DOI: 10.31648/an.9252

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# The Wind Knows the Answer. Ideological Transformations of Bob Dylan's "Blowin' in the Wind" in Polish

**Abstract:** "Blowin' in the Wind" is considered to be one of the lyrics most representative of Bob Dylan's songwriting and is the one most frequently translated into Polish among the American poet's texts. This article analyses the ideological and poetological transformations of the original in its melic translations into Polish, demonstrating that its arguably key features (including engagement with social activism and use of Biblical allusions) underwent dramatic shifts to fit the constraints of target culture expectations and the needs and values of respective translators.

**Keywords:** song lyrics, melic translation, Bob Dylan, translator's values, Biblical allusions

## 1. Introduction

In spite of Bob Dylan's 2016 Nobel Prize in Literature, the Polish reception of his lyrics is less positive than that of other foreign singer-songwriters (Łobodziński, see: Dylan 2017a: 335). This appears surprising given the efforts to construct the American artist as a major figure. Polish versions of Dylan's songs have been sung by celebrities (Maryla Rodowicz, Martyna Jakubowicz, Krzysztof Krawczyk), and crafted by prominent translators (Stanisław Barańczak, Daniel Wyszogrodzki), authors of hit songs (Andrzej Bianusz), and other widely recognized figures (Filip Łobodziński, Roman Kołakowski).

Given the considerable social and economical capital of the translators and performers involved, it would seem quite logical to assume, in line with Lefevere's theory of patronage (Lefevere 1992: 11–25), that sufficient resources have been in place to secure a successful reception of Dylan's work. However, assuming the correctness of Łobodziński's observation, it might be hypothesized that there are

features in the American poet's songwriting at odds with the translators' aims and the audience's expectation, and hence Polish translations of Dylan's work will demonstrate a tension between the specificity of the source text and the requirement of the target text. This article investigates this through a case study of the Polish versions of Dylan's "Blowin' in the Wind".

This song may serve as an illustration of the problems inherent in translating Dylan into Polish for a number of reasons. Reception considers "Blowin' in the Wind" one of the most representative texts in terms of Dylan's themes, stylistics, and cultural importance (Gill 1999: 23; Łobodziński, see: Dylan 2017a: 322). This is confirmed by institutionalized recognition: the inclusion of the song in the Grammy Hall of Fame and on the *Rolling Stone* magazine's list of the *500 Greatest Songs of All Time*. Moreover, "Blowin' in the Wind" has been widely translated and culturally influential beyond the American context. The German version by H. Bradtke (1964) was sung by Marlene Dietrich. The Swedish version by Tore Lagergren (see: Dylan 1963b) topped *Svensktoppen*, the Swedish top music chart, twice (1963 and 1970). In Poland, "Blowin' in the Wind" is Dylan's most frequently translated song. It was included in Barańczak's anthology of American poetry in translation (Barańczak 1998) and recorded by celebrities (Rodowicz in 1969 and Krawczyk in 2017).

## 2. Methodological remarks

Before starting the actual analysis, it must be noted that the subject constitutes a methodological challenge. The existing models of literary translation largely focus on non-oral literature and hence do not take into account the demands of translating song lyrics, which, generally speaking, requires that the target text fit within the time- and rhythm-related constraints posed by the music.

Apart from the early 20th-century essays by operatic translators that often cannot be directly applied beyond the boundaries of the genre, in the 21st century there have appeared a few works offering general theories of translating music-bound texts (Apter/Herman 2016; Gorlée 2005; Minors 2013; for an overview of song translation theories, see: Antosz-Rekucki 2022). The most influential theorist in the field is still Peter Low, who proposes that effective song translation equals finding a balance between five factors (sense, singability, naturalness, rhythm, and rhyme). The advantages of this model are its direct applicability to song translation and conciseness (Low 2005: 185–212).

However, Low's model exhibits significant drawbacks as well. The five criteria are disputable. Rhyming might indeed be a frequent feature of melic poetry, but it is hard to defend a prescriptive treatment of rhyme on a par with semantics and rhythm. Low's notion of singability implies avoiding consonantal clusters whenever possible, reflecting his bias in favour of the operatic libretto and of the Romance and Germanic language cultures. Meanwhile, such clusters are not viewed as problematic in Polish lyrics writing (Zagórski 1975: 358–359). The notion of stylistic naturalness may be easily attacked on the grounds of Venuti's classic critique of domesticating strategies (Venuti 1995: 2–42).

Most importantly, Low's treatment of the semantic aspects of song translation may be viewed as unsatisfactory, focusing on vague "semantic fidelity" (Low 2013: 231), and leaving out the cultural and political aspects of translation.

Hence in this article, while the peculiar demands of song translation are kept in mind, ideas from Lefevere's already classic discussion of political, cultural, and poetological forces shaping literary translation (Lefevere 1992) are borrowed to flesh out the methodology.

## 3. "Blowin' in the Wind" as a source culture artifact[1]

The source text was first recorded in 1963, against the sociocultural background of the Civil Rights Movement in the United States of America. The importance of that context cannot be overestimated. The Civil Rights Movement aimed at overthrowing the systemic discrimination against African-Americans (see: Davis 1998; Eagles 2000; and Tsesis 2008). In the early 1960s the movement had already had its first successes (Brown v. Board of Education in Topeka, 1954, and Browder v. Gayle, 1956, two landmark decisions of the US Supreme Court). However, until the passing of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, general discrimination based on skin colour was still considered constitutional, and taxes meant to discourage African-Americans from voting were eliminated only in 1965–1966 (Voting Rights Act, 1965:

[1] The following section makes a limited use of critical analyses of both "Blowin' in the Wind" and Dylan's oeuvre in general because of space limitations and the main goal of this part of the article: presenting the key contexts of Dylan's text and providing an original analysis of what makes that text function so effectively in the source culture. For comprehensive overviews and analyses of Dylan's entire oeuvre, a few recommended sources used by the author of the article elsewhere in his research include Corcoran (2010), Dettmar (2009), Gilmour (2004), Kinney (2014), Otiono and Toth (2019), and Rogovoy (2009).

the Twenty-Fourth Amendment to American Constitution, 1966). Local bans on the so-called interracial marriages were delegalized in 1967 (Loving v. Virginia).

Echoes of the struggle against institutionalized discrimination can be heard loud and clear in "Blowin' in the Wind". The opening couplet of the song, "How many roads must a man walk down / Before you call him a man?" may be read as an allusion to street protests and the question of conventionalized (legal) human status. Another couplet, "how many years can some people exist / Before they're *allowed* to be free?"[2] refers not only to the general question of freedom, but also of granting or withholding basic liberties. In the opening line of the third stanza ("How many times must a man look up"), the expression *look up to* in connection with the modal verb *must* may be connoted with the idea of abusive hierarchies (*look up to* in MWOD).

Apart from the context of the Civil Rights Movement, the Vietnam War (1955–1975) was another burning question for Dylan's listeners. The song includes pacifist references. The "white dove" ("how many seas must a white dove sail / Before she sleeps in the sand?") is a symbol of peace (apart from being a Biblical allusion, which will be discussed later). The rhetorical question "how many times must the cannonballs fly / Before they're forever banned?" is a clear appeal to ban weapons and violence, while the couplet "how many deaths will it take till he knows / That too many people have died?" expresses a demand to stop the killing.

But the lyrics do not merely reference the most pressing issues of Dylan's times. The song urges the listeners to take an active stance. To achieve this aim, a simple yet effective communicative structure is employed, based on rhetorical questions, repetition, and parallelism. The questions undermine the unvoiced opposing views through a *reductio ad absurdum* strategy and channel frustration.

The anaphoras and parallelisms are used here within two literary traditions. Firstly, a similar stylistic structure is reminiscent of the oratory format of American sermons and public speaking. Martin Luther King's 1963 "I Have a Dream" speech follows a similar framework. Secondly, the song's structure mirrors the stylistics of the Psalms and speeches of Biblical prophets.

Biblical imagery and allusions can be found throughout the song lyrics; given the deep connection between American culture and Protestant Christianity, these allusions must have been rather clear for the original listeners. The aforementioned white dove flying over the seas to find a safe land can be connected with Noah's dove (Gen. 8:1–12). The image of a dove fleeing persecutors to hide in the sand can be also

[2] All emphases are mine.

found in Ps. 55:7–8. The same psalm features pacifist ideas and curses against those who justify violence with smooth words (Ps. 55:21). The paradox of listening without understanding, watching without seeing, etc., found in Isaiah 6:9ff; Ezek. 12:1–2; Ps. 135:16–17, Matt. 13:14, Mark 4:12, and Luke 8:10 is also referenced in "Blowin' in the Wind" ("How many ears must one man have / Before he can hear people cry?"). The Biblical prophecy of the social justice after the coming of the Messiah, expressed by the image of leveling down hills (Isaiah 40:4 and Luke 3:4–6) is echoed in Dylan's couplet "How many years can a mountain exist / Before it's washed to the sea?".

The eponymous wind might be interpreted in Biblical terms as well, but more important to the understanding of the entire lyrics is the ambiguity of the verb "blow". *MWOD* lists over a dozen of distinct meanings for the lexeme, including movement, sound, breathing, exploding, spreading, destroying, and even talking in empty words. The ambiguity was somewhat alleviated by Dylan himself (quoted after Gray 2006: 64), who said that the song's answer "is going to come down […] like a restless piece of paper" and the "trouble is that no one picks [it] up". This gives more ground to seeing the appellative function of the song as its key feature: "the answer", though hard to grasp, is still available and should be picked up. Simultaneously, Dylan's words undermine interpreting the song as a less actionable, philosophical reflection. The latter direction is the one Polish translators gravitated towards.

## 4. Analysis of the Polish translations of "Blowin' in the Wind"

### 4.1. Introductory remarks

All the existing Polish versions of "Blowin' in the Wind" can be sung to the original musical composition, even Barańczak's translation, published in 1995 and 1998 as a printed text only. In fact, this version employs only prosodic patterns found in the original, making it possible to sing the Polish version to the original music note-for-note, without even minor variations to the melody deemed acceptable by Apter and Herman (Apter/Herman 2012: 126–131). Łobodziński's translation was both published (Łobodziński, see: Dylan 2017a: 203) and recorded (see: Dylan 2017b). The remaining versions (Bianusz, see; Dylan 1969; Kołakowski, see: Dylan 2009a; Kondrak, see: Dylan 2009b; and Wyszogrodzki, see: Dylan 2017c) are audio or video recordings.

Within Low's theoretical framework, an analysis of the semantics of the translations would be deemphasized, while the target texts would be scanned for allegedly unsingable consonantal clusters, departures from the original rhythm, rhyming quality, and natural register. This article proceeds without delving deeply into these considerations, as the aim is rather understanding the friction points between the source and target texts. The analyzed translations include quite a few consonantal clusters, but the recordings demonstrate that none of them proved problematic. The original melody, harmony, and rhythms are kept fully recognizable. Both the original and the translations rhyme, but it is not a crucial feature of these texts and does not need in-depth scrutiny. None of Low's non-verbal criteria (rhythm, rhyme, singability) has proven a friction point here, whereas the semantics of the translations and their stylistics will be analyzed in the following sections, covering the ground of Low's "naturalness" and "semantic fidelity".

## 4.2. Analysis

### 4.2.1. A mysterious canyon in Bianusz's "Odpowie ci wiatr" ("The wind will answer you"), 1969

Bianusz's version of Dylan's text was created in a complex historical context. When the translation was first aired on the radio in 1969, Poland was a People's Republic under an undemocratic communist regime supported by the Soviet Union (for broader historical context, see: Sowa 2011; and Strzyżewski 2015). Hence the translation had to be produced under the state-sanctioned censorship. In 1968 the country saw a major political crisis providing a relevant context for Dylan's egalitarian and pacifist agenda, consisting of major protests by university students and intellectuals, violent repressions, an unabashedly anti-Semitic campaign of the state authorities, and the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the forces of the Warsaw Pact, including the Polish army, in reaction to the Prague Spring.

Given the context, it might seem surprising that Dylan's song could have been translated and that the target text remains a protest song. Bianusz's rewriting still calls for a major change: "Przez ile lat nie odważy się nikt / zawołać, że czas zmienić świat?". Later, Bianusz renders "How many years can some people exist / Before they're allowed to be free?" as "Przez ile ksiąg pisze się ludzki byt, / nim wolność w nim wpisze ktoś?", retaining the connotation with the legal aspect of freedom. The line "how many times must a man look up" is rendered as "Przez

ile lat ludzie *giąć będą kark*", a very competent solution, as in Polish the phrase *giąć kark* carries the meaning of being subdued and reproduces the anti-hierarchical undertones of *look up to*.

Bianusz was able to read into rather subtle semantic implications of the source, but – mysteriously – translated the couplet "How many times must the *cannonballs* fly / Before they're forever banned?" as "Przez ile lat będzie *kanion* trwał, / nim w końcu rozkruszy go czas?". Given the rest of the text, it is implausible to attribute this semantic shift to lack of competence. Admittedly, it is possible Bianusz might have rendered *cannonballs* as *kanion* based on phonetic resemblance. However, knowing the text must have passed the censor's office, there might be another explanation. As noted by Lefevere, what translation researchers consider mistakes, should instead be first expected to be "the expression of a strategy" (Lefevere 1992: 97).

Introducing the image of a canyon produces two effects in the text. Firstly, for Polish recipients the canyon is an exotic element, associated with North America, as stereotypically presented, for instance, in popular novels of the Western genre (compare, for instance, Szklarski 1959). Possibly, such a strong symbol was used to mark any ostensibly political critique in the song as directed exclusively against the source-culture establishment, the US government, which would be acceptable in 1969 Poland.

Secondly, removing the call for banning weapons deprives the song of Dylan's pacifism. The Warsaw Pact officially supported the Arab aggression against Israel in the 1967 Six-Day War and invaded Czechoslovakia in 1968; criticizing militarist political doctrines might not have been safe in 1969. Indeed, Bianusz consistently weakens the pacifist implications. The directness of the lines "how many deaths will it take 'til he knows / That too many people have died?" is transformed into a more detached reference to mortality as a part of human fate: "Jak blisko śmierć musi przejść obok nas, / By człowiek zrozumiał swój los?". When Dylan asks "how many years can some people exist / Before they're allowed to be free?", Bianusz's translation avoids rendering the word *people* in the sense of "a nation or ethnic group", easily achievable with the lexeme *lud*. A question about allowing *a* people to be free could have sparked association with suppression of the 1968 pro-freedom revolution in Czechoslovakia.

Communist-era censorship is also the most plausible explanation for the fact that Bianusz largely eliminates the Biblical allusions. The hypernym *ptak* ("bird") is used instead of *gołębica* ("dove"). The Biblical idea of failing to hear in spite of having ears does not surface in the target text. Admittedly, Bianusz turns the

eponymous original wind into a personified entity providing the answer. Still, no other element of the translation justifies interpreting this decision as a Christianizing strategy. More probably, such personification follows the Polish Romantic and Modernist convention of endowing natural entities with their own psychology. As proposed by Lefevere, oral literary systems and translations have a tendency to gravitate towards older trends in symbolics and poetics (Lefevere 1992: 23).

Bianusz's translation illustrates Lefevere's point that "if linguistic considerations enter into conflict with considerations of an ideological and/or poetological nature, the latter tend to win out" (Lefevere 1992: 39). Still, although the target text eliminates the original pacifism, which may be seen as an act of manipulating the views and values the source stands for, and thus a violation of loyalty to the author (see: Nord 2009: 184–186), Bianusz still preserved the song's appeal to change to societal status quo, a commendable achievement for a translation produced under an undemocratic regime.

#### 4.2.2. Stanisław Barańczak, "Odpowiedź gwiżdże wiatr" [The wind whistles the answer] (1995)

Barańczak's translation was published in 1998, in a context markedly different from that of Bianusz's 1969 version. Firstly, after the process of political and economic transformation started in 1989, 1998 Poland had been a democratic, censorship-free, capitalist country for a few years already. Secondly, the translation was published within an anthology of American poetry translated and edited by Barańczak. As noted by Jarniewicz, Barańczak's anthology claimed to be the definitive representation of American poetry to a Polish reader, while competing with a proliferation of other, slightly earlier anthologies stating similar ambitions (Jarniewicz 2018: 55–60). Thirdly, Barańczak published his only Dylan translation as an exile from Poland who emigrated to the US in 1981 to avoid persecution for his social activism and topical poetry (for this aspect of Barańczak's biography, see: Stabro 1989: 229–249). However, in spite of having firsthand access to the source American context, Barańczak crafts a translation dramatically transforming the original imagery, themes, and ideology.

In the opening lines, Barańczak's subject's search is not for humanity, but for meaning (Polish *sens*). The image of roads is replaced with that of rivers and borders ("Ile oddziela nas granic i rzek"), eliminating the connotation with protest marches. Jarniewicz believes such shifts make the target more political than the original, as

"roads" can be interpreted existentially, whereas the notion of borders is a purely political one (Jarniewicz 2018: 62). Jarniewicz also notes that Barańczak "drags Dylan into the poetics of political opposition (*poetyka sprzeciwu*) he himself practiced" in the Communist-era Poland (Jarniewicz 2018: 66). Indeed, Barańczak renders the couplet "how many times must the cannonballs fly / Before they're forever banned?" as "Ile jeszcze eksplozji ogłuszy ten wiek, / Tę ziemię zasieków i krat?". The lexeme *zasieki* here can be understood as barbed wire, an image recurring in Barańczak's own politically engaged poetry alongside the image of prison bars (*kraty*); similar imagery proliferates in Barańczak's 1980 book of political poems *Sztuczne oddychanie*.

Still, Barańczak's target texts features also choices that make the text philosophical where it was political. The transformation of roads into borders disregards the crucial context of street protests, including the March on Washington, during which "Blowin' in the Wind" was performed (a fact Jarniewicz is aware of, cf. 2018: 62), Next, the purpose of "walking down the roads" in Dylan's song is to be "called a man", i.e., considered fully human, a pressing and immediate issue in the context of systemic racial discrimination in the 1960s USA, whereas for Barańczak, "the borders and rivers" may be crossed to attain meaning, in fact hidden within the subject ("Od sensu, który jest w nas"), a more abstract notion. I would argue that while the translation remains strongly political, the philosophical issues and existential concerns replace the activist struggle as the main focus of the song.

Dylan's rhetorical questions suggest that the unacceptable social context should be changed. Barańczak transforms that rhetoric into philosophically-minded reflection. Dylan's subject calls out to end the war, grant freedom, question unjust hierarchies, and stop systemic killing. Barańczak's subject reflects upon the repeatability of violence: "Ile jeszcze eksplozji ogłuszy ten wiek", and calling for freedom is replaced with suggesting that human beings will be repeatedly humiliated and betrayed: "Ile człowiek znieść może poniżeń i zdrad / Nim z łaski pozwolą, by żył?". Polish *z łaski* ("graciously") carries strongly sarcastic connotations.

When Dylan's rhetoric challenges systemic killing, Barańczak's speaker wonders how many people will succumb to darkness inherent to them: "Ilu jeszcze na zawsze zagłębi się w mrok, / W ten mrok, co w nich samych się wkradł?" (compare Dylan's "how many deaths will it take till he knows / That too many people have died?"). This is a telling illustration of the key difference between the worldviews expressed by Dylan's and Barańczak's speakers. For the former, evil is a part of the social system, which hence should be changed. In Barańczak's version, evil is an internalized, unchangeable feature of humanity. Barańczak's subject does not fight,

only asks if perseverance will be sufficient to accept the world as it is: "Ile jeszcze zostało mu woli i sił, / By godzić się wciąż na ten świat?". Last but not least, the eponymous "answer" is whistled by the wind in Barańczak's rewriting ("Odpowiedź gwiżdże wiatr"). The solution is consistent with the strategy degrading the song's appellative function: in Polish, the act of whistling brings up connotations with ignoring someone or something (compare idioms such as "gwizdać na kogoś/na coś" and "gwizdać na wszystko"). Barańczak's wind appears to sneer at the human problems described in the poem.

The apparent lack of hope and disempowerment of both the speaker and the addressee in this translation is amplified by eliminating the Biblical allusions of the source. Within the Judeo-Christian framework in which the Jewish singer--songwriter addresses a mostly Protestant American audience, implicit assumption of God's existence inspires some hope. Barańczak's translation is pessimistic and agnostic. Dylan's dove not only becomes a generic bird (*ptak*), but loses its white colour as well. The paradox of having ears but failing to listen is simply absent.

Barańczak infuses the target text with poetics characteristic of his own output as a poet. Dylan alludes to the Bible and uses rich symbolics but keeps his register relatively colloquial, facilitating the sense of immediacy characteristic of his songs (cf. Boucher/Boucher 2021: 228–229). The translator selects lexemes and figures of speech heightening the register. A number of metaphors not even remotely suggested by the source text are introduced, some bordering on hyperbole and catachresis. Dylan's dove will "sleep in the sand"; Barańczak's bird needs to sleep "long in the stillness of the stars" ("i długi sen w ciszy gwiazd"). Barańczak's text features imagery such as darkness sneaking into human beings ("ten mrok, co w nich samych się wkradł"), explosions which will "deafen the age" ("ile jeszcze eksplozji ogłuszy ten wiek"), and time measured in empires ("ile jeszcze przeminie imperiów i lat"). The general tendency to elevate the register in literary translation has been criticized by Berman (2009: 256–257), but the shifts in Barańczak's translation can be also seen as a result of the conflict between the discourses of the source and target cultures (Lefevere 1992: 41), as well as between the poetological demands of the target culture and linguistic considerations related to the source text (Lefevere 1992: 39). Possibly, Barańczak might have wanted to avoid strong marks of political activism to evade unwanted associations with Communist-era poetry written in support of the regime whose ideology included the apotheosis of revolution (compare Władysław Broniewski's *Słowo o Stalinie*, 1950). Similarly, eliminating Dylan's implicit theism and conspicuous Biblicality may have served to avoid the reception of the song as an instance of contemporary religious poetry

and hence, justly or not, lower literary standards. The usage of inventive metaphors, including catachreses, is a feature of the poetics of Barańczak's original writing which he often transplants into his translated work (for an in-depth study of this phenomenon, see: Kaczorowska 2011).

### 4.2.3. 21st-century translations of "Blowin' in the Wind" into Polish: a contextual introduction

Apart from Bianusz's and Barańczak's versions, all remaining Polish versions of "Blowin' in the Wind" to be discussed here appeared in the 21st century. They were produced in the context of a democratic capitalist state and free speech, i.e. market considerations may have more influence on shaping them than political issues. Still, some of the circumstances were different for each of those translations.

Kołakowski produces his version for a CD compilation of protest songs by various artists. Kondrak's translation, performed by Piotr Selim, an artist associated with the Polish *poezja śpiewana* ("sung poetry") genre of song poems, was recorded and broadcast by Polish TV. That heavily staged, rock-like performance, was accompanied by black-and-white documentary footage of various instances of police and military violence against civilians, building a bridge between the source American contexts and the Polish collective memory of the Nazi German occupation and post-war Communist period.

Wyszogrodzki's 2017 version is one crafted by an authority in the field of musical theatre translation and musicology for an extremely popular celebrity singer, Krzysztof Krawczyk. The translation was released on a CD anthologizing Dylan's translated songs, employing the marketing idea of viewing Krawczyk and Dylan as comparable figures because of the evergreen quality of both artists' outputs in spite of their advanced age (hence the title of the CD, *Wiecznie młody*, a translation of Dylan's song title "Forever Young"). Importantly, the release of the album already followed Dylan's Nobel Prize in Literature. Łobodziński's version of "Blowin' in the Wind", both published and recorded also after Dylan's Nobel, is a part of his far-reaching, multiyear project of translating almost all American artist's songs and making them available through live performances, audio recordings, and book publications.

### 4.2.4. Roman Kołakowski's "Odpowiedź zna wiatr" [The wind knows the answer] (2009)

Kołakowski employs solutions showing a strong influence of both Bianusz and Barańczak, to the point that it seems the earlier translators were a stronger reference point than the source text itself.

Some lines by Kołakowski are almost identical with Bianusz's solutions. The former's counterpart of Bianusz's "Przez ile mórz lecieć ma biały ptak" only replaces the verb "lecieć" with "frunąć", a synonym. Similarly, the counterpart of Bianusz's "Jak blisko śmierć musi przejść obok nas" appears as "Jak blisko śmierć winna przejść obok nas"; again, a single-word change for a synonym.

Whereas Bianusz's transformation of the image of cannonballs into that of a canyon is surprising but must have been an independent decision, the fact that Kołakowski's text features an image of a ravine and erosion at the corresponding point can only be attributed to the influence of the earlier translation. The same is true for rendering Dylan's "look up to" as "giąć kark". Bianusz's creative but accurate solution is uncreatively copied.

Influences of Barańczak's interpretation are similarly conspicuous. Kołakowski chooses to render the original "blowin'" of the wind with a number of verbs and images instead of one, including "Odpowiedź gwiżdże wiatr", a copy of Barańczak's idea, but most importantly, his wind "blows in your face" ("wiejący ci w twarz"). This establishes the wind as a malevolent entity, again close to Barańczak's ideas and not really justified by the source text. Kołakowski's counterpart of Barańczak's line "Ile człowiek znieść może poniżeń i zdrad" is "Jak wiele znieść człowiek ma podłych zdrad", when Dylan's original line reads "how many ears must one man have". Biblical allusions are absent and Dylan's simple diction is transformed into one full of literary lexemes (e.g., "winien", "zdoła"), and rhetorical anastrophes ("przejść musi sam", "strumień dno winien rwać").

### 4.2.5. Tymoteusz Kondrak's "Odpowiedź zna wiatr" [The wind knows the answer] (2009)

Kondrak's translation can be seen as a source-oriented one. For instance, the question about bullets and literally banning them is the counterpart of Dylan's idea of banning cannonballs: "Jak wiele kul, ile razy ma gnać, / Nim trafią na zakaz po kres?". Thus, at the cost of stylistic clumsiness, Dylan's direct expression of pacifism is rendered. Similarly, and at a similar cost, the translator directly reproduces Dylan's

call to stop the killing, linking the growing death toll to a realization that a limit has been reached: "Jak wielu śmierci potrzeba mu, by, / By zdał [sic], że zbyt wiele ich".

Kondrak preserves some of Dylan's Biblical allusions. Kondrak's bird is a generic one, not a dove, but remains white and sleeps in the sand. The image of leveling down the mountains is reproduced and stays simple. Even the idea of having ears but failing to listen is preserved: "Jak wiele uszu powinien on mieć, / By ludzki móc słyszeć płacz?".

Sadly, Kondrak's text employs inept stylistics. The verb *gnać* ("rush") used in reference to bullets produces a very unnatural collocation, and makes an impression of having been chosen as a rhythmic filler. The phrase "Nim trafią na zakaz, po kres" features further clumsy collocations and is hard to process logically. The above-mentioned couplet "Jak wielu śmierci potrzeba mu, by, / By zdał [sic], że zbyt wiele ich" features an incorrect ellipsis, as the verb *zdał* ("passed, reported" in isolation) lacks the logical continuation *sobie sprawę* to form the phrase with the intended meaning of "realize". The sense of confusion and ineptitude produced by these choices illustrates there is some truth to Low's warning that linguistic naturalness should not be one-sidedly sacrificed for rendering sense (Low 2015: 196).

Like in all other Polish translations of Dylan's text except for Łobodziński, Kondrak's wind is personified and knows the eponymous answer. However, even in the light of the hard-to-ignore stylistic flaws, the translation is an intriguing attempt at adopting a truly source-oriented perspective.

### 4.2.6. Daniel Wyszogrodzki's "Odpowiedź zna wiatr" [The wind knows the answer] (2017)

Wyszogrodzki's translation employs a plethora of established Polish collocations, idiomatic expressions, and poetic clichés ("padnie strzał", "cień chmur", "zetrzeć w pył", "blady świt", "sięgnąć dna", "kres błękitu", "pasmo krzywd", "morze łez", "cena istnienia", "smak wolności") at the cost of moving away from original imagery. The strategy succeeds at producing a target text free of stylistic friction. However, Wyszogrodzki's poetics, based on established collocations and conventionalized metaphors infuses the song with vagueness and, arguably, an impression of lack of imaginativeness. The obscurity of the translation stands in a stark contrast to Dylan's rather clear communication.

Wyszogrodzki's treatment of Biblical imagery is ambiguous. The transformation of the white dove in his version is perhaps the most drastic, as the bird turns into

a flock of seagulls, birds associated with holiday resorts in the Polish cultural context. The paradox of having ears but failing to listen is absent. On the other hand, some of the decisions seem to compensate for that. Wyszogrodzki's subject urges the addressee to listen to the answer of the eponymous wind: "Odpowiedź zna wiatr / Posłuchaj jego rad", emphasizing that the answer is to be acted upon. Not only is the wind personified; the lexeme *rada* ("advice") is the one used in Polish for counsel in the sense of one of the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit in Catholic theology. The translator seems to interpret Dylan's song as opposing hypocrisy and includes an image of moral purification through the washing of one's lips: "Jak wiele kłamstw trzeba zmyć ze swych ust / Aby wolności poznać smak?". The idea is a Biblical one and can be found in Isaiah (6:1–6) and Zephaniah (3:9), whereas the connection between truth and freedom is strongly expressed in the Gospel of John (8:31–41). Importantly, the character of Biblical allusions is transformed. Dylan's intertextual links are more universal and open to interpretations from various perspectives. The sum of Wyszogrodzki's allusions has strong Christian connotations.

Introduction of the idea of acting upon the wind's advice and directly mentioned freedom retain the appellative function and egalitarian undertones of Dylan's song. The opening couplet "Jak wiele każdy z nas musi przejść / By móc człowiekiem się *zwać*?" preserves Dylan's idea of a fight to be called human. The rendition of Dylan's question about the cannonballs, "Jak wiele salw będzie niósł blady świt / Zanim ostatni padnie strzał?" retains the expectation to end violence. The subject wants the listener to see the suffering of others ("Byś ujrzał i ty morze łez") and turn their face towards it ("Byś i ty obojętną zwrócił twarz"), and the world – to learn the value of life ("By cenę istnienia znał świat").

The entirety of Wyszogrodzki's strategy can be understood in terms of Lefevere's idea of patronage and the constraints of the target audience's expectations. The translation, crafted to be sung by a celebrity, had to aim for economic success and accessibility. More Catholic ideology and diction may have been deemed more understandable to Polish listeners by Wyszogrodzki. The translator's poetics serves the same function, replacing Dylan's self-consciously simplistic diction with one constructed of readily accessible expressions, not overly sophisticated, but signaling to a broad audience a poetic text on important matters, residing on the borderline between the genres of poetry and pop song.

### 4.2.7. Filip Łobodziński "Odpowiedź unosi wiatr" [The wind carries the answer] (2017)

Łobodziński's translation is a part of his wide-ranging project, aiming at integrating Dylan's lyrics into Polish culture, with what Nida would call dynamic equivalence (Nida 2003: 156–192) and basing the translations in biographical context and academic studies on Dylan stated as the project's goals (Łobodziński, see: Dylan 2017a: 334–335).

Indeed, this version of the text appears to be source-oriented and focused, for instance, on reproducing the original Biblical allusions. Dylan's dove is still a dove here, and its final destination is in the sand: "jak wiele mórz gołąb przebyć ma wszerz / by piasek znów poczuć móc?". The image of leveling down mountains ("Jak wiele lat łańcuch gór będzie trwać / nim całkiem obróci się w proch?") is reinforced by including the phrase *obrócić się w proch* ("turn to dust"), the exact one found in the most widely used Bible translation in Poland, the Catholic *Biblia Tysiąclecia*, in Gen. 3:19. Still, the image of having ears but failing to listen is absent from Łobodziński's version.

Dylan's pacifism and social engagement are reproduced to an extent. The opening couplet is "Jak wiele *dróg* człowiek wciąż musi przejść / by człowiekiem *mienić się* mógł?", keeping the possibility to interpret it as alluding to human-rights-related efforts. The lines "I jak wiele musi wciąż wystrzelić kul / by mógł zamilknąć ich huk?" retains the original intention to end violence. The lines "I jak wielu z nas musi zginąć, by człek / zrozumiał, że skończyć z tym czas?" and "I jak wiele lat można odwracać wzrok / i głuchym być na skargi głos?" are similarly close to the original ideas.

On the other hand, when Dylan asks: "how many years can some people exist / Before they're allowed to be free?", the use of passive voice and the verb "allow" bring up connotations with the normative, and hence legal and political aspects of freedom. Łobodziński's rendition is "jak wiele lat ludzie będą tak trwać / nim wolność przyniesie im los?". Making fate, an external force with strong philosophical undertones, the agent of expected change limits the possibility to interpret the fragment as urging the listeners to be the agents of change themselves. Similarly, when Dylan asks: "How many times must a man look up / Before he can see the sky?", Łobodziński translates this as "Jak wiele czasu potrzeba, by człek / zobaczył znów słońca blask?". Dylan's artfully crafted allusion to questioning authority is replaced with a conventional image of waiting for sunshine. Still, Łobodziński manages to reproduce the original polysemy of what the eponymous

wind does without personifying it: “Odpowiedź, mój bracie, *unosi* wiatr”, with “unosi” interpretable as both “carry” and “carry away”.

Łobodziński’s efforts to produce an equivalence-oriented translation are visible but not fully satisfactory. Additionally, his rewriting suffers from stylistic issues. The translation proliferates with short lexemes serving mainly as rhythmic padding, placed in grammatically clumsy positions (*wciąż*, *wszerz*, *całkiem*, *tak*, *znów*). In addition to that, syntactic inversion is used extensively, and so is the noun *człek*, an archaic form of *człowiek* (“human being”), employed to ease the task of keeping masculine cadences. Apart from elevating the register, this convolutes the grammar of the target text, resulting in obscure syntax and diction, and depriving the translation of the direct and effective rhetoric of the original.

## 5. Conclusions

Despite serving different goals and having been produced at different historical points, the Polish translations discussed here share some striking common features. As expected by Lefevere’s account of translation policies, target culture expectations have proven to impact the target text more strongly than any source-oriented considerations. Elements of original political worldview and use of Biblical imagery were the features of the source text most prone to manipulation and transformation. The Biblical themes were invariably deleted or adjusted to be more accessible to the target audience. Questions about human rights and freedom were mostly modified to appear as more personal and philosophical than concrete and political. Meditative sadness and passivity tend to appear in the translations instead of frustration and a call to taking an active stance. The human issues are expressed, but not through a Dylan-like direct diction, but within the frameworks of aestheticized conventions, while laicized or Christianized symbolism replaces the abundant and subtle Biblical references of the source text.

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## Appendix: original lyrics of Bob Dylan's "Blowin' in the Wind" and its Polish translations

1. "Blowin' in the Wind", transcription of the original lyrics by Bob Dylan as featured on *The Freewheelin' Bob Dylan* (1963).

How many roads must a man walk downbefore you call him a man?
Yes, 'n' how many seas must a white dove sail
before she sleeps in the sand?
Yes, 'n' how many times must the cannonballs fly
before they're forever banned?
The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind,
the answer is blowin' in the wind.

How many years can a mountain exist
before it's washed to the sea?
Yes, 'n' how many years can some people exist
before they're allowed to be free?
Yes, 'n' how many times can a man turn his head
pretending he just doesn't see?
The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind,
the answer is blowin' in the wind.

Yes, 'n' how many times must a man look up
before he can see the sky
Yes, 'n' how many ears must one man have
before he can hear people cry?
Yes, 'n' how many deaths will it take till he knows
that too many people have died?
The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind,
the answer is blowin' in the wind

2. "Odpowie ci wiatr", translated by Andrzej Bianusz, recorded by Maryla Rodowicz in 1969 (unreleased radio recording), transcribed as featured on Rarytasy 1967–1970 (2012).

Przez ile dróg musi przejść każdy z nas,
by móc człowiekiem się stać?
Przez ile mórz lecieć ma biały ptak,
nim w końcu opadnie na piach?
Przez ile lat będzie kanion trwał,
nim w końcu rozkruszy go czas?
Odpowie ci wiatr, wiejący przez świat,
odpowie ci, bracie, tylko wiatr.

Przez ile lat przetrwa ten górny szczyt,
nim deszcz go na mórz zniesie dno?
Przez ile ksiąg pisze się ludzki byt,
nim wolność w nim wpisze ktoś?
Przez ile lat nie odważy się nikt
zawołać, że czas zmienić świat?
Odpowie ci wiatr, wiejący przez świat,
odpowie ci, bracie, tylko wiatr.

Przez ile lat ludzie giąć będą kark,
nie wiedząc, że niebo jest tuż?
Przez ile łez, ile bólu i skarg,
przejść trzeba i przeszło się już?
Jak blisko śmierć musi przejść obok nas,
by człowiek zrozumiał swój los?
Odpowie ci wiatr, wiejący przez świat,
i ty swą odpowiedź rzuć na wiatr

3. "Odpowiedź gwiżdże wiatr", the translation by Stanisław Barańczak, reproduced after Barańczak (1998).

Ile oddziela nas granic i rzek
Od sensu, który jest w nas?
Ile mórz ujrzy ptak, nim ocali go brzeg
I długi sen w ciszy gwiazd?
Ile jeszcze eksplozji ogłuszy ten wiek,
Tę ziemię zasieków i krat?
Odpowiedź zna wiatr, odpowiedź gwiżdże wiatr,
Odpowiedź, odpowiedź gwiżdże wiatr.

Ile ostrości powinien mieć wzrok,
By dojrzeć niebo zza chmur?
Ile razy słuch złowi czyjś jęk albo szloch,
Nim wreszcie dosłyszy w nim ból?
Ilu jeszcze na zawsze zagłębi się w mrok,
W ten mrok, co w nich samych się wkradł?
Odpowiedź zna wiatr, odpowiedź gwiżdże wiatr,
Odpowiedź, odpowiedź gwiżdże wiatr.

Ile przeminie imperiów i lat,
Nim góry skruszą się w pył?
Ile człowiek znieść może poniżeń i zdrad,
Nim z łaski pozwolą, by żył?
Ile jeszcze zostało mu woli i sił,

By godzić się wciąż na ten świat?
Odpowiedź zna wiatr, odpowiedź gwiżdże wiatr,
Odpowiedź, odpowiedź gwiżdże wiatr.

4. "Odpowiedź zna wiatr", translated by Roman Kołakowski, recorded by Robert Janowski, transcribed after *Flower power: wielkie protest songi świata śpiewają polscy artyści* (2009), Warszawa: Polskie Radio.

Jak wiele dróg człowiek przejść musi sam,
nim ludzki usłyszy znów głos?
Przez ile mórz frunąć ma biały ptak,
nim zdoła odnaleźć swój ląd?
Jak długi czas strumień dno winien rwać,
by rzeką podziemną się stać?
Odpowiedź zna wiatr, wiejący przez świat.
Odpowiedź, mój bracie, gwiżdże wiatr.

Jak wiele er górski szczyt może trwać,
nim deszcz zmieni go w morski piach?
Jak wielu słów człowiek musi się bać,
nim wolność pokona w nim strach?
Jak wiele serc musi zmienić się w głaz,
by przejrzał na oczy ten świat?
Odpowiedź zna wiatr, wiejący ci w twarz.
Odpowiedź, mój bracie, gwiżdże wiatr.

Jak wiele lat człowiek giąć musi kark
nim w niebo popatrzy choć raz?
Jak wiele znieść człowiek ma podłych zdrad
nim zbudzi w nim żal ludzki płacz?
Jak blisko śmierć winna przejść obok nas,
by człowiek naprawdę żyć chciał?
Odpowiedź zna wiatr, wiejący ci w twarz.
Odpowiedź, mój bracie, gwiżdże wiatr.

5. "Odpowiedź zna wiatr", translated by Tymoteusz Kondrak, recorded by Piotr Selim, transcribed after a 2023 audiovisual recording by TVP (Polish national broadcasting company).

Jak wiele dróg człowiek przejść musi sam,
by móc człowiekiem się stać?
Jak wiele mórz przebyć ma biały ptak,
nim do snu wtuli się w piach?
Jak wiele kul, ile razy ma gnać,

nim trafią na zakaz, po kres?
Odpowiedź zna wiatr, odpowiedź niesie wiatr,
odpowiedź, mój bracie, niesie wiatr.

Jak wiele lat mogą stać szczyty gór,
nim zmyte będą do mórz?
Jak długo muszą niektórzy tu trwać,
by móc wolnymi się stać?
Jak często człek może odwracać się,
udawać, że nie widzi nic?
Odpowiedź zna wiatr, odpowiedź niesie wiatr,
odpowiedź, mój bracie, niesie wiatr.

Ileż to razy ma człek podnieść wzrok,
by niebo dostrzegać mógł?
Jak wiele uszu powinien on mieć,
by ludzki móc słyszeć płacz?
Jak wielu śmierci potrzeba mu, by,
by znał, że zbyt wiele ich?
Odpowiedź zna wiatr, odpowiedź niesie wiatr,
odpowiedź, mój bracie, niesie wiatr.

6. "Odpowiedź zna wiatr" translated by Daniel Wyszogrodzki, recorded by Krzysztof Krawczyk, transcribed after *Wiecznie młody: piosenki Boba Dylana* (2017). Warszawa: Sony Music Entertainment Poland.

Jak wiele każdy z nas musi przejść,
by móc człowiekiem się zwać?
Jak wiele mórz minąć ma stado mew,
nim w końcu usiądzie na piach?
Jak wiele salw będzie niósł blady świt,
zanim ostatni padnie strzał?
Odpowiedź zna wiatr, posłuchaj jego rad,
Bo zna ją, przyjacielu, tylko wiatr.

Jak wiele dni musisz stać w cieniu chmur,
aby błękitu dojrzeć kres?
Jak wiele lat musi trwać pasmo krzywd,
byś ujrzał i ty morze łez?
I jak wiele strat musi nieść każdy dzień,
by cenę istnienia znał świat?
Odpowiedź zna wiatr, posłuchaj jego rad,
Bo zna ją, przyjacielu, tylko wiatr.

Jak wiele gór musi czas zetrzeć w pył,
by szczyt na powrót sięgnął dna?
Jak wiele kłamstw trzeba zmyć ze swych ust,
aby wolności poznać smak?
I jak wiele spraw musi przejść obok nas,
byś i ty obojętną zwrócił twarz?
Odpowiedź zna wiatr, posłuchaj jego rad,
Bo zna ją, przyjacielu, tylko wiatr.

7. "Odpowiedź unosi wiatr", translated by Filip Łobodziński, recorded by Filip Łobodziński and Tadeusz Woźniak, transcribed after *Niepotrzebna pogodynka, żeby znać kierunek wiatru* (2017). Warszawa: Agora/Fundacja Republika Marzeń/Narodowy Instytut Audiowizualny.

Jak wiele dróg człowiek wciąż musi przejść,
by człowiekiem mienić się mógł?
I jak wiele mórz gołąb przebyć ma wszerz,
by piasek znów poczuć móc?
I jak wiele musi wciąż wystrzelić kul,
by mógł zamilknąć ich huk?
Odpowiedź, mój bracie, unosi wiatr,
odpowiedź unosi wiatr.

Jak wiele lat łańcuch gór będzie trwać,
nim całkiem obróci się w proch?
I jak wiele lat ludzie będą tak trwać,
nim wolność przyniesie im los?
I jak wiele lat można odwracać wzrok,
i głuchym być na skargi głos?
Odpowiedź, mój bracie, unosi wiatr,
odpowiedź unosi wiatr.

Jak wiele czasu potrzeba, by człek
zobaczył znów słońca blask?
I jak wiele czasu potrzeba, by człek
usłyszał znów ludzki płacz?
I jak wielu z nas musi zginąć, by człek
zrozumiał, że skończyć z tym czas?
Odpowiedź, mój bracie, unosi wiatr,
odpowiedź unosi wiatr.