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Signed: Gombrowicz

“Pupa,” the Western Canon, and the English Translation of *Ferdynand*

“pupa”

an intermediate usually quiescent stage of a metamorphic insect (such as a bee, moth, or beetle) that occurs between the larva and the imago, is usually enclosed in a cocoon or protective covering, and undergoes internal changes by which larval structures are replaced by those typical of the imago

[Merriam-Webster Dictionary]

Is a rose a rose a rose?

It may be true that a rose by any other name would smell as sweet, but to attempt to verify this hypothesis in the context of translation would be nothing short of tilting at windmills. And yet, once we have decided to embark upon a literary translation project, the die is cast: we will

inevitably confront the fact that Juliet may have been right only partly and that Gertrude Stein may have not been wrong at all. A hermeneutically viable solution to the dilemma of the imperfect parallelisms between the conceptual systems of different languages may prove the original author's to be, or not to be in the target language culture – that is the question that this article addresses.

Of course, the concentration of **bon mots** I have used to introduce my theme in the paragraph above is far from accidental. Inasmuch as they are sentences or phrases consisting of ordinary parts of speech and composed in accordance with the rules of English grammar, they all have a textemic potential. Once recognized as such, they become keys opening intertextual doors within and across languages, manifesting themselves as hermeneutic landmarks, shibboleths, or activators of deconstructivist freeplay. Furthermore, if such phrases are borrowed from canonical works of literature, then transcultural recognition of their function is crucial not only from the point of view of the potential productivity of the translated work in the receiving culture, but also from the perspective of the dynamics of the relations between this culture and the work's intertextual charge.

Such is also the case of the famous Gombrowiczean *pupa*: a symbol of central importance to *Ferdydurke* (one of the few Polish novels that Harold Bloom includes in his *Western Canon*) but also, as an intertext, to the whole canon of Polish literature and – by extension – to the shape of the phrasal system of the contemporary Polish language. Like Hawthorne's scarlet letter "A," like the colour purple in the novel by Alice Walker, the word "pupa" in Witold Gombrowicz's novel requires particular attention in terms of preliminary and initial norms to be adopted by the translator – norms whose systematic implementation will then impact the matrix of the text and the operational norms which the translator will implement at the micro-level (the level of linguistic, rather than textual, means) [Toury 1980: 113]. In Polish, "pupa" (pronounced ['pupa], not ['pju:pə] – a word meaning "child's buttocks" or "anus" that, by extension, has become a euphemism for anyone else's buttocks – is primarily a homograph of the Latin word meaning "an intermediate usually quiescent stage of a metamorphic insect" [Merriam-Webster Dictionary]. Primarily, but not exclusively, owing to lucky turns in the respective paths of evolution of both English and Polish, the infantilism "pupa" does seem to coincide with the concept of immaturity inscribed in the Latin word. Effectively, "pupa" – the Gombrowiczean signature word – connoting a lot more than

the definition quoted in the beginning of this article would suggest, does not have an English equivalent of a similar hermeneutic potential. It is therefore the case that its translation into English – which is the object of discussion in this article – poses a major problem: the interpretation of the whole work depends upon the translator's choice concerning this particular signature word, and it is only through its hermeneutic consistency with his other works that Witold Gombrowicz's philosophy may shine into a target language. As Danuta Borchartd, the translator, admitted, "pupa," indeed, was the most problematic element of Gombrowicz's philosophical discourse: her decision to retain the Polish word (pronounced as <'pupa>) in the English text (where it is pronounced as <'pju:.pə>) was, therefore, most dramatic and consequential [Borchartd 2000: xix].

The present case study, relying upon the methodological foundations of the polysystem theory of translation and other major theories developed within the field of literary studies, is meant to offer a starting point for a broader discussion on translation, hermeneutics, and the process of canonization – a discussion for which paths have already been paved by such scholars as Gideon Toury, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Paul Ricoeur, Itamar Even-Zohar or John Guillory. Therefore, my argument begins with an overview of general (hermeneutic) characteristics of a canonical text in the context of translation. Subsequently, I apply theory to analytical practice, concentrating on Witold Gombrowicz's canonical *Ferdydurke*, in which infantilisms play a textemic role. In this context I return to the major tenets of Gideon Toury's concept of norms in translation in order to shed light upon Danuta Borchartd's choices in the process of preparing the English text of the novel and dispute the translator's assertions on the possible interpretations of the word *pupa* appearing in the English version of *Ferdydurke*. The article closes with the conclusion concerning the consequences of Borchartd's application of a borrowing both on the textual and on the intertextual levels.

Hermeneutics/Canon/Translation

Owing to their popular recognition, the characteristic "signature" traits of the immanent poetics of a canonical author potentially activate intertextual references throughout a given culture. Those are usually details – key words or phrases – which obtain a new sense when incorporated into a text, while simultaneously retaining their original distinct meaning. As

such, they serve as portals: through such signature elements whole texts become incorporated in the new text, thus bringing in complex semantic/semiotic references which are external to the text and thus influencing both the hermeneutic potential and the actual reception of the new text.

For instance, **to be or not to be** or **babbittry** are impossible to read without the context of the multitude of connotations they carry within the texts in which they appeared. While being of a distinctly different nature – as one is a string of already existing semantic elements and the other a neologism created by the author – both play intertextual functions appearing in a plethora of texts and contexts, always semantically and semiotically laden. **To be or not to be**, known to Poles as *być albo nie być*, owing to the cultural productivity of the 19th century translation of *Hamlet* by Józef Paszkowski, is a phrase that serves similar purposes in the popular contexts of both languages because – in terms of philosophy – it carries the same intertextual connotations in English and in Polish. However, the sense of **babbittry** – an American word which was originally derived from the name of the character George Babbitt of Sinclair Lewis's eponymous novel and only then entered the popular English lexicon – was expressed in Polish by means of an already existing term, *kołtuneria*. And even if the name of the character, George Babbitt, was preserved in the text of the Polish version of the novel without change, its title, however, underwent a transformation: from *Babbitt* in English it changed into *Koltun* in Polish, the main character's name disappearing from the title altogether. Although both "Koltun" and "Babbitt" are associated with Lewis' Nobel Prize-winning novel, the link is definitely less fixed in Polish than it is in the English language, especially that within the Polish literary canon **babbittry** is already epitomized by another literary character: the central character of Gabriela Zapolska's play *Mrs. Dulski's Morality* (*Moralność Pani Dulskiej*). Interestingly, the word *dulszczyzna* – derived from Mrs. Dulski's name in accordance to the same derivational principle as was the case with **babbittry** from **Babbitt** – functions as a popular cultural synonym of the term *kołtuneria*. Such a situation opens up space for experimentation: one could speculate that George Babbitt could – for instance – become Jerzy Koltun, George B. Dulsky, or George Babbitt Dulsky, thus allowing the interplay of concepts already existing in Polish culture with those of canonical value in American culture. Such speculations, however, make little sense, unless one intends to propose an alternative translation. The present day state of affairs is such

that the translator has chosen to sacrifice the possibility of the reader's recognition of the author's signature in the Polish text by detaching the name of the character from the sense of the generic noun to which it gave rise in favour of the name itself. The choice of such a strategy may have been the result of the adoption of an initial norm that would preclude the domestication of a quintessentially American novel, but the consistency in conforming to this norm comes at the cost of the lack of any visible connection between a popular phrase (**babbitt**) and the title of Lewis's work, and thus the impossibility of the analogous functioning of **Babbitt** in the respective spaces of American and Polish cultures.

The problems raised indicate that an intertextual approach to translation at the micro-level might be crucial for the reception of a translated work. When the translation does not concern a simple lexical element, but should include its intertextuality, a number of connotations in the source culture, and its function as a "slogan" of a canonical text and the author's signature element, the importance of the translation at the micro-level is not to be neglected [Zhao 2017: 122]. This discussion continues further in the context of *Ferdydurke* and Gombrowicz's *pupa*. First, however, *pupa* and its connotations need to be placed in the context of the author's work, whereas Gombrowicz's writing needs to be introduced in international context.

Infantilism, immaturity and "pupa"

Although the semantics of Gombrowicz's use of *pupa* is multifold, it is mainly rooted in one concept – infantilism. Led by the belief that literature should be a depiction of society [Malić 1973: 257], Gombrowicz uses infantilism to reveal the immaturity of society and the individuals within it, and the 'in-betweenness' in which people are trapped and unable to move forward. Zdravko Malić describes this transitory, yet, permanent state, as a situation when one, having started developing oneself in terms of culture, is not and cannot yet be mature enough to successfully exist within that culture [Malić 1973: 254].

The immaturity is portrayed by infantilism by means of two main approaches: one being a longing for the ideal of youthfulness, which in *Ferdydurke* is symbolized by purity, directness, and authenticity [Malić 1973: 256] and the other being a form one is forced into by a number of institutions, like school or family, which indoctrinate the individual by enforcing upon them

the established norms. Therefore, childhood and/or adolescence is a time of constant struggle in an attempt to establish one's identity in the context of the enforced forms. Zdravko Malić describes it as “developing sexual maturity, a world of sarcasm, a maniacal rebellion and a fierce fight of everything against everything,” and as “ugliness, monstrosity, sham, and the grotesque” [Malić 1973: 259; translation mine]. The real tragedy of the characters is that whenever they try to escape the template they were forced into by the society and/or by institutions they are immediately trapped in another one, at the same time being constantly infantilized, indoctrinated, and never able to reach the authenticity they long for.

Although childhood and adolescence are commonly free from connotations of social norms, Gombrowicz persistently demonstrates and reveals that the process of indoctrination, or even of destroying one's identity, starts at the beginning of one's life and there is no stage in a person's life which would be absolutely innocent or natural. Gombrowicz himself notices:

We strive after the maturity, power and wisdom of adulthood and at the same time, we are irresistibly drawn toward adolescence. But adolescence is inferiority. Being young means being less powerful, less mature, less wise. And here is an astounding contradiction: on the one hand a person wants to be perfect, wants to be God. On the other, s/he wants to be young and imperfect. An adult, then, is between God and the Young [Gombrowicz 1995: 163; translation mine].

The above-discussed paradox of the situation when one exists within a constant state of immaturity, which manifests itself both in a longing for the child's authenticity and in being moulded and indoctrinated by societal institutions, is demonstrated by Gombrowicz through infantilisms and reveals the immaturity of society and the failure of shaping one's mature personality while being trapped in hypocrisy and artificiality. The paradoxical form or the phenomenon of immaturity is introduced in *Ferdydurke* through the Polish word *pupa*. It means ‘buttocks’, but it also carries connotations of a baby or of caring for a baby, of childhood or innocence and is typically used by children or their caretakers. *Pupa* in *Ferdydurke* is from the beginning metaphorical and does not refer directly to the part of the body. It is rather imposed on people as an ubiquitous form and carries the significance of the above-discussed double meaning. Being imposed on somebody or “dealt to somebody” [Gombrowicz 2000:

68], it reduces an individual to the infantile level of immaturity, fragmentariness, and incompleteness. On the other hand, in Polish *pupa* ‘buttocks’ constitutes the minimum of a scale extending from the diminutive to the augmentative, with the vulgar word *dupa* being at the latter end. Furthermore, the verb *upupić*, a neologism created by Gombrowicz through affixation, is a clear reference to another vulgarism, *udupić*, carrying the meaning “to render somebody incapable to do anything; to defeat somebody”.¹ Therefore, in the context of Gombrowicz’s philosophy and the vocabulary provided above, *pupa* or *upupić* are infantilisms used by Gombrowicz ironically to present both the immaturity of a person and the social structures aimed at destroying one’s authenticity and individuality – structures that control an individual through all the stages of their life.

In the Polish language *upupić*, although still a neologism, functions as a clear reference to *Ferdydurke*. The hermeneutic significance of *pupa* and *upupić*, together with *geba*, *łydka* and *kupa*, is not to be ignored, as they are the key words carrying all the semantic meaning of the text [Buczek 2012: 181]. Being containers of a multitude of connotations both within and outside the novel, they function in the language as typical Gombrowiczian elements.

Considering the above discussion in light of the importance of translation of intertextual elements in canonical texts, we can observe that the decisions the translator makes in the process of translation of these elements are crucial for the reception in the target language. For this to be true, the translation has to be well received and deemed significant in countries where it appears. *Ferdydurke* has been placed on the Western Canon list by Harold Bloom along with two other Gombrowicz’s novels [Bloom 1994: 558]. In 2006’s *501 Must-Read Books*, it was featured as the only Polish title, with special praise bestowed upon the translator, Danuta Borchardt [Wilczek 2011: 9]. Additionally, for her translation of *Ferdydurke* Danuta Borchardt received the National Translation Award in 2011.² Undoubtedly, it is Borchardt’s translation which has entered the western canon. In “Kanon a przekład,” Wilczek [2011] emphasized the role of the translator in a foreign literary culture, which can be observed in the case of Adam Zagajewski, who is considered the second most

¹ In direct translation “to screw over” or “to fuck over” are the established equivalents.

² Given by the American Literary Translation Association.

recognized Polish poet in the US. In the Polish national canon, however, his position is not as prominent [Wilczek 2011: 9]. Taking all that into consideration, one may assume that the translation of *Ferdydurke* into English was a significant accomplishment for the translator and that it is recognized internationally. Thus, the decisions of the translator matter in a very broad context: not only at the textual level, but also in terms of connotations the translated elements evoke outside the text in the target culture.

Taking into consideration prior translations of *Ferdydurke* into mainstream languages, Danuta Borchardt was faced with an even greater challenge. The first two translations – Spanish and French were co-created by Gombrowicz himself and due to numerous elements where the target text departs from the original, they are said to be two original versions of the same novel and, additionally, equal to the Polish version [Niziołek. 2016: 46]. The only English translation, done by Mosbacher in 1961 on the basis of the French version, was criticized by many [Heydel 2004: 107-108 or Hoffman 2000] as inconsistent and a “chopped-up” version of the novel. Therefore, Borchardt’s was the first independent, internationally significant translation of the text. The challenge was to create an equivalent for Gombrowicz’s language in the English discourse, a task in which the translator found her experience as a psychiatrist very useful. As she herself admits, working with English-speaking schizophrenics emboldened her to create neologisms in English (e.g. *proffed*) [Borchardt 2000: xviii]. The translation of the Gombrowiczian key words, namely *pupa*, *gęba*, *łydka* was especially important in the context of the whole book. Because of their semantic weight they are considered untranslatable [Rogalińska 2014; Heydel 2004: 104-108]. This untranslatability is not a translator’s lack of skill [Heydel 2004: 103-104], but rather a situation when the meaning of a word escapes existing lexical elements. Therefore, finding a direct equivalent in the target language is impossible and the best method of translation would be to look for forms that carry similar connotations [Heydel 2004: 103]. It is not a matter of the translator’s skills or qualifications, but rather what is necessary is awareness of the fundamental differences in experiencing the world in the two cultures. This entails the knowledge of what the Polish school was like before World War I, and what was considered traditional and what modern [Heydel 2004: 103]. But in that case, in fact, there are not just two different languages involved here, as apart from Polish and English there

is also the Gombrowiczean language, in addition to the twisted reality introduced by Gombrowicz through that language. It consequently means that *Ferdydurke* is a fusion of both Polish semantics and connotations, as well as Gombrowiczean ones. Thus, the translation requires the creation of a new language, which in this case, would be Gombrowiczean English. As Magda Heydel notices, “the paradoxical translatability of Gombrowicz’s novel – well used by Danuta Borchardt – would be therefore based on the universality of Forms which were coined by Gombrowicz playing with certain realities” [Heydel 2004: 103; translation mine].

The Gombrowiczean key words under discussion, *pupa*, *gęba* and *łydka*, were translated by means of different techniques. For two of them Borchardt found equivalents in English (*gęba* – *mug*; *łydka* – *calf*) whereas *pupa*, which the present discussion is limited to, constitutes a separate problem.

“Pupa” – the translation

In the first (and so far the only) direct translation of *Ferdydurke* from Polish into English the word *pupa* was not translated. The translator, Danuta Borchardt, explained her choice in the translator’s note claiming that

[t]he Polish word *pupa* (pronounced “poopa”) presented a special problem. It means the buttocks, behind, bum, tush, rump, but not only these (nor any others that I considered) adequately conveys the sense in which Gombrowicz uses “pupa” in the text. While the “mug” is Gombrowicz’s metaphor for the destructive elements in human relationships, the *pupa* is his metaphor for gentle insidious, but definite infantilizing and humiliation that we inflict on one another. We made the decision to stay with the Polish word. [Borchardt 2000: xix]

The solution has gained both supporters and critics. While some scholars claim that the loss of the meaning of Gombrowicz’s neologism would be prevented if an English equivalent was used, [Rogalińska 2014], others state the opposite. Magda Heydel claims that Borchardt’s is the first translation of the word where translator’s sensitivity prevented the Gombrowiczean element from losing its meaning. Heydel refers here to the connotations of the spoken form of the word *pupa*: **poop** in baby talk and a sound expressing a despising irony [Heydel 2004: 111], which although do not carry the same basic meaning of the word, transfer significant

connotations of the Gombrowiczian term. At the same time she criticizes Mosbacher for introducing into the first English version numerous equivalents of *pupa* (e.g. “arch-bum” or “pretty little backside”), giving it as an example of the translator’s inconsistency and imprecision [Heydel 2004: 108]. The critique of using numerous equivalents was expressed also by Marta Buczek (with reference to the Slovak version of the novel) [Buczek 2012: 181] and by Konstanty Jeleński (addressing the French version) [quoted in Niziołek 2016: 45-46]. Nevertheless, it is worth remembering that the first translation into English was performed from the French version, where *pupa*, in a similar manner, is given many different equivalents. Furthermore, it is, after all, the translation approved by Gombrowicz himself, like in the Spanish translation where the word is translated as “culo,” “culito” or “culeito.” Gombrowicz replied to Jeleński’s criticism in *Walka o sławę* [1998] in the following way: “Considering variants of ‘pupa’ we both think that those variants to a certain extent compensate the dynamics of the language and do no harm” [as cited in Niziołek 2016: 46; translation mine].

Notwithstanding the above excerpt from the translator’s note, where the choice is explained, after I contacted Mrs. Danuta Borchardt,³ she directed me to her memoir where she admits the words she intended to use to translate “pupa” and “upupić” were “tush” and “to tush,” respectively. Later on, she writes:

However, Susan Sontag, who would be writing the “Foreword” to the book — which she later did, beautifully — put a spoke in the wheel: she said that this was a Yiddish-derived word and would not sit well with American readership. Just like that! The American Grande Dame of essays had tushed me. She tore the word out of my very own entrails and cast it away. [...] I was a fledgling translator and didn’t feel secure enough to put up a fight. When the editor suggested we use the Polish word *pupa*, I agreed. It was a good compromise. I have later heard pros and cons concerning this solution both from English and Polish readers. But as the years went by I would still hanker after “tush.” I still do [Borchardt 2017: 1073].

As the translator herself admits, it was not her choice to retain the Polish word *pupa*, and she would actually choose to translate it. Nonetheless, the book went into English markets with the borrowing and it must have

³ Presently, Mrs. Danuta Stachiewicz.

had its consequences in the reception of the book. The examples below cast a light on the problem.

Table 1. Translation of the word “pupa”.

Source text	Target text
... nie ma ucieczki przed gębą, jak tylko w inną gębę, a przed człowiekiem schronić się można jedynie w objęcia innego człowieka. Przed pupą zaś w ogóle nie ma ucieczki. Ścigajcie mnie, jeśli chcecie. Uciekam z gębą w rękach. [264]	... there is no escape from the mug, other than into another mug, and from a human being one can only take shelter in the arms of another human being. From pupa , however, there is absolutely no escape. Chase me if you want. I'm running away, mug in my hands. [281]
Pimko nie poszukiwałby mnie przez policję, tak daleko macki pedagogii pupiej chyba nie sięgały. [47-48]	Pimko would not call the Police to look for me, the tentacles of his pupa pedagogy surely did not extend that far. [46]
Widzieliście, jak złośliwie dydaktyczny Pimko mnie upupił [...] [67]	You saw how maliciously the doctri-naire Pimko had dealt me the pupa [...] [68]

As the given citations illustrate, the English version, mostly because of the difference in the derivational processes in both languages, has lost Gombrowicz's linguistic innovations, which in the original version constitute an element of the grotesque and ridiculous reality. While in Polish the three examples represent three different word categories, noun, adjective and verb respectively, and *pupa* is the only one that exists in the language outside Gombrowicz-related contexts, in English the form is the same in all the examples, and only in the case of “pupa pedagogy” one might talk about an adjective created by the zero derivation technique. The language of *Ferdydurke* is twisted both in the case of morphology and syntax, and has a uniquely Gombrowiczean style. Thus, losing the twist in the morphology or not applying a certain word formation strategy might seem to be a loss of a truly Gombrowiczean element, although admittedly, the expression „deal somebody the pupa” is a wordplay partly compensating for this loss. Of course, looking at the matter of the language in *Ferdydurke* through just one element (the translation of *pupa* and its derivations) is absolutely inadequate, as the grammar of both

languages allows for different word-formative and syntactic processes, and Danuta Borchardt applied the style typical for Gombrowicz in other parts of the text.

Notwithstanding the matter of word formation, what seems to me a very peculiar element of the analysed translation is the accidental parallelism of the possible interpretations of the word *pupa* in English. **Pupa** ['pju:pə] in the English language means:

an intermediate usually quiescent stage of a metamorphic insect (such as a bee, moth, or beetle) that occurs between the larva and the imago, is usually enclosed in a cocoon or protective covering, and undergoes internal changes by which larval structures are replaced by those typical of the imago. [Merriam – Webster Dictionary]

Mrs. Danuta Borchardt, after I asked her about the similarity of forms, kindly explained she did not take this into consideration, as there is little coincidence in the semantics of the two words and the form is similar only in writing, and not in pronunciation, with the Polish word *pupa* being more similar in form and in meaning to English **poop**. While I could not agree more with this point of view in the case of any context where the word is used in the spoken form, the reader of *Ferdydurke* – as long as they are not listening to an audiobook – is exposed only to the written form and thus, the coincidence between Polish *pupa* <'pu:pa> and English **pupa** <'pju:.pə> seems more relevant in this specific case. It is worth noting that the translator introduces the Polish meaning together with its pronunciation in her foreword, in order, as it seems, to pre-empt the reader's concerns with interpretation; still, even if one assumes that every reader starts reading the book with the translator's note, however naïve this might be, the existence of the word **pupa** in the English lexis and, thus, the connotations it evokes influence the reception of the novel. Readers do not assume that the application of lexical forms might be different than those they are familiar with. Entering the reality of a given text, they apply their previous understanding of the world [Jędrzejko 2001: 31]. Thus, words belonging to the lexis of our first language are inscribed in our subconscious and it is reasonable to assume it would not be sufficient to tell somebody that a word s/he has known to signify something means something different in a specific text. Even with that awareness, whenever the word occurs, we are more likely to recover the meaning we have been so far familiar with than the one intended by the

author, and the connotations might even mix with one another. Of course, this assumption is very much dependent on the context in which the word in question occurs, which will be discussed later on.

The interpretation and connotations the word *pupa* might bring to an English-speaking reader would depend on many variables like the reader's mindset, whether the translator's note has been read, or the context in which *pupa* occurs. Whatever the influence of those variables might be, the English word **pupa** and the connotations it might evoke for the reader are worth considering in light of the Gombrowiczean *pupa*.

English *pupa* in light of *Ferdydurke*

If one was to read **pupa** only in the context of English, despite the fact that the parallelism was coincidental, some elements of the Gombrowiczean "pupa" would still be preserved. English **pupa** evokes connotations of 'in-betweenness,' incompleteness, immaturity. No longer a larva and not yet an imago, **pupa** is associated with a state of change from the ugly and clumsy into the beautiful and graceful. Therefore, the state of existing in-between certain stages of life is common for both meanings, as well as connotations of immaturity and incompleteness. Perhaps the English word conveys them in a clearer way than Polish *pupa* does. What is more, Gombrowicz writes "... to be green because someone who is immature dunks and bathes you in greenness of his own" [Gombrowicz 2000: 9], which is only one of the references to the colour and as a consequence, to the world of nature in *Ferdydurke*. Gombrowicz uses **green** to talk about immaturity and naivety and English **pupa** very clearly refers to the world of nature. This added meaning coming from English **pupa** is not present so clearly in the Polish meaning. In both languages, **green** (Polish *zielony*) means **inexperienced**, but in Polish, *pupa* is more clearly associated to the human world, which allows for a different interpretation. Consequently, in English **pupa** carries no connotations of babies or of caring for them as well as, more generally, humanity. In this way, there is no place for the Gombrowiczean irony hiding in the use of an innocent term to talk about something which is anything but innocent – institutional systems indoctrinating individuals – not to mention the pun on the Polish vulgarisms *dupa* and *udupić*, which in *Ferdydurke* were implicit perhaps partly to introduce irony and partly because their literal application would be forbidden by the censorship of the time, which is yet another multifold

reference to the existing systems of indoctrination which Gombrowicz achieved by means of irony. Admittedly, the idea of indoctrination attached to the Gombrowiczean *pupa* can be extracted from the context in the English version of the book, so although the word play was lost, the essential meaning in that sense is not altered. Yet, what would be lost in the English meaning of **pupa** is infantilism – a characteristic device in Gombrowicz’s repertoire – for which Polish *pupa* constitutes a landmark symbol.

The above considerations provide a one-sided understanding of the word *pupa* in the English version of the book. While those connotations cannot be omitted, their significance for the English reader will vary depending on the variables mentioned earlier in the paper. The requirement for the reader would be to read the translator’s note and once this criterion is indeed met, the only variables that still remain are the individual mindset and the context in which the word occurs. This is illustrated in the following examples:

Table 2. Translation of the word “pupa” – possible interpretations I

Source text	Target text
Bańalnie zbełfrzony drobiu u boku bełfra olbrzymiego, który bełkocze jeno: – Cip, cip, kurka... Zasmarkany nosek... Kocham, e, e... Człowieczek, małuś, małuś, e, e, e, cip, cip, cip, cipuchna, Józio, Józio, Józiunio, Józieczek, male male, cip, cip, pupcia, pupcia , pcia... [22]	Tritely proffed by him, I ran in mincing steps by the side of the giant prof who muttered on: “Chirp, chirp, little chickie . . . The sniffing little nose . . . I love, ee, ee . . . Little fellow, little, little man, ee, ee, ee, chirp, chirp, chickadee, Joey, Joey, little Joey, tiny Joey, tinier and tinier, chirp, chirp, tiny, tiny little, little pupa . . .” [19]
– Pupa, pupa, pupa! Dziękuję za pamięć, drogi profesorze! Bóg zapłać, panie kolego, za nowego ucznia! Gdyby wszyscy umieli tak zdrabniać, byłibyśmy jeszcze dwakroć więksi, niż jesteśmy! Pupa, pupa, pupa. Czy uwierzy pan, że dorośli, sztucznie przez nas zdziecininnieni i zdrobnnieni, stanowią jeszcze lepszy element niż dzieci w stanie naturalnym?	“Oh, the pupa, pupa, pupa! Thank you for remembering us here, dear Professor! And God bless you, dear colleague, for the new pupil! If everyone were as good at belittling as you are, our school would be twice as big! The pupa, pupa, pupa. Would you believe that when we artificially belittle and infantilize adults we get better results than we do with children in their natural state?

<p>Pupa, pupa, bez uczniów nie byłoby szkoły życia by nie było! Polecam się pamięci i nadal, zakład mój bez wątpienia zasługuje na poparcie, metody nasze wyrabiania pupy nie mają sobie równych, a ciało nauczycielskie pod tym względem dobrane jest jak najstaranniej. [37-38]</p>	<p>Oh, the pupa, the pupa, there would be no school without pupils, and no life without school! I commend myself to you, my institution doubtless continues to deserve support, our methods of turning out the pupa have no equal, and the teaching body is meticulously selected with that in mind. [35-36]</p>
<p>A tymczasem pupa wzbijała się w górę i ziała miliardem iskrzących promieni nad światem, który był jak gdyby namiastką świata, wyiętą z kartonu, podmalowaną na zielono i oświeconą z góry palącym blaskiem. Bocznymi ścieżkami, unikając osiedli ludzich, zaczęliśmy przekradać się ku stacji, a droga była daleka – dwadzieścia parę kilometrów. Ona szła i ja szedłem, ja szedłem i ona szła i tak razem podtrzymując nasz chód szliśmy pod promieniami bezlitosnej, promiennej, jarzącej pupy infantylniej i infantylizującej. [258]</p>	<p>In the meantime the pupa rose and fired a billion glistening rays over a world that was only a substitute world, made of cardboard, touched up in green, lit from above with a burning glare. Avoiding human settlements, we slipped along out-of-the-way paths toward the railroad station, and it was a long way-about fifteen miles. She walked and I walked, I walked and she walked, and together we kept on walking under the rays of the merciless, brilliant, blazing, infantile, and infantilizing pupa. [274]</p>

The three examples leave place for more than one interpretation. Even if the reader is familiar with the meaning of the Polish word, in the above extracts *pupa* is so detached from its basic Polish meaning and is used in such a metaphorical way that the English reader might very well interpret it as the word they are familiar with from their native language. This might occur especially if one pays attention to another extract from the beginning of the novel where, although there is no mention of *pupa*, the main character talks about achieving maturity:

Table 3. Reference to the word “pupa” in English

Source text	Target text
<p>Gdy ostatnie zęby, zęby mądrości, mi wyrosły, należało sądzić – rozwój został dokonany, nadszedł czas nieuniknionego mordu, mężczyzna winien</p>	<p>When I cut my last teeth, my wisdom teeth, my development was supposed to be complete, and it was time for the inevitable kill, for the man to kill</p>

<p>zabić nieutulone z żalu chłopię, jak motyl wyfrunąć, pozostawiając trupą poczwarkę, która się skończyła. Z tumanu, z chaosu, z mętnych roz- zlewisk, wirów, szumów, nurtów, ze trzciny i szuwarów, z rechotu żabiego miałem się przenieść pomiędzy formy klarowne, skryształizowane – przyczesać się, uporządkować, wejść w życie społeczne dorosłych i rajcować z nimi. [7]</p>	<p>the inconsolable little boy, to emerge like a butterfly and leave behind the remains of the chrysalis that had spent itself. I was supposed to lift myself out of mists and chaos, out of murky swamps, out of swirls and roars, out of reeds and rushes, out of the croaking of frogs, and emerge among clear and crystallized forms: run a comb through my hair, tidy up my affairs, enter the social life of adults and deliberate with them. [3]</p>
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The literal reference to English **pupa** introduces the idea of transformation from a larva into a butterfly as a symbol of attaining maturity. In this particular context, “pupa” in the previous three examples might be interpreted as the intermediate stage between the larva and the imago which, although transitory and in accordance with nature, in this case is a symbol of entrapment between two forms, in a situation when one is passive and helpless. Nevertheless, in the three discussed extracts the word is presented out of context and other interpretations are possible. Would the understanding vary in the following examples?

Table 4. Translation of the word *pupa* - possible interpretations II

Source text	Target text
<p>Patrzcie – podstawowa część ciała, dobra, oswojona pupa jest podstawą, od pupy przeto zaczyna się akcja. Z pupy, jak z pnia głównego, rozchodzą się rozgałęzienia poszczególnych części, jako to palec u nogi, ręce, oczy, zęby, uszy, przy czym jedne części przechodzą nieznacznie w inne dzięki subtelnym i kunsztownym przetworze- niom. [68]</p>	<p>Look-that basic body part, the tame and kindly pupa is the basis, therefore, it is from the pupa that all action begins. It is from the pupa, as from the trunk of a tree, that the branching of individual parts, namely the toe, hands, eyes, teeth, ears, begins, and, at the same time, all those parts imperceptibly pass from one part to another in delicate and skillful transformations. [69]</p>

Jednakże dla was Forma i Styl wciąż jeszcze są pojęciami z dziedziny ściśle estetycznej – dla was styl jest li tylko stylem na papierze, stylem waszych opowiadań. Panowie, któż wypoliczkuje pupę, którą ośmielacie się zwracać do ludzi kłękając przed ołtarzem sztuki? [79]	Form and Style still belong strictly to the realm of the aesthetic – for your style is on paper only, in the style of your stories. Gentlemen, who will slap your pupa which you dare turn toward others as you kneel at the altar of art? [80-81]
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Here *pupa* is presented in the context where the commonly known English meaning does not fit well. Being listed among body parts would raise doubt even in the mind of a reader who has not read the translator's note. This is also true of the expression "slap your pupa," which does not sound natural if it is interpreted with the English word in mind. Although it seems understandable to expect unnatural constructions and to be suspicious of the author's intentions while reading *Ferdydurke*, in the case of the two examples provided above English **pupa** does not fit the context well.

The coincidental parallelism of possible interpretations of the word *pupa* results in a situation when the meaning intended by Gombrowicz is altered, whether by merging with the English meaning of the word or by the reader's subconscious connotations. Interestingly, the shared connotations of the words in both languages are significant; it could however distract the reader's attention from the infantilism and irony introduced by Gombrowicz. Furthermore, the above examples demonstrate how the interpretation of the same element could vary depending on the context in which it occurs.

Conclusion

The (non)translation of *pupa* illustrates how great an influence one word can have on a text and how the lack of the established equivalents triggering similar connotations in both languages can affect the interpretation of a text. Admittedly, the translator's idea to introduce the word **tush** could be less confusing and it would be possible to use it as a verb. It would however still lack the essential Gombrowiczian element, namely infantilism. Retaining the Polish word posed the problem of the possibility of different interpretations. On the one hand, the homographs in

both languages refer to a state of immaturity and incompleteness. On the other, *pupa*, being a signature Gombrowiczean term, ironically triggers connotations of innocence, while in fact it is a tool used by the society to indoctrinate individuals and deprive them of authenticity or to reveal their immaturity. The English form has no such potential, but neither does any other established equivalent. Thus, perhaps keeping the Polish word might have been a very fortunate idea after all. Admittedly, the translator has saved the neologism by not following the strategy of using a multitude of synonyms, unlike many other translators. The existing confusions about the form could be avoided by applying an italic type. Putting *pupa* in italics would alert the reader and would make them pay attention to the element and thus the overlapping of connotations might be less confusing.

Understanding that it is the translator whose work is canonized and that it is the translator's decisions that influence the reception of a text in a receiving culture leads to the conclusion that decisions made on the level of individual linguistic elements may acquire intertextual significance and play a role in creating the literary heritage of that culture. As for Gombrowiczean *pupa* and *upupić*, which exist as intertextual elements in the Polish literary tradition, they were transferred into English by Borchardt as "pupa" and "to deal somebody the pupa", which are forms already best recognized by the Western, Anglo-Saxon canon even though there used to be more popular ways of translating the elements, approved by Gombrowicz himself. **Pupa**, as a recognized English version of the word, serves as the author's "slogan" or a "signature" trait, although its outreach or usage are not yet as significant as in the Polish tradition. While in the Polish translation **to be or not to be** (*być albo nie być*) is of a similar meaning and importance to the original, **babbitt** and **babbitt** (Polish *koltun* and *koltuneria*), through domestication and parallelism of elements in the Polish literary tradition, substantially lessen the potential of being the author's "signature words." In the case of **pupa**, the coincidental parallelism of forms results in a multitude of lost and gained connotations, depending on individual conditions, which translates not only into the hermeneutic potential and actual reception of *Ferdydurke* in English, but also into the intertextual characteristics of Gombrowiczean **pupa**, both now and in the future. These considerations may serve as a starting point for a broader discussion of the process of canonization, hermeneutics, and translation.

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ABSTRACT

The present paper aims at demonstrating how the initial norms adopted by translators, affecting their operational norms, impact the hermeneutic potential and process of canonization of the target text—or, in other words, how the consistency of Gombrowicz’s philosophy as it is expressed in his works in the Polish language transforms when translated into English. Opening with an overview of the canonization of translated literature and canonical authors’ “signature words,” the paper concentrates on one of landmark Gombrowicz’s terms, the word *pupa*, and its function in the immanent poetics of the philosopher’s work and in his global vision of the human condition. Against such a backdrop, an analysis of the consequences of the English translator’s choice concerning this term is provided, simultaneously revealing the importance of “signature words” in the process of canonization of a translated text.

Key words: Gombrowicz, *Ferdydurke*, canonization, infantilism

STRESZCZENIE**Pupa, kanon zachodni i angielskie tłumaczenie *Ferdydurke***

Celem artykułu jest pokazanie, w jaki sposób decyzje dotyczące tłumaczenia słów-kluczy, czy też wyrażeń rozpoznawalnych dla autora, wpływają na hermeneutykę i kanonizację tekstu docelowego, przez przedstawienie, jak filozofia Gombrowicza w *Ferdydurke* w języku polskim zmienia się, kiedy jest przełożona na język angielski. Artykuł, rozpoczynający od omówienia procesu kanonizacji tłumaczonej literatury i kluczowych, rozpoznawalnych wyrażeń kanonicznych autorów, koncentruje się na jednym z najbardziej rozpoznawalnych słów-kluczy Gombrowicza – na wyrazie **pupa** i jego znaczeniu w kontekście *Ferdydurke*. Na tym tle przeprowadzona została analiza konsekwencji tłumaczenia tego terminu na język angielski, jednocześnie ujawniająca istotność tłumaczenia terminów oraz słów-kluczy w procesie kanonizacji tłumaczonych tekstów.

Słowa kluczowe: Gombrowicz, *Ferdydurke*, kanon, infantylizm