

**Polish literary prose in English after 1918
from the perspective of translation history and sociology:
Texts, people, institutions**

The aim of the project is to investigate the history of English post-1918 translations of Polish literary prose, paying particular attention to their makers and recipients – that is, translators, editors, and publishers who introduced the works of Polish authors to English-speaking countries, and readers, both professional (literary critics and scholars) and non-professional – as well as to Polish and foreign institutions supporting their publication.

The project involves preparing a database (an electronic catalogue of bibliographic entries) of English editions of Polish prose literature (novels, short stories, and literary non-fiction, i.e. essay and reportage) published after 1918 (regardless of the date of publication of the Polish original), which will verify and considerably expand existing partial bibliographies. Its analysis is going to reveal the most translated authors, texts, genres and themes, the most active translators and publisher, and the changes in these categories across the research timeframe of more than a hundred years – from Poland's regaining of independence to the present.

With regard to selected works, the most significant from the perspective of the target cultures (i.e. those with the greatest number of editions and/or translations), further research will focus on the history of translation production, with particular emphasis on institutional patronage (by Polish, émigré, international, and foreign institutions) and the role of the 'human factor': translators, editors, publishers, and possibly other intermediaries or stakeholders, such as literary agents or informal patrons of translation projects. The promoters of Polish literature in the English-speaking world after 1918 and the circumstances of translation commission/funding will be identified based on the analysis of a wide range of sources: from printed texts (including periodicals), through archive materials (correspondence; official documents), to interviews with people involved in bringing the works of Polish authors to English-speaking readers in late 20th and the 21st century. An analysis of what is known as translation paratexts, i.e. materials accompanying a given text and introducing it to the readers (introduction, afterword, footnotes, as well as the book cover and all information it contains) will also determine the marketing and interpretative strategies used in presenting and promoting the translations; for example, it will reveal to what extent emphasis was placed on the fact that particular texts and authors belong to the Polish tradition or on contexts more relevant to foreign readers, such as comparisons with anglophone authors, representatives of other national literatures, and/or the canon of world literature. The project will also examine the effectiveness of these efforts, i.e. the reception of English translations of Polish literature in various readerships over the decades. Articles and reviews in specialised periodicals and books will be collected and analysed, showing the reception of particular translations in academic circles (among foreign scholars of Polish literature), as will reviews in influential general periodicals and other testimonies of reception by professional literary critics, but also cursory mentions newspapers and magazines, and, with regard to the most recent period, online statements by 'lay' readers (including Amazon or Goodreads reviews), which, due to the data volume, will be analysed automatically using a special computer script. This part of the proposed research will establish how Polish literature was read in translation, how its image changed with time, and whether individual titles were received differently by different readerships and in different English-speaking countries (and in the global English of the Internet).

Thus-designed wide-ranging research in the history of English translations of Polish prose has not been carried out to date. The project will bring knowledge about the presence of Polish prose in English-speaking countries in a broad historical perspective, as well as more detailed insights into selected socio-political, institutional, and personal aspects of the emergence of literary translations from Polish into English. This will shed new light on the differences between the domestic canon of Polish literature and the works of Polish authors best known in English-speaking countries and in international circulation, signalled by scholars in translation studies and Polish and comparative literature, whose observations have inspired the project. Apart from a research monograph and articles presenting the research results, also made available to the public will be the database developed for the purposes of project, which will significantly facilitate further research into particular currents of literary transfer in the 20th and 21st centuries, also from a comparative perspective.