

**Selected cultural elements and allusions
in five Polish translations of F. Scott Fitzgerald's
*The Great Gatsby***

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Abstract

The Great Gatsby (1925) is considered the greatest literary achievement of Francis Scott Fitzgerald. Its first Polish translation was published in 1962. Presently, readers in Poland can choose from among six translations of this iconic work, with three of them added in 2021 and 2022, probably as a result of the entry of the book into the public domain in 2021. Fitzgerald, often regarded as a chronicler of the tumultuous Jazz Age in the United States, presents a socio-cultural narrative that invites reflection on how Polish translators dealt with the cultural elements and allusions pervasive in *The Great Gatsby*. This paper delves into selected cultural elements and allusions within the context of the five Polish translations of *The Great Gatsby*.

Keywords

The Great Gatsby, Francis Scott Fitzgerald, Polish translations of *The Great Gatsby*, translation of cultural elements, translation of allusions

**Wybrane elementy kulturowe i aluzje
w pięciu polskich przekładach powieści
Wielki Gatsby F. Scotta Fitzgeralda**

Abstrakt

Wielki Gatsby (1925) to największa powieść amerykańskiego prozaika Francisca Scotta Fitzgeralda. Powieść ta została wydana w pierwszym polskim przekładzie dopiero 37 lat po ukazaniu się oryginału. Obecnie polski czytelnik ma już do wyboru sześć tłumaczeń powieści. W 2021 r. powieść tę przestały obowiązywać prawa autorskie, co z pewnością miało swój udział w powstaniu w 2022 r. dwóch nowych polskich przekładów *Wielkiego Gatsby'ego*. Fitzgerald uważany jest za kronikarza burzliwego okresu w Stanach Zjednoczonych – epoki jazzu. Kronikalny charakter pisarstwa Fitzgeralda skłania do refleksji, w jaki sposób na przestrzeni lat polscy tłumacze radzili sobie z przekładem elementów kulturowych i aluzji, w które obfituje *Wielki Gatsby*. Niniejszy artykuł omawia wybrane elementy kulturowe i aluzje w kontekście pięciu polskich przekładów powieści *Wielki Gatsby*.

Słowa kluczowe

Wielki Gatsby, Francis Scott Fitzgerald, polskie przekłady *Wielkiego Gatsby'ego*, tłumaczenie elementów kulturowych, tłumaczenie aluzji

1. Introduction

The Great Gatsby (1925) is considered the most salient writing success of American novelist Francis Scott Fitzgerald. Published worldwide in both its original form and translated into over 40 languages, the novel has gained notable traction, particularly in Italy, with at least fifteen Italian translations to its credit (Wardle 2018: 213-233). Beyond its literary impact, *The Great Gatsby* serves as a wellspring of inspiration for artists, often being the foundation for theatrical plays and film adaptations. Additionally, the novel has been a focal point of extensive academic discussions, predominantly in the United States, Great Britain and

various European and Asian countries. The year 2021 marked a pivotal moment for the novel as it entered the public domain, contributing to its heightened global popularity. The publication of three new Polish translations in 2021 and 2022 exemplifies the enduring recognition and continued growth in appreciation of this literary classic.¹

2. Cultural elements in translation

Numerous intertextual references and cultural elements within *The Great Gatsby* are not expressed explicitly; rather, they engender allusions that demand a certain level of cultural, social and historical erudition from the reader. According to Krzysztof Hejwowski (2012: 71), cultural elements encompass those parts of the text closely tied to a specific culture. He further emphasizes (2012: 71-72) that

We are concerned here with such elements of the text that have a distinct connection to the culture of a specific country. In translation, these elements share a common challenge: their cultural specificity (the fact that they are characteristic only of the source culture or better known in the source culture) poses translation problems.²

This cultural specificity is vividly present in elements such as proper names, terms referring to political systems, educational systems, legal matters, customs, holidays, religious practices or forms of address like greetings or farewells (Hejwowski 2012:

¹ There are six Polish translations of *The Great Gatsby*. First by Ariadna Demkowska-Bohdziewicz (1962), second by Jędrzej Polak (1994), third by Jacek Dehnel (2013), fourth by Kazimierz Cap (2021), fifth by Arkadiusz Belczyk (2022) and sixth by Adam Zabokrzycki (2022). The publisher refers to Kazimierz Cap's rendition as a literary reinterpretation (opracowanie literackie) rather than a strict translation. For this reason, the present paper will examine excerpts from the other five translations, excluding the translation by Kazimierz Cap from the analysis.

² All the quotations from Polish sources are translated by the author of this paper unless otherwise indicated.

71-72). Bożena Tokarz (2008: 8) observes that during the translation process, the meaning of the original text undergoes changes, as “background knowledge, literary and cultural tradition, social norms, typical associative trajectories, ideas, as well as the linguistic usages, and the world model embedded in it, differ for the recipients of the original and the translated text”. The translator’s choices, therefore, significantly shape the reader’s understanding of the cultural content. Consequently, it may become challenging for the reader of the translation to fully grasp the cultural nuances that remain culturally closer to and better understood by the recipient of the source text. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that the individual cognitive attitude of readers also determines the understanding of a culturally saturated content.

Roman Lewicki explored the role of the recipient of the translated text in the context of cultural elements and linked this aspect to the concept of foreignness in translation. Lewicki (2013: 320) believes that the level of foreignness of the translated text is not primarily determined by the nature of the original text but largely depends on the perspective of the translation’s recipient:

[...] foreignness in translation is not dictated by the original author, the original language, or an external authority, such as the translation scholar, rather, it is shaped by the recipient. It is the recipient who determines those features of the text that distinguish it from others and make it foreign [...].

Lewicki (2013: 320) grounds this assertion in the environmental and psychological conditions of readers, which manifest not only in the context of the text reception but also extend to other facets of a person’s social performance. He distinguishes two groups of readers: the first seeks the security of communication, implying limited tolerance for unfamiliarity. The second group demonstrates a curiosity about the diversity of the world, displaying openness to foreignness, or even expects it in trans-

lations. It follows that the level of foreignness in a given text is not determined by the sender of that text (including the translator) but depends on the cognitive attitude of the recipient of the translation. In this perspective, the evaluation of the translator's decision within the translation of a given text would remain largely limited, i.e. without feedback from all the recipients, which is rather impossible to obtain.

Therefore, to discuss the differences in the translation of cultural elements, one should, to some extent, adopt a generalised approach, as Dorota Gutfeld (2012: 16) astutely proposes. She views a foreign element in a text as

the one of which familiarity (or knowledge of its associations) could be more reliably demonstrated by a hypothetical ideal representative of the source culture (or rather its simplified model) than by a hypothetical ideal representative of the target culture (or its simplified model).

The hypothetical ideal representative of a culture, as Gutfeld mentions, is essentially a projection of the reader, likely envisioned by the original author and subsequently by the translator. In practice, identifying such an ideal reader is not a straightforward task. The comprehension of cultural elements, both in the source and the target texts, is shaped not only by cultural background but also by a whole range of other factors, such as upbringing, education, age and individual cognitive abilities of the reader. For this reason, Gutfeld's concept of a hypothetical ideal reader is applied also in this paper, facilitating the examination of cultural elements in the Polish translations of *The Great Gatsby*.

The cultural elements are also allusions and intertextual references, which are omnipresent in the prose of F. Scott Fitzgerald, in particular in *The Great Gatsby*. Olgierd Wojtasiewicz (2007: 81-82) refers to the issue of allusions in translation. He distinguishes between erudite allusions and linguistic allusions. Erudite allusions are characterised by the fact that their

“balance point lies in their content, and at the same time they always refer to individual, unique facts (a historical event; an anecdote [...], an artistic idea; a custom or belief derived from a worldview <<idea>>, etc.)”. Linguistic allusions, on the other hand, no longer involve the content itself but the form of its expression. Linguistic allusions concern “recurrent phenomena, which are how different people use a given language”. Within the framework of linguistic allusions, Wojtasiewicz (2007: 82) distinguishes e.g. those concerning the use of dialects, sociolects or the forms of addressing others. Ritva Leppihalme (1997: 7) points out that authors often use allusions “to call attention to one’s learning or wide reading [...], to enrich the work by bringing in the new meanings and associations, [or as] an attempt to characterise people, or suggest thoughts or unconscious impressions and attitudes in characters [...]”. Wojtasiewicz (2007: 71) believes that in translation, the possibility of misunderstanding the allusion increases due to the reader’s lower degree of erudition related to the source culture. Therefore, Fitzgerald’s prose, which is rich in references to the socio-cultural life of America, does pose a challenge both to the translators and the readers.

3. Cultural elements in five Polish translations of *The Great Gatsby*

Researchers interested in Fitzgerald’s prose often tend to highlight the historiographical aspects of his work. In 1942, Alfred Kazin (1995: 316) wrote that Fitzgerald had been the historian of his generation and its most recognizable symbol. Almost half a century later, Peter B. High (2000: 143) stated in a similar vein that “Fitzgerald’s best books form a kind of spiritual history of the Lost Generation”. The collection of short stories *The Tales of the Jazz Age* (1922) considerably contributed to the writer’s status as the chronicler of the era.

Contemporary scholars also perceive Fitzgerald’s work as firmly embedded in a historical and cultural context. Kirk

Curnutt (2007: 112) points out that “today, most Fitzgerald scholars read his work against the backdrop of the 1920s and 1930s, arguing that they have much to teach us about those eras”. Alisson Morretta, in her book *F. Scott Fitzgerald and the Jazz Age*, describes how the period of the 1920s influenced Fitzgerald’s writing. Morretta (2015: 84) finds the writer a historian of the American society and concludes that in *The Great Gatsby*, Fitzgerald captured the public mood during the economic boom and the cultural changes in the 1920s. Michał Sprusiński (1982: 5), a Polish editor and translator, aptly points out that “critics anointed Fitzgerald as a prophet of the *Jazz Age*. This was the assessment of Fitzgerald’s extraordinary talent for words and observations of manners, which he revealed by registering the rapid transformations of American morality in the post-World War I era”.

3.1. “The man who fixed the World’s Series”

In *The Great Gatsby*, a reference to the culture and history of the USA in the early 20th century occurs when the narrator, Nick Carraway, meets one of the novel’s antagonists Meyer Wolfshiem. This man is closely connected to the criminal world and is involved in the illegal alcohol trade and gambling. Fitzgerald partially based this character on the Jewish mafia leader in the USA, Arnold Rothstein, who was suspected of bribing the players of the Chicago White Socks baseball team. This bribery led the team to lose the final games during the league championship in 1919 (Tate 2007: 101).

When Nick inquires about what Meyer does for a living, Gatsby replies that he is a gambler, and to confirm this information he adds:

He’s the man who fixed the World’s Series back in 1919. (F 71)³

³ In the extracts quoted for the analysis, I use the following abbreviations for the original text of *The Great Gatsby* and its Polish translations: F for F. Scott Fitzgerald (Fitzgerald 2000), DB for Ariadna Demkowska-Bohdziewicz

To on w tysiąc dziewięćset dziewiętnastym zrobił tę machlojkę na Jesiennych Rozgrywkach baseballowych. (DB 96)

To facet, który w 1919 załatwił Światową Ligę baseballa. (P 104)

To jest facet, który w 1919 roku ustawił finały Ligi Baseballu. (D 90) – a footnote

To on ustawił finały bejsbolowe w 1919 roku. (B 66)

To jest ten facet, który ustawił World Series w 1919 roku. (Z 91) – a footnote

Gatsby informs Nick that Wolfshiem is responsible for the abuse of The World's Series final games. Fitzgerald thus makes an allusion to actual events in 1919, specifically a corruption scandal called the Black Sox Scandal. The crime involved the bribery of eight players of the Chicago White Sox, a team favoured in the games. The Chicago White Sox players were alleged to have deliberately played poorly to cause their team to lose in five out of eight matches. The losses were in turn associated with large profits for the gambling world (Johnson 2002: 30-44). Wolfshiem's involvement in the manipulation of the 1919 baseball league finals is for many authors the basis for linking this figure with the real-life gambler Alfred Rothstein. In the Polish translations of *The Great Gatsby*, Jacek Dehnel and Adam Zabokrzycki added footnotes at this point, where they explain the genesis and consequences of the *Black Sox Scandal*. According to Daniel A. Nathan (2005: 1), the Black Sox Scandal was an event that was widely known to Americans in the 1920s and remains recognizable till today. The Polish reader may have some difficulties with cultural or historical associations here; therefore, footnotes certainly help to comprehend the allusion intended by Fitzgerald. Demkowska-Bohdziewicz also noted the need to clarify the

(Fitzgerald 1962), P for Jędrzej Polak (Fitzgerald 1994), D for Jacek Dehnel (Fitzgerald 2013), B for Arkadiusz Belczyk (Fitzgerald 2022a), Z for Adam Zabokrzycki (Fitzgerald 2022b).

cultural element here, translating the World's Series as *Jesienne Rozgrywki baseballowe* (Autumn Baseball Games). The verb *załatwił* (dealt with) in Polak's translation does not fully indicate that the text is about the illegal activities of gamblers, but in the following statement of the narrator, the translator already makes it clear that it is about an illegal affair.

I remembered, of course, that the World's Series had been fixed in 1919. (F 71)

Rzecz jasna pamiętam aferę w Światowej Lidze w 1919. (P 104)

The Polish translators decided to either use a footnote or to explicate the cultural element that is the final baseball games of *the World's Series*. It should be noted that *the World Series* is also called *the Fall Classic*, since they are usually played in October or other autumn months (Nathan 2005: 124). For this reason, Demkowska-Bohdziewicz's decision to use the descriptive equivalent *Jesienne Rozgrywki baseballowe* (Autumn Baseball Games) is the most appropriate given the translator's general strategy of trying not to overuse footnotes. Dehnel's decision for a detailed footnote is a consequence of the strategy that the translator adopted throughout the translation, which he informed about in the afterword: "In my translation, I tried to include all the allusions of the original, which are not necessarily clear to today's reader; so I decided to introduce footnotes" (Dehnel 2013: 219). In the discussed footnote Dehnel (2013: 90) wrote:

This is the "Black Sox Scandal": the 1919 championship, the MLB league finals, was fixed by a gangster and gambler Arnold Rothstein, the model character for *The Great Gatsby's* Wolfsheim. Eight Chicago White Sox players, bribed by the New York Mafia, led to a loss to the Cincinnati Reds; they were all banned from the league for life.

There is one substantive issue regarding Dehnel's footnote which is worth noting. The translator has synthesised the circumstances concerning the 1919 finals, but the statement that those games "were fixed by the gangster and gambler Arnold Rothstein" appears to be an overgeneralisation. In fact, Rothstein was not directly responsible for bribing the players of the Chicago White Sox team, although he did know of it and used it in betting, thus earning at least \$350,000 (Nathan 2005: 33-34). The author of Rothstein's biography, Leo Katcher (1994: 139), believes that the gangster did not orchestrate the Chicago team's loss, but his reputation and wealth were used to bribe the players. According to Katcher (1994: 139-140), Rothstein's involvement in the whole scandal was that he did not bother to organise it. However, the information included by Dehnel should not be regarded as particularly unreliable, as some authors often attribute Rothstein with direct involvement in bribing the players of the Chicago White Sox, in consequence encouraging a factual discrepancy.⁴

3.2. "A cousin of Kaiser Wilhelm's"

In the novel, there is plenty of conjecture about Jay Gatsby. Some characters claim that he was a German spy during World War I or that he killed a man. All these rumours make Gatsby mysterious and his past vague. During the narrator's visit to the flat Tom Buchanan rents for his lover Myrtle Wilson, her sister Catherine suggests that Jay is closely related to the last German emperor, Wilhelm II Hohenzollern, which is why Gatsby has such a large fortune:

⁴ Hensley (2007: 22) comments that Rothstein is credited with rigging the 1919 finals. Nathan (2005: 33) notes that shortly after the scandal came to light, the press at the time blamed Rothstein for bribing the Chicago White Sox players. Tate (2007: 370), in turn, claims that no crime has ever been proven against Rothstein.

Well, they say he's a nephew or a cousin of Kaiser Wilhelm's. That's where all his money comes from. (F 35)

Wie pan, mówią o nim, że to kuzyn czy siostrzeniec cesarza Wilhelma. Stąd ma tyle forsy. (DB 45)

Wie pan, mówią, że jest siostrzeńcem albo kuzynem cesarza Wilhelma. Stąd ma tyle forsy. (P 51)

Podobno jest bratankiem czy tam kuzynem kajzera Wilhelma. Stąd ta cała jego forsa. (D 43)

Mówią, że jest bratankiem albo kuzynem cesarza Wilhelma. I stąd ma tyle pieniędzy. (B 33)

Wie pan, mówią, że jest bratankiem czy tam kuzynem cesarza Wilhelma. No i stamtąd ta cała jego forsa. (Z 44)

In the Polish translations, Catherine's language seems more colloquial than in the original text, because the noun *money* is translated as the informal *forsa* (Eng. *kale*). Surprisingly four out of five translators agree on such a colloquial stylisation of her idiolect, especially since it was not indispensable here to compensate for another informal expression. The most likely justification here is that Catherine's behaviour towards Nick is noticeably direct from the beginning. The woman quickly sits close to the narrator and whispers various stories in his ear, which can be regarded as uncommon behaviour during a first meeting. The differences in the translations appear also in the case of the word *nephew*. These discrepancies result from the well-known issue that in English nephew may be both a sister's son and a brother's son (Stanisławski 1997: I, 559).

The translation of the monarchical title Kaiser is particularly notable in this passage, as in English, it refers to any German emperor, particularly Wilhelm II (Collins Dictionary online). It should be noted, however, that in English-speaking countries, the term Kaiser acquired a pejorative character and

evoked negative associations (Definitions.net online). Demkowska-Bohdziewicz, Polak, Belczyk and Zabokrzycki ignored this linguistic allusion and translated the title Kaiser as *Cesarz* (Emperor). Such a solution is not incorrect, as Wilhelm II is, of course, the German emperor, but in Polish, the term used by Fitzgerald has its direct equivalent. It is the word *Kajzer*, and, just as in English, it carries an unkind overtone. According to *Słownik języka polskiego*, *Kajzer* means “A German emperor (with an ironically dislikeable tinge) (Doroszewski 1964: Vol. III, 469)”. The term *Kajzer* evokes similar associations both for English and Polish readers. Who we have in mind here is the contemporary reader of *The Great Gatsby*. For the reader from the 1920s, the allusions to World War I certainly evoked different emotions and associations. When I write of similar associations for the American and Polish reader, I mean a negative emotional colouring, but one triggered by different historical events. The history of the USA lacks, for instance, the notion of “zaborca” (invader, annexationist), which is well known to many generations of Poles and has political and historical associations.

Moreover, in Dehnel’s translation, the term Kaiser acquires some intertextuality. In 2012, the book by David Olusoga and Casper W. Erich entitled *The Kaiser’s Holocaust* (2011) was translated into Polish as *Zbrodnia Kajzera*. The book depicts the genocide perpetrated in 1904-1907 by the German Empire troops against the African Herero and Nama tribes. In both the English and Polish titles, *Kajzer* refers to Wilhelm II, who was the German emperor during the genocide described. The statement that Dehnel was familiar with this book and wanted to refer to it in his translation might seem precipitate, were it not for the fact that the translation of *Zbrodnia Kajzera* was done by Piotr Tarczyński, who is Jacek Dehnel’s life partner. Furthermore, prior to the publication of the third translation of *The Great Gatsby*, Dehnel and Tarczyński collaboratively translated Edmund White’s novel *Hotel de Dream* (2007). It confirms their close professional cooperation at the time, which may have resulted in the translation decision discussed here.

3.3. “A man like James J. Hill”

The day before Gatsby’s funeral his father, Mr. Gatz, arrives to New York. He is deeply affected by his son’s death but looks at his house with a sense of astonishment and admiration. During a conversation with Nick Carraway, he expounds upon Gatsby’s intellectual brilliance and the promising future that lay before him. Then, Mr. Gatz compares his son to the railway magnate James J. Hill (1838-1916). Hill considerably contributed to building railways in the United States and thus became known as The Empire Builder. He was an example of how one can make a fortune while working for the good of the country (Malone 1996: xiii). James J. Hill lived in St. Paul on Summit Avenue, the street where Fitzgerald grew up. Fitzgerald’s family successively rented several flats and houses in St. Paul’s representative Summit Avenue neighbourhood (Curnutt 2007: 14). According to Matthew Bruccoli (1991: 26), Fitzgerald felt embarrassed that his parents did not own a house but were forced to rent. Fitzgerald knew that he lived in the best neighbourhood in the city but felt that his family did not belong to the financial elite of St. Paul, whose representative was James J. Hill. As stated by Kyra Stromberg (1998: 16), Fitzgerald “always felt poor among the rich [...], his developing skills and the uncertainty of social position empowered him in the ambition to achieve what the rich did, or even more”.

It is noteworthy that James J. Hill knew Fitzgerald’s grandfather, adding a layer of personal significance to the historical figure. For Fitzgerald then, Hill did not remain a mere historical figure and the reference to him in *The Great Gatsby* had an autobiographical dimension. The reference to James J. Hill as a prominent figure in US history is an important cultural element and an allusion to Fitzgerald himself (Tredell 2011: 2, 7). The name James J. Hill appears in the novel once, when Gatsby’s father, Mr. Gatz’s, talks to the narrator:

If he'd of lived, he'd of been a great man. A man like James J. Hill. He'd of helped build up the country. (F 160)

Gdyby żył, zostałby wielkim człowiekiem. Takim jak ten finansista James J. Hill, któremu zawdzięczamy nasze koleje. Przyczyniłby się do rozwoju kraju. (DB 216-217)

Gdyby jeszcze pożył, byłby wielkim człowiekiem. Takim jak James J. Hill. Przyczyniłby się do rozbudowy kraju. (P 229) – a footnote

Gdyby żył, zostałby wielkim człowiekiem. Takim jak James J. Hill. Pomógłby budować kraj. (D 201) – a footnote

Gdyby żył, zostałby wielkim człowiekiem. Takim jak James J. Hill. Pomógłby budować ten kraj. (B 146)

Gdyby dalej żył, toby został się wielkim człowiekiem. Jak ten James J. Hill. Pomógłby budować ten kraj. (Z 200) – a footnote

Three Polish translators decided to use a footnote here to provide the reader with a basic understanding of who James J. Hill was. Moreover, in the 2000 English edition of *The Great Gatsby*, there is also a note at this point:

James J. Hill: A railroad tycoon who lived in Fitzgerald's home town, St. Paul, Minnesota. He built the Great Northern Railroad, which linked the Great Lakes with the Pacific Coast. Fitzgerald alludes to him several times in his work (Tanner 2000: 177).

Dehnel's and Zabokrzycki's commentaries⁵ are more extensive than the one by Polak. Their notes contain more information

⁵ Polak's note: "Amerykański potentat finansowy, budowniczy kolei – uwaga tłumacz" (Polak 1997: 229). Dehnel's note: "James Jerome Hill (1838–1916) – urodzony w Kanadzie amerykański finansista. Po kryzysie 1873 roku, kiedy zbankrutowały liczne linie kolejowe, Hill zainwestował w koleje i wybudował mierzącą 2,7 tysięcy kilometrów transkontynentalną Great Northern Railway z St. Paul w Minnesocie do Seattle w stanie Washington. Zyskał sobie tym przydomek „budowniczego imperium”. Przyjaźnił się z dziadkiem autora" (Dehnel 2013: 201). Zabokrzycki's note: "James Jerome Hill (1838-1916),

about the achievements of Hill and reveal his acquaintance with Fitzgerald's grandfather. Dehnel thus confirms his statement, acknowledged in the afterword, that his translation would not omit any allusions made by the original author. The relatively extensive, as for a footnote, discussion of James J. Hill by Dehnel may also result from the fact that in the afterword to his translation, Dehnel uses this character as an example to highlight the differences between his translation and the one by Demkowska-Bohdziewicz's. Dehnel (2013: 2018) states, for example, that it was more difficult for Demkowska-Bohdziewicz "to reach various details, concerning famous financiers or stars of the 1920s. Demkowska-Bohdziewicz tried to bring these figures closer by encrusting the text with an annotation". Dehnel adds that Demkowska-Bohdziewicz worked without access to many studies and the Internet, which may have influenced the omission of certain references in her translation. In light of the sources available to me, Dehnel's suggestion appears illegitimate, because Demkowska-Bohdziewicz had access to many materials, among others, in the library of the American embassy. In private correspondence with me, Demkowska-Bohdziewicz's daughter, Anna Bohdziewicz (2017), wrote about her mother the following:

Mum visited the Library at the American Embassy and the reading room at the British Council. There, she read the press and was able to borrow books [...]. After 1956, the Iron Curtain in Poland was very perforated and we really had access to various information. For example, at the Iluzjon cinema, you could watch a lot of classic American films from the 1920s and 1930s, which was a great help. The Iluzjon cinema was then located just off Plac Trzech Krzyży where we lived. As a child, I watched all the classics of world cinema there. Without a few "indecent films", of course.

kanadyjsko-amerykański biznesmen. Miał przydomek "Budowniczy imperium". Dyrektor generalny rodziny linii kolejowych kierowanych przez Great Northern Railway, obsługujący znaczny obszar Górnego Środkowego Zachodu, północnych Wielkich Równin i północno zachodniego Pacyfiku. Przyjaciół dziadka F.S. Fitzgeralda" (Zabokrzycki 2022: 200).

Naturally, one must agree with Dehnel that Demkowska-Bohdziewicz did not have access to studies that appeared after 1962. On the other hand, the fact that she “encrusted” the text with notes, as mentioned by Dehnel, proves her understanding of the original allusions. In Demkowska-Bohdziewicz’s translation, James J. Hill is “ten finansista James J. Hill, któremu zawdzięczamy nasze koleje” (Eng. that financier James J. Hill, to whom we owe our railways) (DB 216-217). The technique used by Demkowska-Bohdziewicz can be described as non-translation plus additional explanation. According to Jan van Coillie (2016: 126), the additional explanation to proper names in translation may deprive the text of its function, e.g. humour, but it does not happen in Demkowska-Bohdziewicz’s translation. The information which was implicit in the original text of *The Great Gatsby* is indeed presented explicitly in her translation, but thanks to this solution, the Polish text retains its informative function without the need to use a footnote.

3.4. The “underground pipe-line to Canada”

In F. Scott Fitzgerald’s *The Great Gatsby*, the theme of honesty is underscored through allusions to corruption in sport and references to figures in the criminal world. This exploration of honesty is intricately linked to the historical backdrop of the National Prohibition Act, which came into effect on January 16, 1920. The Act, aimed at prohibiting the sale, manufacture and transportation of alcohol, was a catalyst for increased lawlessness in the United States (Michalek 2004: 107-108). Despite its intentions, the Prohibition Act was widely disregarded, leading people to resort to various means, including homemade production and smuggling, to obtain alcohol. Notably, bootleggers emerged as key players in this illicit trade, constructing illegal breweries or importing alcohol, primarily from Canada, by ships and trucks (Gross 1998: 35-36).

The Prohibition period significantly increased the scale of illegal bootlegging, leading to rapid enrichment among criminals.

The secrecy and glamour surrounding Gatsby, coupled with the extravagance of his parties, fuelled widespread gossip about him. In Chapter VI of *The Great Gatsby*, the narrator recounts a visit by a New York journalist to Gatsby's home. The journalist, seeking Gatsby's comment on an unspecified matter, reflects the prevailing mystery surrounding the enigmatic host. One rumour circulating about Gatsby suggested his involvement in smuggling alcohol from Canada through an underground pipeline, as the narrator cryptically notes:

Contemporary legends such as the "underground pipe-line to Canada" attached themselves to him, (F 94)

Współczesne legendy, jak na przykład legenda o „podziemnych kontaktach z Kanadą” (DB 126)

Współczesne legendy, takie jak ta o „podziemnym rurociągu do Kanady”, przyłgnęły do niego na dobre (P 136)

Łączono z nim rozmaite współczesne legendy, jak tę o „podziemnym wódkociągu do Kanady” (D 119)

Łączono go ze współczesnymi legendami, jak ta o „podziemnym rurociągu z Kanady” (B 87)

Przyklejały się do niego bieżące sensacje, takie jak „podziemny whisky do Kanady” (Z 119)

In addition to the speculation that Gatsby may be Kaiser Wilhelm II's nephew, he was linked with an alleged underground pipeline transporting alcohol between the United States and Canada. In reality, alcohol was illegally transported to the USA from Canada, Mexico and Cuba by trucks or on ships, and the existence of the pipeline was just a popular legend in the Prohibition era (Stoltman 2019: 65). In the Polish translations, Dehnel and Zabokrzycki chose to clarify the allusion present in the original, but without using a footnote. Demkowska-Boh-

dziewicz omits the noun *pipe-line* in her translation, but the collocation *podziemne kontakty* (underground contacts) directly points to Gatsby's possible dishonest dealings. In the original text, the attribution of dishonesty to Gatsby is contingent upon the reader correctly understanding the allusion to an underground pipeline transporting alcohol. Demkowska-Bohdziewicz's translation, however, takes a somewhat explicative approach. In her rendition, the association with Jay's dishonest dealings is partially externalised and explained to the Polish reader.

Dehnel and Zabokrzycki also hint at why the narrator is talking about an underground pipeline, but by using the terms *wódkociąg* (vodka pipeline) and *whiskociąg* (whisky pipeline), the translators make it clear that Gatsby's relationship with the criminal world has to do with alcohol smuggling.

3.5. Sixteen Lewis guns and the insignia of three German divisions

As already noticed, Fitzgerald used references to the World War I in *The Great Gatsby*. In 1917, the United States joined the War, which was the country's first significant involvement in a military conflict in Europe after years of isolationism (Tredell 2011: 9). American troops, including many young soldiers, were deployed to the front lines in Europe. Participating alongside French forces, they engaged in the offensive in the Argonne, aiming to sever German forces from communication lines and shift the front line eastwards (Lengel 2014: 15-17). In the novel, both Nick and Jay are depicted as participants in these battles. According to James H. Meredith (2004: 181), the characters' experiences and memories from Europe contribute to the building of mutual credibility and the establishment of a closer bond. Prior to Gatsby introducing himself to Nick at the party, their conversation and relationship were already rooted in soldierly memories.

“Your face is familiar,” he said, politely. “Weren’t you in the Third Division during the war?”

“Why, yes. I was in the Ninth Machine-gun Battalion.”

“I was in the Seventh Infantry until June nineteen-eighteen. I knew I’d seen you somewhere before.”

We talked for a moment about some wet, gray little villages in France. (F 48)

Gatsby ultimately reveals a lack of full honesty, and his ostentatious accounts of European travels cause embarrassment to the narrator. However, Kirk Curnutt observes that Nick never entirely doubted Jay’s tales of battlefield achievements, as such narratives were commonplace among veterans of the time. Notably, Fitzgerald’s allusive writing in *The Great Gatsby* draws parallels between Gatsby’s experiences and those of Sergeant Alvin York, an American war hero. David D. Lee (1985) detailed York’s story in the article “Sergeant York: An American Hero”,⁶ wherein York, like Gatsby, fought in the Argonne Forest and performed remarkable feats for the American army. York’s accomplishments included killing 25 German soldiers, capturing 132 others and disarming 35 enemy machine guns with only a handgun and a rifle (Owens 2004: 98). Fitzgerald was acquainted with Sergeant York’s achievements, having referenced his name in the short story “Dalyrimple Goes Wrong” (1920). In this narrative about Dalyrimple’s achievements, Fitzgerald (2000: 399) juxtaposed this character with the names of the prominent American general John Pershing and Sergeant Alvin York. According to James Meredith (2004: 182), the story of Sergeant York served as an inspiration for Fitzgerald in crafting Gatsby’s heroic past.

Now, let us delve into the Polish translations of the scene occurring during the car ride to Downtown New York. Jay endeavours to impress Nick as they drive, recounting his heroic battlefield achievements in the Argonne Forest.

⁶ The article was originally published on the 26th of April, 1919 in *Saturday Evening Post*.

We stayed there two days and two nights, a hundred and thirty men with sixteen **Lewis guns**, and when the infantry came up at last they found **the insignia** of three German divisions among the piles of dead. (F 65)

Staliśmy tak trzy dni i trzy noce, stu trzydziestu ludzi i **szesnaście cekaemów**, i kiedy wreszcie piechota nadeszła, znalazła **sztandary** trzech niemieckich dywizji wśród stosu trupów. (DB 86-87)

Siedzieliśmy tam przez dwa dni i dwie noce, stu trzydziestu ludzi z szesnastoma **karabinami Lewisa**, i gdy w końcu nadeszła piechota, pośród stosu trupów znaleźli **insygnia** trzech niemieckich dywizji. (P 94)

Tkwiliśmy tam przez dwa dni i dwie noce, stu trzydziestu ludzi z szesnastoma **karabinami Lewisa**, a kiedy wreszcie nadciągnęła piechota, w stosach trupów znaleziono **naszywki** trzech niemieckich dywizji. (D 81)

Utrzymywaliśmy się tam przez dwa dni i dwie noce, stu trzydziestu ludzi z szesnastoma **karabinami Lewisa**, a kiedy piechota w końcu dotarła, wśród stosu trupów znalazła **sztandary** trzech niemieckich dywizji. (B 60)

Tkwiliśmy tam przez dwa dni i dwie noce, stu trzydziestu chłopów i szesnaście **karabinów Lewisa**, a kiedy wreszcie nadciągnęła piechota, to w stosach trupów odnaleźli **dystynkcje** trzech niemieckich dywizji. (Z 82)

At least two elements in the aforementioned translations warrant a more extensive discussion. The first pertains to the translation of Lewis guns, a weapon designed in 1911 by American Colonel Isaac Newton Lewis, characterised as a light machine gun. The Lewis rifle gained prominence during World War I due to its effectiveness and relatively lightweight design. Initially, Belgian soldiers, and later British and American forces, successfully employed this weapon against the German army (Schultz 2011: 241). The historical trajectory of the Lewis rifle is

intriguing, particularly within the context of the United States. Originally, Colonel Isaac Newton Lewis faced resistance from authorities when attempting to have the gun produced and utilised for the American army. In response, Lewis relocated to Belgium, where he commenced the production of this weapon for the Belgian army. The lightweight nature of the Lewis gun set it apart from other contemporary machine guns, which typically required a minimum of two soldiers to operate them. The rifle's popularity during World War I was further amplified by its cost-effectiveness in production and user-friendly design (Tucker 2014: 955).

Polak, Dehnel, Belczyk and Zabokrzycki translated Lewis guns as “Karabiny Lewisa” (Lewis rifles) without providing any explanation or footnote. This choice is justifiable since these weapons, due to their characteristic construction, can be easily identified by many readers. The Lewis gun, famously used by Charlie Chaplin in the film *The Great Dictator* (1940) and appearing as a close replica used by stormtroopers on the fictional planet Tatooine in *Star Wars* (1977), was also utilised by the Polish army during and after World War I, referred to in the Polish military literature as “Karabin Lewisa wz. 1915”⁷ (Konstankiewicz 2003: 90). Demkowska-Bohdziewicz, on the other hand, translated the Lewis gun using the generic term ‘cekaem’, considered a functional equivalent, that is “the replacement of a little-known element of the original culture with an element of the target culture (Hejwowski 2015: 95)”. The “cekaem” is culturally closer to Poles than “karabin Lewisa”, if only because it has been used in war poetry (Balcerzan 1976: 116). It should be recalled, however, that Lewis wz. 1915 belongs to the group of light machine guns, Polish lkms,⁸ capable of being operated by one person. In contrast, Polish “ckms” are a group of heavy machine guns, requiring a more complex operation, often involving

⁷ In 1915, Lewis entered British Army equipment and its mass production began.

⁸ In English terminology, light machine gun (LMG) is in Polish both a light (lkm) and hand (rkm) machine gun.

at least two soldiers (Ciepliński 2005: 51, 444). From a technical standpoint, the 'cekaem' is then neither a precise equivalent nor a hyperonym of the Lewis gun.

The second noteworthy issue concerns the translation of German insignia discovered by the infantry. The insignia of three German divisions (F 65) are rendered in the Polish translations as: sztandary (the banners) (DB 86, B 60), the insygnia (insignia) (P 94), naszywki (the patches) (D 81) and dystynkcje (badges) (Z 82). Insignia here can be understood, among other things, as a sewn-on supplement to the uniform indicating the soldier's affiliation to a given division (Homsher 2006: 293) or epaulettes, on which military ranks are marked. Demkowska-Bohdziewicz and Belczyk translated insignia as banners, which is an unusual decision. This choice raises intriguing questions from the perspective of the historical and cultural significance of banners. As Kazimierz Madej (1980: 36, 38) remarks, for centuries the military banner has symbolized valour, bravery, honour, unity and victory. In the Roman legions, the banner was treated with particular respect, as receiving it signified the establishment of a unit, while the loss of a banner meant the disbanding of the unit. In the history of the Polish Armed Forces, the banner also held a unique and significant place.

The capture of an enemy banner was considered one of the greatest conquests, while the loss of a flag in battle brought disgrace to the entire unit. Therefore, 51 Teutonic banners captured at the Battle of Grunwald were prominently displayed in Wawel Cathedral. [...]

The banner was always unfurled during battles and surrounded by knights dedicated to its protection. Guards were posted in front of it when it was stationary. The fundamental duty of every knight was to safeguard the flag. It was held in the highest reverence and treated as the greatest relic. Honours were paid to the flag and soldiers took oaths on it (Madej 1980: 36, 38).

The banner continues to perform a significant ideological role even today, remaining an inseparable attribute of the military.

The possession of a banner taken from the enemy on the battlefield is still a symbol of victory, including for Poles. After the end of World War II, on the 24th of June, 1945, a Victory Parade took place in the Red Square, Moscow. An integral part of this parade was the laying of 200 captured banners of the Wehrmacht army and old banners of the Imperial Army at Lenin's mausoleum. The capture of some of the banners was attributed to the soldiers of the 1st and 2nd Polish Army. Following the parade, all the banners were stored in the Museum of the Soviet Army in Moscow. In the early 1960s, the General Political Board of the Polish Army requested Moscow authorities to donate several Wehrmacht banners to be displayed as trophies in The Polish Army Museum in Warsaw. In 1962, the date of the publication of Demkowska-Bohdziewicz's translation, the Russians handed over several of the German banners to the Poles (Muzeum Wojska Polskiego, online). The assumption, that the translator's decisions were inspired by the handing over of the aforementioned banners to the Poles would be unjustified in the light of the archival materials available. Although Demkowska-Bohdziewicz and Belczyk's translation choices differ from those of other translators, they intensify Gatsby's glorious achievements on the battlefield, making his story even more sublime for the Polish reader.

It is noteworthy that in Gatsby's story from the frontline in Europe, Philip D. Beidler recognises an allusion to the famous American Lost Battalion. The Battalion valiantly fought against German troops in the Argonne Forest in October 1918 (Beidler 2016: 108). Gatsby's experiences, when set in the context of actual historical events, evoke associations with bravery, heroism and victory. By employing the term *sztandary*, Demkowska-Bohdziewicz and Belczyk emphasised Gatsby's merits, which become evident to the Polish reader, even without explicit associations with the story of the Lost Battalion.

4. Conclusions

The Polish translations of *The Great Gatsby* used diverse techniques, often beneficial, for preserving the original references and allusions. A distinct difference is evident when comparing Ariadna Demkowska-Bohdziewicz's version with those by Jacek Dehnel and Adam Zabokrzycki. Demkowska-Bohdziewicz primarily signalled references to characters or events within the text, without footnotes. In contrast, Dehnel and Zabokrzycki opted to introduce footnotes, providing detailed explanations of cultural elements and some allusions. Additionally, they elucidated the meaning of allusions, as seen in the case of "the underground pipe-line to Canada". While Polak's translation also incorporates explanations within the text, footnotes are not entirely abandoned, as exemplified in the case of James J. Hill. On the other hand, Belczyk's translation stands out for the absence of footnotes throughout. This strategy may have resulted from the fact that Belczyk (2007: 127) considers footnotes as a potential impediment to reading. He suggests that "it is better to avoid this method as much as possible, since footnotes always detract to some extent from the main text and often do not fit in at all [...]" (Belczyk 2007: 127). The extensive use of footnotes by Dehnel and Zabokrzycki may be seen as symbolic "coming out" of the translators from the author's shadow, as noted by Jerzy Jarniewicz (2012: 7). Jarniewicz observes that some publishers choose to reveal the presence of the translators by placing their names on the covers of translations. He points out that "such a *coming out* breaks with the hitherto prevailing understanding of literature in translation, which most often concealed its translational status". The noticeable footnotes in the translations not only serve to elucidate cultural nuances but also highlight the translational character of the literature, thereby acknowledging the significant presence and role of the translator within the text.

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