

Between appropriation and foreignness. The Reception of Gustave Flaubert's work in Poland

Gustave Flaubert, along with such authors as Marcel Proust or James Joyce, is recognized as a reformer of the novel, and the writer who sets up a polemical dialogue with the Romantic tradition on the one hand, and on the other, sets the general direction for the development of modernity. In the field of literary aesthetics, it is Flaubert who is credited with developing concepts related to radical reform of the narrative (subverting Balzac's style in the narrative, the auctorial narrative), a literature liberated from its biographical background, and a literature strongly related to detailed studies in psychology, history, and geography.

Flaubert, as writer and theorist of the novel, had a strong influence on Polish literary tradition. Already in the second half of the 19th century, there were discussions in this country about the importance of his work. Soon enough, translations were published of his most important works (*Madame Bovary*, *Salammô*). At the same time, Polish authors created a number of novels obviously styled on Flaubert's fiction – i.g. *Na skalach Calvados* of Antoni Sygietyński or *Cham* of Eliza Orzeszkowa.

Thus, the aim of the project is to survey the reception of Flaubert's work in Polish literature, beginning from mid-19th century (that is, from the first Polish statements about the French novelist), until today. Only such a widely designed research plan will allow for an answer to the question of Polish reception of Flaubert, and more generally, it will allow for development of a research method that can be used to analyse the modes of functioning of a foreign author (French, in this case) in the network of a target culture (Polish culture). Defined in this way, the absorption process of a foreign author conforms to the postulates formulated by André Lefevere in *Why Waste Our Time on Rewrites? The Trouble with Interpretation and the Role of Rewriting in an Alternative Paradigm* and by Marta Skwara in *Wyobraźnia badacza – od serii przekładowej do serii recepcyjnej* [The Researcher's Imagination: From Translation Series to Reception Series]. Consequently, the Polish reception of Flaubert in this project is analysed on three fundamental levels: 1) the presence of Flaubert's work and his biography in critical discourse and essay writing; 2) translations of Flaubert's work into Polish; 3) references to Flaubert's texts in texts by Polish authors, and Polish texts inspired by Flaubert's work.

This profiling of the research plan allows for a detailed reconstruction of the reception process, simultaneously making it possible to answer a number of questions about the development of the novel in Poland. As it turns out, the reaction of Polish authors to Flaubert's work was not homogeneous at all: critical reviews and essays suggest that the response ranged between the opposing poles of fascination and rejection. The history of translations of Flaubert's work seems equally interesting, allowing for the purely linguistic approach (translation understood as a linguistic activity) to the cultural approach (translation understood as a factor influencing the pattern and direction of development in target culture). The project makes it possible to develop, in a specific example, a more general approach to research in the presence of a foreign author in a target culture, which testifies for the project's wide-ranging potential in application to new, similar phenomena.