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**Agnieszka Majcher**

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2149-0278>

Uniwersytet Jana Kochanowskiego w Kielcach/ Jan Kochanowski University of Kielce  
[agnieszka.majcher@ujk.edu.pl](mailto:agnieszka.majcher@ujk.edu.pl)

## **Matters of (Non) Mortality and Flesh – Selected Stanisław Lem’s Neologisms in *The Futurological Congress* and Their Translations by Michael Kandel**

**Abstract:** This paper is part of a cycle of studies on selected thematic groups of neologisms in Lem’s *The Futurological Congress*. The lexemes’ analysis – at the word-formation level, in the context of communicative and artistic functions of the text, leads to conclusions concerning the translator’s preferred strategies. Kandel demonstrated an understanding of the word-formation nuances and semantics of Lem’s neologisms, yet refrained from using calques, naturalisations, or dictionary equivalents in most of the cases under study. He looked for equivalences at various levels of the text and referred to extra-textual elements. He created neologisms understandable to readers rooted in American culture and strove to reconstruct the intra- and intertextual functions, with the goal of making the text function in the target cultural system.

**Keywords:** Lem, translation, neologisms, equivalences, translation strategies

### **1. Introduction**

Lem’s texts, including *The Futurological Congress*, are abundant in neologisms, which are among the most challenging units to translate. Krzysztof Hejwowski argues that some of the English equivalents of the structural neologisms created by Stanisław Lem, formed through various word-formation processes, are a particularly successful example of their translation (Hejwowski 2009: 115).

In this paper, authorial neologisms depicting the world of the future will be analysed. The paper is a continuation of the one (Majcher 2025) which focused on nonce formations that refer to daily situations and are verbs or closely related to names of activities. The current one is a study of nouns which allow the reader to understand topics revolving around death, crime and sexuality.

Authorial neologisms, or nonce-formations, are new words created by a given author for the needs of a specific work or series of works if the action takes place in the same universe. According to Stanisław Lem, work on them must begin by drawing a line between the fantastic and the real (Lem 1973: 97).

Authorial neologisms can be divided into several categories:

- Absolute neologisms are the result of the author's complete invention and encourage the reader to imagine non-existent designates. They intensify the impression of fictitiousness due to the lack of connections with the extra-textual world. Out of context, they make it difficult to imagine the designate. This type is not represented in *The Futurological Congress*.
- Structural neologisms are easier to conceptualise, because their meanings are relatively clear out of context. They are characteristic of Lem's work, who created neologisms based on general language.
- Neosemes are another group of authorial neologisms. The innovation in this case lies in the collision of meaning known from non-literary reality with contextual meaning. While retaining the form of common words, they describe completely new designates.
- Collocational neologisms are another group of linguistic devices used to create the impression of fictionality of the represented world. These are atypical word combinations in which the meaning shifts due to the fact that the defined component, associated with its typical referent, ends up in a different place in the represented world thanks to the use of an atypical defining component (c.f. Handke 1989: 234; 1991: 20–25).

Neologism, according to Peter Stockwell can be divided into:

- Creation
- Borrowing
- Derivation
- Compounding
- Shortening
- Inflectional (Stockwell 2000: 110).

Neosemes, on the other hand, form the following categories:

- Broadening
- Narrowing
- Metaphor
- Metonymy
- Synecdoche
- Hyperbole

- Litotes
- Quality shift
- Recontextualisation (Stockwell 2000: 110).

According to Ryszard Handke, authorial neologisms not only have a naming function, but are also an important tool for creating the world of the story (Handke 1989: 228–248). This means that the reception of neologisms in a science fiction translation, as in the original, depends on the knowledge of the reader. According to Darko Suvin (1979), this lexical category is an element that allows the reader to distinguish the fictional world from the extra-literary world and is a basic indicator of science fiction, the genre characterized by the introduction of inventions, unreal places of action or characters. Istvan Csicsery-Ronay Jr. notes that neither devoted readers of this type of literature nor newcomers will be surprised to find unusual words and sentences characteristic of the created reality (Csicsery-Ronay Jr. 2011: 13), but the latter may feel overwhelmed, as Peter Stockwell argues (Stockwell 2000: 106). Lack of familiarity with this type of vocabulary and poor knowledge of this literary genre and its features can lead to confusion: the reader will not know whether the described element belongs, for example, to the ultra-modern technology of the real world or is an author’s invention (Stockwell 2000: 106). Similarly, in translation, a reader familiar with sci-fi in their native language will expect neologisms to be translated in a way that is consistent with the target literature and will react to them in a predictable way, while a reader unfamiliar with such literature will behave analogously to the reader of the original texts, facing the dilemmas described above. This means that the reception of neologisms in a science fiction translation, as in the original, depends on the knowledge of the reader.

Two basic strategies for translating the authorial neologisms can be distinguished: a strategy aiming towards preserving the types of neologisms and one focused on semantics (Salich 2018: 243). Neologisms are a challenge for a translator, as Hejwowski (Hejwowski 2009: 112–113) notes. One must guess their meaning, which can be more accurate thanks to a thorough analysis and interpretation of the author’s intentions and the work. Equivalents are required, but dictionaries do not facilitate this. According to Hejwowski, the right approach to neologisms in the target text is neologism for neologism (Hejwowski 2009: 112–113). He states that structural neologisms are usually translated through analogous processes, while absolute neologisms give an opportunity to demonstrate one’s creative ingenuity, as in this case only the visual and sound effect of the translation counts (Hejwowski 2009: 113–116). Therefore, the translator must be linguistically creative. Jacek Pleciński supports this position, recalling that a translator begins their “real, creative work”

where the dictionary ends (Pleciński 2010: 147–148). Piotr Blumczyński considers translation of neologisms a test of translator's skills and creativity, a demonstration of mastery of translation techniques, the application of which should possibly lead to new solutions, not copying the source structure (Blumczyński 2010: 82). Therefore, the translation of authorial neologisms is an activity in which translator is obliged to consciously choose appropriate means of expression and may have to break away from the structures of the source language.

With regard to translating Lem's neologisms, Blumczyński divides them into four groups, emphasizing that moving from formal to dynamic equivalence through many intermediate solutions leaves plenty of room for the translator's invention (Blumczyński 2010: 81–82). The researcher distinguishes between:

- (a) terms constructed according to foreign morphological patterns, and therefore not involving translation, sometimes only transcribed, e.g. *Abberantia*, *Debilates*, *polpitor*, *symenofora* (Eng. *symenophora*);
- (b) semantically understood neologisms, most often compounds and blends, which are usually translated into English with analogous word-formation processes, e.g. *cybermistyk* (Eng. *cybermistician*), *matkojady* (Eng. *mothereaters*), *prabladawiec* (Eng. *paleopaleface*), *żonowala* (Eng. *wifebeater*);
- (c) semantically unclear or lacking sense neologisms with a predominantly expressive or associative function, and therefore most accurately translated with a functional equivalent, sometimes differing significantly from the original expression in formal terms, e.g. *garagole* (Eng. *malomorphs*), *gwajdlenci* (Eng. *wampdoodles*), *muchle* (Eng. *closh*), *niedoćpaki* (Eng. *upgluts*);
- (d) acronyms whose humorous form contrasts with the caricaturedly serious or specialized meaning of the words, e.g. *AMOREK* [*Amortyzator Energii Kinetycznej*] (Eng. *CUPID* [*Cyclochronic Universal Polarization of Inchoate Differentials*]), *CIPEK* [*Centralny Instytut Pełnej Estetyzacji Kończyn*] (Eng. *BUFF* [*The Beauty Figure Foundation*]), *DETEKTOR „WC”* [*Wysokich Cywilizacji*] (Eng. “*ASS*” [*Advanced Sidereal Societies*] *FINDER*) (Blumczyński: 81–82).

According to the word-formation criterion, Monika Krajewska proposes the following division of translation techniques for appellative neologisms:

- 1) neologism > neologism (with the same word-formation pattern);
- 2) neologism > neologism (with a different word-formation pattern);
- 3) neologism > non-neologism;
- 4) non-neologism > neologism (Chomik/Krajewska 2011: 159–192)

The issue of neologisms is also raised by translators of Lem himself. The nonce formations posed a challenge for his Dutch translator Lisetta Stembor, who noted that the Dutch language fortunately allows for creativity similar to that of Lem (Stembor 2010: 296). Each language has a different potential for creativity in the creation of neologisms. Hence, as demonstrated in the paragraph above, it is possible that a given language in a particular case will force the translator to completely abandon neologism. There is another interesting situation exemplifying translator autonomy, when two translators translate the same neologism differently, as is the case in the Russian translations of Stanisław Lem’s *Solaris* (Bednarczyk 2010: 113–114). Gostkowska compares the translations of authorial neologisms in two French translations of *Cyberiada* and notes that faithful translation of neologisms carries the risk of depriving the text of wordplay and humor, which leads to an unsatisfactory reception (Gostkowska 2010: 178).

In terms of translating Lem’s neologisms one more approach must be presented – of Lem himself. His thoughts on his creations and the strategies translators should adopt in their case are scattered throughout his correspondence with Michael Kandel, his American translator. There, Lem suggests interpretations to Kandel, evaluates his completed samples and explains his approach to neologism:

Then comes the fatal question of lower levels of vocabulary and syntax. Not everything is hopeless here, because English contains a strange amount of Latin (it is not surprising as the Romans suppressed the English for so long), but it is complicated by the fact that the vast majority of English speakers are not aware of this “Latinization” of their own language. Creating neologisms is deceptively easy, but in fact it is a difficult task. A neologism must make sense, although it does not have to make sense in itself: the context can enforce its meaning. But the question is whether, when faced with a neologism, it is possible to get on the train of thought that the author would like to have. For example, if I wanted to use a neologism instead of “dom publiczny” [brothel], I could introduce the term “lubieżnia” [lecherous + track]. But I feel it would be advisable to place a word that can be associated with it nearby: the word “bieżnia” [track]. If “track” does not appear, associations of a comical nature (sexual track – sex marathon – etc.) may be lost. [...] Departure from the original text is in all these cases a command, not just a permitted thing! (Lem 2013: 44)<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “Potem przychodzi fatalna kwestia niższych poziomów leksyki, a i składni. Nie wszystko tu jest beznadziejne, ponieważ angielski zawiera w sobie dziwnie wiele łaciny (o tyle to nie dziwne, że tak długo dusili pod sobą Anglików Rzymianie), lecz o tyle to skomplikowane, że olbrzymia większość mówiących po angielsku nie zdaje sobie z tego ‘ułacinnienia’ języka własnego – sprawy. Wytwarzanie neologizmów jest rzeczą pozornie łatwą, a w istocie paskudną. Neologizm musi mieć sens, chociaż nie musi mieć sensu własnego: może mu ten sens wpompowywać kontekst. Ale bardzo istotna jest kwestia – czy mając przed sobą neologizm, można wejść na tory tych skojarzeń, jakich by sobie autor życzył? Oto gdybym chciał zamiast ‘domu publicznego’ użyć neologizmu, mógłbym wprowadzić

As presented, Lem is in favour of dynamic equivalence, domestication, and acceptability. The writer postulates entering under the surface of the text, so that, as a result of the hermeneutic process, the best possible equivalents for nonce formations can be discovered. These words make it clear how multifaceted the process of creating neologisms and placing them in the right context is in order to have the intended (as far as a translator can read it) effect of wordplay on the reader. Thus, in the following analysis, this collaboration between the translator and the author may appear useful in the process of reconstructing the neologisms.

Although all the above approaches are valid to translating Lem's neologisms, they do not take into account a factor concerning neologisms' function that is important in Lem's texts. Lem composed parts of his texts based on the principle of musical counterpoint and crescendo, intricately interweaving the text with neologisms of different etymology and different degrees of saturation with absurdity, which is only visible when analyzing larger portions of the text (Majcher 2024: 202). It should be assumed that the correct translation procedure in such a case would be to recognize the composition of the entire passage and reconstruct these counterpoints and gradations of register using autonomously selected techniques, not necessarily equivalent word formation processes, even if this is possible.

## 2. Analysis

Different structures of Polish and English must be taken into consideration to analyse nonce formations: the complex inflection of the Polish language, the multitude of perfect, imperfect, frequentative and plural forms, the distinction between verbs, nouns and adjectives by means of formants. Foreign translators may miss such nuances when reading or lack analogous word-formation tools in English, where the sentence structure and sometimes its context determine the completion of an action, the lexemes denoting the verb and the noun are sometimes identical, and the position in the sentence determines the assignment of a given word to a specific part of speech. There are lexemes in case of which syntax determines not only their part of speech but also their meaning (e.g. *duck* and *dog*).

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termin 'lubieżnia'. Lecz byłoby, czuję, wskazane umieścić niedaleko tego słowa to, które się może kojarzyć z nim: słowo 'bieźnia'. Jeśli 'bieźnia' nie pojawi się, to mogą przepaść skojarzenia o komicznym charakterze (bieźnia seksualna – maraton płciowy – etc.). [...] Odejdźcie od oryginalnego tekstu jest w tych wszystkich wypadkach nakazem, a nie tylko rzeczą dozwoloną!" (Lem 2013: 44, tr. A.M.).

Thus, the word-formation approach will be different in both languages in question. As a result, as Wojtasiewicz notes, such structural differences between languages can affect translation (Wojtasiewicz 1957/1996: 30–51). However, it is possible that a satisfactory effect will be achieved in the target text. By applying the dynamic equivalence (cf. Nida 2003), i.e. “fitting” the message to the recipient in the target language by adjusting its form, we have a chance to reconstruct features of the text evoking similar feelings in the target reader as the original reader experienced.

This study of neologisms in *The Futurological Congress* focuses on interesting, in terms of word formation, lexemes that name bizarre phenomena in the world depicted, with particular emphasis on those that show a certain degree of the translator’s independence and originality.

### 1. (Non) mortality

The attitude of the inhabitants of the new New York towards the final matters is what immediately catches the reader’s attention.

- *rewitarium* / *zmartwychwstania* (KP, 84) – *revivificarium* / *resurrection center* (KA, 57)
- *odmrożeniec* (KP, 84) – *defrostees* (KA, 57)
- *defryzoń* (KP, 91) – *grandfather stiff* (KA, 62)
- *zmaryskacz* (*resuscitant*) (KP, 92) – *revivalist* (KA, 62), *reincarnated* (KA, 64)
- *wstawianka* (KP, 92) – *exhumant, disinterment, jack-in-the-grave* (KA, 62)
- *zgonniczan* (KP, 102) – *obituary* (KA, 71)

Death is no longer a necessity; it is a choice, and a reversible one. Spare parts are an everyday occurrence. The sick are frozen and restored when a way to cure them emerges. The place where this happens is called *rewitarium* or *zmartwychwstania* (KP, 84), and a person brought back to life is *odmrożeniec* (KP, 84). The society of the future is not free of prejudice and contemptuously refers to such people as *defryzoń* (KP, 91). A murder victim can be revived, and such a person is called *zmaryskacz* or *resuscitant* (KP, 92). Another lexeme for those brought back to life is *wstawianka* (KP, 92). However, if someone insists on dying, their earthly remains rest in *zgonniczan* (KP, 102). In the English version, the word has been translated as *obituary* (KA, 71), a portmanteau of *obituary* and *ossuary*, or another lexeme ending with the suffix *-arium*, meaning a place for something. English translations in this field generally make use of Latin loanwords, for example, lexemes such as *revive* and *resurrect*, based on the prefix also used by Lem: *re-*. *Revivificarium*

(*resurrection center*) (KA, 57) is the equivalent of a *rewitarium* (*zmartwychwstania*), and *revivalist* (KA, 62) of *zmarśkacz*. However, the translation of the latter for the second time in the text brings both disappointment and admiration for the concept. Although the word reappears two pages later, Kandel ignores this fact and proposes a new blending of the word *deceased* and *reincarnation*: *reinceased* (KA, 64), which brilliantly associates the phenomena of death and reincarnation. In this case, the translator apparently prioritized reinforcing the sarcasm, perceived as the dominant feature of the fragment, rather than staying formally faithful and translating the elements of the original syntagmatically. In the English version, a person who has come back to life after defrosting (*odmrożeniec*) is called *defrosteer* (KA, 57). This is a neologism, where the verb *defrost* has been given the suffix *-ee*, which denotes the recipient of the action, like *employee*. Since there is no need to look for innovative solutions, due to the fact that the target language offers word-formation possibilities analogous to the source language ones, the English translation in this case reproduces the Polish word-formation pattern. The translation of *defryzoń* (KP, 91) is more interesting, though. The Polish neologism is based on the English word *freeze*, combined with a prefix meaning “reversal of the process” (as in *depopulation*) and the suffix *-oń*. Although the typical Polish reader at the time the book was written may not have known English and only guessed from the context that the nickname referred to the process of defreezing people, there is a chance that through association with words characterized by a similar formant, such as *walkoń*, *gamoń* [oaf, fool], they perceived this word as pejorative, which is at least consistent with the content of the extract, from which we learn that this lexeme was meant to be offensive. Despite having the English root word in the original lexeme, Kandel completely abandons this concept, opting for the phrase *grandfather stiff* (KA, 62), which aptly conveys the patronizing attitude of New Yorkers towards the comers from the past. With this (and *resurrection center*) example, he demonstrates his penchant for collocational neologism. He proves that he took seriously the writer’s recommendation to make his supposedly American text truly American.

Knowing Kandel’s tendency for “improving” the original, facilitating the reception for the American reader and augmenting, it will not surprise the researcher that he ignores the allusion to Russian culture (a Russian-style toy that always stands up, called “*wańka-wstańka*”), as seen in the word *wstawańka* (KP, 92) in the source text. This reference is a foreign element and slightly destroys the coherence of the Polish text. A neologism derived from the Russian name does not belong to a text about the USA. If it had been invented by the protagonist, Tichy, who most likely

has Slavic roots, it would be fine. Yet, as an element of New York culture, this lexeme causes cognitive dissonance. Therefore, the translator proposes three other lexemes instead: *exhumant* (made up of the prefix *ex-*, the lexeme *human*, the suffix *-ant*, which forms nouns and adjectives), *disintermagent* (a word made up of the prefixes *dis-*, *inter-* and possibly the lexemes *mage* and *agent*), and *jack-in-the-grave* (KA, 62). The latter proves that he knew the principle *wańka-wstańka*’s work and decided to reproduce the concept of the toy metaphor as rising from the grave. In his neologism, Kandel replaced the last element from the name of a toy popping out of a box, *jack-in-the-box*, with *grave*. Using three neologisms instead of one is justified: the translator seems to be compensating Lem’s text for his changes, while strengthening the expressive function of the translated record from the hero’s diary, that is emphasizing Ijon’s constant astonishment at the world around him. The translator is thus an active critic of the Polish text, as his interpretation meets the expectations of the target reader.

## 2. Matters of flesh

Some aspects of life in New York of the future are familiar. The lexemes associated with them pose a challenge for the translator, though:

- *infanteria* (KP, 99) – *tottery* (KA, 68)
- *kremokraci* (KP, 99) – *lubricants* (KA, 68)

*Infanteria* (KP, 99) is the result of overpopulation. This lexeme is based on the internationalism *infant*, which in English refers to a baby, and in Polish to the underage heir to the Spanish throne. In Polish, the word *infanteria* is noted as an old term for *infantry*, but in the story, it is a neoseme meaning a lottery for permits to have children. Polish readers who do not know English have to guess the sense through associations with the adjective *infantylny*, for example, and through the clear context. The translator could have transferred the entire wordplay from Polish into the target text. However, the blending of the *infant* and *loteria* was replaced in the target version with another, closely related blend: *tottery* (KA, 68), a combination of *tot* and *lottery*. The decision not to transfer the word can be justified as in English this word could be taken literally, not as a semantic shift, and Kandel, bearing in mind that it is his reader who has to accept the exotic writer, and not the other way round, decided to draw the reader’s attention to the neologism.

Another problem is corruption. *Kremokraci* (KP, 99) are involved in bribing. The noun was created by associating *kremować* [apply cream] with *posmarować*

[spread substance], which is a metaphor of “to give a bribe”. Kandel employs invention into translation, calling these criminals *lubricants* (KA, 68), creating a neoseme, a semantic shift from “moisturizer” while explaining in the text that it comes from *greasing of palms*, which suggests giving bribes. This example proves that Kandel did not always focus on making it easier for the American reader to understand. This time he proposed a wordplay and associations just as complicated as in Lem’s case.

Nevertheless, Kandel showed a certain lack of conscious attention when translating the following pairs of neologisms featuring common roots. They refer to managing the society:

- *klibiscyt* (KP, 90) – *preferendum* (KA, 61)
- *libiscyt* (KP, 104) – *preferendum on feminine beauty* (KA, 72)
- *kredybilan* (KP, 178) – *credendum* (KA, 128)
- *wsparcie kredybilanowe* (KP, 165) – *help of gullibloon* (KA, 118)

The first two derive from the word *plebiscyt* [plebiscite]; in one, weather preferences are voted on, in the other, fashion preferences regarding body modifications (hence it can be assumed that *libido* is the component). Kandel softened the joke because for both lexemes he proposed the neologism *preferendum* (KA, 61, 72), which reflects the meaning of both events without differentiating the voted aspect of life. However, he extended the latter translation, adding the explanation. Thus, he weakens the message of the text: an excess of neologisms to illustrate the madness of the world depicted.

The other pair refers to the phenomenon of manipulating citizens’ trust with the help of a psychotropic drug called *kredybilan*. The neologism can be linked to the English adjective *credible* and a suffix characteristic of Polish drug names, e.g. *Nervosan*. For a knowledgeable Polish reader, the association of the neologism with faith may occur through the name of the Catholic creed: *Credo* [I believe]. Kandel may have wanted his neologism to sound equally foreign to English-speaking readers, as he offered a Latin-based lexeme instead of a transcription: *credendum* (KA, 128). However, the translator did not link this with the analogous lexeme. Earlier in the text, instead of the Polish phrase *wsparcie kredybilanowe*, he proposes the phraseological neologism *help of gullibloon* (KA, 118). It contains a neologism based on the English word *gullible*, which seems to be a sensible choice. Funny as it may sound, it disrupts the internal consistency of the text.

The last neologism demonstrating a lack of continuity in translation describes a complex interaction between science and everyday life:

- *Bijologia* (KP, 23, 125, 127), *grupa bijologiczna* (KP, 23) – *group phrensobarbs* (KA, 14), *Assault and Battery* (KA, 88), *brutalistics* (KA, 89)

*Bijologia* (KP, 23, 125, 127) appears three times in the text. It blends *biologia* [biology] and *bić* [to beat] and was interpreted differently by the translator each time. *Grupa bijologiczna* – *group phrensobarbs* (KP, 23; KA, 14) describes a line of chemical substances. This term also refers to the management of citizens’ aggression, not so much to its suppression as to its controlled stimulation under certain circumstances. This phenomenon was called *Assault and Battery* by Kandel (KA, 88). The capitalization is justified because the American translator interpreted the neologism as the name of a department in a company. The lack of neologism is compensated for by a funny name as if taken from the penal code, and the lack of continuity in naming is justified by the completely different context and the fact that, when translating hundreds of neologisms, the translator, focusing on artistic effect rather than meticulous comparative tables, could have overlooked their similarity. Thirdly, *bijologia* was interpreted as part of social science and translated as *brutalistics* (KA, 89). From the perspective of the translation reader, these changes do not affect the reception, but from the researcher’s point of view, they distort it somewhat. In the world of chaos presented in the original, fixed elements occasionally appear, confirming that it is governed by some logic, which dispels suspicions of its illusory nature (as in the end it turns out to be a mirage). The reader of the translation can therefore realize earlier that the described world is not real, which weakens the final effect, so carefully composed by Lem. On the other hand, the ordinary reader of the original, who is neither a critic nor a researcher, will most likely ignore these coherent neologisms.

The dominant quality in the description of the daily matters of this fictional world is baroque excess and chaos. That is why the translator, having interpreted the source material, was right to consider this chaos a binding feature. Such an interpretation made his work easier, as he could focus on local qualities instead of tracking whether a given lexeme had already appeared somewhere. Bearing in mind that reconstructing the full value of the poetics by an author unknown in the target culture is hardly the main goal, it must be recognized that Kandel sufficiently respected the source text.

### 3. Confusing politics and morality

The following lexemes are neosemes intended by the author to confuse the protagonist and the reader:

- *myśliwy* – *plagiator cudzych pomysłów* (KP, 91) – *pederast* – *artificial foot faddist* (KA, 62)
- *lewak* – *łowca syntetycznych lwów* (KP, 120) – *leostat* (KA, 84)

They are described in the text as words Tichy knew in the past that have changed their meaning, such as *myśliwy* [hunter, but: *myśl* = thought] as *plagiator cudzych pomysłów* [plagiarist of others' ideas,] (KP, 91) or *lewak* [lefty, but *lew* = lion] as *łowca syntetycznych lwów* [hunter of artificial lions] (KP, 120). To achieve a similar effect for the protagonist in the target text (and its reader), one would have to implement arbitrary English lexemes with arbitrary explanations of new meanings, created on the basis of homophony. However, the latter should be considered more carefully due to the context. At first, the reader learns that a guest from Africa, a *lewak*, came to visit Mr. Symington, and only then is the neologism explained. One might suspect that it was Lem's conscious intention to deceive the reader, because in this fragment nothing forewarns the reader that we will see another shift, so at first glance one may read the familiar word literally [a lefty]. The ideal would be to make a neoseme related to the word *lefty*, associate it with any activity. *Lefty* could, for example, come straight from the UK and be a regular user of the left-hand side of the road. However, one may presume that in the 1970s in the USA, the echoes of McCarthyism were still so painful that the joke could be considered distasteful so needed to be censored. Kandel could otherwise have, as stated above, started from any lexeme with a slightly pejorative meaning. However, the translator used a neologism simply referring to the lion hunting, *Leo*, the Latin term used in English to name the zodiac sign was developed into *leostat* (KA, 84). The desired pun occurs, but the joke is weakened by the lack of identity with the existing lexeme.

A different strategy was applied in the case of *myśliwy* – *plagiator cudzych pomysłów*. As presumed above, Kandel completely replaces the lexeme that is the basis of the pun, proposing: *pederast* – *artificial foot faddist* (KA, 62). The clue can be found in Latin: *pediculus* is the equivalent of the word *foot*. The attention of the reader of the English version (and the researcher) may be drawn to the fact that with this lexeme, Kandel enters the realm of taboo (homosexual relations) in a story that is generally “correct”. However, this did not bother the author, as he did not refer to this neoseme in his letters. And the readers of the English version, aware of the moral revolution in his society, would most likely not be offended

when they find this word in the description of a world that was supposed to be a bolder version of their own.

Furthermore, in *Kongres futurologiczny*, we find examples in which the translator was provoked by the author to ignore decency:

- *lechtomobil lechtawka, lecht* (KP, 91) – *autofrotts (manual)* (KA, 62)
- *tarleston* (KP, 92) – *squim* (KA, 63)

These examples of neologisms contain genital allusions. In his studies of the new language, Lem’s protagonist mentions *lechtomobil* and its alternative forms: *lechtawka, lecht* (KP, 91). The base word is undoubtedly the verb *lechtać* (to tickle, to stimulate), but the context does not explain what the device is; we only learn that it is advertised as available for sale. And although the Polish norm does not include such an option, *lechtać* is also colloquially understood as *to grope*. Finally, the organ *lechtaczka* [clitoris] is derived from it. Having no clue in the source text as to the interpretation, Kandel chose the neologism *autofrotts (manual)* (KA, 62), i.e. he combines the prefix *auto-* with the derivative of the lexeme *frotteur*, referring to a person deriving sexual pleasure from touching the clothed bodies of strangers. The English version leaves little doubt about the character of the device. Faced with the need to interpret and narrow the semantics of the original neologism, the translator decides to introduce a bit of spice to the text, which matches the characteristics of the world depicted, thus his autonomic decision increases the attractiveness of the work.

Finally, the translation of Lem’s typical blend: *tarleston* (KP, 92). This lexeme refers to the customs of the youth of the future. It is most likely a type of dance, as indicated by the suggestive element of the blend (*charleston*) – or more generally, a game. The other element is *tarło*, the mating season of fish. The promiscuity of the described society is shown in a veiled and allusive way. Kandel’s version seems not so subtle. Sexual freedom of the hippie generation may have influenced the translator’s decision that his reader needed something more blunt, but it is difficult to make a strong judgment on this matter. The English lexeme *squim* (KA, 63) seems to be a blend of *squirm* and *quim*, an obsolete British vulgar term for female genitals. According to the Urban Dictionary, the word *quim* was used in Victorian times to describe the fluid produced during a woman’s orgasm. Moreover, the same dictionary lists the word *squim* as a mixture of the aforementioned fluid and sperm. Of course, it is also justified to assume that the translator simply modified the word *squirm* as associated with the movements of fish spawning, without even thinking about vulgarisms. However, as the translation was done by a philologist

familiar with the history of the language, literature and culture, one may assume that in this case the translator deliberately added this ambiguous obscenity.

All things considered, when studying neologisms containing political or obscene allusions, the researcher may feel confused, as Kandel sometimes softens and sometimes makes the message spicier, the reasons for which may be different in individual cases, therefore difficult to grasp and classify unambiguously. One must admit that from the target audience's point of view, a delicate "dirtiness" increases the attractiveness of the text and fits in perfectly with the vision of the world depicted, derived from the image of the United States after the sexual revolution of the 1960s. The translator, whose job included "Americanization" of Lem's story, proves to be a great observer of the customs of the society around him, which he then strengthened and made a constitutive element of the world created in the English text.

### 3. Conclusions

The neologisms that constitute the world of the mid-21st-century New York, as presented in *The Futurological Congress* by Lem, are so numerous that they need to be divided into smaller groups for analysis. The previous article (Majcher 2025) focused on verb formations referring to everyday activities, whereas this one attempts to reveal the translator's methods applied to render noun formations revolving around death, crime, and sexuality. The lexemes have been analyzed at the word-formation level and in the context of the communicative and artistic functions of larger fragments of the text. The conclusions of the analysis, concerning the translator's preferred strategies, do not differ much from those drawn in the previous paper (Majcher 2025). Apart from Kandel's tendency to use slightly more neosemes and collocational neologisms than Lem, no strong conclusion in terms of structure can be drawn. However, we can claim that Kandel's approach to translating neologisms was consistent, regardless of the semantics and structure of the studied formations.

Although it has been demonstrated that he understood the word-formation nuances and semantics of Lem's lexemes, instead of using calques, transcriptions or obvious dictionary translations, he often looked for equivalences at various levels of the text. Frequently, he played with extra-textual elements. Kandel, an attentive reader of the Polish text, whose interpretations were to be as close as possible to the author's intention, used his skills to approximate the implied reader, though. His vision seems largely consistent with the potential interpretations of the original

by a Polish reader, but he strove to reconstruct the aforementioned functions by means of often highly original methods. Apparently, his goal was to adapt the text to the reality in which it was to function in the target cultural system. He showed great inventiveness and independence in creating neologisms that are acceptable to readers rooted in American culture. He took into account the different nature of the reader of the target text. Lem’s books in the United States have found their way into mainstream American science fiction literature and culture, which means the average target audience is less sophisticated than that of the Polish text.

The abundance of neologisms did not confuse the translator, who consistently referred to the target culture rather than properties of the source formations. Despite the tendency to simplify the text, which Lem criticized Kandel for (Lem 2013), the English text reconstructs the spirit of the original, is appealing, full of cultural and intellectual allusions and multi-layered wordplay and functions autonomously in the target culture.

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