

Agnieszka Romanowska

ORCID: 0000-0003-4659-4521

Jagiellonian University, Cracow

a.romanowska-kowalska@uj.edu.pl

Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz as Translator of Shakespeare

Abstract: While theatre has always been the major force generating new translations of Shakespeare's plays, the prerequisite assuring a successful (i.e. theatrically functional) rendering is the translator's awareness of the theatrical potential of poetic drama. The combination of poetic and dramatic skills on the part of the translator, coupled with the interpretative reading that underlies all translation, provides a literary historian with interesting questions. How are the translator's creative forces channelled to strike a balance between translating and playwrighting? To what extent should we perceive translated literature as an integral part of the writer-translator's literary output? Is it possible to interpret one in the light of the other and can such interpretation enrich our understanding of the translated texts' functioning in the target culture? Looking for answers to these questions, I focus on the blend of the poetic and playwrighting temperaments that characterise Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz's translations of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet*.

Keywords: Shakespeare, Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, translation, writer-translator, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Hamlet*

1. Iwaszkiewicz as a Writer-Translator^{*}

In his *History of Polish Literature*, Czesław Miłosz writes about the impressive variety of Iwaszkiewicz's literary output that encompasses several genres and aesthetics. From expressionistic poetry, to historical novel and drama, to biographies, essays and travel accounts, Iwaszkiewicz's "many-sidedness" seems to reflect "the hunger of life and an ecstatic immersion in its current so typical for him as a man and as a writer" (Miłosz 1983: 392–393). Being a writer open to all literary kinds,

^{*} I write extensively about Iwaszkiewicz's translations of *Hamlet* and *Romeo and Juliet* in my book *Za głosem tłumacza. Szekspir Iwaszkiewicza, Miłosza i Gałczyńskiego* (Kraków 2017), in which I present an interpretative reading of the plays based on an approach that locates translation within the writer-translator's creative activity.

Iwaszkiewicz nevertheless saw himself primarily as a poet, quite paradoxically so, considering his popularity as a novelist. “All I write is, in a sense, poetry. That’s why I say I am first and foremost a poet. I see poetry as the most important field of my literary creation”¹ (Gronczewski 1969: 3), he said as a mature writer.

Iwaszkiewicz was similarly versatile as a translator. *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet* are his only translations from English, but the authors he translated include Neruda, Rimbaud, Claudel, Gide, Tolstoy, Chekhov and even Hans Christian Andersen. Iwaszkiewicz neither theorised about translation, nor formulated any translation strategies, but on the basis of several statements scattered in introductions, essays, and biographical writings, it is possible to summarise his views on this topic. He saw translation of poetry as an almost hopeless task that at the same time was an everyday necessity (Balcerzan, Rajewska 2007: 489) as the need to translate results from the reader’s wonder at and fascination with the beauty and power of poetic language. The very existence of poetry was the trigger for translation whose aim was to reflect the originals as if in a mirror (Iwaszkiewicz 1954a: 5), while the beneficial effect of the process consisted in activating sensitivity to the poetic word. Iwaszkiewicz’s special focus and object of his most attentive treatment in Pablo Neruda’s poetry that he translated in 1950s was a unity of meaning and sound realized in the specific musicality of these poems. Such special “ear” for the musical qualities of the poetic language is not surprising in a writer who in his young years studied music, contemplated a musical career and all his life remained faithful to this fascination. I suppose that this is the reason why commentators of his Shakespearean translations repeatedly refer to the smoothness of his poetic line.²

Iwaszkiewicz’s attentiveness to the sound of poetry manifested itself also on another level. He tried to furnish the actors with words that would be common and easy to pronounce and understand, while the features of Shakespeare’s dramatic language that he strived to retain were vividness and realism (Iwaszkiewicz 1939: 11). As translator of Shakespeare, he was aware of the feature of the plays’ texts that drama translation scholars call speakability, playability (Snell-Hornby 1984; Schultze 1990, 1998) or performability. It may be roughly defined as theatrical functionality of a play-text or its scenicality. Susan Bassnett, who in her texts heavily criticised the term “performability” for its vagueness, nevertheless acknowledges that the specificity of drama translation is connected with the dramatic text’s openness towards stage realisation (Bassnett 1985), or its theatrical potential

¹ “Wszystko, co piszę, jest w jakimś sensie poezją. I dlatego mówię, że jestem przede wszystkim poetą. Uważam, że najważniejszą gałęzią mojej twórczości są wiersze”. Translation of quotations from Polish sources — mine [A.R.].

² See, e.g., G. Sinko, “Dramat angielski i niemiecki w wydaniach PIW”, in *Pamiętnik Teatralny* 1955/1, p. 209; J. Zwieyski, “O przekładach dramatu”, in *O sztuce tłumaczenia*, Warszawa 1955, p. 424.; S. Barańczak, *Ocalone w tłumaczeniu*, Kraków 2004, pp. 201–202.

(Totzeva 1999).³ This aspect was especially relevant at the time when he first translated the plays, between 1925 and 1938. The first half of the 20th century was a time in the Polish reception of Shakespeare when the need for new translations was more acute than ever. Theatres still performed the plays in the nineteenth century renderings that were popular, but increasingly difficult for actors and audiences. Andrzej Żurowski in one of his books on Shakespeare in Polish theatres assesses the general attitude as, nevertheless, conservative. Because both theatre-goers and critics were used to the canonical translations, a version too modernised would not be readily accepted (Żurowski 2003: 42). In the context of this distrust towards attempts to overcome the dominance of the canonical translations, we are today allowed to see Iwaszkiewicz's achievement as ground-breaking. He succeeded to produce a translation of *Hamlet* targeted at his contemporaries, one that offered freshness of language and clarity of metaphors. Commissioned by Teatr Polski and first performed in 1939, this rendering was very well received and got revived after the war to become one of the most important Shakespearean productions of the late 1940s. Before this happened, however, Iwaszkiewicz had authored an unsuccessful translation of *Romeo and Juliet* which, for a failure, proved surprisingly fruitful. Before I go into details, it is necessary to characterise Iwaszkiewicz's writings from 1920s and 1930s to establish the context for both of these translations.

Shakespeare's tragedies were translated by Iwaszkiewicz in a period when his poetry and poetic prose was intensively developing and changing. These years were also important because of the first longer stays abroad, initiating Iwaszkiewicz's European journeys that became crucial for his further development as a writer. His writings were dominated by inner anxiety and intensity of feeling that steered his diction towards expressionism (Kwiatkowski 1962: 393–421). Two features of his poetic diction from that period seem to have left a special mark on his translations — a tendency to employ direct, sometimes colloquial, language, and sensuality of description. The first may be the source of certain simplifications of Shakespeare's metaphors that Iwaszkiewicz was often accused of.⁴ The latter seems to be a continuation and condensation of his fascinations with Rimbaud (Kwiatkowski 1962: 401), and it is visible in what I would call tangibility of the poetic imagery in his translations. In Iwaszkiewicz's poetry, the "sensualistic voraciousness"⁵ (Kwiatkowski 1975: 23), fuelled by the greed of versatile experience, finds its reflection in poetic vividness and syncretic nature of imagery, especially the poet's sensitivity to colour and sound. On the philosophical level, the key to Iwaszkiewicz's work, his artistic credo, the reason for the poet's sensualism and

³ For an analysis of Totzeva's model of theatrical potential and its application in the study of Polish translations of Shakespeare's plays see my book *"Hamlet" po polsku* (Kraków 2005).

⁴ See, e.g., W. Borowy, "Przekłady Szekspira i teatr", in *Studia i rozprawy* vol. 2, Wrocław 1952, pp. 34–36; S. Helsztyński, "Przekłady szekspirowskie w Polsce wczoraj i dziś", in *Pamiętnik Teatralny* 1954/2, p. 93.

⁵ "Sensualistyczna żarłoczność".

aestheticism, as well as his cult of beauty and art is the “resignation dominant”⁶ (Kwiatkowski 1975: 25). It flows from the conviction that human lot is meagre *vis a vis* the vitality of nature and from the sense of futility of all human attempts and choices (Maciejewska 1982: 321). It fuels a passion for life mingled with a fascination with death, as well as the tension between desire and inability to realise it. Both are joined in the motif of ambivalent relation between love and death, one that consistently recurs in Iwaszkiewicz’s work, notwithstanding the genre. Much of his prose is governed by the principle of juxtaposing opposites that acquire a philosophical dimension by generalizing the fates of characters who, entangled in antinomies, acquire a sense of tragedy. Images of lovers torn between love and death are used repeatedly in the poems from the volume *Lato 1932* [Summer 1932]. Frequently, instead of the anticipated ecstasy, love leads to destruction and decay. Night-time is presented as ominous and frightening. It is metaphorically likened to black poison that chokes the speaker or to a black circle which imprisons the lovers, while physical love is described in terms of suffering and destruction.⁷ Kwiatkowski, having identified thirty different usages of words referring to black and blackness in *Lato 1932* and in another volume from the period, *Inne życie* [Another Life] (1975: 389–575), writes about the poet’s obsession with blackness which gradually darkens the tones of the poems.

Blackness which dominates this volume is “conscious”, “purposeful”, “meaningful”, far from being merely a colouring epithet, one that may, but does not have to, mean more than just signify a hue. [...] it acquires an expressive-symbolic character [...] Symbolising ideas (death, evil, condemnation, eternity) and suggesting emotions (hopelessness, despair), it is at the same time also an element of the world’s beauty [...] fascination with blackness in this volume [...] reflects the poet’s fascination with death. (Kwiatkowski 1975: 471–472)⁸

Black and blackness, also combined or contrasted with other colours, often forming oxymoronic phrases, become the major expressive tool for Iwaszkiewicz’s lyrical speaker in the volumes. A similar act of endowing the colouring epithet with a symbolic function is visible in the initial parts of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* and this feature of the play’s text was, as I demonstrate in the analysis below, treated by the translator with special attention.

⁶ “Dominanta rezygnacyjna”.

⁷ Esp. in poems XXXI, XXVIII, XXX, XXXIV, XXXV.

⁸ „Dominuje w tym tomie czerń „świadoma”, „celowa”, „znacząca”, daleka od wyłącznej roli sprawodawczego kolorystycznego epitetu, takiego, który może, ale nie musi znaczyć więcej niż zwykłe określenie barwy. [...] nabiera znaczenia ekspresyjno-symbolicznego. [...] Symbolizując pojęcia (śmierć, zło, potępienie, wieczność) i sugerując stany psychiczne (poczucie beznadziei, rozpacz) [...] czerń jest tu przecież jednocześnie elementem zmysłowej urody świata [...] fascynacja czernią jest w tym tomie [...] odpowiednikiem estetycznej fascynacji śmiercią”.

2. Translation — Adaptation — Playwrighting

Iwaszkiewicz was asked to prepare a new version of *Romeo and Juliet* for the National Theatre in 1925, but his translation was never staged. Inspired by Adam Mickiewicz's poetic rendering of the play's fragment, he translated the whole play in regular rhymed thirteen-syllable lines, both verse and prose passages. A more drastic measure, however, was to introduce numerous textual cuts and shifts, reshaping the original in order to revise what he saw as Shakespeare's structural shortcomings. I suppose that it was Iwaszkiewicz's relatively poor English and limited knowledge of Shakespeare, blended with his strong playwrighting temperament, that diverted him from the task of translating towards realising his own vision of the story. This resulted in a stage adaptation, later assessed by the writer as disintegrated patchwork (Iwaszkiewicz 1954b: 7). Thirty years later — when asked to publish this rendering — he translated the play again, having rejected most of the previous text. The rhymed version of *Romeo and Juliet* might have been a failure, but it brought experience and conclusions for future as can be seen in the success of *Hamlet*, translated in 1938. Iwaszkiewicz was initially asked by Teatr Polski to revise a script written several years earlier on the basis of the nineteenth-century translation by Józef Paszkowski. This task must have seemed unattractive as the poet decided to prepare his own version instead. This time he was careful to curb his playwrighting temperament.

The poet's work on *Romeo and Juliet* done in 1926 produced also results of a different kind. From the very beginning Iwaszkiewicz assumed a creative approach towards the original, but in the process of translation-interpretation he developed a clearly polemical attitude towards Shakespeare's version of the story. He felt that a modern writer might supply the characters with some more convincing psychological motivations and substitute the resolution that depends on misunderstanding and coincidences with an ending which would question the possibility that the two fighting families become happily united through the young lovers. Iwaszkiewicz's scepticism towards Shakespeare's play supported by his philosophy of resignation became fully realised in the play entitled *Kochankowie z Werony* [The Lovers of Verona], composed in 1927.⁹ The play's protagonists — two young people from the 1920s drawn to one another by powers they do not quite comprehend and despite acute awareness that their relation is doomed — represent Iwaszkiewicz's unorthodox interpretation of Shakespeare's characters. "The mighty power dividing the two families is a machine much stronger than the particular individuals and Romeo and Juliet, in spite of all their efforts, even if joined by happy love, must feel that their happiness is hopeless, untimely, anachronistic" (Iwaszkiewicz 2010a: 303). They are ambiguous characters, prone to abrupt changes and torn with conflicting emotions.

⁹ For an extensive discussion of the origins of this play and its links with *Romeo and Juliet*, see Romanowska 2017a: 95–107.

The reasons for Romeo appearing in Juliet's garden are far from clear. He announces to have come in order to kill Juliet, but instead he persuades her that they might stop the feud by marriage. Juliet soon succumbs to his visions of their being together, although she is prone to destructive thinking and has an overwhelming sense of pointlessness. After the wedding night spent in the Montagues' ruined vault, Romeo wakes up to realise that the perfection of love ecstasy has brought nothing but disappointment and longing for the past state of imperfection and incompleteness. In Iwaszkiewicz's play the tragic ending does not result from any unlucky coincidence, but from the characters' inability to free themselves from the constraints of their backgrounds. Like in Iwaszkiewicz's other works, happiness can remain happiness only if it is unfulfilled, so preference is given to desire, anxieties, ambiguous impulses and dreams that fuel the protagonist's activity (Maciąg 1959: 102). Much critical attention has been given to the fierceness of Iwaszkiewicz's response to Shakespeare, in which one of the liveliest love stories of European culture is turned into a drama of mutual disappointment, concluded with mutual murder (Czanerle 1964: 7).

3. Iwaszkiewicz's Shakespeare

Iwaszkiewicz's philosophy of resignation, permeating all his writing, is also reflected in his translational treatment of the disturbing closeness of love and death in *Romeo and Juliet*. When the Choir announces that the "fearful passage of their death-marked love, / [...] Is now the two hours' traffic of our stage" (1.1.9, 12),¹⁰ "death-marked" is rendered in translation as *śmiertelna miłość*.¹¹ This phrase's ambiguity — it may mean both deadly love (love leading to death) and mortal love (love destroyed by death) — initiates the specific logic of the love-death imagery that fills the play. This logic is revealed already before Romeo and Juliet meet, in the yet potentially comic first part of the play, which depicts Romeo's love to Rosaline in terms of Petrarchan suffering caused by the indifferent *dolce nemica*. The old Montague, disconcerted by Romeo's melancholy, describes its symptoms as sorrows: "Could we but learn from whence his sorrows grow, / We would as willingly give cure as know" (1.1.145–146). In the translation, we find a stronger designation — *choroba* [illness].¹² Romeo's parents are worried by their son's health-threatening condition and thus the text amplifies the idea that love is a danger.

While love in *Romeo and Juliet* is always overshadowed by death, eroticism is marked by deadly violence¹³. It is so from the first scene, in which the Capulet

¹⁰ The play quoted from W. Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, ed. B. Gibbons, London 1980.

¹¹ *Prawdziwe sprawy śmiertelnej miłości / [...] Na dwie godziny zajmą was na scenie* (301). The translation is quoted from W. Szekspir, *Dwanaście dramatów*, ed. A. Staniewska, Warszawa 1999 (the numbers in brackets refer to the pages in this edition).

¹² *Gdyby przyczynę poznać tej choroby* (310).

¹³ For a detail study of this aspect of the play, see Davis 1996: 65.

servants' bawdily manifest their readiness to fight with the Montague servants, linked with their readiness to sexually assault their women: "I will push Montague's men from the wall, and thrust his maids to the wall" (1.1.16).¹⁴ Iwaszkiewicz's translation amplifies this effect when the Prince condemns the continuous brawls and bloodshed. While in the original we have "Three civil brawls, bred of an airy word, / By thee, old Capulet, and Montague, / Have thrice disturbed the quiet of our streets," (1.1.80–82) in the Polish text the fairly general verb "disturb" is rendered as *gwałcić* [to rape].¹⁵ Instead of the literal image of the city's peacefulness being disturbed, we have Verona personified and presented as one of the women who become victims of the street violence.

The translation reveals other modifications which strengthen the motif of love and death inseparably entangled. Love relationship is depicted as a deadly conflict, as a fight in which the lovers may lose their lives. While Shakespeare's Romeo complains that he is "Out of her [Rosalind's] favour where [he is] in love" (1.1.159), Iwaszkiewicz's Romeo dies of love¹⁶ and this happens because love (in the original described as "tyrannous" and "rough") is in the translation compared to a heavy weapon, *ciężka jak żelazo* [heavy as iron], that wounds or possibly kills the lover. As Romeo is exaggerating about his "heart's oppression" (1.1.182), the humorous effect of the oxymoronic phrases is supported in translation by the repetition of the adjective *ciężki* [heavy] in various grammatical forms. In line-by-line literal back translation of 1.1.162–173, this reads as follows:

Here's much to do with hate, but more with love:

Nienawiść ciężka, ale miłość cięższa. *Hate [is] heavy, but love heavier.*

Why then, O brawling love, O loving hate,
Miłość, nienawiść, nienawiść w miłości — *Love, hate, hate in love —*

O any thing of nothing first create!
Wszystko zrodzone z pierwotnej nicości. *All is born of the primordial nothingness.*

O heavy lightness, serious vanity,
Trudne wesele! O! Ciężka pieszczoto! *Difficult joy! Oh! Heavy caress!*

Misshapen chaos of well-seeming forms,
Mętny chaosie doskonałych kształtów! *Vague chaos of perfect shapes!*

Feather of lead, bright smoke, cold fire, sick
health,
Czymś jak dym twardy, czymś jak chore zdrowie, *Something as smoke hard, something as sick*
health,

¹⁴ As B. Gibbons says in his *Introduction* to the Arden edition of the play, the "vivid responsiveness to the physical texture of life is centered in the human body itself [...] from the very first moment of the play, as the coarse talk of the servants generates through many active verbs a quick awareness of the body as an instrument of physical brutality and sexual aggression", W. Shakespeare, *Romeo and Juliet*, London 1980, p. 64.

¹⁵ *Szczękiem broni gwałcicie ulice / Naszej Werony* (307).

¹⁶ *Brak mi wzajemności, / A sam z miłości ginę* (311).

Still-waking sleep, that is not what it is!
Puch ciężki, sen bezsenno zda się miłość!

[as] Down heavy, sleep sleepless seems [to be]
 love!

This love feel I, that feel no love in this.
Tak ją odczuwam, więc się strasznie męczę

So [I] it feel, therefore [I] [refl.] awfully suffer ...

Iwaszkiewicz, inspired by Shakespeare's "heavy lightness," amplifies the image of the caresses that, heavy as steel, inflict pain and cause death. Thus the experience of love is here linked more to physical than psychological suffering, the lover's body being affected even more than his soul, especially because the blind Cupid, who in Shakespeare's text "should without eyes see pathways to his will" (1.1.170), in the translation knows how to inflict a wound (*wie, jaką zadać ranę*), and because Romeo's neutral "I [...] feel no love in this" is rendered as *się strasznie męczę* [I suffer terribly]. Similar Petrarchan imagery is present also in the initial stages of Romeo's relationship with Juliet, the best example being the echo of the life-threatening caresses which returns in the garden scene. Unwilling to part with Romeo, Juliet admits that she would gladly keep her lover like a bird imprisoned "with a silken thread" (2.2.180), only that she might kill him "with much cherishing" (2.2.183).

Iwaszkiewicz's translation reveals a consistent thread of imagery connected with heaviness. In the banter between Romeo and Mercutio before entering the Capulet's house, Cupid's shaft that "sore enpierced" Romeo is in the translation described as having wounded him heavily, *ciężko strzała Kupida zraniła*, in addition to "love's heavy burden" that bends him to the ground.¹⁷ In the same exchange, the translator introduces another item suggesting a heavy load, a burden on Romeo's heart — imagery based on the associations with stone. This amplifies the effect created by Shakespeare's expression "a soul of lead." For Romeo's "You have dancing shoes / With nimble soles, I have a soul of lead / So stakes me to the ground I cannot move" (1.4.14–16) in the translation there are three phrases that suggest heaviness and burden: *podkute buty* [hobnailed shoes], *duśza z ołowiu* [soul of lead], and *smutek mnie gniecie jak kamień do ziemi* [sadness pushes me as stone to the ground] (325). When Romeo refuses to follow the Friar's advice about finding a secure place after Tybalt's death, he uses a phrase *Schowany jestem od każdego / Za murem mego kamiennego smutku* [I am hidden from everyone / behind a wall of my stony sadness] (388), thus creating a metaphor "stony sadness." It is based on the association with a stony wall, whereas Shakespeare's focus is different: "unless the breath of heart-sick groans / Mist-like infold me from the search of eyes" (3.3.72–73). Last but not least, when the Nurse comes to Juliet's bedroom to wake her up for the wedding with Paris, she wonders "How sound is she asleep!"

¹⁷ *I pod ciężarem miłości upadam* (326).

(4.5.8), which the Polish translator renders metaphorically as *sen kamienny* [stony sleep]. There are several instances in the translation in which the burden of stone used foreshadows the literal stone of the vault where Juliet, apparently dead, waits for her lover, and of the grave where they die together. In this way the translator creates his own line of recurring imagery, slightly modified in comparison with, but consistently following, the one present in the original.

Another important aspect of the love/death ambiguity that this translation amplifies results from linking the motif of deadly love with the image of lover as enemy. When the Nurse reveals to Romeo that he has just fallen in love with the Capulet's daughter, he has no doubt that his life is threatened: "Is she a Capulet? / O dear account! my life is my foe's debt" (1.5.112–117). Although the translator also uses the word "enemy," he changes the semantic field of the metaphor from the economic/legal to a much more tangible and violent image of catching Romeo in a net — *Czy jest z Kapuletów? / Zatem wróg pojmał mnie w sieci, niestety!* [Is he from the Capulets? / So the enemy caught me in his nets, alas!] (335). Romeo's beloved is thus his enemy, not only in the conventional, Petrarchan, sense, but also quite literally, being the daughter of his mortal foe. Shakespeare cleverly transforms the conventional image of *dolce nemica*'s deadly look, which contains "more peril [...] / Than twenty [...] swords" (2.2.71–72), into a look of love that has the power to protect Romeo against his enemies' blows: "Look thou but sweet / And I am proof against their enmity" (2.2.72–73). In the translation, Romeo says that Juliet's eyes seem to him terrifying: *straszne mi są oczy twoje* [your eyes are dreadful to me] (344). In this way the lovers' initiation in the garden scene links more directly with the Choir's warning about the "death-marked love" and with Romeo's ominous premonitions of "some vile forfeit of untimely death" (1.5.111). The recurring lover-enemy imagery is intensified in the translation also in one more echo of the Petrarchan tradition, when — upon learning that Romeo has killed Tybalt — Juliet calls her lover a "Beautiful tyrant, fiend angelical!" (3.2.75). The translator substitutes "enemy" for "fiend" in *Piękny zbrodniarzu! Mój anielski wrogu!* [Beautiful murderer! My angelic enemy!] (383). As a result, instead of the oxymoron "fiend angelical" we have a phrase that equals Juliet's lover with her enemy.

The motif of love-death is perhaps best manifested in the image of death as a rival and as someone who threatens the lovers' unity. This image first appears when the wedding night is threatened by Romeo's exile. Looking at the cords of the ladder, Juliet laments "I, a maid, die maiden-widowèd. / Come cords, come, Nurse, I'll to my wedding bed, / And death, not Romeo, take my maidenhead!" (3.2.132–137). For the second time, it is used by the old Capulet's when he addresses Paris over Juliet's apparently dead body: "O son, the night before thy wedding day / Hath Death lain with thy wife. There she lies, / Flower as she was, deflowered by him" (4.5.35–37). In both cases the translation is less dynamic and less transparently sexual. In *A ja pośpieszę na weselne łoże, / Z śmiercią, nie z mężem, na nim się*

położę (385) [And I will hasten myself to the wedding bed / With death, not with my husband on it I will lie] Juliet says that she is going to lie down on her wedding bed with death, not with her husband. In Juliet's father's words the puns on "lie" and on "flower" are changed into fixed metaphors: *Śmierć ci zabrała twą oblubienicę. / Tu leży niby kwiat śmiercią skoszony* (422) [Death has taken from you your bride. / She is lying here like a reaped flower]. While in both text the emotional load is comparable, the pointedness of the image is blunted in translation as it does not retain Capulet's suggestion that Paris's rival has raped his bride on their very wedding eve.

Another reference to defloration omitted by the translator can be found in Juliet's famous monologue, in which she invokes the night to come and teach the lovers "how to lose a winning match / Played for a pair of stainless maidenhoods" (3.2.12–13). Shakespeare's Juliet describes the sexual act as a game that has to be lost by both them in order to be won, and Iwaszkiewicz follows this imagery closely with one exception. He changes "stainless maidenhoods" into *niewinne dusze* [innocent souls]. This works against the overall sense of Juliet's monologue, the essence of which is her youthfully enthusiastic eroticism (cf. Koppenfels 2006: 74). The original text consistently supports this erotic tension: from Juliet's initial impatience with the lingering day ("Gallop apace..."), to imagining how Romeo leaps to her arms "untalked of and unseen", to her quibble on "die" in "when I shall die / Take him and cut him out in little stars" (3.2.22). In the translation the tension and impatience are softened.

But making sexual references less visible is by no means Iwaszkiewicz's consistent strategy, as is best seen in one of the most macabre instances of love-death ambiguity in the play. In the final scene, when the rival-death celebrates his ultimate victory, Romeo contemplates the beauty of Juliet's "dead" body:

Ah, dear Juliet,
Why art thou yet so fair? Shall I believe
That unsubstantial Death is amorous,
And that the lean abhorred monster keeps
Thee here in dark to be his paramour?
For fear of that, I still will stay with thee,
And never from this palace of dim night
Depart again. Here, here will I remain
With worms that are thy chambermaids.
(5.3.101–109)

These "gothic and macabre images seem to be telepathically communicated from Juliet: Romeo intuitively shares the nightmarish fears that assailed her at the moment of draining the cup" (Gibbons 1980: 51). In the translation this shocking effect is enhanced with macabre eroticism by the final image of the worm-chambermaids undressing Juliet for her wedding night with Death: *tu zostanę z tobą, / Z czerwiami, które będą cię rozbierać* (437) [here I'm staying with you, / with the

worms that are going to undress you], in which the word *rozbiierać*, meaning both to put off one's clothes and to decompose, allows for an effective wordplay.

Iwaszkiewicz's philosophy of resignation is also reflected in his approach to Shakespeare's imagery in *Hamlet*. The stubborn darkness of the prince's "inky cloak" (1.2.77)¹⁸ must have been especially striking to the translator who so lavishly painted his own poems black. It is worth noticing that even before Hamlet demonstratively wears black in the council scene, darkness is the dominant feature of the setting. In the play's opening we see the sentinels unusually frightened by darkness of the midnight hour. Night on stage is created in the dramatic dialogue: "Who's there?" (1.1.1), "'Tis now struck twelve" (1.1.7), "'tis bitter cold" (1.1.8). And then, while waiting for the Ghost to appear again, Marcellus, Barnardo and Horatio talk also about "the nightly toils" (1.1.72) of Claudius' subjects forced to "make the night joint-labourer with the day" (1.1.78) while producing weapons to oppose the young Fortinbras. Thus from the very beginning of the play night is associated with ominous mystery and fear, but also with toil and fatigue. In the translation this associative thread is amplified as the characters highlight not only the night-time work — *Po co czuwaniem trudzą noc za nocą / Duńskich poddanych?*¹⁹ [Why with watch (they) tire night by night / the Danish subjects?], *W nocy jak we dnie nie ustaje praca* [During the night as during the day the work goes on] — but also the need to be on guard: *To jest przyczyna, że się w pogotowiu / Trzymać należy i pilnować nocą* [This is the reason why one needs to be on guard and watch in the night].²⁰

In the tragedy's second scene blackness reappears in the politically incorrect "nighted colour" (1.2.68) of Hamlet's mourning clothes.²¹ Iwaszkiewicz introduces here a modification that makes Claudius's situation additionally difficult. The hyperbolic image of "our whole kingdom / [...] contracted in one brow of woe" (1.2.3–4), famously revealing the king's hypocrisy, changes into an image of Denmark, all dressed in a mourning cloak: *raczej się godzi [...] całej Danii / [...] przywdziać jedną czarną kiru szatę* [rather it is becoming for the whole Denmark to wear one black cloak]. It is utterly against Claudius's strategy to highlight the mourning blackness of Hamlet's dress, the more so that he wishes to divert the court's attention from the disobeying prince. True, the king deceitfully argues for he need to observe the mourning rites, but not without "remembrance of ourselves" (1.2.7). The whole kingdom should follow his example of how to look with "one

¹⁸ The play quoted from *Hamlet Prince of Denmark*, ed. By Philip Edwards, The New Cambridge Shakespeare, Cambridge 1985.

¹⁹ The translation is quoted from W. Szekspir, *Dwanaście dramatów*, ed. A. Staniewska, Warszawa 1999 (the numbers in brackets refer to the pages in this edition).

²⁰ Cf.: Horatio's "And this I take it, / Is the main motive of our preparations, / The source of this our watch (1.1.105–107).

²¹ In some editions the hints in the dialogue, "nighted colour" (1.2.68) and "inky cloak" (1.2.77), are augmented by a stage direction "Enter Hamlet [dressed in black]", as in the Oxford edition of 1987 (Hibbard 1987: 154).

auspicious and one dropping eye" (1.2.11), but to say that the whole kingdom should wear black is to say that he, Claudius, should be wearing black too, an argument that weakens his carefully wrought *exposé*. Talking about the funeral dress or contemplating the proper length of mourning time is too risky for Claudius, while he, his queen, and the whole court, wear festive wedding clothing — with the exception of Hamlet. It is worth remembering that the core of the theatrical potential of the dramatic text is the ability to generate the coexistence of the verbal and non-verbal elements of the theatrical performance. On the visual level, it is the black colour of the prince's dress — the most important property in this scene — that makes him the antagonist, the more significantly so because it is the first time we see them both together. On the verbal level, it is Claudius's task to justify the lightness of his own attire and to mask the bad impression of Hamlet's insubordination.

In *Hamlet*, black is the colour of memory. It expresses the pain of seeing the loved ones dead and signifies the refusal to forget them. It is the sign of sadness, but also a manifestation against the attempts to conceal the crime. It is the symbol of estrangement and the promise to do justice to the truth. As the play develops, black is employed also to signal evil or cruelty, as in *The Murder of Gonzago*, when Lucianus reveals his readiness to poison the king in the following words: "Thoughts black, hands apt, drugs fit, and time agreeing" (3.2.231). The cruelty of Pyrrhus is expressed through notably dark colours: "'The rugged Pyrrhus, he whose sable arms, / Black as his purpose, did the night resemble'" (2.2.410–411). There are also numerous textual instances when black and darkness are associated with sin, hell and death. "Oh wretched state! Oh bosom black as death!" (3.3.67), exclaims Claudius, dreaded by his inability to pray. Hamlet is looking for the proper moment to avenge, in which Claudius's "soul may be as damned and black / As hell whereto it goes" (3.3.94–95). Gertrude — her conscience moved by Hamlet's reproachful words in the closet scene — sees on her soul "such black and grained spots / As will not leave their tinct" (3.4.90–91). In all these cases the translator closely follows the original frequency and intensity of blackness. There is one instance, however, of an interesting amplification, when the poison used by Claudius to kill his brother is described as *czarny hebanon* [black hebenon], in comparison to the "cursed hebenon" (1.5.62) that we have in the English text. This apparently inconspicuous modification of the attribute, by linking blackness and curse finds its place in the recurring imagery that presents the poison as something produced by damned dark powers of evil, "mixture rank, of midnight weeds collected, / With Hecat's ban thrice blasted, thrice infected" (3.2.233–234), and thus completes the metaphorical description of the crime as born the king's dark thoughts and causing damnation of the murderer and of his country. Reading Iwaszkiewicz's translation together with *Lato 1932*, it is hardly possible to overcome poem XXXI, in which the image linking death and damnation rests upon a condensation of the following elements: night, blackness, potion, death and curse. The last two stanzas, through

the closeness of love and death, as well as madness and method, build a bridge connecting this volume with both *Romeo and Juliet* and *Hamlet*:

[...]

Nie wiem, co mi twoje usta
Dadzą: śmierć czy pocałunek?
Noc nadchodzi: czarny trunek,
Który dławi mnie jak chusta.

*I don't know what your lips will
Give me: death or a kiss?
Night is coming: a black drink
That chokes me like a shawl.*

Wszystko wróży nam przekleństwo,
Czarnym cieniem cierni czoła,
Sowa cztery razy woła:
Czy to mądrość, czy szaleństwo?²²

*Everything predicts a curse for us,
with a black shadow of the forehead's thorns,
The owl cries four times:
Is this wisdom, or madness?*

4. Conclusion

For a historian of translation, the parallel tones of the plays and of Iwaszkiewicz's volumes from the time he translated Shakespeare constitute links that make the writer-translator's work an integral unity. Both Iwaszkiewicz's translatorial treatment of the plays' poetic language and his playwrighting response to *Romeo and Juliet* prove that the influence between writing and translating is mutual. As translation is part of the writer-translator's creative activity, so the translated text can be read and interpreted as an element of the writer's *oeuvre*. On the textual level the integrity is manifested in the translator's poetics, while on the extra-textual level it allows us to discover various biographical and socio-political circumstances that have shaped this important cultural heritage that we call "Polish Shakespeare". This makes us aware that reception of Shakespeare goes beyond rendering his plays into another language. In the cultural negotiations entailed by the phenomenon of translation, new senses are revealed that modify and enrich our understanding of the originals.

References

- Balcerzan, E. and E. Rajewska. 2007. *Pisarze polscy o sztuce przekładu 1440–2005*. Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie.
- Barańczak, S. 2004. *Ocalone w tłumaczeniu*. Poznań: Wydawnictwo a5.
- Bassnett, S. 1985. "Ways Through the Labyrinth. Strategies and Methods for Translating Theatre Texts." In: Hermans, T. (ed.). *The Manipulation of Literature. Studies in Literary Translation*. New York: St. Martin's Press. 87–102.
- Borowy, W. 1952. "Przekłady Shakespeare'a i teatr." In: *Studia i rozprawy* vol. 2. Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich. 34–50.

²² Quoted from J. Iwaszkiewicz, *Wiersze*, vol. 1, in *Dzieła*, Warszawa 1977, p. 345.

- Czannerle, M. 1964. "Pan lubi ludzi, Panie Iwaszkiewicz..." *Teatr* 20. 7–8.
- Davis, L. 1996. "'Death-marked love': Desire and Presence in *Romeo and Juliet*." *Shakespeare's Survey* 49. 57–67.
- Gibbons, B. 1980. "Introduction." In: Shakespeare, W. *Romeo and Juliet*. London: Methuen. 1–77.
- Gronczewski, A. 1969. "O godności i powołaniu artysty. Rozmowa z Jarosławem Iwaszkiewiczem." *Współczesność* 15. 3.
- Helsztyński, S. 1954. "Przekłady szekspirowskie wczoraj i dziś." *Pamiętnik Teatralny* 2 (10). 3–91.
- Iwaszkiewicz, J. 1939. "Mój przekład *Hamleta*." *Teatr* 8. 10–11.
- . 1954a. "Słowo wstępne." In: Neruda, P. *Pieśń powszechna*. Warszawa: Czytelnik.
- . 1954b. "Wstęp." In Shakespeare, W. *Romeo i Julia. Hamlet*. Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy.
- . 1977. *Wiersze*, vol. 1. In: *Dziela*, Warszawa: Czytelnik.
- . 2010a. *Książka moich wspomnień*. Poznań: Zysk i S-ka.
- . 2010b. *Dzienniki 1956–1963*. Warszawa: Czytelnik.
- Koppenfels von, W. 2006. "Laesa Imaginati or Imagination Infected by Passion in Shakespeare's Love Tragedies." In: Jansohn, Ch. (ed.). *German Shakespeare Studies at the Turn of the Twenty-first Century*. Newark: University of Delaware Press. 68–83.
- Kwiatkowski, J. 1962. "Rimbaudyzm Iwaszkiewicza." *Pamiętnik Literacki* 2. 393–421.
- . 1975. *Poezja Jarosława Iwaszkiewicza na tle dwudziestolecia międzywojennego*. Warszawa: Czytelnik.
- Maciąg, W. 1959. "Dramaty Jarosława Iwaszkiewicza." *Dialog* 1. 96–107.
- Maciejewska, I. 1982. *Poezi dwudziestolecia międzywojennego*. Warszawa: Wiedza Powszechna.
- Miłosz, C. 1983. *The History of Polish Literature*. 2nd ed. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Romanowska, A. 2005. "*Hamlet*" po polsku. *Teatralność szekspirowskiego tekstu dramatycznego jako zagadnienie przekładowe*. Kraków: Księgarnia Akademicka.
- . 2017a. "'I hate you, Romeo'. A Heretic Rewriting of *Romeo and Juliet*." *Linguaculture* 8. 95–107.
- . 2017b. *Za głosem tłumacza. Szekspir Iwaszkiewicza, Miłosza i Gałczyńskiego*. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego.
- Sinko, G. 1955. "Dramat angielski i niemiecki w wydawnictwach PWN." *Pamiętnik Teatralny* 1 (13). 206–216.
- Schultze, B. 1990. "In Search of a Theory of Drama Translation: Problems of Translating Literature (Reading) and Theatre (Implied Performance)." In: *Os Estudos literários: Entre Ciência e Hermenêutica*. Actas Do I Congresso Da APLC, Associação Portuguesa de Literatura Comparada. Lisboa. 267–274.
- . "Highways, Byways, and Blind Alleys in Translating Drama: Historical and Systematic Aspects of a Cultural Technique." In: Mueller-Vollmer, K. and M. Irmscher (eds.). *Translating Literatures — Translating Cultures. New Vistas and Approaches in Literary Studies*. Göttinger Beiträge zur Internationalen Übersetzungsforschung 17. Berlin: Erich Schmidt. 177–196.
- Shakespeare, W. 1999. *Dwanaście Dramatów*. Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy.
- Snell-Hornby, M. 1984. "Sprechbare Sprache — Spielbarer Text. Zur Problematik der Bühnenübersetzung." In: Watts, R. and U. Weidman (eds.). *Modes of Interpretation. Tübinger Beiträge zur Linguistik* 260. Tübingen: Gunter Narr. 101–116.
- Totzeva, S. 1999. "Realising Theatrical Potential. The Dramatic Text in Performance and Translation." In: Boase-Beier, J. and M. Holman (eds.). *The Practices of Literary Translation. Constraints and Creativity*. Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing. 81–90.
- Zawieyski, J. 1955. "O przekładach dramatu." In: Rusinek, M. (ed.). *O sztuce tłumaczenia*. Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich. 415–435.
- Żurowski, A. 2003. *Szekspir — ich rówieśnik*. Gdańsk-Pelplin: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego-Wydawnictwo Diecezji Pelplińskiej "Bernardinum".