rosnące jak wietrzyk.
 (Denver 2002: 22)

We can see that the translator has adapted most of the geographical names to the requirements of Polish, omitting the Blue Ridge Mountains, which is a macrotoponym and has a Polish equivalent (Pasma Błękitne, Góry Błękitne). The strangest thing here is the translation of the last two lines, which could probably be seen as some monstrous attempt at foreignization to confuse the reader. We have to assume, however, that this is rather due to a misunderstanding of the text. After all, it is not that life (what life? where from?) is old here, but that people have been here a long time, longer than the trees and shorter than the mountains. “Like a breeze” means very fast in English, which would make sense if the translator looked at the song as a whole and noticed that the lyrical subject is driving a car, and that the mountains do not so much grow as grow in his eyes/grow up in front of him.

This is not the only awkwardness in the lyrics, but the point here is rather to highlight the fact that English songs have a very specific character, and that you have to “think into” them to understand their stories.

Sometimes this is very difficult, and instead of a coherent picture you get a text that is unclear, sometimes even meaningless. Such an example is the translation of Patti Smith's song “Rock N Roll Nigger”, by well-known journalist and translator Filip Łobodzinski (Smith, 2019: 72–73), which can be found in his volume of translations of Smith's songs, titled *Nie gódź się*.

But before we look at his translation, we should mention two things. Firstly, Łobodzinski's translation is already of a different nature, as it is intended to be sung. Secondly, Patti Smith often writes symbolic, difficult, sometimes very personal lyrics, such as in her song “Horses”. However, the lyrics of “Rock N Roll Nigger” are not one of these and seem understandable enough. They tell the story of an artist (described as a “baby”) who becomes successful, but because of her non-conformism, she has to stand outside society, on the side of all those who do not fit in, and although she feels lost, it is only there she can find love in her heart. At the same time, it should also be noted that the

central parlando and the following text refer to the poem “The Marriage of Heaven and Hell” by one of literature's greatest outsiders, William Blake.

ROCK’N’ROLLLOWY MURZAJ

Lala była czarna owca lala była kurwa
lala rosła lala była coraz bardziej duża
lala coś wyhaczy lala więcej urwie
lala lala była rock’n’rollowy murzaj

Popatrz wokół rozejrzyj się wokół
po miedziaków fali gnasz
podoba ci się wszystko wokół
no i czy zasady znasz

Peryferyjny świat, o dają mi znak
peryferyjny świat chcę być właśnie tam

Lala była czarna owca lala była kurwa
lala rośnie lala będzie coraz bardziej duża
lala chwytą lala mierzy strzela bo się wkurza
lala lala jest rock’n’rollowy murzaj

Peryferyjny świat chcę być właśnie tam
peryferyjny świat o dają mi znak

Którzy cierpieli wiedzą co to cierpieć
wyciągają przeto dłoń
burza niesie ból
i wodę życia na chwałę traw
i kolców i ziół
i światła

Zabłądziłam w błogą arkadię
zabłądziłam w bezmiar mórz
zabłądziłam lecz miarka za miarkę
miłość w sercu mi bryznęła już
Zabłądziłam zapłaciłam
zapłaciłam a co mi tam
zabłądziłam zapłaciłam

weszłam w peryferyjny świat

Jimi Hendrix to był murzaj
 Jezus Chrystus i babcia też
 Jackson Pollock to był murzaj
 murzaj murzaj murzaj murzaj
 murzaj murzaj murzaj

Peryferyjny świat o dają mi znak
 peryferyjny świat poszukaj znajdziesz mnie właśnie tam
 peryferyjny świat
 peryferyjny świat
 peryferyjny świat...
 (Smith 2019: 72–73)

It is quite difficult to find all those pieces of information in Łobodziński’s translation and combine them into a coherent story. Besides, if we compare this text with the original, it is really difficult to justify its non-standard Polish grammar, as Smith uses regular English. What is more, we have here the word “murzaj”, probably resulting from political correctness, which is not to be found in dictionaries nowadays, but which meant in archaic, colloquial Polish a big black man and was used mostly with reference to athletes.

This is another example of inappropriate domestication, and the translation itself does not so much take the reader/listener into a foreign world as into a (slightly domesticated) world that lacks meaningful rules and connections. The author's name leads us to expect that we will encounter an important text, and we are confronted with meaninglessness. What's more, not every reader will be brave enough to see this.

Obviously, we can translate Patti Smith’s song in a different way and retain its melic function:

CZARNUCH ROCKA

Lala czarną owcą, lala kurwą jest,
 Lala była mała, a większa się stała,
 Lala miała trochę, lala miała coś,
 Lala, lala, lala jest czarnuchem rocka.
 Popatrz wkoło, popatrz no,
 Jak ci się ten świat podoba?
 Wszędzie szmal i wszędzie zło,
 Chcesz być taki? Pomyśl, zobacz.

Społeczeństwo mierzi mnie, społeczeństwo chcę zapomnieć,
Społeczeństwo jest passé, społeczeństwo nie jest moje.

Lala czarną owcą, lala kurwą jest,
Lala była mała, a większa się stała,
Lala ma palec, lala ma broń,
Lala, lala, lala jest czarnuchem rocka

Społeczeństwo mierzi mnie, społeczeństwo chcę zapomnieć,
Społeczeństwo jest passé, gdzieś poza nim miejsce moje.

Ci, którzy cierpieli, rozumieją cierpienie
I dlatego wyciągają pomocną dłoń.
Burza, która niszczy, nawadnia ziemię.
Błogosławiona trawa, rośliny,
Ostry cierń i światło.

Zagubiłam się w rozkoszy dolinie,
Zagubiłam się w bezmiarze wód,
Zagubiłam się w miarce za miarkę
I miłości w sercu stał się cud.

Zagubiłam się, zagubiłam,
Choć koszt taki musiał być,
Zagubiłam się, zagubiłam
Poza społeczeństwem żyć.

Jimi Hendrix był czarnuchem,
Jezus Chrystus, babcia też,
Jackson Pollock był czarnuchem,
Czarny, czarny, czarny
Czarny był, czarny był.

Społeczeństwo mierzi mnie, społeczeństwo chcę zapomnieć,
Społeczeństwo jest passé, poza społeczeństwem stoję.
(Unpublished)

Both translators use domestications that, in line with Hejwowski's postulate of restoring the text to its uniqueness, could be replaced by foreignized terms. Mann translates

“the misty taste of moonshine” as “mglisty smak samogonu”, although it would have been better to give “the taste of homemade whiskey”/”smak domowej whiskey” (retaining the Irish-American spelling of this alcohol). Łobodzinski, on the other hand, sees no archaisation in the lyrics of the song “Dancing Barefoot”, and uses contemporary Polish.

Those two examples also prove that in the case of song translation, professionalism depends on something more than the obvious requirement of a very good knowledge of SL and TL, and some experience in translation in general. Since it is not the main subject of our investigations, we will leave it at this point, just adding that like in other more artistic activities song translation may require some talent.

3. Translations on stage

We must remember that after Venuti, domestications themselves became infamous and, at least in theory, the legitimacy of their use was increasingly restricted. Fewer and fewer domestications appear in serious adult literature, but there are also calls to foreignize children's literature to a greater extent, which can be exemplified by the latest Polish translation of *Anne of Green Gables* by Anna Bańkowska. But theorists are much more likely to approve domestication wherever there is humour of various kinds (which may explain why Jarniewicz is willing to accept the domestication of *Alice*, but not of *Heart of Darkness*), and also in such translations which the viewer (and the reader of, e.g. subtitles) encounters directly and finds it more difficult to check any references immediately, because he/she happens to be watching a play, a film or listening to a song. This is why, in principle, no one doubts that *Monty Python's Flying Circus* should have been domesticated, which was first done on a large scale by Tomasz Beksiński, and then, in a similar way, by Elżbieta Gałązka-Salamon. The same is true of Bartosz Wierzbęta, who, starting with *Shrek*, not only replaced foreign cultural references with native ones where they existed in the text, but even created native references where there were no foreign ones.

As far as song translations are concerned, the most “direct” are of course the melic ones, intended to be performed on stage. (Others, such as informational ones, appear in books/newspapers/the Internet, and the readers can check most foreign references on their own.) This probably means that melic translations will contain the biggest number of domestications, dealing especially with cultural references and humour.

I propose, then, that we look at a few such translations and see how domestications “work” there. Firstly, we will focus on the very popular song by Dick Scanlan and Jeanine Tesori “Girl in 14G”:

*When I first moved to New York I couldn't sleep. I couldn't sleep and I couldn't figure it out.
And then I realized: It's LOUD! People honking, and people yelling at each other on the streets.
And of course there's the apartment I live in with the neighbors.*

Just moved in to 14G
So cozy, calm, and peaceful
Heaven for a mouse like me
With quiet by the lease-full
Pets are banned, parties too
And no solicitations
Window seat with garden view
A perfect nook to read a book
I'm lost in my Jane Austen when I hear
Say it isn't so
Not the flat below
From an opera wanna be
In 13G
A matinee of some cantata
Wagners Ring
And Traviata
My first night in 14G
I'll put up with Puccini
Brew myself a cup of tea
Crochet until she's fini
Half past eight
Not a peep
Except the clock tick-tockin
Now I lay me down to sleep
A comfy bed to rest my head
A stretch, a yawn, I'm almost gone when
Now the girl upstairs
Wakes me unawares
Blowing down from 15G Her revelly
She's scattin like her name is Ella
Guess who answers a cappella
I'm not one to
Raise my voice
Make a fuss
Or speak my mind
But might I query
Would you mind if
Could you kindly
Stop!

That felt good
 Stop!
 13, 15, 14G
 A most unlikely trio
 No quite three part harmony
 All day and night we're singing
 I've had my fill of peace and quiet
 Shout out loud, "I've changed my diet!"
 All because of
 14G

This song has become so popular on the Polish music scene that it has lived to see at least five translations—and we will look at four of them. The first one was done by Jakub Kornacki and had the slightly awkward Polish title “Wprowadziłam się”:

W zamku klik, otwieram drzwi, nowością pachnie wszystko
 Nieba skrawek jak w sam raz dla takiej cichej myszki
 Pies i kot nie wślizgną się, imprezy mi nie w głowie
 Za oknem ogród jak we śnie
 Do pełni szczęścia jeszcze to—Jane Austen rozdział już w połowie, gdy...
 Cóż za szczęścia łut, że poniżej ciut
 Operowy sopran drze, wciąż śpiewać chce
 Wagnera ćwicz, ostinata, Sakentata i Traviata

Pierwsza noc w mym gniazdku, więc niech będzie ten Puccini
 W herbaty woń już wtulam się, nie będzie tak do zimy
 Blisko świt, tik-tak, tik-tak, odmierza zegar ciszę
 Czuję jak nadchodzi sen
 Kołderka czule wita mnie, z rozkoszą już przeciągam się, gdy...
 A więc wyżej też mieszka jakaś wesz
 I jej nie przeszkadza, że ja tutaj śpię
 Scatuje niby jakaś Ella, a od dołu a capella
 Ja nie z tych, co koty dra, takt i umiar cnotą ma, lecz...
 Czy bym mogła... prosić byś... zamknęła wreszcie...
 DZIÓB
 hmm.. nieźle!
 DZIÓB

Oto jak usłyszał świat niezwykle nasze trio
Ballada, szanta, jaką chcesz, Trzy głosy dadzą ci ją

I nagle gdzie to ciche dziewczę
Gdy ja śpiewam—milczeć, leszcze
Wprowadziłam się!

This text was successfully sung by Paulina Grochowska. However, the translator has rendered it featureless: we don't know where the song's heroine has moved to or where she comes from. We can therefore speak of a neutralisation of the text. In addition, the Polish language of this translation is also questionable, which, however, is not the subject of our inquiries.

Two other, much more interesting and linguistically correct translations come from Daniel Wyszogrodzki. Here is the first one, entitled “Czwarte piętro, numer pięć”:

*Kiedy przeprowadziłam się do Nowego Jorku nie mogłam spać.
Zastanawiałam się dlaczego, aż doznałam olśnienia: to przez ten hałas!
Kierowcy trąbią, ludzie krzyczą, gra muzyka.
Ale znalazłam sobie ciche mieszkanko...*

Na czwartym piętrze numer pięć
W uroczej kawalerce
Ta myszka spokój będzie mieć
I książki w biblioteczkę

Żadnych imprez, żadnych psów
I żadnych domokrażców
Za oknem widok, że ho-ho
W lekturę więc, zagłębię się
Już czeka tom Steinbecka, a to co...

Boże, co za cios
Pod podłogą—głos!
Piątka, trzecie piętro i
Tam aria brzmi
A zaraz zaczniesz się kantata
Coś z Mozarta lub
Traviata

Czwarte piętro, pierwsza noc
Puccini był przede mną
Herbata, książka, no i koc
Głos padnie jej na pewno

Ósma trzy
Nie słyszeć nic
Zegarek tylko tyka
Zaraz się położę spać
Kołderka i poduszki trzy
Przeciągam się i ziewam, gdy...

Tu jest pięter pięć
Pecha trzeba mieć!
Nad sufitem nagły zgiełk
Ktoś woli jazz
I śpiewa scatem niczym Ella
A pode mną a cappella

Zbyt nieśmiała
Jestem by
Kłócić się
Lub stukać w drzwi
Lecz mimo wszystko
Skromna myszka
Prosi tylko...

Stop!
Ale fajnie
S-T-O-P-!

Na trzech piętrach, numer pięć
Od dzisiaj mamy trio
Trafi się dysonans lecz
Praktyka czyni mistrza

(I) tyle miałam życia w ciszy
Zmieniam dietę, zacznę krzyczeć

Wszystko przez ten
Numer pięć
(Unpublished)

In this text, Wyszogrodzki left the heroine of the song in New York (foreignization), and translated her poken remarks, making the whole more playful and fuller. But he decided that these lyrics can be translated in a different way and domesticated them:

*Kiedy przeprowadziłam się do Warszawy nie mogłam spać.
Zastanawiałam się dlaczego, aż doznałam olśnienia: to przez ten hałas!
Kierowcy trąbią, ludzie krzyczą, dzwonią tramwaje.
Ale znalazłam sobie ciche mieszkanko...*

Na czwartym piętrze, klatka sześć
W uroczej kawalerce
Ta myszka spokój będzie mieć
I książki w biblioteczkę
(Unpublished)

As we can see from this excerpt, we have here Warsaw, trams and a staircase, which makes the heroine of the song definitely closer to Polish culture. And perhaps it is only a pity that, after Jane Austin and Steinbeck, she is simply reading some 'book' in this translation.

These two examples point to another interesting phenomenon. They put into question the fairly common view that we can use domestication only to make the text more understandable for the public. However, the two versions of the song “Girl in 14G” by Daniel Wyszogrodzki³ indicate otherwise. Foreignization and domestication simply become elements of cultural play. Wyszogrodzki gives the performers a choice and shows that the song will sound slightly different when its protagonist finds herself in “foreign” New York and different when in familiar Warsaw.

Is this the end of the possibilities of domesticating this text? Certainly not. In the early spring of 2017, the preliminaries of the 38th PPA in Wrocław featured two candidates who were to perform the same version of “Girl in 14G”. Of course, this was perfectly acceptable, but one of the performers approached a new translator with a request for a new translation. This person decided to domesticate the text even further:

³ And obviously Bartosz Wierzbęta’s attempts at domesticating neutral elements of different films.

CICHE MIESZKANKO

Kiedy po raz pierwszy przyjechałam do Białegostoku, zrozumiałam, że jest tu głośno. Białystok to duże miasto. Teatry, kina, kawiarnie... Mamy tu nawet od niedawna operę! Samochody jeżdżą, trąbią, ludzie krzyczą... A ja szukałam czegoś dla siebie. Jakiegoś spokojnego miejsca.

Nareszcie mam mieszkanko swe,
 W którym nie puchną uszy,
 Tu pragnę spędzać noce dnie,
 Bo jestem jak Kopciuszek.
 Zwierzątek tu nie wolno mieć
 I imprez głośnych robić,
 Cóż jeszcze więcej mogę chcieć?
 Na stole czeka—Musierowicz,
 Więc zbliżam się do niego, a tuuu...
 A więc jednak nie,
 Obok tuż się drze
 Jakaś diwa, która chce
 Pognębić mnie,
 Więc powiedzcie, po cholere
 Było robić tu operę?

Ten pierwszy wieczór w gniazdku mym
 “Umila” mi Puccini,
 Toczę wokół wzrokiem złym,
 O ósmej jest już finisz.
 Potem, cóż, nie słyszę nic
 I cisza dźwięczy w uszach,
 Zaraz do łóżeczka hyc
 Sen wciąga mnie, przeciągam się,
 Jak miło wabi mnie poduszka

Teraz z prawej ta
 Koncert chce mi dać
 Drze się przy tym głośno tak,
 Że tchu jej brak
 A zgadnijcie jaka zgaga
 Na te scaty odpowiada?

Ja nie lubię mówić wprost,
 Rzadko też podnoszę głos,
 Ale pytam tylko
 Czy możecie zamknąć wreszcie
 RYJ

Nasze głosy tworzą ten
 Niespotykany tercet,
 Wieczorem, nocą albo w dzień
 Rytm nam dyktuje serce

Solo wam zaśpiewam wreszcie,
 Cicho, kurwa, proszę grzecznie,
 Zmieniło mnie mieszkanko ciche me!

The domestications start already with the title, as the quiet flat is a conscious reference to a Polish song called “Małe mieszkanko na Mariensztacie”. However, in the song itself, we change location and move to Białystok, where a quiet girl from Hajnówka⁴ arrives. There are very specific local allusions to the opera, as well as a reference to a book by a very popular teen author, Małgorzata Musierowicz. It is also worth mentioning that the vulgarisations, which appear a little later, are intended to show the inner transformation of the “silent mouse” and are most intentional.

Do these domestications exhaust the possibilities offered to us by the original text? And here, too, we must answer in the negative. After all, we can imagine a song about a highlander called Halka who arrives in Pcim and is surprised at how bustling the town is, that an Orlen station can be found on every corner, cars are constantly running, tourists are shouting and singing “Góralu, czy ci nie żal”. This kind of domestication would go even further and refer to the present political situation in Poland.

So, domestication can also result from the current political or social situation in the country of the target language. At the same time, interestingly enough, we can either adapt the text to it, or the situation itself will adapt to the text. This is exactly what happened with a song that Colum Sands wrote many years ago. It is entitled “Whatever You Say, Say Nothing”, and refers to a saying used by the Irish (meaning: you have to be careful and not say too much to the English). It is also worth mentioning that a poem with this title was written by Seamus Heaney. We, however, are interested in the song, which reads in the first two passages:

⁴ As this was the home town of Julita Wawreszuk, who sang this song.

Whatever you say, say nothing, when you talk about you know what
 For if you know who should hear you, you know what you'll get
 They'll take you off to you know where for you wouldn't know how long
 So for you know who's sake don't let anyone hear you singing this song

You all know what I'm speaking of when I mention you know what
 And I fear it's very dangerous to even mention that
 For the other ones are always there, although you may not see
 And if anyone asks who told you that, please don't mention me

I heard it in the 1990s and very much regretted that translating it had become point-
 less. Sands's song suited the communist era but lost its relevance in democratic Poland.
 However, it was enough to wait about twenty years and it became more relevant again—
 one could say that it “domesticated itself” in Poland's political situation:

Cokolwiek mówisz, nie mów nic,
 Jak mówisz to, co wiesz,
 Bo jak usłyszy ten, co wiesz,
 To trafisz sam wiesz gdzie,
 A na jak długo—nie wie nikt,
 Lecz wiesz, co zrobią znów,
 Więc ucz się śpiewać piosnkę tę,
 Bez wymawiania słów.

I wiecie, o co chodzi mi,
 Gdy mówię o tym czymś,
 To jednak niebezpiecznie brzmi,
 A zwłaszcza przy tym kimś,
 Tym, co nie zawsze widać go,
 Ale on wszystkich zna,
 Więc gdy pytają, rzekł tak kto,
 Nie mówcie, że to ja.

This example allows a broader view on domestication which can also be treated in
 political terms. The best known domestications (or adaptations) of this kind are two
 songs by Jacek Kaczmarski: “Obława” (Vladimir Vysotsky) and “Mury” (Lluís Llach). But
 usually domestications are applied to less serious works.

This view is confirmed by other Polish translations. We can find domestications in
 some translations of Jaromir Nohavica’s more humorous songs, such as “Milionář”, in

which “łebski Franek” takes part in the Polish version of a popular quiz programme, or “Mně snad jebne”, in which the hero of the song is magically transported to Warsaw with its all idiosyncrasies, and the only Czech element in the translation is a Škoda car, although we have an Opel in the original version. But in other, more serious works by the singer, such as “Stanice Jiřího z Poděbrad” or “Těšínská”, all the cultural elements remain intact.

This means that we usually deal with standard domestications and, according to the accepted criteria (lyrics reach the audience directly and are most likely to be humorous), we will most often encounter domestication in songs by artists such as the double act Michael Flanders and Donald Swann or Tom Lehrer. The latter in particular encourages domestication in songs such as “I Got It from Agnes”, “We Will All Go Together When We Go” and “National Brotherhood Week”. I translated the first two songs by Lehrer for local performers, and in the first one in particular I felt I had to appeal to Polish criteria:

JA MAM TO OD RYSIA

Przyjaciół mam,

A oni mnie

I wszyscy tak

Dzielimy się,

By każdy był

Szczęśliwy, cóż

Tak to z nami jest

I już!

Ja mam to od Rysia,

Od Kasi ma to Rys,

A Kasia zwierzyła mi się dzisiaj,

Że mógł to dać jej Krzyś,

Krzyś ma to od Oli,

Od Bola Ola ma,

A wszyscy wiedzą: jemu

Dałam to ja.

Staś ma to od Basi,

A Basi dał to Ray,

Który przypadkiem złapał to,

Gdy zwiedzał polski Sejm,

Jacques dał to Cecylii,

Gdy przywiózł z Francji ser,
Cecylii wszystko się już myli,
Lecz... ucieszy się Pierre.

Kasia ma to od Busia,
Który na banjo gra,
A Stasia od tatusia,
Który jej wszystko da,
Przejął to od niej Daniel
A także jego psiak,
Nasz dentysta też skorzystał,
A my wciąż... nie wiemy jak.

Ale ja mam to od Rysia,
A może to był Zdziś
Czy Bronek, czy Romek, czy może Atomek
Trudno powiedzieć dziś,
To mógł być jakiś klub
Czy kłop, czy sklep, czy jakiś bar,
Więc możesz też otrzymać ten...
Ale tylko możesz ten... przyjaźni dar.

The basic domestication here is, of course, the replacement of English names with Polish ones. But apart from that, we still have the swap of the Blarney Stone for the Polish Sejm and a local surplus in the form of Romek and Atomek (the heroes of a popular comic book), but of course the foreign names (Ray, Pierre) play exactly the same role in the translation as the other foreign names in the original.

The third song mentioned is still awaiting a Polish translation, but if we look at the English lyrics, we can certainly see the adaptability in them:

Oh, the white folks hate the black folks,
And the black folks hate the white folks.
To hate all but the right folks
Is an old established rule.

But during National Brotherhood Week, National Brotherhood Week,
Lena Horne and Sheriff Clarke are dancing cheek to cheek.
It's fun to eulogize
The people you despise,
As long as you don't let 'em in your school.

Oh, the poor folks hate the rich folks,
 And the rich folks hate the poor folks.
 All of my folks hate all of your folks,
 It's American as apple pie.

But during National Brotherhood Week, National Brotherhood Week, New Yorkers love
 the Puerto Ricans 'cause it's very chic. Step up and shake the hand of someone you can't
 stand. You can tolerate him if you try.

Oh, the Protestants hate the Catholics, And the Catholics hate the Protestants, And the
 Hindus hate the Muslims, And everybody hates the Jews.

But during National Brotherhood Week, National Brotherhood Week, It's National
 Everyone-smile-at-one-another-hood Week. Be nice to people who are inferior to you. It's
 only for a week, so have no fear. Be grateful that it doesn't last all year!

It is interesting to note that many of the original oppositions can be retained in trans-
 lation (especially the religious references and the fact that everyone hates the Jews), but
 it is also imperative to replace Lena Horn and Sheriff Clarke, e.g., with the pair Borys
 Budka, Beata Szydło. Lehrer's text certainly provides opportunities for multi-storey
 domestications:

- the replacement of certain cultural elements with others (the aforementioned
 Budka and Szydło);
- the addition of certain topical pieces of information to the text (Podlachians hate
 refugees);
- and the general adaptation of a text that Lehrer wrote in the 1960s to the contem-
 porary situation in Poland (with the sad reflection of how little has changed).

Such domestication does not stem from the need to explain the source text to a native
 audience; rather, it is an invitation to Polish audiences to the kind of semantic playfulness
 that the now aged Tom Lehrer once infused his audience with. It is also a domesti-
 cation combined with modernisation, which becomes possible if we—as Jarniewicz
 postulated—treat the translator as the creator of a given work.

4. Final remarks

Domestication has been in decline at least since two famous publications by Venuti:
The Translator's Invisibility. A History of Translation (1995) and “Translation, Community
 Utopia” (2000). But even before that it was treated more as a possible tool than a whole-
 sale technique, and most scholars described (and sometimes evaluated) it using

separate examples from different translations, which was also true in the case of song translations.

The exception here is a relatively new book by Apter and Herman, in which the authors devote a separate section to domestication, and their conclusion is that the choice between foreignization and domestication depends on “the particular work being translated, the specific source and target languages, the audience for which the translation is made, and the abilities and proclivities of the translators” (Apter & Herman 2016: 56), which makes their ideas very close to those of Hejwowski.

Otherwise, most authors simply note this phenomenon or sometimes do not see its manifestations. In a new book by Franzon (2021) the author writes, for instance:

Monetary currency is clearly culture-bound. Though one element, *a greenback* dollar, uniquely current in the SL culture is exchanged for domestic equivalents, *en tia* and *ören*, all of them serve well to prove the big point the singer makes (Franzon 2021: 95).

Franzon not only notes domestication here, but also evaluates it but does not try (neither here, nor later in the article) to give it a theoretical frame. This is somehow understandable because this is not his main task here, but this example illustrates a general trend.

On the other hand, in the same volume we have an article under the meaningful title “Forming a new song within the shell of the old: Process of transformation, recontextualization, and prefiguration in the lyrics of Joe Hill’s «The Preacher and the Slave»”, which is an excellent example of intralingual transcreation. But Daniel Lees Fryer says that the text of the original song was here “transformed, repurposed, or adapted” (Lees Fryer 2021: 353), although we can find there new and very interesting examples of domestication. Another article by a Greek scholar discusses very vividly in one of the subchapters (Kelandrias 2021: 53–57) creativity in song translations, but the author in most cases uses here the word “adaptation” instead of “domestication”.

However, it must be acknowledged that the introductory article by four writers acknowledges that domestication is one of the macrolevel strategies in song translations (Greenall et al. 2021: 29).

The same approach (if any) is also characteristic of Polish scholarly works on song translations. What is more, we can find there a certain view which I quote here from an unpublished Master's thesis by Anna Mach, who wrote about a possible translation of the song “Gin” by the The Tiger Lillies:

The main argument for domestication would be an assumed lack of comprehension of cultural references of the source text by the target audience. Nevertheless, British culture is well known worldwide and the images of an English gentleman drinking gin in the

tropics are not incomprehensible to Polish audiences. Therefore, there are no reasons to adapt the original cultural reality of the universe presented in the song to any specific needs of the target audience (Mach 2020:64).

In the light of the preceding considerations, especially on the five Polish translations of “Girl in 14G”, it seems to be a misunderstanding which obviously comes from Venuti.

It is worth mentioning that although these reflections are a polemic against both Venuti's theory and Jarniewicz's postulate, they do not in the least detract from them. Translators indeed use domestication and foreignization in their work, and in many cases the emphasis should be on the latter. The translator is indeed the creator (though I would insist that he or she is a co-author) of the work being translated and fully deserves to have his or her name appear on the cover of the book. However, with such general formulations, we are dealing with a multiplicity of very subtle phenomena, and we must emphasise that a translator can be a creator to a greater or lesser degree, and that not all domestications are bad. This was perfectly understood by Hejwowski, who provided us with the tools for such a subtle analysis in different types of translations.

It also seems that domestication in general is a way of understanding some exotic ideas or facts. Referring to what we know seems natural when learning about new things. Referring to our own culture seems natural when learning about other cultures. Only after the similarities have been established can one move on to the differences and see what is unique about a culture.

The question still remains: what happens if we get it wrong? If we distort an element of a foreign culture by domestication to a very large extent? In the famous short story “Averroes's Search”, Jorge Luis Borges describes a real-life situation where an Arabic philosopher translating Aristotle is unable to understand the key concepts of tragedy and comedy as described by “Aristu”. Averroes concludes erroneously:

With firm, painstaking calligraphy he added these lines to the manuscript: *Aristu [Aristotle] gives the name “tragedy” to panegyrics and the name “comedy” to satires and anathemas. There are many admirable tragedies and comedies in the Qur’ān and the mu’allaquat of the mosque* (Borges 1954: 561).

The story is ambiguous, and Borges does not draw conclusions from what happened, leaving this task to his readers. Moreover, Averroes, who is so misguided when it comes to theatre (even though the theatre is literally displayed under his nose), is remarkably perspicacious when it comes to philosophical and religious questions concerning future ages. However, we can probably read the story as praise of human inquisitiveness, which, although misguided, seeks to understand. It may not be praise of domestication

(which Averroes does), but it also shows that anyone who thinks and draws conclusions exposes themselves to error.

However, I am far from considering domestications as errors or mistakes. Rather, they are a tool that translators—including song translators—should use consciously and carefully. There are situations that allow for their wider use (songs, films, theatrical plays, translating humour), and there are others when they are not so welcome. Finally, there are certain domestications which spring from pure misunderstanding of the source texts and are, as Venuti claimed blatant abuses. But we must still remember that all of them are marked by the human effort to understand and explain.

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