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(Re)Writing the History of Polish Literary Studies Through Translation. The Case of Ireneusz Opacki's *Royal Genres*

In her much celebrated *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities* (2002), Mieke Bal builds a strong argument on Walter Benjamin's claim that history "is neither a reconstruction of nor an identification with the past; it is a form of translation."[1] Taking *The Task of the Translator* as her point of departure, the Dutch cultural theorist makes an attempt to extend ("translate," as she puts it) Benjamin's philosophy of translation into the historical interpretation of visual objects.[2] In a manner characteristic of many other recent cultural histories narrated as travelogues,[3] Bal overtly rejects the rudimentary meaning of "translation" as an exchange between languages in favour of other (dissipating, metaphorical, and active) semantic associations that allow it to become "a suitable model for historical work."[4]

Indeed, the recently announced "translational turn" in cultural studies has set up translation as a model for conducting inter- and trans--disciplinary cultural research, and as the main analytical category for investigating the cross-cultural diffusion and historical transformation

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[1] Mieke Bal, *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities. A Rough Guide* (Toronto – Buffalo – London: University of Toronto Press, 2002), 64.

[2] Bal, *Travelling Concepts*, 64.

[3] See e.g. Edward Said, "Travelling Theory," in *The World, the Text and the Critic* (Cambridge and Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1983), 226–47; *Travelling Concepts for the Study of Culture*, ed. Birgit Neumann and Ansgar Nunning in collaboration with Mirjam Horn (Berlin and Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2012); *The Travelling Concepts of Narrative*, ed. Mari Hatavara, Lars--Christer Hydén, and Matti Hyvärinen (Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2013).

[4] Bal, *Travelling Concepts,* 67.

of art forms and art theories.[5] Cultural historians now describe translation not only as one of the basic instruments for cultural self-reflection and self--criticism, but, indeed, as an over-arching methodological concept for the study of culture.[6] The notion of translation has become one of the major "travelling concepts" in the humanities,[7] with translation studies acquiring for many the status of a guiding science (*Leitwissenschaft*).[8]

Despite the fact these conceptual leaps and methodological transitions in the humanities have translation proper as their ultimate point of reference,[9] they tend to overlook the role of the linguistic medium in shaping our understanding of cultural theories and concepts. Scholars in cultural studies and philosophy, in much the same way as literary critics, regularly fail to account for the dynamic relationship between the source and target texts, a point made forcibly by Şebnem Susam-Sarajeva in her *Theories on the Move: Translation's Role in the Travels of Literary Theories* (2006). Beyond the generally accepted truth that it can "enhance the mobilisation of knowledge,"[10] it is now widely recognised that interlingual translation can also, under certain circumstances, even inhibit novel ideas from travelling between socio-historically differentiated cultures. Yet, historical accounts of the circulation of concepts/theories across cultural borders rarely engage its specificities. In Lawrence Venuti's words, "widespread dependence on translated texts coincides with neglect of their translated status, a general failure to take into account the differences introduced by the fact of translation."[11] Literary and cultural theories evolve through "the creation of concepts by interpreting domestic versions of foreign [theoretical] texts, but for the most part these

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[5] See e.g. Doris Bachmann-Medick, "The Translational Turn," trans. Kate Sturge, *Translation Studies* 1 (2009): 2–16; Doris Bachmann-Medick, *Cultural Turns. Neuorientierungen in den Kulturwissenschaften* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2010), 238–83; *The Trans/National Study of Culture: A Translational Perspective*, ed. Doris Bachmann-Medick (Berlin – Boston: Walter de Gruyter, 2014).

[6] See Anna Weronika Wendland, "Cultural Transfer," in *Travelling Concepts for the Study of Culture*, 59–62.

[7] Andreas Langenohl, "Scenes of Encounter. A Translational Approach to Travelling Concepts in the Study of Culture," in *The Trans/National Study*, 93.

[8] Heidemarie Salevsky and Ina Müller, *Translation as Systemic Interaction. A New Perspective and a New Methodology* (Berlin: Frank & Timme, 2011), xv–xvi.

[9] See Dilek Dizdar, "Translational Transitions: 'Translation Proper' and Translation Studies in the Humanities," *Translation Studies* 1 (2009): 90.

[10] Scott L. Montgomery, *Science in Translation: Movements of Knowledge Through Cultures and Time* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 2000), 108.

[11] Lawrence Venuti, *The Scandals of Translation: Towards an Ethics of Difference* (London and New York, 2002), 106.

versions have been taken as transparent, and the concepts unmediated by the domestic language and culture that is their medium."[12] Eliding the problems of linguistic mediation in the cross-cultural travels of humanistic concepts is particularly problematic when target texts overtly emphasise their "translated" status, in the form of self-referential and self-reflexive metatranslations observing their own operations and the factors conditioning those operations.[13] Perhaps nowhere is this as apparent as in Polish translations of Martin Heidegger and Jacques Derrida,[14] referred to in historical accounts of literary studies as if they were illusionist substitutes of the originals in the target culture.

This paper argues for a more encompassing appreciation of the problems entailed with translation proper in the history of literary studies. The problem of "the translatedness" of theoretical texts involves such crucial issues as the visibility of the discursive subject (who speaks in an original/translation?), the context (i.e. the historical position and local situatedness, source-culture-specific/target-conditioned styles, genres, and modalities of theoretical texts), mutual commensurability between different scholarly cultures (negotiability and transferability of terms and notions, cultural asymmetries), and the role of translation in shaping canons and currents of literary knowledge in target cultures. In short, the practice of translation has to be viewed as part of the intellectual history of literary studies or, more broadly, of cultural history.[15] Literary studies translation deserves to be studied, not only as a medium for interpreting and expanding the knowledge of other scholarly cultures,[16] as a mode of and stimulus to theoretical literary inquiry,[17] or as a tool for critical analysis and the teaching of literature,[18] but also as an object

[12] Venuti, *Scandals of Translation*, 106.

[13] Theo Hermans, *The Conference of the Tongues* (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), 42.

[14] Metatranslation invades Martin Heidegger's "Powiedzenie Anaksymandra," trans. Janusz Sidorek, in Martin Heidegger, *Drogi lasu* (Warszawa: Aletheia, 1997), 261–301, and Jacques Derrida's *O gramatologii*, trans. Bogdan Banasiak (Warszawa: KR, 1999).

[15] See e.g. *Cultural Translation in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Peter Burke and R. Po-chia Hsia (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2007).

[16] See e.g. Montgomery, *Science in Translation*; Salar Manafi Anari, "The Role of Translation in the Development of Humanities," *Translation Studies* 7–8 (2004/2005): 7–24; Piotr Gierowski, *Struktury historii: O czeskim projekcie dziejów literatury na tle recepcji praskiego strukturalizmu w Polsce* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 2013).

[17] See Rainer Schulte, "Translation and Literary Criticism," *Translation Review* 9 (1982): 1.

[18] See e.g. Marilyn Gaddis Rose, *Translation and Literary Criticism: Translation as Analysis* (Manchester, UK: St. Jerome, 1997).

of scholarly investigation in its own right.[19] Translations should be studied not only for their active role (constructive/distortive, stimulating/sedative, disengaged/overtly manipulative) in the transmission of literary theories, but moreover as historical records of critical self-consciousness, and as forms of self-thematisation by target scholarly cultures.

Perhaps one of the most illustrative examples to highlight the significance of translation in the historiography of literary studies, and more specifically to demonstrate the part translation has played in manipulating the scholarly fame[20] of Polish literary theory in target cultures, is David Malcolm's English version of Ireneusz Opacki's *Krzyżowanie się postaci gatunkowych jako wyznacznik ewolucji poezji*[21] (1963), published in David Duff's *Modern Genre Theory* (2000) under the title *Royal Genres*.[22] With its inclusion in this widely-used anthology, Opacki's article enters the canon of twentieth-century literary genre theory in English-speaking literary studies – alongside, among others, Yury Tynyanov's *The Literary Fact*, Mikhail Bakhtin's *The Problem of Speech Genres*, Hans Robert Jauss's *Theory of Genres and Medieval Literature*, Fredric Jameson's *Magical Narratives: On the Dialectical Use of Genre Criticism*, Tzvetan Todorov's *The Origin of Genres*, and Jacques Derrida's *The Law of Genre*. Notwithstanding the fact that both *Krzyżowanie się postaci gatunkowych* and its English translation have already received much critical attention in Polish literary studies, a thorough comparative analysis is still needed, sensitive to generic, cultural-historical, methodological, and conceptual-figurative shifts, which may significantly distort the author's original perspective. Moreover, and more broadly, these translational transformations may be considered characteristic of the Western European and American (non-

[19] See e.g. Roman Ingarden, "O tłumaczeniach," in *O sztuce tłumaczenia*, ed. Michał Rusinek (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1955); Tamara Brzostowska-Tereszkiewicz, "Poetyka przekładu literaturoznawczego," in *Od tematu do rematu. Przechadzki z Balcerzanem. Księga Jubileuszowa z okazji 70 rocznicy urodzin Profesora Edwarda Balcerzana*, ed. Tomasz Mizerkiewicz and Agata Stankowska (Poznań: Wydawnictwo UAM, 2007), 519–34; *Tekst naukowy i jego przekład*, ed. Anna Duszak, Anna Jopek-Bosiacka, and Grzegorz Kowalski (Kraków: Universitas, 2015); *The Translator* 2 (2011): special issue on translation of science, ed. Maeve Olohan and Myriam Salama-Carr.

[20] To use André Lefevere's terms. See his *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992).

[21] The original title is translated in a footnote to *Royal Genres* and it reads: *The Hybridisation of Genre Forms as a Determinant of the Evolution of Poetry*.

[22] All quotations in this paper are from Ireneusz Opacki's "Krzyżowanie się postaci gatunkowych jako wyznacznik ewolucji poezji," *Pamiętnik Literacki* 4 (1963): 349–89 and from the 2nd ed. of *Modern Genre Theory*, ed. and introduced David Duff (London and New York: Routledge, 2014). Page numbers are given in parentheses in the main text at the end of direct quotations from both sources.

chronological, fragmentary and dispersed) reception of Polish and, more generally, Eastern European literary studies discourse.

First and foremost, *Royal Genres* lacks a considerable portion of the original text.[23] The translation omits not only the epigraph, but also robust research-based evidence in support of the author's claim that any viable genre theory should take a dynamic concept of a literary genre as its point of departure, together with extensive analytical passages that frame and explain the novelty of his theoretical position. Moreover, significant traces of the cultural-historical and methodological (dialectical) situatedness of Opacki's generic theory are erased. The original *Krzyżowanie się postaci gatunkowych*, written when the author was a 28-year-old doctoral student, is deeply embedded in the context of modern Polish literary studies. The author's main intertextual references are Czesław Zgorzelski, Stefania Skwarczyńska, Juliusz Kleiner, and Kazimierz Wyka. Most significantly, Opacki's analyses of selected pieces of Polish Romantic, Early Modernist, and Sentimentalist poetry[24] are informed by the phenomenological model of a stratified structure of a literary work introduced by the Polish philosopher Roman Ingarden in his 1931 *Das literarische Kunstwerk*.[25]

Krzyżowanie się postaci gatunkowych begins, however, with a critique of the theory of literary genres outlined in René Wellek and Austin Warren's *Theory of Literature* (1949). Remarkably, this work is quoted throughout, not in the available Polish translation, but in the English original. Opacki explains that he refers to the English version because of its "terminological sensitivity" ["*terminologiczna czułość*"], which poses "numerous problems for any attempt at faithful translation into Polish terminology" (350).[26] An extensive discussion follows of two conflicting paradigms in genre theory: the Aristotelian static definition of literary genres and Ferdinand Brunetière's evolutionary approach to literature.

[23] The English translation is based on Opacki's "Krzyżowanie się postaci" (1963) reprinted in *Problemy teorii literatury*, seria 1: *Prace z lat 1947–1964*, ed. Henryk Markiewicz (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1987, 2nd (extended) ed.), 131–67. Malcolm's rendition covers, however, roughly one--third of the original (i.e. pages 161–67).

[24] I.e. Roman Zmorski's *Dziwy* [Wonders], Leopold Staff's *Królestwo* [Kingdom], and Franciszek Karpiński's adaptation from French entitled *Podróżny i strumień* [Traveller and the Stream] (the title of Zmorski's ballad is misspelled in English translation as "*Dziwa*").

[25] George G. Grabowicz's English translation of Ingarden's *Das literarische Kunstwerk*, *The Literary Work of Art. An Investigation on the Borderlines of Ontology, Logic, and Theory of Literature* was published in 1973 (Evanston: Northwestern University Press).

[26] The Polish translation of Wellek and Warren's theoretical discussion of literary genres ("Gatunki literackie," trans. J. Frentzel, *Przegląd Humanistyczny* 3 (1957): 19–30) would need a separate study. A complete Polish translation of *Theory of Literature* (1949) appeared in 1970 (*Teoria literatury*, trans. Jerzy Krycki (Warszawa: PWN)).

Only after outlining the main stances in contemporary genology does Opacki move on to his critique of Polish literary studies and, finally, to formulating his own view of the evolution of literary genres. This decision to use English and to situate the discussion of genres first against the backdrop of the international canon of literary theory (curated by Western universities), might be seen as a covert "ideological gesture," resulting from the critic's desire to break through the hegemony of Marxism in post-war Polish literary scholarship, and to confirm the reciprocity, dialogicity, critical reflexivity, and competitiveness of modern Polish literary theory within world humanities. Remarkably, there are virtually no overt references to Russian literary scholarship in Opacki's research article, other than one made to Roman Jakobson's *Randbemerkungen zur Prosa des Dichters Pasternak* [Marginal Notes on Pasternak's Prose], published in "Slavische Rundschau" (1935).

The translator's (editor's?) decision to remove both the opening historical-methodological considerations and analytical passages and to leave solely the theoretical part of Opacki's work entails significant changes with respect to the genre of the Polish scholar's literary studies discourse. The methodically rigorous, carefully outlined and well--argued research article (Polish: "*rozprawa naukowa*") is converted into a bold theoretical manifesto proclaiming the hegemony of "royal genres." The original "weak epistemic modality" of the subject and its negotiative, relational construction, so characteristic of Opacki's writing in general, is transformed into the "strong epistemic modality" of a self--constituting subject of scholarly discourse.[27] The original hedging devices – conditional clauses and quotation marks indicating both the scholar's strong self-awareness of the figurative character of his newly-established theoretical language and his hesitation as to the adequacy of the linguistic formulation of his theoretical hypotheses – are substituted with broad theoretical formulations unleashed both from hesitation marks and from any indications of theoretical/methodological polemics.[28] It is also worth noticing the classification of *Krzyżowanie postaci gatunkowych* by the author as a modest "*szkic*" and Duff's designation of Opacki's piece as an "essay";

[27] For further discussion of the opposition between "strong" and "weak" epistemic modalities, see *Academic Discourse Across Cultures*, ed. Igor Lakić et al. (Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2005), 99.

[28] See e.g. "*'dzieje gatunku'*," "*'poruszanie się gatunku'*," "*'wzrost'*"/ "*'upadek' gatunku*," "*'stadium przejściowe,'*" "*'przepostaciowanie' gatunku na drodze ewolucji*," "*'układy ewolucyjne,'*" "*zanik 'gatunku'*," "*'układ sił' w strukturze* [*gatunku*]," "*'dynamika' [gatunku]*," "*'otok' dzieła*," "*'elementy opozycyjne,'*" "*'korona' gatunków literackich*," "*'zanieczyszczanie'* [*postaci gatunkowych*]," "*gatunki 'uboczne'*," "*'związki krwi,'*" "*'postaci gatunkowe,'*" "*'wyznaczniki ewolucji.'*"

although, the semantic and generic differences between the Polish "*szkic*", "*studium*", "*etiuda*", "*rozprawa*", "*esej*" on one hand, and the English "esquisse", "sketch", "étude", "study", "dissertation", "treatise", "essay" on the other, would demand separate and extensive treatment in the light of historical comparative genre studies.

Indeed, the range of terminological shifts increases markedly in interlingual translations when it comes to genre taxonomy. In Malcolm's translation of Opacki's work, the assumed equivalences between a "*sielanka*" (as opposed to a *skotopaska*, *pasterka*, *pastuszka*, *bukolika*, or *idylla*) and a "pastoral" (as opposed to an idyll or bucolic), a "*baśń*" (as opposed to a *bajka* or *bajka magiczna*) and a "fairy tale/legend" (as opposed to a fable), a "*ballada*" and "ballad", a "*gawęda*" and "yarn" are highly debatable, and ignore significant differences in national historical-literary systems. In this context, let us consider certain fragments from Opacki's work along with their English translation. *"Analizując 'Królestwo' Staffa wykryliśmy trzy pokłady genologiczne: postać sielanki osiemnastowiecznej, postać sielanki romantycznej (lirycznej) i nurt baśni*" (384). [While analysing Staff's *Królestwo* [Kingdom], we discovered three generic layers: the 18th century idyll, the Romantic (lyrical) idyll, and the fairy--tale current.] Despite the overt reference to "three generic layers" (with its Ingardenian overtones), the English translator omits the first layer of the 18th century idyll and mentions only "the form of the Romantic (lyric) pastoral and the current of the fairy tale/legend" (120). In a second fragment, the translator mistakenly equates the "*nurt sielanki roussowskiej*" [the Rousseauian idyll current] with the "old-Russian pastoral" (121). The "old-Russian pastoral" is then said to "fit well with the common Młoda Polska slogan of 'the flight from the city' into the bosom of nature" (121).

The omission of the historical-methodological and analytical passages devoted to modern Polish literary studies in Opacki's work, particularly the polemics against Stefania Skwarczyńska's genre theory and Ingardenian analyses of Polish verse, not only results in a blurring of the specific character of Polish (East Central European) scholarly culture in the first half of the twentieth century and a smoothing out of the antinomic character of (not only Polish) generic discourse, but also places Opacki's concept of genre within a completely different methodological framework. The translator's (editor's?) decision to delete Opacki's methodological dialogues in effect makes the author of *Krzyżowanie się postaci gatunkowych* the sole representative of Polish genre theory in the target culture. Having positioned Opacki as a metonymic representative of Polish literary theory,

the English translation then projects onto him features of the target culture.[29]

Perhaps it would not be amiss to remind English-language readers at this point that Ingarden, the main inspiration behind Opacki's literary analyses, distinguished four basic strata ("*warstwy*" [layers]), arranged in hierarchical order: the stratum of verbal sounds, the stratum of semantic units of meaning, the stratum of "schematised appearances" ["*uschematyzowane wyglądy*"], and finally the stratum of presented objects. Interestingly, while justifying his choice of Ingarden's stratification model for assessing the generic complexity of exemplary literary texts, Opacki draws on tectonic-geological imagery, which was later to become a characteristic of Polish structuralist and hermeneutical discourses describing genres and historical literary processes.[30] "*Zastosowanie Ingardenowskiego 'rozwarstwienia' stwarza możliwości przejrzystego wykrycia złóż genologicznych w różnych układach 'warstw' struktury utworu oraz jasnego ich usystematyzowania*" (367; emphasis added). [The use of Ingarden's "stratification" enables the transparent detection and clear systematisation of generic deposits in different configurations in the "layers" of the literary work's structure.[31]] The tectonic-geological metaphor is further extended to the notion of "*pokłady genologiczne*" [*utworu*] (385) ["generic layers" [of a literary work]][32] and "'*korona' gatunków literackich*" (384) ["the 'crown' of literary genres"], akin to the metaphor of "*korona Ziemi*" [the Crown of the Earth, the highest peaks of the Globe]. In Malcolm's translation, the partly tectonic and partly feudal[33] metaphor of "*gatunki koronne*" [crown genres] evolves into the unambiguously imperial political metaphor of "royal genres." Due to the omission of the extensive Ingardenian passages in the English translation, the "'layer' of the text" (120) ("'*warstwa' utworu*"), though placed in inverted commas, ceases to be an Ingardenian theoretical metaphor. One of Opacki's main points

[29] For further discussion of translation as a metonymy of the source and target cultures, see Maria Tymoczko, *Translation in a Postcolonial Context. Early Irish Literature in English Translation* (Manchester, UK St. Jerome, 1999), 41–61, 282; Maria Tymoczko, *Enlarging Translation, Empowering Translators* (Manchester, UK and Kinderhook, NY: St. Jerome, 2007), 36–37.

[30] See Stanisław Balbus, "Zagłada gatunków," in *Genologia dzisiaj*, ed. Włodzimierz Bolecki and Ireneusz Opacki (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo IBL PAN, 2000), 30; Janusz Sławiński, "Synchronia i diachronia w procesie historycznoliterackim," in Janusz Sławiński, *Dzieło–Język–Tradycja* (Warszawa: PWN, 1974), 23–24.

[31] This passage is omitted in Malcolm's translation.

[32] Malcolm translates the Ingardenian "*warstwa*" either as a "level" (121), or as a "layer" of a literary work.

[33] See Nawarecki, "Czy Ireneusz Opacki był darwinistą?," 192.

of reference is thus suppressed by the English translation and substituted with another – rather incongruous – theoretical tradition.

Duff presents Opacki as a "Polish Formalist scholar,"[34] a classification also employed by other English language literary theorists.[35] *Royal Genres* is itself introduced as "an important contribution to the dynamic or 'morphological' theory of genre,"[36] and described as "clearly an extension of Russian Formalist work on the evolution of genres."[37] Further historical references are made to Yury Tynyanov's *The Literary Fact* (1924) and to two articles by émigré Polish scholars: Zbigniew Folejewski's article on *"Formalism" in Polish Literary Scholarship* (1972), which discusses Manfred Kridl's "Integral School" in interwar Vilnius, and Wiktor Weintraub's *A Political Gloss to the History of the Polish Formalist Movement* (1985). While Opacki's mentor, Czesław Zgorzelski, was indeed Manfred Kridl's student and an adherent of the Vilnius Circle,[38] it is dubious to introduce Opacki as "one of the most distinguished members" of "the Polish Formalist movement, established in Warsaw and Wilno in the 1930s, and resurrected after the war in Lublin and more recently in Gdańsk."[39] Even more misguided is the assumption of internal methodological consistency and integrity among the "Warsaw-Vilnius

[34] David Duff, [editorial preface to *Royal Genres*], in *Modern Genre Theory,* 118.

[35] E.g. Frances Dickey announces in *The Modern Portrait Poem: From Dante Gabriel Rossetti to Ezra Pound* (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2002), 256, that "Polish formalist Ireneusz Opacki proposed the concept of a 'royal genre' that contributes its traits to other genres during the period of its dominance." Similarly, Antonis K. Petrides informs readers of his *Menander, New Comedy and the Visual* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 82, that "[t]he theory of 'royal genres' and generic hybridisation was propounded by the Polish formalist Ireneusz Opacki."

[36] Duff, [editorial preface to *Royal Genres*], 119.

[37] Duff, [editorial preface to *Royal Genres*], 118. For further discussion of the "Russian Formalist school" as the "morphological school," see e.g. P.N. Medvedev, "Ucheny salerizm. O formal'nom (morfologicheskom) metode," *Zvezda* 3 (1925): 264–276 translated into English as "The Formal (Morphological) Method or Scholarly Salieri-ism," in *Bakhtin School Papers*, ed. and trans. Ann Shukman (Oxford: RPT Publications, 1983), 51–64. See also Duff's explanation of "morphological genre theory" in the "Key Concepts" section of *Modern Genre Theory*, xv.

[38] Adam F. Kola and Danuta Ulicka, "From Circles to the School (and Back Again). The Case of Polish Structuralism," in *Theoretical Schools and Circles in the Twentieth-Century Humanities. Literary Theory, History, Philosophy*, ed. Marina Grishakova and Silvi Salupere (New York and London: Routledge, 2015), 63–83.

[39] Duff, "Introduction," in *Modern Genre Theory*, 14. For further information on the Warsaw--Vilnius group between 1912 and 1937, see Danuta Ulicka, "*Tradycje nowoczesnego literaturoznawstwa polskiego*," *Teksty Drugie* 1-2 (2008): 206–20; Kola and Ulicka, *From Circles to the School*; *Tradycje polskiej nauki o literaturze. Warszawskie Koło Polonistów po 70 latach*, ed. Marcin Adamiak and Danuta Ulicka (Warszawa: Wydział Polonistyki Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2008).

group," also referred to retrospectively as the "Polish Formalist school"[40] (a designation its members are unlikely to have recognised), and its supposed reactivation after World War II. While it could be argued that Zgorzelski's post-war writings on the problems of style and genre in Polish Romantic poetry derived their impetus from Russian Formalism,[41] it is difficult to agree with the claim that he continued to cultivate the "Formalist" tradition in the decades that followed at the Catholic University of Lublin.[42]

In line with Duff's paratextual biographical and historical explanations, Opacki's phenomenological and structuralist theoretical language is directly transposed into the critical idiom identified with Russian Formalism in English-language literary studies. The editor of *Modern Genre Theory* writes:

> As in Russian Formalist theory, generic change is seen to involve competition as well as combination, and any one period tends to be "dominated" by a particular genre which affects other genres, by ultimately transforming them into hybrids of itself.[43]

Similarly, in his short preface to the English translation of Opacki's work, Duff remarks: "what Opacki calls a 'royal genre' is a 'dominant' genre, in Russian Formalist terms."[44] Thus, Opacki's *Krzyżowanie się postaci gatunkowych* becomes part of the theoretical constellation of Russian Formalism, according to a well-known tendency to enlist any East Central European theoretician discovered in the West after the Russian Formalist school as another Formalist.[45]

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[40] See Stefania Skwarczyńska, *Kierunki w badaniach literackich. Od romantyzmu do połowy XX wieku* (Warszawa: PWN, 1984), 277.

[41] See Andrzej Karcz, *The Polish Formalist School and Russian Formalism* (Rochester, NY and Kraków: University of Rochester Press and Jagiellonian University Press, 2002), 182. Zgorzelski's *Duma poprzedniczka ballady* (1949), referred to approvingly in Opacki's study, is said to constitute "the best example of the application of Formalist tenets to postwar Polish literary scholarship."

[42] See Agnieszka Czajkowska, "Romantyzm jako powinność. Lubelska szkoła badań nad literaturą polską I połowy XIX wieku," *Słupskie Prace Filologiczne. Seria Filologia Polska* 8 (2010): 67–83.

[43] Duff, "Introduction," 14.

[44] Duff, [editorial preface to *Royal Genres*], 118; Duff, "Key Concepts," in *Modern Genre Theory*, xi ("Dominant").

[45] See Igor Shaytanov, "Aleksandr Veselovsky's Historical Poetics: Genre in Historical Poetics," *New Literary History* 2 (2001): 429–43; Ann Shukman, "Russian Formalism: A Bibliography of Translations and Commentaries (Works in English, French, German, and Italian)," in *Russian Poetics in Translation*, 4: *Formalist Theory* (Oxford: Holdan Books, 1977).

The "formalist" interpretation of Opacki's theoretical discourse is further strengthened by the English translator's terminological choices. Not only do "dominant (royal) genres" point to the Russian Formalist idiom as stabilised in English translations, but also the phrase "*wiązadła kompozycyjne*" [compositional ligaments] is translated as "compositional devices," "device" being a regular equivalent of the Russian Formalist *priem* (in Polish: *chwyt*). "In early Russian Formalist theory," as Duff explains, "a literary work is defined as the 'sum of its devices', and a genre as a repertoire of more or less standardised devices: the device which 'focuses' a given work or genre by subordinating other elements is assigned the name of the dominant."[46] Moreover, "*postaci* [*gatunkowe*]" is translated as "[genre] forms" and "*przepostaciowanie* [*gatunku*]" is rendered as "transformation [of the genre]," akin to Vladimir Propp's "fairy tale transformations."[47]

Opacki's theoretical proposal has been presented elsewhere in English-language literary studies in terms of Russian Formalism (automatisation/deautomatisation, the dominant, literary struggle). In Alan Bale's *Genre and Narrative Coherence in the Acts of the Apostles*, for instance, one reads that "Ireneusz Opacki, a Polish literary theorist, focuses not just on the power struggles that lead to the overthrow of old, automatised traits, but also on the adoption of successful and dominant traits."[48] Similarly, in her *Topographies of Japanese Modernism*, Seiji M. Lippit explains how, following Ireneusz, "Opacki's formalist analysis of literary genre, the 'hybridisation' of genre marks the transition from one "dominant" genre to another, a shift in stages of literary history."[49] Yet, as we can see by a comparison of Opacki's theory with that of Yury Tynyanov, one of leading lights of the Russian Formalist movement, who is referred to by Duff in his framing of Opacki as a "Polish Formalist scholar," Opacki's position was quite different.

While it can indeed be argued that Opacki shares Tynyanov's dynamic view of literary genres and concern for the problems of literary evolution,

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[46] Duff, "Key Concepts," in *Modern Genre Theory*, xi ("Device").

[47] The English translation of Propp's *Transformatsii vol'shebnykh skazok* is published in Duff's *Modern Genre Theory* along with Opacki's *Krzyżowanie sie postaci gatunkowych.* On Western European and American readings of Propp in the context of Russian Formalism, see Ann Shukman, "The legacy of Propp," *Essays in Poetics* 1 (1976): 82–94 and Tamara Brzostowska-Tereszkiewicz, "Od służetu do plotu (i z powrotem)," *Przegląd Rusycystyczny* 2 (2010): 5–20.

[48] Alan Bale, *Genre and Narrative Coherence in the Acts of the Apostles* (London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2015), 78.

[49] Seiji M. Lippit, *Topographies of Japanese Modernism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2002), 131.

it would be wrong to equate Tynyanov's understanding of the term "evolution" with its meaning in Opacki's genre theory. Whereas Tynyanov focuses on the abrupt shifts and sudden changes within literary dynamics ("not regular evolution but a leap; not development but a dislocation"[50]), the Polish literary scholar emphasises "the evolutionary continuity" ("*zachowanie ciągłości ewolucyjnej*" (386)) within genres.[51] Opacki examines subsequent "new genre forms" belonging to "the same line of generic development ("*ta sama linia rozwojowa*" (382–383)).[52] Even the "complete transfiguration (metamorphosis?) of a given genre" ("*całkowite przepostaciowanie danego gatunku*" (387)) does not interfere with its evolutionary continuity. "*Zachowana wszakże zostanie ciągłość ewolucyjna, uzyskana dzięki powolności przemian w okresach przejściowych, w okresach "ścierania się" prądów antagonistycznych, która zapewnia jedność nurtu gatunkowego*" (387; emphasis added). ["The evolutionary sequence, however, will be maintained. It can be grasped […] thanks to the slow speed of transformation in transitional periods, in periods of the 'friction' of antagonistic currents, which ensures the unity of the genre trend" (123).] At bottom, while the Russian Formalists explored the problems of literary evolution in terms of anti-Darwinian evolutionary theories,[53] as was the general trend in modern Russian literary studies, Opacki's approach was overtly Darwinian.[54]

Opacki's generic theory is foregrounded by the title of his research article where, along lines once suggested by David Fishelov, the primary conceptual metaphor seems to be that of biological species and their evolution rather than a social institution, as is the case with *Royal Genres*.[55] The notion of a "royal genre," together with the notions of "generic cross--fertilisation or 'hybridisation' [of genre forms],"[56] as Duff introduces and Malcolm translates "*krzyżowanie się postaci gatunkowych*," seems

[50] Yury Tynyanov, "The Literary Fact," trans. Ann Shukman, in *Modern Genre Theory*, 31.

[51] In Malcolm's translation: "maintaining the evolutionary sequence" (122).

[52] A fragment omitted in Malcolm's translation.

[53] For a detailed discussion of anti-Darwinism tendencies in modern Russian literary studies, see Tamara Brzostowska-Tereszkiewicz, *Ewolucje teorii. Biologizm w modernistycznym literaturoznawstwie rosyjskim* (Toruń: Wydawnictwo Naukowe UMK, 2011).

[54] See Nawarecki, "Czy Ireneusz Opacki był darwinistą?"

[55] See David Fishelov, *Metaphors of Genre*: *The Role of Analogies in Genre Theory* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1993). Fishelov identifies four "deep metaphors" through which twentieth-century critics conceptualised literary genres: the analogy with biology, the family analogy (family traits and resemblances between family members), the institutional analogy (emphasising norms, conventions, and social functions), and the speech act analogy (in which genres represent speech acts).

[56] Duff, [editorial preface to *Royal Genres*], 118.

to resonate with contemporary postcolonial social-political discourse on the British Crown as well as with postcolonial concerns in British cultural criticism.[57] The notion of hybridity, which has become increasingly important in genre studies, is extensively used in postcolonial studies, where it points to the supposedly subversive potential of "mixing" discourses.[58] In English translation, Opacki's biological genre metaphor thus takes on additional political overtones. "Extending the quasi-political metaphor of the hierarchy of genres," Duff claims, "Opacki calls these dominant genres the 'royal genres'."[59] Yet, in its original version and from its original context, the "deep metaphor" underlying the Polish theorist's reasoning should rather be identified as genetics.

The genetics analogy shows itself clearly both in the title *Krzyżowanie się postaci gatunkowych jako wyznacznik ewolucji poezji* and in the epigraph to Opacki's work, which refers to Wells's *New Poets from Old: A Study in Literary Genetics* (1940) (both of which are omitted from the English translation). The epigraph reads: "One of the obvious values of genre study is precisely the fact that it calls attention to the internal development of literature, to what Henry Wells […] has called 'literary genetics'" (349). One might wonder whether it may not therefore have been more appropriate to discuss Opacki's "hybridisation of genre forms" in the context of another Russian Formalist, Boris Yarkho, who described the "hybridisation of sources" (*skreshchenie istochnikov*) as the main source of genetic changes in literature, and as the primary factor in literary evolution.[60] While expounding the overriding law of literary hybridisation in his monumental *Metodologiya tochnogo literaturovedeniya* [Exact Methods of Literary Sciences], written towards the end of the 1930s and at the beginning of the 1940s, Yarkho drew inspiration from Gregor Mendel's experiments in plant hybridisation.[61] An important reservation, however, needs to be made regarding any possible comparisons between Opacki's concept of the "hybridisation of genre forms" and Yarkho's

[57] See Nawarecki, "Czy Ireneusz Opacki był darwinistą?," 192–93.

[58] For further discussion of the notion of "hybridisation of genres" and "generic blending," see Martina Allen, "Against 'Hybridity' in Genre Studies: Blending as an Alternative Approach to Generic Experimentation," *Trespassing Journal: an online journal of trespassing art, science, and philosophy* 2 (2013), accessed June 9, 2016, http://trespassingjournal.com/Issue2/TPJ_I2_Allen_Article.pdf.

[59] Duff, "Introduction," 14; emphasis added.

[60] See Boris Yarkho, "Metodologiya tochnogo literaturovedeniya," in Boris Yarkho, *Metodologiya tochnogo literaturovedeniya. Izbrannyye trudy po teorii literatury*, ed. Marina Akimova, Igor Pilshchikov and Maksim Shapir (Moskva: Yazyki slavyanskikh kul'tur, 2006), 16. On the idea of hybridisation in literature and in biology in Western European and American literary studies discourse, see Fishelov, *Metaphors of Genre*, 20.

[61] Yarkho, "Metodologiya," 68–69.

"genetics of literature." Unlike the Russian Formalist, who described (with the utmost seriousness) chromosomal cross-overs in the evolution of Russian verse,[62] the Polish genre theorist did not consider cross-generic hybridisation as leading to the emergence of new genres.

Surprisingly, Duff claims quite the opposite:

> Opacki offers a lucid theoretical description of a process […] by which genres modify and combine with one another, producing variant forms and eventually giving rise to new genres in which the different evolutionary layers can still be discerned.[63]

"Hybridisation" is defined as a "process by which two or more genres combine to form a new genre or sub genre; or by which elements of two or more genres are combined in a single work."[64] Contrary to Duff's reading, Opacki's main research dilemma concerns not the "generic cross-fertilisation or hybridisation"[65] of genres, but the question of "*krzyżowanie się postaci gatunkowych*" (the translation of the formula is to be suspended for a while), which guarantees evolutionary continuity ("*zachowanie ciągłości ewolucyjnej*"[66]) and generic homogeneity ("*jedność nurtu gatunkowego*" (386), "*jednolitość gatunkowa*" (387)) rather than giving rise to new genres.[67] Moreover, the Polish scholar uses neither the term "*hybrydyzacja*" (hybridisation, cross-fertilisation, cross-breeding) nor the term "*hybryda*" (hybrid, cross-breed), though "*krzyżowanie*" and "*mieszańce*" indeed serve as equivalents of these terms in Polish translations of Mendel's genetics.[68] In any case, the Polish genre theorist is neither interested in nor observes any "hybrids" within his field of research. Indeed, Opacki goes so far as to claim that "*zjawisko mieszania się gatunków nie zachodzi*" (389; emphasis original) [hybridisation of genres does not occur]. From his perspective, one cannot speak of the "polygeneric quality" ("*wielogatunkowość*" (389)) of a particular literary work. One can, however, speak of "generic polymorphism" (*"wielopostaciowość genologiczna"* (389)). As the Polish critic Aleksander Nawarecki correctly

[62] See Yarkho, "Metodologiya," 263–64 and Brzostowska-Tereszkiewicz, *Ewolucje teorii*, 159–66.

[63] Duff, "Introduction," 14; emphasis added.

[64] Duff, "Key Concepts," in *Modern Genre Theory*, xiv ("Hybridisation").

[65] Duff, [editorial preface to *Royal Genres*], 118.

[66] In English translation: "the evolutionary sequence" (123).

[67] See Nawarecki, "Czy Ireneusz Opacki był darwinistą," 191.

[68] Grzegorz Mendel, *Badania nad mieszańcami roślin*, trans. Wanda Wolska (Warszawa: Gebethner i Wolff, 1915).

emphasises, it is "*postać gatunkowa*" [genre gestalt[69]] and not "genre" that is the actual subject of change.[70] Meanwhile, in Malcolm's translation, the differences between "*gatunek*" (a "genre") and "*postać gatunkowa*" ("genre form"/"form of the genre"), "*wielogatunkowość*" ("multi-generic nature [of a literary work]" (124)) and "*wielopostaciowość genologiczna*" ("generic multiplicity of form"/"multiplicity of forms" (124)) are blurred and difficult to grasp.[71]

In view of the above, it can readily be seen what is at stake if historical accounts of literary studies overlook the role of interlingual translation in the migration of cultural concepts. As Lydia Liu puts it, there would appear "no difference in which direction theory travels (from West to East or vice versa) and for what purpose (cultural exchange, imperialism, or colonisation?), or in which language and for what audience."[72] Such is the case, for instance, with "*syuzhet*" ("plot"[73]) and "*balet organov rechi*" ("ballet of the speech organs"), when "Bob Cobbing [speaks] on Bob Cobbing,"[74] unaware of their Russian Formalist (Shklovskian) origins; and with "*krzyżowanie się postaci gatunkowych*" ("hybridisation of genre forms"). The point is not that theoretical concepts must remain semantically fixed, firmly tied to an idiosyncratic idiom and immovable from their original contexts. While it can hardly be doubted that the movement of theories is necessary for the development of culture, it should not be at all ignored that only through acknowledging their culture-boundness and language-specific idiosyncrasies can theories be genuinely dialogical, interdiscursively mediatable, and interlingually translatable.

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[69] See Ireneusz Opacki, "Die Gestalt und dramatisierende Funktion des erzahlers in der polnischen epischen Ballade," *Zagadnienia Rodzajów Literackich* 2 (1964): 72–107.

[70] See Nawarecki, "Czy Ireneusz Opacki był darwinistą," 191. For further discussion of the semantic nuances between the Greek *morphe*, the Latin (also Polish and Russian) *forma*, and the German *Gestalt*, see Elizabeth M. Wilkinson, "Goethe's Conception of Form," in *Goethe. A Collection of Critical Essays*, ed. Victor Lange (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1968), 121–22, 129.

[71] Duff's definition of "Form" in the "Key Concepts" section of *Modern Genre Theory* is unlikely to help the reader: "FORM: Often used synonymously with genre to mean simply a type or category of literary work (sonnet, novel, tragedy, etc.)" (xii).

[72] Lydia H. Liu, *Translingual Practice. Literature, National Culture, and Translated Modernity – China 1900–1937* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 1995), 21; qtd. in Şebnem Susam-Sarajeva, *Theories on the Move. Translation's Role in the Travels of Literary Theories* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2006), 210.

[73] See Brzostowska-Tereszkiewicz, "Od sjużetu do plotu."

[74] See *Ballet of the Speech Organs: Bob Cobbing on Bob Cobbing*, interviewed by Steven Ross Smith (Saskatoon: Underwhich Editions, 1998).

Finally, we can return to the title. Had *Krzyżowanie się postaci gatunkowych jako wyznacznik ewolucji poezji* been translated as *The Interpenetration* (Interfusion? Interweaving? Overlapping? Intersection?)[75] *of Genre Gestalts as an Indicator of the Evolution of Poetry,* it might have contributed to a completely different history of modern Polish literary studies.

Abstract

The recently announced "translational turn" in cultural studies has set up translation as a model for conducting inter- and trans-disciplinary cultural research and as the main analytical category for investigating the cross-cultural diffusion and transformation of art forms. Although attempts to broaden the concept of translation still have translation proper as their primary point of reference, they tend to overlook the role of the linguistic medium in shaping literary theories and in the writing of histories of literary studies. This paper argues for a more encompassing appreciation of the significance of translation proper in the historiography of literary studies, through a case study of the English language translation of Ireneusz Opacki's *Krzyżowanie się postaci gatunkowych jako wyznacznik ewolucji poezji* (1963), published as *Royal Genres* (2000).

Key words: Polish literary studies; Polish Formalist School; Russian Formalism; translational turn; translation proper

[75] Compare other titles of Opacki's works: "Gestalt und dramatisierende Funktion des Erzählers in der polnischen epischen Ballade" (1964) and *Odwrócona elegia – o przenikaniu* się *postaci gatunkowych w poezji* (1999).