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STORIES FROM POLAND BY A WELSH SOLDIER– JOHN ELWYN JONES'S TRANSLATIONS

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ABSTRACT

The majority of translations from Polish into Welsh published so far are the works of John Elwyn Jones (1921-2008), who learned Polish in a German prisoner-of-war camp during World War II. His translations include *Storiâu Byr o'r Bwyleg*, a collection of short stories by two of the classic authors of the Polish Positivist period, Bolesław Prus and Henryk Sienkiewicz. This paper analyses two stories from the collection, *Ianco'r Cerddor* "Janko Muzykant" and *Y Wasgod* "Kamizelka", within a comparative functional model of translation criticism. The texts are analysed in the light of lexical-semantic, cultural and aesthetic codes. A great number of modifications to the source texts introduced in the Welsh translation places them on the border between free translations and adaptations. While some of the alterations are tokens of a specific translation strategy, others can be regarded as translation errors. Although the Welsh version retains the primary message of the original stories, much of their culture-specific dimension, historical context and artistic value is not conveyed in the translation.

Keywords: Polish-Welsh translation, John Elwyn Jones, Bolesław Prus, Henryk Sienkiewicz, translation criticism

1. Translations between Polish and Welsh

Cultural relations between Poland and Wales have never been particularly strong. This is reflected in a very small number of translations between the two languages. Even in the Romantic period, when the fashion for 'Celtic' culture inspired Polish literati to explore Irish or Scottish poetry, Wales remained on the periphery, outside the scope of interest (cf. Gmerek 2010: 207-251). Moreover, and understandably, as it was hardly possible for Poles to read Celtic literatures in the original, they had to rely on translations into other European

languages. To this day Wales is not recognised by many Polish people as a distinctive part of the United Kingdom and the existence of the Welsh language is not commonly known. In recent years, with the ever growing number of translations from English, Polish readers have had a chance to become familiar with some of the major Anglo-Welsh authors[1], but as far as Welsh is concerned, stories of the *Mabinogion*[2] remain the only Welsh-language literature published so far in Poland.

Parallel to this, little is to be found of Polish literature in Welsh, despite some interest in matters Polish in the 19th century when Poland's struggle for independence served as an inspiration for the Welsh Chartist movements (Łazuga 2013: 52-54). There seems to be no evidence for Polish literature translated into Welsh until 1953, when Thomas Hudson-Williams (1873-1961) published *Bannau Llên Pwyl* "Highlights of Polish literature". This ground-breaking work, which nevertheless attracted little attention, contained excerpts from works of Polish authors of the 19th and 20th century translated by Hudson-Williams himself (see Rosiak and Heinz 2010).

As confirmed by *Cronfa Cyfieithiadau'r Gymraeg* (2015), a database of works translated into Welsh since the early 20th century, the vast bulk of existing translations from Polish into Welsh were produced by a single person, John Elwyn Jones, who learned Polish in a German prisoner-of-war camp during the Second World War. In the 1970s and 1980s, Jones published three translations from Polish

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1 Danny Abse, Gillian Clarke, Gwyneth Lewis, Bernice Rubens, Gordon Thomas, Dylan Thomas, R.S. Thomas, Jo Walton, Sarah Waters, to name just a few examples.

2 Three collections of the *Mabinogion* have been published in Polish:
– Adaptations of the Four Branches based on Gwyn Jones's *Welsh Legends and Folk Tales* (1979), translated by Maria Skibniewska under the titles "Małżeństwo Pwylla z Rhiannon", "Narodziny Pryderi", "Historia Branwen", "Trudne lata księstwa Dyfed", in: Korsak, Izabela (ed.) 1985. *Baśnie i legendy Wysp Brytyjskich* [Fairytales and Myths of the British Isles], Warszawa: Nasza Księgarnia;
– Three stories: "Manawydan, syn Llyra", "O tym, jak Culhwch o Olwenę zabiegał", "Owein i Pani na Źródlech" translated from Welsh by Elżbieta Nogeć and Andrzej Nowak in *Mabinogion.* 1997. *Pani na źródlech jako też inne historie z pradawnej Walii rodem*. [Mabinogion. Lady of the Fountain and Other Stories from Ancient Wales], Kraków: Oficyna Literacka;
– Three volumes containing the full *Mabinogion* as presented by Lady Charlotte Guest: *Mabinogion – Cztery Gałęzie Mabinogi, Pięć opowieści walijskich, Romanse arturiańskie* [Mabinogion – Four Branches of the Mabinogi, Five Welsh Tales, Arthurian Romances], 2008. Sandomierz: Armoryka,. Nogeć's and Nowak's translation of *Owain* was included together with their new translation "Geraint i Enida". The rest of the stories were translated by Andrzej Sarwa and Katarzyna Simonienko from Lady Guest's English translations. For a discussion of selected aspects of the Polish versions of the Four Branches see Jaworska-Biskup (2015). The fact that the majority of the *Mabinogion* stories were translated from Guest's 1848 translation, recognised nowadays as having a number of shortcomings, would be in itself an interesting subject for a study.

into his mother tongue: *Storïau Byr o'r Bwyleg* "Short Stories from Polish" (Jones 1974), a collection of four stories by two major 19th century authors Bolesław Prus and Henryk Sienkiewicz, the 1947 novel *Lludw a Diemwnt* "Popiół i diament" [Ashes and Diamonds] by Jerzy Andrzejewski (1976) and a selection of poetry by Zbigniew Herbert (1985), translated by Nesta Wyn Jones and Gwyn Thomas.

In translating from Polish into Welsh, John Elwyn Jones faced the huge challenge of introducing a culture and literature practically unknown to his target audience. Thus, his pioneering translations turn out to be an extremely interesting subject for research, as a great number of changes to the source text place them on the verge of being adaptations. This paper will critically describe Jones's strategies and techniques and attempt to establish the adequacy and artistic value of his translations. The works chosen for this purpose are two stories from the *Storïau Byr o'r Bwyleg* collection: *Ianco'r Cerddor* "Janko Muzykant" [Yanko the Musician]) by Henryk Sienkiewicz and *Y Wasgod* "Kamizelka" [The Waistcoat]*)* by Bolesław Prus.

2. The life and work of John Elwyn Jones

A common notion concerning the translator's role is expressed through the metaphor of a pane of glass: a translator presents (or should present) an undistorted view of the original text while remaining invisible themselves. Yet the choices of a translator are inevitably to some extent dictated by his or her personality and life experiences – a statement which seems to be particularly true in the case of John Elwyn Jones. Hence, it is worth presenting here a short overview of his life and work at this point.

A farmer's son, John Elwyn Jones (1921-2008) was born in Dolgellau, north-west Wales, and raised in Bryn Mawr. At eighteen years old, just before the outbreak of the Second World War, he joined the Welsh guards. In 1940 during military operations near Boulogne, he was taken prisoner and transported, after an unsuccessful escape attempt, to a German prisoner-of-war camp located in what is now Poland. Within little over a year Jones had learnt to speak fluent German and had begun learning Polish from Poles whom he met in the camp. He also found a way to sneak out of the camp and meet up with a Polish woman, Cecylia Grygier (Celinka), whom he eventually married in secret. Shortly after their marriage Celinka disappeared and was reported to have died. Soon afterwards Jones attempted to escape again and was moved from one camp to another on the territory of what is now Germany, Poland and the Czech Republic. During the third escape he managed to cross the border of the General Government, the Nazi-occupied part of Poland, and joined Polish partisans of the Home Army. As he wrote in his memoirs, this decision was driven by his admiration for Polish people, whom he considered to be

"the most loyal, courageous and honourable people I've ever met" (Jones 1987: 42[3]). Jones's partisan unit was defeated in the battle of Bichniów and he was imprisoned again. It was only in 1944, on his fifth attempt, that he escaped on a ship to Sweden and finally returned home. He was honoured with a Distinguished Conduct Medal and trained as an officer in the Green Howards. After retiring from the army in 1946 he joined the police force in London. A year later he moved to Wales, but when the Korean war broke out he was called back to the armed forces. Due to his knowledge of Polish, he was sent to the University of London to study the language and become a military translator. In 1957 he was transferred to the Royal Air Force where he served until his retirement in 1964. He completed A-level studies at the Trinity College in Carmarthen and in the years 1965-1970 worked as a teacher of German and Russian in Dr Williams' school in Dolgellau. It was also at the time that he began writing and translating works of literature. In the 1970s and 80s he produced ten translations, mostly contemporary novels and collections of short stories – seven from German and three from Polish. Towards the end of 1980s his interest shifted to French: he translated a 19th-century historical novel and wrote a short adaptation of another novel, Pierre Loti's *Pêcheur d'Islande* under the title *Pysgotwyr Llydaw* (1985) (British National Bibliography 2015).

As an author, Jones is best known to the Welsh public for his war memoirs *Pum Cynnig i Gymro* [Five Chances for a Welshman[4]] (1971, 2nd extended edition 1987), an account of his war experience resembling an adventure novel. In 1987, he published another autobiographical book in three volumes: *Yn fy ffordd fy hun: Hunangofiant dyn byrbwyll* [In My Own Way: A Hothead's Autobiography] and an English version of his war memoirs, *At the Fifth Attempt*[5]. In 1997 the Welsh TV channel S4C and the Polish public broadcaster Telewizja Polska produced a TV series *Bride of War*, based on Jones's memoirs, focusing on the love story of John and Celinka. The broadcast of this series unexpectedly made Jones's name appear in several European newspapers when Polish television received a letter from Celinka's son saying that she had survived the war and died in 1990. Jones died in 2008. In 2015, *Pum Cynnig i Gymro* was adapted for the stage by Theatr Bara Caws[6]. The Polish translation of *Pum Cynnig i Gymro* by the present author is currently being prepared for publication.

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3 All translations from *Pum Cynnig i Gymro* are mine, MK.

4 The original title of this book is a play on the Welsh idiom *tri chynnig i Gymro* meaning roughly the same as "third time lucky".

5 It is not a straightforward translation of *Pum Cynnig i Gymro*; some of the facts are presented in a different light than in the Welsh version for the sake of the English-speaking audience.

6 Jones's biography presented in this section is mainly based on his memoirs *Pum Cynnig i Gymro* (1987), biographical details on the cover of *Lludw a Diemwnt* (1976) and the press article "Hanes y milwr anorchfygol" [Story of the Invincible Soldier] (Golwg, 26 (vol. 27) 12 March 2015).

3. Jones's Polish Translations

Having found himself in the heart of Central Europe during the Second World War, Jones not only witnessed the atrocities taking place in Poland, but also had an opportunity to learn the language and gain insight into Polish culture, traditions, history and political situation. It appears that this experience became something he was eager to share with his fellow countrymen, both through his autobiographical writing and translation.

The first of the translations to be published was a collection entitled *Storïau Byr o'r Bwyleg*, including three short stories: *Janko Muzykant* and *Latarnik* by Henryk Sienkiewicz (1846-1916), *Kamizelka* by Bolesław Prus (1847-1912), and Prus's novella, "Powracająca fala". It can be assumed that the stories were intended to serve as an introduction to modern Polish literature or that Jones wanted to practise on shorter forms before working on what would be his major translation, *Lludw a Diemwnt* "Popiół i diament" [Ashes and Diamonds] by Jerzy Andrzejewski. This novel used to be extremely popular and influential during the Communist period[7] due to its intricate portrayal of the political situation in post-war Poland, a subject that was undoubtedly of interest to Jones.

Jones's final Polish translation was a 1984 tribute volume of Zbigniew Herbert's poems, published on the occasion of receiving the International Writer Award by the Welsh Arts Council. This translation was a joint project, with Jones translating Herbert's poetry into Welsh prose, and the other two writers turning it into verse (Davies 1985: 1).

This paper will analyse two stories from the *Storïau Byr o'r Bwyleg* collection, *Ianco'r Cerddor* by Henryk Sienkiewicz and *Y Wasgod* by Bolesław Prus, which will allow for a thorough description of the translator's strategies due to their short form and distinct styles of the authors.

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7 *Popiół i diament* was one of the most government-supported works of literature in the Communist period: it had over 20 editions, was adapted for cinema and theatre and introduced as compulsory reading in schools; in the 1980s it was voted the best post-war Polish novel (cf. Detko 1964. *Popiół i diament Jerzego Andrzejewskiego* [Jerzy Andrzejewski's *Ashes and Diamond*], Warszawa: Państwowe Zakłady Wydawnictw Szkolnych; Dzitko *Byłem kim jesteś* [I was who you are], Warmia i Mazury (8), 16.04.1995). Currently, however, the novel is quite forgotten and its artistic value is put into doubt by some critics (cf. Nowacki *Naprawdę mniej niż popiół* [Truly less than ashes], *Życie* 31.05.2001).

4. Analysis of the translations

4.1. Analysis Model

Due to the multitude of approaches to translation theory, a universal practical model for translation criticism has yet to be established. Much depends on the relation between the two languages analysed, as well as the critics' approach to the translator's role and the nature of translation. Among the contemporary models topical for this paper, one may distinguish between comparative and non-comparative ones. The latter, most notably Toury's (1978) discussion on translation norms and Lefevere's (1981) model based on the polysystem hypothesis, focuses on target language systems, consequently placing evaluative judgments on the target text without considering the source text. Since these models emphasise the importance of the way texts function within broader linguistic systems, it would be challenging to apply them in the situation where little to none translation is done between the two languages, as is the case with Polish and Welsh. Furthermore, relatively little is known about the exact purpose, target audience and reception of the translations analysed here. Hence, the models chosen for this paper are text-based, comparative frameworks, referring to literary texts specifically. The analysis to follow will draw from the models developed by Reiss (1971), van den Broeck (1985) and Newmark (1988), representing an equivalence-based and functional approach.

One of the most controversial issues in translation criticism is the question of forming evaluative judgements. Bednarczyk (1999: 79) distinguishes between two models of translation criticism: evaluative, where the critic formulates subjective judgments on the translated text, and descriptive, which attempts to objectively present the discrepancies between source and target texts, demonstrating alterations to the original meaning. The first group of approaches are open to criticism for being unsystematic and arbitrary (House 1998: 197). Proponents of the non-comparative approach, such as Toury (Toury 1978: 26, in Maier 1998: 208), point to the danger of such criticism turning into ad hoc listing of errors, condemning any discrepancies from the original. It seems, however, that at least in the case of literature, evaluative judgements are inherent to translation criticism, as aptly commented by van den Broeck:

> Translating literature has rightly been called a kind of critical intercourse with the literary work; and it has been observed that every translation implies a form of criticism of its original. The translation critic, then, is a critic's critic, for he brings his value judgment to bear on a phenomenon which by its very nature implies a judgement of values (van den Broeck 1985: 61).

In other words, translation criticism is based on a double interpretation of the text – by the translator and by the critic. However, in spite of the unavoidable subjective element, van den Broeck (1985: 59) claims that translation criticism objectivity may be achieved by systematic description and analysis: by taking into account the target language and translator's norms, deviations from the source text can be attributed to a number of linguistic and extralinguistic factors, not simply the translator's incompetence or manipulation. Accordingly, van den Broeck's critical model for analysing literary texts consists of the following stages:

- comparative analysis of the source and target texts
- confrontation of critic's standards with the norms of the translator
- analysing translation methods adopted by the translator (1985: 58-60).

This procedure is in general accordance with Newmark's four-stages comparative model (1988: 186-189):

- a brief analysis of the SL text stressing its intention and its functional aspects
- the translator's interpretation of the SL text's purpose and his translation method
- a selective but representative detailed comparison of the translation with the original
- an evaluation of the translation: a) in the translator's terms, b) in the critic's terms.

These two models will serve as the basis for this analysis, as they represent a comparative, equivalence-based and functional approach to literary translation, which highlights the characteristics of creative composition to be taken into account in the evaluation. This approach is based on Reiss's (1971) model which distinguishes three basic text types which determine the translation strategies to be adopted. A similar classification was adopted by Newmark (1988: 39-44), who distinguishes between expressive, informative and vocative functions of the language, each of them prevailing in certain types of texts. Within this approach, a literary work is associated primarily with the expressive type of text and the aesthetic function of the language. The expressive element is contained in the form as well as the author's personal idiolect and style, which should not be normalised in the translation (Newmark 1988: 40-41) As the author's intention or purpose are of utmost importance, the preferable translation method proposed by Reiss is 'identifying', that is attempting to adopt the original author's perspective (Reiss 1977: 108-9) as cited by Munday 2001: 73). Both Reiss and Newmark

(Newmark 1988: 166) stress the importance of the aesthetic dimension of the language in translating a work of art, i.e. metaphors, sound-effects and various stylistic devices. An effort to render those may create a tension between the expressive and the aesthetic function and, thus, the translator would face a challenge of finding a balance between the two.

In view of that, the stories analysed here will be considered in the light of three basic translation codes: lexical-semantic, cultural and aesthetic (Krzysztofiak 1999: 73). Following Reiss's model (1971, in Krzysztofiak 1999:142), the lexical-semantic considers equivalence between source-and target text, the adequacy of the translation and the translator's interferences, while the cultural and aesthetic focuses on the culture-specific elements, extra-linguistic factors, e.g. psychological and political ones, and stylistic aspects in relation to individual style and style of the period. These three dimensions will be discussed in separate sub-sections, although at times they obviously overlap with each other. Therefore, the translator's choices will be evaluated in light of how well they render the sense of the original in its entirety following two principles postulated by van den Broeck:

- degree of factual equivalence, understood as "the observable (empirical) phenomenon that both the source and target texts are relatable to (at least some of) the same functionally relevant features"
- adequacy, understood as optimum (or maximum) reconstruction of all the source texts elements possessing textual functions (van den Broeck 1985: 59).

In other words, a good translation, to quote Pieńkos's definition (Pieńkos 1993: 415), is one that "conveys the text i.e. its vocabulary, syntax, style in the same way as the translated author would have written if the translator's language were his mother tongue". Therefore, following the principle of adequacy and faithfulness to the original, a translation may contain necessary alterations. Hermans (1985: 11) points to the fact that "from the point of view of target language, all translation implies a degree of manipulation of the source text for a certain purpose". Manipulation is thus acceptable when it serves a specific aim, such as blending the source text into the target culture (Dukāte 2009: 122), rather than be dictated by the translator's arbitrary choices.

These changes, or shifts in expression, will be the focus of this analysis. In van den Boerk's model, shifts can be divided into both obligatory, resulting from the nature of the source and target languages, and optional, determined by the translator's norms (van den Broeck 1985: 59). The second category will be of primary interest here, due to the unusual character of Jones's translation, i.e. the great number of alterations introduced, both at the lexical-semantic and

stylistic level. Possible sources of errors will be discussed as well as taking into account the translator's knowledge of Polish and adapted translation strategies.

Errors may be classified as linguistic mistakes at the grammatical or lexical level, which show the translator's insufficient knowledge of a foreign language, and referential mistakes, when changes introduced by a translator incorrectly depict elements of the real world reflected in the original work of fiction (Newmark 1988: 188-189).

A typology of translational strategies adopted here is based on Chesterman (Chesterman 1997: 93-112) who distinguishes three categories of translation strategies: mainly syntactic, mainly semantic and mainly pragmatic. Syntactic strategies are those that involve the manipulation of form. Literal translation is viewed as the default, meaning that a deviation from literal translation should take place only if literal translation is impossible. Other syntactic strategies are: loan or calque, transposition, unit shift, phrase structure change, clause structure change, sentence structure change, cohesion change, level shifts and scheme change. The main semantic strategies, in which the translator manipulates the meaning, include: synonomy, antonomy, hyponomy, converses, abstraction change, distribution change, emphasis change, paraphrase and trope change. Pragmatic strategies – manipulating the message – are: cultural filtering, including domestication or adaptation, explicitness change, information change, including additions and omissions, interpersonal change, illocutionary change, coherence change, partial translation, visibility change and transediting.

Since many of the above strategies refer to obligatory language shifts, they will not be mentioned in the analysis which follows. Strategies relevant for this paper will be described in more detail in the course of the analysis.

4.2. The source texts – summary and characteristics

Before discussing Jones's translations, it may interest the reader to be presented with a short summary of the two works analysed. Henryk Sienkiewicz's *Janko Muzykant* "Yanko the Musician", 1879) tells the story of a peasant child named Janko, a fragile little boy living with his mother in great poverty. Janko is unintelligent and absent-minded, but has amazing sensitivity for music: he hears it everywhere he goes and experiences near-mystical moments while listening to the sounds of nature. Consequently, the boy's greatest dream is to have an instrument; he even makes his own fiddle, but what fascinates him most is a real violin hanging on the wall in the local landlord's house. One night, Janko creeps into the landlord's garden and sees the violin gleaming in the moonlight; unable to resist the temptation to touch the instrument, he enters the house and gets caught. The village magistrate decides that the boy should be punished with a beating, which turns out to be so severe that Janko dies. The story ends on an

ironical note, as the landlord's family come back from holidays in Italy saying that the folk there are extremely talented and it is a pleasure to support them. *Janko Muzykant* is a classic story of the Polish Positivist period, pointing at major social problems of the time: the catastrophic lack of prospects for peasants due to the lack of education, as well as the ignorance of the upper classes. Despite the strong message, the story is devoid of straightforward moralising and with its skilful mixture of realism and lyrical pathos, it is commonly acknowledged by literature experts in Poland as a highly artistic piece of work (cf. Markiewicz 1999: 130, Bajda 2004: 530).

Kamizelka "The Waistcoast", 1882) by Bolesław Prus is an urban story set in the Warsaw of the 1880s. The narrator, a man living on his own, relates the story of an old waistcoat that belonged to his neighbour, a young clerk. In the first part, the narrator buys the waistcoat from a Jewish tradesman, who bought it from the clerk's widow. The personal narration turns then into an omniscient one as the narrator reconstructs the young couple's happy, though poor life and follows the gradual deterioration of the husband's health. Suffering from tuberculosis, the man constantly loses weight, but his wife hides from him his fatal condition. At the same time, the man tries to convince his wife that he is recovering by saying that his waistcoat is becoming tighter day by day. Ultimately he admits that he deceived her by moving the buckle of the belt, but adds that now the waistcoat really has become tighter, meaning that he will soon get well. A couple of days later the man dies and the narrator explains the secret of the waistcoat: the husband tampered with it to console his wife, but at the same time she also secretly cut the belt to give hope to the sick man. This short and powerful story draws a realistic picture of life of the lower social classes at that time, showing the everyday heroism of ordinary people and similarly to *Yanko the Musician*, it is among the classics of the Polish Positivist period, considered a masterpiece of the novella genre (e.g. Kulczycka-Saloni 1984: 416). The exceptional artistic value of both texts naturally compels one to hold high expectations for the literary merit of the translation.

4.3. Authors and Titles

Before proceeding to the analysis of the text itself, the first fact to be mentioned about *Storïau Byr* is the peculiar confusion of the authors and titles included in the collection. The majority of the original Polish titles placed below the Welsh ones are misspelt, while the authors' names are not only misspelt, but actually confused. On the title page and in the table of contents, Bolesław Prus, spelt 'Bolestaw Pruss', is given as the only author of the stories, although inside the book Henryk Sienkiewicz is named as the author of *Yanko the Musician*. Nevertheless, the other story by Sienkiewicz, *The Lighthouse Keeper,* is

wrongly attributed to 'Bolestaw Pruss'. On top of that, three out of four original titles of the stories are misspelt: *Laternik*, *Ianko Muzykant* and *Powracejaca Fala*, instead of *Latarnik*, *Janko Muzykant* and *Powracająca fala*.

These spelling errors could be attributed to carelessness or unfamiliarity with the Polish language on the part of the printer. However, passages in Polish to be found in Jones's memoires *Pum Cynnig i Gymro* suggest that his Polish spelling was also far from perfect and often inconsistent. This can be seen for example in the translation of *The Lighthouse Keeper*, where the Polish town Częstochowa is spelt 'Ciestochova' (Jones 1971:15), while in *Pum Cynnig i Gymro* the same town is mentioned twice with two other spellings: Cestochova and Częstochova (Jones 1987: 148, 176).

At this point, given the unusual circumstances in which Jones learned Polish, the question of how good his knowledge of the language was is worth addressing. Although any definite judgements in this matter are hardly possible, turning once again to the 'Polish fragments' in *Pum Cynnig i Gymro*, a dedication and sections in dialogues, it can be seen that many of these, despite being very basic words, contain spelling or grammar mistakes; nevertheless, the phrases sound natural, creating the impression that they were quoted directly from memory, as in the following examples: *Rannie boskie!* "Oh my God!" rather than *Rany Boskie* (Jones 1987:56), *Dobra vodka. Na zdrovie!* "Good vodka. Cheers!", rather than *Dobra wódka. Na zdrowie!* (131), *Zydziprzeklęci! Zatrzelajem!* "Damned Jews!" We will shoot [you]!", rather than *Żydzi przeklęci! Zastrzelimy [was]!* (145), or even *Dowidzenia* "Goodbye" instead of *Do widzenia* (250).

All in all, it appears that Jones's passive knowledge of Polish was much better than his active knowledge of it, and when in doubt while writing in Polish, he relied on his recollections and intuition, rather than external reference works. The issue of confusing the authors in *Storïau Byr* clearly demonstrates the translator's lack of research or careful preparation of the work in hand.

4.4. Adequacy

Generally speaking, the adequacy of Jones's translations varies from complete faithfulness to – more frequently – the point of being on the verge of adaptation. This section will demonstrate some examples of information change to be found in *Storïau Byr*, i.e. omissions, additions and substitutions.

As a rule, Jones's translations abbreviate the source texts quite extensively. In the short stories analysed here, the fragments left out are typically single phrases or sentences. Additions to the text are usually minor, confined to single phrases, and less frequently, whole sentences. The translator's substitutions

concern mostly single phrases at the lexical level, but affect the style more profoundly, which will be discussed in the next section. The scale of alterations to the text will be exemplified on the following passage of *Janko Muzykant*:

> Zobaczył go tak raz karbowy stojącego z rozrzuconą czupryną i słuchającego wiatru w drewnianych widłach... zobaczył i odpasawszy rzemyka, dał mu dobrą pamiątkę. Ale na co się to zdało! Nazywali go ludzie „Janko Muzykant"!... Wiosną uciekał z domu kręcić fujarki wedle strugi. Nocami, gdy żaby zaczynały rzechotać, derkacze na łąkach derkotać, bąki po rosie burczyć; gdy koguty piały po zapłociach, to on spać nie mógł, tylko słuchał i Bóg go jeden wie, jakie on i w tym nawet słyszał granie... Do kościoła matka nie mogła go brać, bo jak, bywało, zahuczą organy lub zaśpiewają słodkim głosem, to dziecku oczy taką mgłą zachodzą, jakby już nie z tego świata patrzyły...

and its Welsh translation:

> Ianco'r Cerddor oedd enw pobl y pentref arno. Yn y gwanwyn gwnâi chwibanogl a'i chwarae o fore tan nos. Gyda'r nos âi i'r rhosydd i wrando ar y llyffaint yn crawcian ac ar doriad dydd gwrandawai ar y ceiliogod yn canu. Ni allai ei fam fynd ag ef i'r eglwys oherwydd cynhyrfai gymaint wrth glywed yr organ a lleisiau'r côr nes peri i'w wyneb bach wyrdroi a dychryn y gynulleidfa.
>
> (*People of the village called him Yanko the Musician. In the springtime he would make whistles and play them from morning to night. In the evenings, he used to go to the moor and listen to the toads croaking, and at the break of dawn he listened to the cockerels crowing. His mother could not take him to the church because upon hearing the organs and choir voices he became so excited that it made his little face twist and scare the congregation*.)[8]

Below is the English translation of the original with the omitted passages underlined:

> The overseer caught him once standing with dishevelled forelock and listening to the wind on the wooden tines… he looked at the little fellow, unbuckled his own leather belt, and gave him a good keepsake. But what use was that? People called the boy "Yanko the Musician." The springtime he ran away from the house to make whistles near the river. In the night, when the frogs were croaking, the land-rail calling in the meadows, the bittern screaming in the dew, the cocks crowing behind the wicker fences, he could not sleep – he did nothing but listen; and God alone knows what he heard in that playing. His mother could not take him to church, for as soon as the organ began to roar or the choir sang in sweet voices, the child's eyes were covered with mist, as if he were not looking forth out of this world.[9]

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8 All English back translations of *Storïau Byr* are mine, MK.

9 All English translations of *Janko Muzykant* by Curtin (Sienkiewicz 1893) unless indicated otherwise.

As can be seen, the shortening of this passage is considerable. First, the translator omits the entire scene of Janko being beaten by the overseer, secondly he deletes most of the sentence which describes the music of nature. Other than omissions, the texts contains fragments not to be found in the source text – these are marked in the English rendition of the Welsh translation below in bold (additions) and italics (substitution):

> Ianco'r Cerddor oedd enw pobl y pentref arno. Yn y gwanwyn gwnâi chwibanogl a'i chwarae **o fore tan nos**. Gyda'r nos **âi i'r rhosydd** i wrando ar y llyffaint yn crawcian ac **ar doriad dydd** gwrandawai ar y ceiliogod yn canu. Ni allai ei fam fynd ag ef i'r eglwys oherwydd cynhyrfai gymaint wrth glywed yr organ a lleisiau'r côr *nes peri i'w wyneb bach wyrdroi a dychryn y gynulleidfa*.
>
> (People of the village called him "Yanko the Musician." In the spring time he would make whistles and play them **from morning to night**. In the evenings, he **would go to the moor** and listen to the toads croaking and **at the break of dawn** he listened to the cockerels crowing. His mother could not take him to the church because upon hearing the organs and choir voices *he became so excited that it made his little face twist and scare the congregation.*)

The passage contains three additions. Two of them – playing "from morning to night" and cockerels crowing "at the break of dawn" – specify the time of events. The third addition changes the original imagery: the information that Janko played "near the river" is replaced with "the moor", a landscape characteristic for North Wales, but rather unusual in Poland. Finally, the last sentence of the passage re-written by the translator makes the text more self-explanatory – while Sienkiewicz leaves it to the reader to understand why Janko's mother could not take him to the church, the Welsh translation explains that the look on the boy's face "scared the congregation". Moreover, the "out-of-this-world" look in his eyes is replaced with the more down-to-earth "it would make his little face twist".

Setting the above example in the wider context of the two stories analysed, one can observe some general tendencies in Jones's translations. To begin with the omissions, many of them can be attributed to one of the two categories: the 'poetic'/'emotional' or 'politically incorrect'.

First of all, Jones frequently chooses to leave out descriptions of nature. This is well-illustrated in the above example, where the fragment „żaby zaczynały rzechotać, derkacze na łąkach derkotać, bąki po rosie burczyć", an elegant onomatopoeic enumeration of animal sounds containing alliterations (a poetic device often used in Welsh literature, incidentally) is deleted. As a result, the artistry of the original descriptions and consequently the emotional power of the passage is significantly lowered in the translation.

Speaking of emotions, Jones also seems to avoid passages where the characters express intense feelings – those are usually extensively shortened and moderated. For example, the Welsh version of Janko's mother's reaction to his death says:

> Ond ni allai ddweud gair mwy.
> Syrthiodd ar ei gliniau wrth y gwely a wylodd fel y wylai mam a wêl ei phlentyn yn marw o flaen ei llygaid.
>
> *(But she could speak no longer.*
> *She fell to her knees by the bed and cried as a mother would cry who sees her child dying in front of her eyes*.)

while a faithful translation from Polish presents the reader with an more forceful, heart-breaking image:

> ale nie mogła dłużej mówić, bo nagle z jej twardej piersi buchnęła wzbierająca żałość, więc jęknąwszy tylko: „O Jezu! Jezu!", padła twarzą na skrzynię i zaczęła ryczeć, jakby straciła rozum albo jak człowiek, co widzi, że od śmierci nie wydrze swego kochania…
>
> (*but she could speak no longer, for suddenly in her hard breast burst the gathering sorrow and groaning only "O Jesus! O Jesus!" she fell with her face on a box, and began to wail as if she had lost her reason, or as a man wails who sees that he cannot wrest from death the beloved one*.)

Just as these changes might be explained by the translator's matter-of-fact approach, one can venture the hypothesis that other deletions were influenced by his personal, positive view of Poles as morally faultless people. A careful comparison of the source and target texts shows that the translator appears to deliberately avoid fragments that contain what now would be considered 'politically incorrect' or controversial elements. A good example are the fragments in *Yanko* that refer to violence towards the child. For instance, the phrase *she [the mother] beat him quite often* ("biła go dość często") is downplayed to *she beat him sometimes* ("iddi weithiau ei guro"). Similarly, as demonstrated above, a scene where little Janko is beaten by the overseer is missing, along with a similar scene in which the boy's mother "made music for him with her ladle".

> – Matulu! Tak ci coś w boru „grlało". Oj! Oj! A matka na to:
> – Zagram ci ja, zagram! Nie bój się!
> Jakoż czasem sprawiała mu warząchwią muzykę. Chłopak krzyczał, obiecywał, że już nie będzie, a taki myślał, że tam coś w boru grało… Co? Albo on wiedział?…

Sosny, buki, brzezina, wilgi, wszystko grało: cały bór, i basta!
("Mum! Something was 'playsing'[10] in the woods. Oi! Oi!" And the mother would say: "I'll give you a good playing! Don't you worry!"
And so sometimes she made music for him with her ladle. The boy screamed and promised he would never do it again, and yet he kept thinking that something was playing there in the woods… What was it? Did he know?... Pines, beeches, birches, golden orioles, everything was playing: the whole forest, and that was the end of it!)

"Mam! Mae rhywun yn 'chwala' yn y coed."
"Mi roi i ti 'chwala'! Cei di weld!" meddai'i fam.
Clywai Ianco gerdd ymhob coeden – y binwydden, y fedwen, yr onen – chwaraeai pob un offeryn gwahanol.

("Mum! Someone is 'playsing' in the woods."
"I'll give you a good 'playsing'! You'll see!"
Yanko heard music in every tree – the pine, the birch, the ash tree – each one played a different instrument.)

The translator's decision to delete such passages makes the whole story less brutal, thus diminishing the final emotional effect of the mother's extreme grief over Janko's death, despite her previous cruelty.

Another potentially controversial passage is found in *The Waistcoat*, when the narrator buys the garment from an old Jewish trader, a notable scene in the story, described as a tiny masterpiece (e.g. Bajda 2004: 535). The Welsh translation excludes some characteristic details, which portray the Jewish man as greedy, servile or inferior to the narrator and could presumably be interpreted as tokens of Polish anti-Semitism. For example, Jones changes the physical description of the Jew (e.g. by leaving out his "yellow eyes") and does not attempt to render the somewhat pejorative diminutive *Żydek* for 'Jew' used in the original narration, instead of the more neutral *Żyd*[11]. Later in the scene the Jew, wanting to make sure that nothing is left in the pockets of the sold waistcoat, "snatches" it from the narrator's hands, a phrase which is omitted in Welsh. Finally, in the translation both characters address each other using the formal *chi* form, which makes their status equal, while in the source text the narrator speaks to the Jew using the informal *you* (*ty*), signalling differences in social status.

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10 Translation mine, MK. It is challenging to convey Yanko's distorted pronunciation of the word *grać* "to play" in English. Curtin chose to omit this element in his translation, while Jones reflected it in Welsh by turning *chwarae* "to play" into *chwala* (to scatter).

11 "Yid" is perhaps the closest English equivalent for *Żydek*. However in Prus's writing the word is used with a patronising rather than offensive undertone, pointing at the low social status of a Jewish character it describes. A Welsh one-word equivalent is hardly to be found. Possible translation strategies would be using a neologism or explicitness change e.g. adding an adjective.

Similarly to deletions, seemingly minor additions in Jones's translations paint a slightly different picture of Polish people than the original stories. For instance, in *The Waistcoat*, one finds several references to religion absent from the source text, such as the exclamation *Brenin Mawr!* ("Good Lord!") instead of *It's no surprise* (*Dziwić się tu*), or the mention that the narrator keeps pressed flowers in a Bible. The highlighting of religious practice in this way may once again stem from Jones's personal beliefs. In *Pum Cynnig* i Gymro he describes Poles as "very religious" people:

> Celinka and I decided to marry on Christmas Eve. She was of course Catholic and very religious, like most Poles are.
>
> (Jones 1987: 61)

Whether the translator projected his own vision of Polish people onto the translation is debatable, yet is a possible explanation for the additions.

Another dimension of Jones's translations is his strong tendency for explicitation, i.e. explaining facts which in the source texts are left for the reader to interpret (Vinay and Darbelnet, 1995: 8). In the translation of *The Waistcoat*, for instance, a woman mentioned at the beginning of the story is identified as a widow before we find out about her husband's death. Similarly, the old tradesman is revealed to be Jewish as soon as he appears in the story, while in the Polish original the word *Jew* is used only after the reader is given a chance to deduce the character's origins from his distinctive manner of speaking.

In other places, Jones's choices for the palpable affect the original tone and sense of humour. This is visible in the following passage from *The Waistcoat*, where the subtle irony of "a buttoned to the neck tailcoat from a funeral parlour" is replaced with the obvious "shroud":

> Patrząc na to od razu domyślasz się, że właściciel odzienia zapewne co dzień chudnął i wreszcie dosięgnął tego stopnia, na którym kamizelka przestaje być niezbędna, ale natomiast okazuje się bardzo potrzebny zapięty pod szyję frak z magazynu pogrzebowego.
>
> (Looking at it you will guess immediately that the owner of this garment was becoming thinner day by day until finally he reached a stage when a waistcoat ceases to be indispensable and *you need a buttoned-to-the neck tailcoat from a funeral parlour instead*.)[12]
>
> Wrth edrych ar y wasgod yma hawdd ydy dychmygu bod ei pherchennog wedi teneuo yn gyson nes iddo fynd mor denau fel nad oedd angen gwasgod arno mwy ond yn hytrach amdo.

[12] Translation mine, MK.

> (Looking at this waistcoat it is easy to imagine that its owner was continually losing weight until finally he became so thin that he did not need a waistcoat anymore, but a shroud.)

Many more instances of substitutions could be mentioned here. To quote some conspicuous examples from *The Waistcoat*, the tradesman is *shouting* instead of *murmuring*, the young couple have a lunch of *apples* instead of *gingerbread and water*, and the waistcoat is lying on a *chair* instead of a *table*. Along with single-word changes, there are more substantial, and hardly explicable ones, such as the sentence "the street was slippery", while in the Polish text, "there were no carriages on the street", or the scene in which the old Jew offers to sell *set o ddanedd gosod fel newydd*, "a set of brand new false teeth" instead of *owcze serki*, "some sheep cheese" (!). Indeed, it is difficult to establish whether these modifications arise from the translator's insufficient knowledge of Polish and guessing what a particular word means, or his attempts to improve on the original text by adding whatever seemed to him more logical, amusing or understandable to the reader. A lack of external resources to check the meaning of words does not seem to be the case here, as a number of Polish-English and Polish-German dictionaries were available at the time the Welsh translations were produced. [13]

In short, at the lexical-semantic level, Jones's translations contain a vast number of omissions, distortions and substitutions, some of which can be regarded as translation errors, others as tokens of a specific translation strategy. The freedom in leaving out long sections of the text, explicitation and adding the translator's own ideas result in changing the overall meaning of the stories, whilst deletions in descriptive and emotional passages weaken the artistry of the source text.

4.5. Cultural aspects

The next level to be considered are culture-specific elements of the translations, in particular the translator's treatment of proper names and other cultural references.

In contrast to Hudson-Williams, who in his *Highlights of Polish literature* used Welsh equivalents of Polish names, e.g. Janko – Siôn (Rosiak and Heinz

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[13] For example, as regards Polish-English dictionaries, the National Library of Wales holds a copy of Czarnomski's 1916, and Stanisławski 1940 and 1966 Polish-English dictionaries. The well-known Kościuszko Foundation Dictionary was published in 1962. Polish-German dictionaries were published as well, e.g. reprints of Kalina's 1935 dictionary (see Frączek and Lipczuk. 2004. *Słowniki polsko-niemieckie i niemiecko-polskie: historia i teraźniejszość* „Polish-German and German-Polish Dictionaries: History and Present")

2010:63), Jones retains the original names, changing the spelling, however, to one more accessible to the Welsh reader, e.g. Janko – Ianco, Skawiński – Skavinski, Gosławski – Goslavski, Staś – Stas.[14] The method of phonetic adaptation is rather inconsistent in that, for instance, the letter 'k' which does not exist in the Welsh alphabet is kept in Skavinski, but replaced with 'c' in Ianco. In replacing Polish 'w' with 'v' and 'ł' with 'l' the translator follows the rules of English spelling, rather than Welsh, where 'f' and 'w' would be the graphemes for the respective sounds. This is, however, common practice with spelling Slavic names in Welsh[15].

A small number of Polish words are kept in their original form, e.g. *grosz* (Polish currency), *obertas* (folk dance), *lelek* ('nightjar'), *Pan* ('Mr.'), although such decisions are sometimes questionable, as in the case of *lelek* which has its Welsh equivalent (*troellwr*). Interestingly, the translator often leaves Polish words in their inflected forms, e.g. "gad inni ddawnsio'r '*obertasa"*" ("let us dance *obertas*") (Jones 1971: 24).

Vital cultural context is present in *The Waistcoat*. The story is set in Warsaw, a very important place for Prus, one of the greatest realists in the history of Polish literature, famous for his descriptions of the capital city. In the Welsh translation, however, every local reference to Warsaw – and other locations in Poland – is deleted or replaced, usually with a more general word. Thus, places such as the Botanic Garden or Łazienki Park are omitted; instead of "staying in Warsaw" the characters "stay at home", the paper "Kurier Świąteczny" becomes simply "a paper" and the Tatra Mountains "some high mountains". These modifications appear to be tokens of an explicitation strategy applied to make the text understandable to the Welsh reader and to present the story as a universal tale of love and devotion rather than a realistic portrayal of life in specific time and place.

Examples of domestication[16] can be also be found in some fragments added by the translator, where he introduces elements familiar to the Welsh audience, but not necessarily appropriate in the original context. Changing "the river" into "a moor" in *Yanko the Musician* mentioned previously is one good example and

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14 As a side note, it is also worth mentioning English and German names that appear in the other two stories in the volume. German names in *Powracająca fala* have Polish spelling, but in the Welsh translation the spelling is German, e.g. Szmit – Schmidt, Marcin – Martin. English names in *Latarnik*, a story set in the USA, are spelled as in the source text, with one curious exception: Johns changed into Jones (an obvious choice for a Welsh translator?).

15 Cf. e.g. the spelling of Russian names in W. O. Roberts's *Petrograd*. At the same time in *Pum Cynnig i Gymro* Jones occasionally uses Welsh spelling of Slavic names, e.g. the Czech town Morafsca-Ostrafa.

16 Understood here as "translation strategy, in which a transparent, fluent style is adopted in order to minimise the strangeness of the foreign text for TL readers" (Shuttleworth and Cowie 1997: 44).

others can be found in the same story. At one point the sound of Janko's fiddle is compared to "a fly or a gnat buzzing" while in Welsh it is "a sea shell humming", despite little probability that a boy like Janko would ever have seen a sea shell[17]. In another scene, when Janko sees the violin in the landlord's house, the narrator, expressing the boy's thoughts, exclaims:

> Ach! Wszystko było śliczne i prawie czarodziejskie (…)
> (*Ah, all was beautiful and almost enchanted!*)

The Welsh translation, however, says:

> O! Roedd hi fel y delyn aur a glywsai amdani!"
> (*Oh, it was like the golden harp he heard about*)

It is unclear whether the 'golden harp' image introduced by the translator is meant to evoke elements of Celtic folklore or whether he refers to a well-known hymn *Y Delyn Aur*. In both cases the image deviates from the reality of 19th-century Polish countryside.

To conclude, in conveying the cultural dimension Jones introduces some explicitation and domestication strategies, such as hyponymy, omitting local references and modifying the metaphors to adapt them to the knowledge of the Welsh reader; at the same time, however, he retains some elements of the source culture, e.g. proper names. Such an approach creates an internal inconsistency as well as referential errors regarding the historical accuracy of the translated text. The target-audience-oriented choices happen at the cost of a realistic portrayal of events and characters, which was, after all, one of the primary intentions of the Positivist authors (cf. Markiewicz 1999: 128).

4.6. Style

The last area to be discussed here is stylistics, a dimension crucial in evaluating the artistic value of a literary translation and one that is most frequently discussed (Krzysztofiak 1999: 91-110). Many of the previously mentioned elements point to the fact that numerous omissions and substitutions in Jones's translations make him unable to appropriately capture the style of Sienkiewicz or Prus. In fact, regardless of the author translated, the style of the Welsh text is very consistent, and after comparison with *Pum Cynnig i Gymro* it can be easily recognised as the translator's own manner of writing. Some of its features are:

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[17] This particular example might not necessary be a conscious change, however, but an error of confusing the word *muszka* 'gnat' with *muszla* 'shell'.

- simplicity – straightforward, explanatory narrative, short sentences and paragraphs, avoiding longer descriptions or complicated metaphors
- little focus on emotions and psychological dimension of the characters
- distinctive mannerisms, such as commenting on events with short sentences ending with an exclamation mark. Compare:

> Teimlwn fy nghalon yn dechrau curo. Roedd fy lwc yn anhygoel!
> (*I felt my heart start beating. My luck was unbelievable!*)
>
> (Jones 1987: 217)

and

> "(…) meddwl roeddwn i fy mod i wedi gadael rhywbeth yn un o'r pocedi." A hynny yn y llais mwyaf naturiol erioed!
> (*"I thought I had left something in one of the pockets." And that in a most natural voice!"*)
>
> – Możem co zostawił w kieszeni, nie pamiętam! – odparł najnaturalniejszym tonem,
> (*"Maybe I've left something in the pocket, I can't remember!" he said in a most natural voice.*)

The unification of style and register of the translation is most noticeable in *Yanko the Musician*, where in the Polish original the narrator's language is masterfully stylised to resemble peasants' speech. In the Welsh translation, however, the commonplace phrases of the countryside are rendered in standard, literary Welsh, often unnecessarily elevating the register, e.g. Janko's simple exclamation *O! Dlaboga!* "Oh, dear God!" is translated as *Er mwyn yr Arglwydd Iesu Grist!* "By the Lord Jesus Christ", while the judge's order to the policeman *Weź go ta i daj mu na pamiątkę* "Take 'im and give 'im a good keepsake" is translated as *Ewch ag ef allan a churwch ef fel nad anghofia* "Take him out and beat him so that he will not forget" – the pronoun *ef*, the negative particle *na* and the 3rd person singular of the verb in *-a* are all characteristic of formal registers of Welsh.

Sienkiewicz's stylisation goes beyond the lexical level in that the narrator's phrasing reflects his mentality and perception of the world; for example, his close connection with nature is displayed in the opening sequence when he says "in the fourth year the cuckoo brought him sickness in spring" [*w czwartym roku okukała kukułka na wiosnę chorobę*]. That dimension is once again not to be found in the Welsh translation which omits that element entirely: "when he was three he caught smallpox" [*pan oedd yn dair oed cafodd y frech wen*]; the faithfulness of this translation is, of course, another matter. As a result, in Jones's version the text

lacks the artistic effect of juxtaposing the cruel mentality of the village people, represented by the narrator in the first part of the story, with the subtle, poetic passages referring to Janko's sensibility in the second. Moreover, the folktale character of the story, which contributes immensely to the realistic portrayal of peasants, is absent from the Welsh rendition – the more's the pity, one might say, because with the richness of rural dialects in Welsh, it does not seem impossible to convey the countryside language used by Sienkiewicz. Similarly, in *The Waistcoat* no attempt is made to show the Jew's characteristic dialect – although it could, for instance, be signalled by retaining Yiddish interjections (such as in the sentence *A, fajn mebel* "Ah, a fine thing".

Both Sienkiewicz's and Prus's styles are also distorted by unit shifts (Chesterman 1997: 95), that is a different structure and organisation of the translated text. In *Yanko the Musician*, Jones trims longer sentences and paragraphs by shortening or breaking them and tends to incorporate some dialogues into the text, all of which further weakens the oral and poetic character of the narrative. In *The Waistcoat*, the concrete and concise style of Bolesław Prus does not please the translator either: if he encounters a part of dialogue or narrative that seems 'incomplete', he extends them or replaces dashes with conjunctions. Furthermore, in contrast to Sienkiewicz, whose language becomes less ornamental in the translation, the translation of Prus tends to contain extra adjectives, e.g. in the final sentence of *The Waistcoat*:

> Któż jednak powie, że za tymi chmurami nie ma słońca?…
> (*But who will say that there is no sun behind these clouds?)*
>
> (…) ond pwy a ddywed nad oes heulwen ac awyr las y tu hwnt i'r cymylau duon hyn?
> (*but who will say there is no sunshine and blue sky behind these black clouds?)*

Such changes distort the unique style of Prus, who, as an amateur mathematician, believed in the right proportions between different parts of speech and claimed that concrete nouns, without unnecessary adjectives, are the essence of good writing (Grzeniewski 1965: 78).

In short, by eliminating various stylistic devices of the original and applying his own style, the translator turns the sophisticated stories into a rather flat text, losing the poetry and emotional intensity in the case of Sienkiewicz and the powerful concreteness of Prus's language.

5. Final remarks

It is hoped that the above overview has exemplified the most characteristic features of John Elwyn Jones's Polish translations and demonstrated that the degree of alterations to the source texts places their Welsh versions on the border between free translation and adaptation. Although the primary, universal message of Prus's and Sienkiewicz's stories is certainly retained in Welsh, much of their culture-specific dimension, historical context and artistic value is not conveyed in the translation. It might be considered symptomatic that Jones's name is the only one appearing on the volume's cover and that inside the book the Polish authors' names are confused. It is the voice of the translator, not that of Sienkiewicz or of Prus, that is to be heard in *Storïau Byr o'r Bwyleg*. The imagery, the setting, even the plot are filtered not only through the translator's cultural background, but also his personal perception of Poland drawn from the war experience, while his individual manner of writing replaces the two author's distinctive styles. Referring to Pieńkos's statement quoted before – that a translation should be written in the same way as the author would have written if the translator's language were his mother tongue – one could say that the translations analysed here were produced in the same way as the translated author would have written, if he were himself the translator.

Obviously, without the translator's own statements, reconstructing his intentions is something of a wild-goose chase, yet with the aid of Jones's other works one might establish some possible reasons behind the drastic changes to the source texts. Insufficient knowledge of Polish, lack of experience in translation and little awareness of the historical and literary context has given rise to a considerable number of errors and distortions in the final product. All of this might tempt a critic to condemn the translator for rashness, carelessness or even arrogance, but is wonderfully consistent with the personality emerging from the pages of *Pum Cynnig i Gymro*. Could it be imagined that this daring soldier, who did not hesitate to jump over barbed walls, would stop at an unknown word or phrase to check it in a dictionary?

Notwithstanding the shortcomings presented above, Jones's translations are a unique contribution to Welsh literature and his effort to provide the Welsh audience with an insight into Polish culture is certainly admirable. It can be argued, however, that informing Welsh readers that they were being presented with adaptations, rather than translations of Polish literature, would have been a fair approach. Interesting as they are, it is hoped that the pioneering works of John Elwyn Jones will not remain the only instances of Polish literature translated into Welsh.

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