

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.31648/an.12373>

Hubert Arentewicz

ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0009-0009-2181-5667>

Uniwersytet Warmińsko-Mazurski w Olsztynie/

University of Warmia and Mazury in Olsztyn

hubert.arentewicz@uwm.edu.pl

Street Names in Translation – the (In)Significance of Hodonyms in the English Translation of Zygmunt Miłoszewski’s *Gniew*

Abstract: This article explores the role of hodonyms and effects of their translation in Antonia Lloyd-Jones’s English translation of Zygmunt Miłoszewski’s *Gniew* (2014). The crime fiction novel’s action takes place in Olsztyn and includes numerous source culture references, the main focus of this article being the hodonyms present in the text and their role in culture-creating and achieving immersion. The article examines the conflict between commercial success and cultural representation by analysing select passages containing toponyms – namely street names – and commenting on the loss of cultural signifiers. It also takes into consideration the overall position of peripheral literatures in the European polysystem.

Keywords: Zygmunt Miłoszewski, translation, Antonia Lloyd-Jones, polysystem, hodonym, crime fiction

1. Introduction

Hodonyms are an often-overlooked subset of culture-bound items. Superficially, they may seem to be nothing more than background elements, but upon closer inspection it becomes evident that they can play an important culture-creating role, helping shape a nation’s mythology (Rutkowski 2024: 10–11). While their presence may often go unnoticed, their absence should not. The goal of this article is to explore the significance of hodonyms and examine the effects of their possible omission on the target text (TT). This will be achieved through the comparative analysis, focused on hodonyms and translation procedures.

2. Miłoszewski's fiction and its translation

Zygmunt Miłoszewski's *Gniew* (2014), translated by Antonia Lloyd-Jones as *Rage* (2016), is the third and final entry in his crime fiction trilogy, which follows the exploits of Teodor Szacki, a Polish travelling prosecutor. The previous novels are *Uwikłanie* (2007) and *Ziarno prawdy* (2011) – both translated by Lloyd-Jones, published as *Entanglement* (2010) and *A Grain of Truth* (2013) respectively¹. Each book sees the main character be assigned to a case in a different city, the final one being Olsztyn, the capital of the Warmińsko-Mazurskie Voivodeship in northeastern Poland. The city's descriptions are vivid and correctly represent its topography, making it clear that the author familiarised himself with the location before including it in his book, for instance: “as he waited at the lights at the junction of Żołnierska and Dworcowa Streets [...]. On one side there were apartment buildings, on the other a hospital, and facing the hospital were pavilions, with a huge banner advertising a ‘Leather and Skins Fair’” (Miłoszewski 2016: 16).

After providing an accurate description of one of Olsztyn's intersections, Miłoszewski goes on to complain about the city's traffic organisation, mainly its philosophy of not employing a green wave approach to traffic lights, often requiring drivers to stop and wait at every intersection they pass. Elsewhere in the chapter the author comments on the city's aesthetics: “everything attractive in Olsztyn – everything that gave the city its character, or made it interesting [...] had been built by them [Germans]” (Miłoszewski 2016: 18). Those remarks, along with similar ones interspersed in the novel, contribute to the feeling of verisimilitude, which, according to Steve Neale, is often expected from certain film genres, for example in the form of using “maps, newspaper headlines, memoirs, archival documents, and so on” (Neale 1990: 47). Expectations of verisimilitude are crucial in genres such as crime fiction as the story needs to be internally logical and plausible. At the same time, works representing this genre evoke the feeling of plausible truth by closely reflecting the extratextual reality of a specific location, as is the case with Olsztyn in Miłoszewski's novel. He uses detailed spatial descriptions, as well as newspaper headlines, appearing at the start of every chapter, to ground the story in 2013 Poland and its socio-political context. This approach to crime fiction is supported by Jonathan L. Crane, who asserts in his article (*Outsourced: Crime Stories, New World Horrors, and Genre*) that “readers looking for confirmation

¹ The scope of this article will not be expanded to cover the remaining entries in the trilogy due to the presence of analogous translation procedures, mainly transfer. Instead, it will focus on the possible consequences of omission on the culture-creating function of the text.

that their chosen fiction belongs to the genre of crime stories generally need to be satisfied that [...] crime fictions honor conventional wisdom regarding the time and place of the investigation” (Crane 2011: 121).

It would therefore be beneficial to maintain the degree of verisimilitude and relationship with extratextual reality present in the source text (ST) and expected by the target readers (TRs). Crime fiction is a popular literary genre, which leads to it often being translated. Due to the complex nature of the translation process, certain aspects of the ST tend to be neglected, in this case hodonyms.

The numerous references to Olsztyn might only be fully appreciated by those with personal experiences of the city, as is the case with the traffic lights complaint. Overall, the book’s readers can be divided into three main groups: those with intimate knowledge of Olsztyn, those with a basic knowledge of Olsztyn, and those with no prior knowledge whatsoever, the last group almost uniformly consisting of the English-speaking TRs (when taking the translation into account). In addition to being a storyteller, Miłoszewski becomes a tour guide of sorts, introducing his readers to an unfamiliar city in northern Poland. Furthermore, the accurate descriptions of the city complement the social commentary central to modern crime fiction, striking a delicate balance between fiction, reality, and social critique. This formula has most definitely been successful for the author, as evidenced by his Szacki trilogy’s sales, *Gniew* alone selling 150,000 copies in 2014 (Kurkiewicz 2015).

Following its commercial success, the series was translated into English by Antonia Lloyd-Jones, an accomplished literary translator. What makes the translation process behind the TT especially interesting is Lloyd-Jones’s relationship with the author. She remained in contact with Miłoszewski, often contacting him online and even meeting in person a few times to discuss her translation choices. The end product can definitely be considered a success, garnering favourable reviews² and a respectable 3.8 goodreads rating (*Rage* Zygmunt Miłoszewski 2014), Miłoszewski even calling it “better than the Polish original” (Anderson 2016). Lloyd-Jones’s translation process is based on the personal relationship between the author and translator, actively involving the ST author whenever possible, ensuring that the TT will realise the goal envisioned by its author. Miłoszewski praises this approach, decrying translators who “tend to treat their authors as if they were dead” (Anderson 2016). Such cooperation would have been impossible in the past, any exchange of information being conducted through physical media, a limitation that is no longer

² The European Literature Network’s review calls *Rage* “an excellent read” (Easterman 2016).

present in the information age. Lloyd-Jones takes full advantage of this, setting an example for contemporary literature translators, though it is worth noting that her influential status at least partially impacts her ability to actively involve the ST author in the translation process. With almost universal internet access, the only variable that should determine whether such cooperation is possible is the author's willingness, which might depend on the translator's fame and the language the text is being translated into. It may be assumed that authors hailing from peripheral literatures would be more willing to work with a translator, whose quality of work could determine whether the author gains a foothold in a foreign market. The same might not be the case with already established authors or those from dominant cultures, who might not assign much importance to the translation of their work. This assumption follows the findings of Jan Parandowski, who notices that peripheral culture authors approach the translation of their works as a chance to reach a broader audience, a concern that is not shared (at least not to the same extent) by authors hailing from dominant cultures (Parandowski 1975: 253).

Gniew is a text originating from a peripheral culture. It can thus be assumed that *Rage* will follow the initial norm of acceptability³, described by Gideon Toury as subscribing to target language (TL) norms (Toury 1978 [2004]: 201), which results in the novel becoming more accessible to the TR at the cost of losing some of its cultural signifiers. In the context of Hebrew literature, Itamar Even-Zohar specifically names texts translated from Polish as those assuming the peripheral position in the receiving polysystem (Even-Zohar 1978 [2004]: 195–196), which also appears to be the case when translating them into English. He also states that such literature is a force of conservatism, not taking risks or introducing new elements to the target polysystem. One of the signifiers pointing to this phenomenon is the translation of street names present in the novel, which, at first, could be seen as rather insignificant, simply set dressing meant to make the book more immersive.

3. Significance of hodonyms

Some cultures may approach street naming with less gravitas than Poland. For instance, British streets tend to be named descriptively, containing information about their purpose or buildings found on them. The most popular British street names include High Street, Church Road, Mill Lane, Main Street (*Revealed...*

³ When translated literature occupies a peripheral position in the target polysystem it tends to follow norms already established in that polysystem (Even-Zohar 1978 [2004]: 195).

2024). Much like many anglophone surnames would be the person's occupation, the names of British streets contain information on local landmarks or other noteworthy places. In the USA, a country much younger than the United Kingdom, street names, instead of being organic, seem to have been assigned by city planners, who most likely had other priorities than creative street naming. The most popular American streets are: Main Street, 2nd Street, 3rd Street, etc., with some referring to surrounding nature, like Lakeview Street or Cedar Street, or notable individuals, mainly George Washington (Chalabi 2014). Interestingly, in the US most street patrons are founding fathers, with few exceptions and an apparent cutoff date after the Civil War. Polish naming schemes are different – streets carry commemorative names more often, 90% of those being named after people (Rutkowski 2024: 32). The most popular street patrons are famous Polish artists, though statesmen are also represented in the top 30, the first place taken by Tadeusz Kościuszko. The other two podium positions are taken up by Adam Mickiewicz and pope John Paul II. Some of the notable street names in other categories, namely dates and organisations, are: Armii Krajowej, Solidarności, Wojska Polskiego, 3 Maja, Pierwszej Brygady (Rutkowski 2024: 33–37), all of which are grounded in Polish history. Street names can represent a nation's cultural canon, functioning as “signs formed by the national community through (re)constructing its own identity”⁴ (Rutkowski 2024: 107). Furthermore, people who streets are named after are immortalised in the collective consciousness as individuals worth remembering. In Polish cities, each street is named consciously, with the specific goal of honouring a person and certain traits associated with them (Rutkowski 2024: 110). Street patrons are national heroes that provide a unique insight into a culture's values, as exemplified by those people who are “representatives, or rather, metonymies of values important to society”⁵. Rutkowski likens street names to monuments, calling them a form of “mythologised tales about Poland”⁶ (Rutkowski 2024: 127–128). The patron functions as a “form of memory representing certain ideas, values, and role models”⁷ that helps form the national identity (Rutkowski 2024: 132). The previously mentioned popular Polish

⁴ “W takim kontekście będą tu rozpatrywane upamiętniające nazwy ulic – jako znaki formowane przez wspólnotę narodową w procesie (re)konstruowania własnej tożsamości” (Rutkowski 2024: 107, trans. H.A.).

⁵ “Patron ulicy jako rodzaj uznanego bohatera jest więc reprezentantem, a w zasadzie metonimią wartości ważnych społecznie” (Rutkowski 2024: 127–128, trans. H.A.).

⁶ “Nazwy ulic to [...] zmitologizowana opowieść o Polsce” (Rutkowski 2024: 127–128, trans. H.A.).

⁷ “Patron ulicy jako nośnik pamięci odsyła do powiązanych z sobą znaczeń: idei, wartości, wzorów zachowań” (Rutkowski 2024: 132, trans. H.A.).

street patrons, Tadeusz Kościuszko (military leader), Adam Mickiewicz (national poet), and John Paul II (pope) have 1159, 1142, and 994 streets named after them, respectively. Other notable figures are Henryk Sienkiewicz (writer) at 882, Mikołaj Kopernik (scholar) at 672, Władysław Sikorski (military and political leader) at 517, and Ignacy Paderewski (musician and prime minister) at 360 (Rutkowski 2024: 33).

4. Hodonyms in *Rage*

As already observed, Miłoszewski's writing style can be described as very grounded, often including location names and detailed descriptions, leading to Olsztyn being more of a supporting character than a simple backdrop. The author has a tendency to produce passages that include multiple proper names, which seemingly do not contribute to the narrative and could overwhelm some readers. This is one of the areas where a divide between the source readers (SRs) and TRs becomes clear: while those living in Olsztyn can easily trace the main character's steps and visualise most locations within the town, the same would not be possible for other readers, especially the English-speaking TRs for whom Polish last names could be replaced with a random string of consonants and be just as clear, which is to say not at all. One such passage can be seen in the ST:

Jadąc Kościuszki, przeciął Piłsudskiego, skręcił w Mickiewicza, minął Kopernika i znalazł miejsce do parkowania przy Dąbrowszczaków. Wsiadając, pomyślał z gryźliwie, że jak w każdym mieście na Ziemiach Odzyskanych ulicom nadano bardzo narodowe nazwy, znaleźć gdzieś tutaj skrzyżowanie Szewskiej z Kotlarską było niemożliwością (Miłoszewski 2014: 18–19).

This passage describes the main character's route to a speaking engagement at a local high school. The short paragraph includes eight proper names, five of them being the names of actual streets in Olsztyn's city centre. Miłoszewski points out how streets in the region are almost uniformly named after national heroes (which is consistent with Rutkowski's study), rather than, for example, occupations. Poland's Recovered Territories are unique – they have only been a part of the country since the end of the Second World War. The last time Warmia belonged to Poland was before its eighteenth-century partitions, resulting in a strong need to emphasise that the area is once again Polish. German influence can be seen throughout the region: the high school visited by Szacki is housed in an eighteenth-century German building on a street named after Adam Mickiewicz, Poland's national poet.

Szacki's comments support the notion that naming streets after notable individuals and organisations is meant to signify that the area is now culturally Polish, despite the remnants of Olsztyn's German history. In this way, the act of re-naming a street after a famous writer, musician, or leader is a symbolic acknowledgement of the land being recovered, all while reinforcing the area's now-Polish identity. Those details cumulatively contribute to a larger picture of the city's historical context, helping to achieve a degree of verisimilitude via topography, while also referring to the complicated history of the place. While impossible to follow today due to a change in traffic organisation, Szacki's route is an accurate description of the way to the high school he was speaking at. The SR, even one unfamiliar with the city of Olsztyn, could open a map and follow along. The passage helps ground the prosecutor in the novel's setting by the inclusion of his commute, together with his compulsion to comment on everything in his surroundings, often in a highly ironic manner. Additionally, he provides historical context about the region. Despite being a prosecutor, Szacki fits into the archetype of a police detective – observant, introspective, with a bit of dry humour every now and then. His internal monologue is one of the sources of exposition about the novel's setting.

In Lloyd-Jones's translation, the entire passage is omitted. Quantitative impoverishment⁸, in the form of deviating from Miłoszewski's characteristic style, leads to important contextual information about the region not being included in the TT. In all likelihood, the translator prioritised other parts of the ST over references to its source culture (SC) and history in places where those could be seen as distracting or overwhelming. The semantic dominant⁹ followed by the translator appears to be the communication of the core plot rather than onomastic concerns. This somewhat domesticating approach results in a TT that, while very positively received, simply lacks some of the semantic, cultural, and stylistic content present in the ST. Reviewers give the most attention to, as could be expected, the plot, suspense, and twists, though they do mention the setting in passing (Harvey 2016), one reviewer even calling the city pretty: "Pretty, because during periods of its history, its German occupants created some wonderful architecture there. Pretty, because within the city there are 11 lakes, which cast up mist and fog on cold mornings that help with the book's increasingly morbid atmosphere" (crimefictionlover 2016).

⁸ Antoine Berman uses the term *quantitative impoverishment* to describe lexical loss that happens during the translation process, decreasing the lexical richness of the text (Berman 1985 [2004]: 291–292).

⁹ Stanisław Barańczak defines the semantic dominant as the "key" to the interpretation of a given text (Barańczak 1990: 17).

Therefore, it would be safe to assume that the TRs will prioritise the crime story over any other aspect of the TT, such as its social grounding or the history of the city, but they will still notice it. It could be argued that even if the flurry of street names could be somewhat overwhelming for the TRs, it contributes to the narrative by building on the monotony of the city commute, providing some insight into why the character might be feeling cross in the following passages. Furthermore, the paragraph serves as a transition between a longer description of Szacki's commute and the next scene, its omission disturbing the TT's pacing.

The apparently problematic passage could have easily been included in the TT, possibly being rendered as follows:

He drove down Kościuszki, cut through Piłsudskiego, turned into Mickiewicza, passed by Kopernika and found a parking spot by Dąbrowszczaków. As he was leaving his car, he snarkily remarked that all streets in the Recovered Territories were given very national names. It was nigh impossible to find an intersection of Tailor Street and Smith Street.

Or:

He drove down various streets named after Polish heroes: Kościuszko, Piłsudski, Mickiewicz, and Kopernik, after which he found a parking spot by Dąbrowszczaków. As he was leaving his car, he snarkily remarked that all streets in the Recovered Territories were given very national names. It was nigh impossible to find an intersection of Tailor Street and Smith Street.

The street names could be kept in the noun cases present on English maps, making them easier to follow. Although the proper names alone might not mean much to the TRs, the following sentence describes them as "national" in character, providing necessary context. The paragraph's inclusion would help address the issue of disturbed plot pacing as well as add information about the TT's setting, which is in line with the author's writing style. Replicating this writing style should be a priority considering the expressive nature¹⁰ of the ST. Another solution would be to slightly modify the way in which the last names appear in the text, highlighting their significance even further by describing the street patrons as Polish heroes.

The discussed example concerns the most controversial hodonym translation decision present in the TT. The vast majority have been subject to transfer with the addition of the common noun (street, avenue) if ellipsis appeared in the original:

¹⁰ The main goal of an expressive text is "the communication of artistically organised content," which should include the author's style (Reiss 1971 [2004]: 163).

ulica Równa (Miłoszewski 2014: 20) is *Równa Street* (Miłoszewski 2016: 19), *Mariańska* (Miłoszewski 2014: 32) is *Mariańska Street* (Miłoszewski 2016: 27), *Warszawska* (Miłoszewski 2014: 69) is *Warszawska Avenue* (Miłoszewski 2016: 56), *Emilii Plater* (Miłoszewski 2014: 71) is *Emilia Plater Street* (Miłoszewski 2016: 58), *Tobruku* (Miłoszewski 2014: 84) is *Tobruk Street* (Miłoszewski 2016: 68), *Kościuszki* (Miłoszewski 2014: 135) is *Kościuszko Street* (Miłoszewski 2016: 105), *Sikorskiego* (Miłoszewski 2014: 185) is *Sikorski Avenue* (Miłoszewski 2016: 142) and so on.

Hodonyms belong to the wider category of proper names, which carry certain implications and translational challenges. For example, certain relationships between a proper name and its SC cannot be replicated in the TT simply because they require prior knowledge possessed almost exclusively by members of that culture, as is the case with knowing street patrons (Hejwowski 2004: 147–155). Most English speakers would not be familiar with Mickiewicz or Słowacki, nor should they be expected to. Hejwowski lists several methods of translating proper names, though only few of those could possibly be used for streets named after people, namely transfer, transfer with adapted spelling, and omission (Hejwowski 2004: 155–156). An argument against omission has already been made when discussing one of the book's paragraphs. Even if the TT is simplified due to omission, the end product suffers by the diminishing of its relationship with the extratextual reality established by the author and appreciated by crime fiction readers. One of the ways immersion is achieved is through direct references to Olsztyn's topography. Miłoszewski's role as a tour guide, in addition to being a storyteller, is diminished when such mentions are eliminated; that it not to say that the omission of one fragment carries catastrophic consequences for the TT. It does, however, create a dangerous precedent for removing challenging parts of the ST when translating it, possibly out of fear for the TRs' comfort. Other streets, named after common nouns, dates, or occupations could theoretically be translated with their TL equivalents, though that comes with its own issues, mainly the consequent mismatch between the translation and available maps. It can be argued that it is more important for the TRs to be able to easily locate a given place rather than know what it was named after. In cases where a street's name is relevant (to the plot, or because someone alludes to it) an additional explanation could be provided, preferably in the main body of the text, for example *Kościelna Street, the site of the local church* or *Stalowa Street, an industrial area*. The one case where it would be acceptable to replace the name of a street with its TL equivalent, e.g., *Stalowa* with *Steel* would be when the toponym is not authentic. In cases where both aspects are relevant, footnotes or explanations could be used.

Nearly all street names mentioned in the ST were translated by transfer in their nominative noun case. Hence their translated TT names do not fully correspond with their ST and map counterparts. While it is true that a person searching for *Tadeusz Kościuszko Street* in Olsztyn would most likely end up finding *ulica Tadeusza Kościuszki Street*, the nominative is the noun case of choice. To a foreign reader, there would be no tangible difference between the two versions, yet they are given the slightly altered one, even if it is just as unpronounceable as its alternative. In this case, it could be beneficial to go against the predominant translation convention of using the nominative noun case in order to better reflect mapping conventions. Both possible choices carry their advantages and disadvantages: the former would be better for a person attempting to learn more about the street's patron, while the latter is easier to find on a map, especially for a person not attuned to the intricacies of the SL.

A different approach to translating hodonyms was employed only a few times in the entire TT. One solution was the omission of the previously discussed fragment. Another was the use of functional replacement, the ST being “za godzinę musi być na Warszawskiej” (Miłoszewski 2014: 87), while the translation reads: “he had to be at the hospital in an hour” (Miłoszewski 2016: 71). It is unclear why Lloyd-Jones decided to translate the street name by substituting it with a building on said street, especially when other mentions of *Warszawska* were simply transferred: “była u profesora Frankensteina na Warszawskiej” (Miłoszewski 2014: 260) was translated as “[it] arrived at Professor Frankenstein’s lab on Warszawska Avenue” (Miłoszewski 2016: 194) and “remont na skrzyżowaniu Warszawskiej i Tobruku”¹¹ (Miłoszewski 2014: 84) was translated as “the repairs at the junction of Warszawska Avenue and Tobruk Street” (Miłoszewski 2016: 68). Most likely she wanted to highlight that Szacki was headed to a hospital since he was going there to learn more about the dead body he found earlier in the story. If that were the case though, writing that he was headed to *the mortuary* or who exactly he was supposed to meet would have made that clearer. It could be that Lloyd-Jones feared the TRs potentially confusing the character’s destination with some other location on Warszawska Avenue. Ultimately, the translator is to use their own discretion with such choices.

¹¹ Referring to the street with the colloquial *Tobruku* instead of the full name *Obrońców Tobruku* is yet another example of Miłoszewski familiarising himself with the city before writing the novel.

5. Extratextual factors in the translator's choices

When discussing translations, the term *skopos* is often brought up to contextualise certain decisions appearing in the translation process. Hans Vermeer argues that each translational action has a set goal (*skopos*) (Vermeer 1989 [2004]: 223), which in the case of Antonia Lloyd-Jones's translation of *Rage* would mostly likely be the captivating communication of the ST's main story. Vermeer also discusses the translation commission, which sets certain expectations for the translator to follow (Vermeer 1989 [2004]: 229–232). Most likely, Lloyd-Jones's commission entailed her translating *Rage* as a commercial expressive text, a crime fiction novel intended to be as approachable to the TRs as possible. In fulfilling those expectations, she occasionally departed from the SC signifiers present in the ST for the sake of producing a more acceptable translatum. Street names are just one of the examples of culture-bound items being neutralised in order to achieve a goal set out by the commission¹². It could thus be reasoned that Lloyd-Jones's translation is acceptability-oriented, as can be expected from a text representing translated literature occupying the peripheral position in the receiving literary polysystem. The resulting TT is by no means a “bad” translation. The consensus is that the book is a gripping crime story. What does end up happening is the creation of a text that is both rooted in the SC and presents a warped, sanitised view of it. The book opens with Szacki angrily waiting in traffic on the junction of Żołnierska and Dworcowa Streets, even alluding to a “Leather and Skins Fair” (Miłoszewski 2016: 16), a scandal which shook Poland. The translator arbitrarily decided which SC elements were to remain in the TT. Consequently, certain important aspects of that culture did not find their way into the TT, somewhat limiting Miłoszewski's role as a guide to Olsztyn and (for the TRs), to some extent, Poland. It should be mentioned that Miłoszewski was not only aware of the changes to the TT but was actually consulted during the translation process, Lloyd-Jones describing the decision to domesticate the text as mutual and meant to “make the non-Polish readers feel involved” (Vez-zaro 2016). Acceptability-oriented translation makes certain signifiers disappear, disturbing the carefully crafted balance between the plot and portrayal of the city, which, as previously stated, is more than just a backdrop. Notably, some of the culture-bound items present in the ST are harder not to include in the TT. Whereas names of foods or tv programmes can easily be replaced with their TC counterparts,

¹² The neutralisation of other culture-bound items could be analysed in a separate article or even multiple articles – the abundance of those items provides more than enough material for further study.

proper names cannot be dealt with as easily. A degree of immersion has to be maintained throughout the novel, which would be disturbed by the careless use of functional equivalents or other forms of paraphrase in relation to the names of people or places, especially street names, which often incorporate both.

At the same time, a more adequacy-oriented translation might not be approved by the commissioning party and could risk alienating the TRs. A certain balance has to be struck between the two initial norms: one that respects the SC while still be appealing to the TRs. It could be assumed that, as consumers of high culture, book readers would be more open minded to foreign concepts and culture-related elements, possibly allowing for the inclusion of more SC signifiers. Still, any translation that deviates from the expectations placed upon it runs the risk of publisher interference. Each translation has its own *skopos* that it tries to realise, to be determined by the commission and the translator. Polish language translators can be seen as cultural ambassadors, exposing people to a somewhat peripheral culture, a rare opportunity considering that Polish books are translated less often than English ones, making each translation somewhat important¹³. Ultimately, it is up to the individuals working on the book to decide on their priorities: whether to focus on promoting as much of the SC as possible or to focus on telling a gripping story. Understandably, Lloyd-Jones set the goal of achieving the latter, perhaps because she was dealing with the crime fiction genre, which, while containing elements of social critique and culture, still prioritises the crime aspect. As is the case with most translations, this choice is more of a spectrum than a binary opposition: a text can promote the SC without necessarily alienating the TRs. Certain tools available to the translator, such as the use of additions or footnotes, can simplify this process, providing them more leeway for including more obscure cultural signifiers.

6. Conclusions

Hodonyms are often seen as not important enough to be the topic of translation-related discussion. They may seem more mundane than other culture-bound items, but they play an important culture-creating role. Translators should be aware of their

¹³ The Polish Book Institute actively supports the publishing of translations with Polish as their SL: “Since the programme began in 1999, more than 3,400 Polish titles have been published in over 50 foreign languages” (Kawalerowicz 2025). Meanwhile, 3,846 translations from English were published in Poland in 2024 alone (*The Polish Book Marker...* 2025), demonstrating a clear disparity in the number of published translations.

significance and give more thought to their rendering of such items. As seen in *Rage*, hodonyms are almost universally transferred without further explanation (and sometimes omitted). Footnotes or in-text explanations could accompany transfer as a means of informing TRs about the SC. Of course, it is unfair to expect translators to be activist cultural ambassadors, but attempts should be made to raise their sensitivity to overlooked aspects of culture, such as hodonyms. As noted by Ewa Kujawska-Lis: “if a translator sets out to achieve commercial success, their translation will be dominated by the crime fiction plot, while some of the allusions are ‘erased’ from the TR’s perception”¹⁴ (Kujawska-Lis 2014: 35). The best course of action is to raise awareness of the importance of even the smallest cultural signifiers so that future translators are more sensitive to them.

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¹⁴ “Jeśli tłumacz będzie chciał osiągnąć sukces komercyjny, to w przekładzie dominować będzie wątek kryminalny, a część aluzji z pewnością pozostanie »wymazanych« z pola percepcji czytelnika docelowego” (Kujawska-Lis 2014: 35, trans. H.A.).

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