The Online Afterlife of a Polish Modernist Classic: John Curran Davis's Fan Translation of the Fiction of Bruno Schulz[1]

Zofia Ziemann
Jagiellonian University

Abstract

The paper discusses John Curran Davis's English retranslation of the works of Bruno Schulz (1892-1942), a highly acclaimed Polish-Jewish author of short stories. Available to all Internet users at *schulzian.net*, a website managed by Davis, the translation is a fully independent, bottom-up initiative of the British fan of Schulz. Not only was Davis working without commission or institutional patronage but by sharing his translations online around 2005-2006, he actually infringed the copyright, which protected Schulz's work until the end of 2012. Focusing on contextual factors rather than textual properties of Davis's version, this paper discusses the theoretical and practical implications of its dubious legal status, as well as its positioning with respect to divisions between elite and popular culture, academic readership and online communities, and institutionalised and unofficial circulation systems of literature. It is argued that Davis's translation project stands out not only from traditional practices from before the digital age, but also varies from the most typical, collaborative forms of fan, crowdsourced, or participatory translation.

Key Words: Bruno Schulz, retranslation, online fan translation, paratexts

Introduction

Although he published only two medium-sized volumes of short stories, Bruno Schulz (1892-1942) has long enjoyed a prominent place in the Polish literary canon. Today, Schulz Studies is a well-established sub-discipline, thriving in departments of Polish language and literature across the country, with its own conferences, festivals, and exhibitions, countless research projects and publications, and even a special journal, *Schulz/Forum*, dedicated exclusively to Schulz's work and its interpretations – a distinction which no other individual Polish author, dead or living, could hitherto ever boast. With his inimitable, highly creative and compelling style, in which the syntax and lexicon are pushed to their limits, Schulz is deservedly

---

considered a great master of the Polish language. The obverse of this admiration for his linguistic ingenuity, however, is that among Polish readers Schulz's sophisticated writing is almost proverbial for untranslatability. Moreover, coupled with the stylistic challenges which his work poses to translators is the local orientation of Schulz's subject matter. Although his stories are narrated in a fantastical or oneiric mode, somewhat reminiscent of magical realism, they are rooted in a very specific temporal, spatial, and socio-cultural context, depicting the life of a Jewish family in a historically Polish, but at the time Austrian-governed provincial Galician town, modelled on the author's native Drohobych (present-day Ukraine).

It would seem unlikely that a literary text set at the turn of the 20th century in a far-off province of a far-off country should appeal to the foreign reader today, especially if, according to the connoisseurs of the original, its inextricable value lies in the captivating language, rather than in such more easily transferable qualities as, say, a well-constructed plot or convincing psychological makeup of the characters. And yet Bruno Schulz is one of the most widely translated Polish authors of fiction. As of March 2015, his works have been published in thirty-seven languages, on four continents.[2] Moreover, the chronology of these publications reveals an upward trend: after the first big wave of translations in the 1960s, and another visible surge in the 1990s, in the 21st century both translations into new languages and retranslations appear regularly, and should continue to do so in the near future, given the recent expiry of copyright protection with the 70th anniversary of the author's tragic death.[3]

Among these numerous translation projects is the initiative of John Curran Davis, a British fan of Schulz who retranslated his favourite author's fiction and made it available in open access on his website *schulzian.net*. Despite its popularity with Schulz readers, Davis's work has shared the fate of other translations of the Polish author, receiving little scholarly attention.[4] The present paper is an attempt to counter this trend. I would like to present

---

[2] Publication details retrieved from *brunoschulz.org*, 23rd March 2015. Managed by the Serbian Schulz scholar Branislava Stojanović, this is the most comprehensive source of bibliographical information on Schulz's works and works about Schulz.

[3] Schulz's attempts to have his stories translated into German, French or Italian were unsuccessful (Schulz 2008) and he did not live to see his work published abroad. On 19th November 1942, he was shot in the street of his native town by a Nazi officer. For a biography of Schulz in English, see Ficowski 2003. The fact that this extensive reference work, canonical for Polish Schulz scholarship, has also been translated into English, is a sign of the growing international interest in Schulz no less important than the translations and retranslations of his fiction.

[4] As regards published works on the English Schulz it seems to me that *works on Schulz in English* suggests any works on Schulz (criticism published in English), and I mean specifically Schulz translations, apart from my own work (Ziemann 2013 and 2014), there are only two journal articles, both concerning Celina Wieniewska's first translation (Nowakowska 1996, Górecka 2012). Her text is also the topic of a recent unpublished Masters

Davis's retranslation project, demonstrating in what ways it stands out from typical translation practices, not only the traditional ones, but also those characteristic of crowdsourced and/or fan translation. I will also investigate the positioning of Davis's text with respect to academic readership and online communities of readers, as well as the institutional framework and the non-institutionalised system of literary circulation. In the following paragraphs, I will argue that Davis's initiative combines the old and the new, the traditional and the innovative, the high-brow and the popular, and that it challenges not only the official system of translation circulation, but also our expectations about the no longer unfamiliar, seemingly well-researched and described phenomena of translation in the digital age. Within the scope of this paper, I will focus on the context of Davis's translation, rather than on the translated text itself. In fact, I am not going to address the question of translation quality at all, whether by comparing Davis's version with the Polish original or with the canonical English translation by Celina Wieniewska. This might seem a risky methodological decision, as we are still used to speaking about translation primarily in its relation to the original text. Even in the post-linguistic paradigm of Descriptive Translation Studies, even after the Cultural Turn, even in approaches which focus on socio-political issues such as power or ideology, the comparative component and the question of what happens with the original text in translation are there – and justifiably so. In this case, however, I believe that it is the medium rather than the message, the mode of existence of Davis's retranslation, rather than its textual features that constitutes a more interesting and cognitively promising research topic. Moreover, discussing the former without reference to the latter is not only a forced dissection performed for the purposes of analysis; I will present examples suggesting that the intratextual characteristics of Davis's translation are not always the most important basis for developing opinions about it. In other words, a bias in translation reception, whether positive or negative, may result from contextual factors which determine its functioning, rather than from the reader's evaluation of the text itself as a good or poor translation. In this paper I will adopt an exclusively context-oriented research perspective, which allows me to demonstrate the importance of contextual conditioning, and the fact that such conditioning operates to a large extent independently of the "core" of the translated text.

---

dissertation, in which Davis received a footnote mention (Szwebs 2014: 5). To the best of my knowledge, single articles on Schulz translations into Hungarian (Reiman 1998), Spanish (Dłużniewska-Łoś 2009), and Brazilian Portuguese (Borowski 2013), and an unpublished Masters dissertation comparing the German translation and retranslation (Völkel 2010), exhaust the list of scholarly literature on Schulz in translation.

In order to gain insight into the genesis and subsequent functioning of Davis's translation, I will analyse its surrounding elements which fall under the category of Genette's paratext, i.e. the accompanying information, whether verbal or non-verbal (visual), which frames the text itself (Genette 1997). As Sharon Deane-Cox convincingly argues in her recent proposition of a socio-cultural approach to retranslation (Deane-Cox 2014: 23-34), although Genette did not pay much attention to the translatorial paratext, focusing on the author and publisher, paratextual analysis can be an effective way of deriving information on the translator and his or her role, status, and working conditions. It is important to note that in this analysis I am using the term paratext in the broadest sense possible, without distinguishing between peritext, i.e. the material physically included with the text (e.g. authorial or translatorial preface, acknowledgements, name of publisher etc.), epitext, i.e. material physically removed from the text, yet sanctioned by the author (or translator), and thus serving as its valid paratextual extension, and extratext, i.e. external material concerning the text (third party commentaries, reviews etc.). My rationale for such blending of Genette's subcategories is that in the case of online publications the distinction often does not hold. For example, an interview with the translator may not be reproduced within the translation itself, yet, if it is hyperlinked on the site where the translation is published, we cannot say that it is physically removed from the translated text either. Immediately accessible with one click thanks to hypertext connection, it lies halfway between the traditional peritext and epitext: neither separated from nor directly included in the translation. Based as they are on the material location of various kinds of paratextual information, Genette's categories cease to be operative when the multidirectional connectivity enabled by hypertext comes into play.

Origins

Typing in the sequence "Bruno Schulz" into Google search engine will bring a link to *schulzian.net* among the top results, following the English-language Wikipedia entry on Schulz.[5] Given its prominent positioning and the comprehensiveness of the material, which includes Schulz's complete fiction as well as a large portion of letters and essays, *schulzian.net* appears potentially within the patronage of a powerful institution: the translations could be the tangible effect of a grant-funded research project conducted by a

---

[5] The search results will of course appear in different order depending on the particular IP address, as well as the device and browser settings, and they will vary in time. Here, I am quoting the results of a query performed on 20th March 2015 on a computer localised in the UK. Given the instability of the medium, it is noteworthy that *schulzian.net* has always appeared in the top five results of UK and US-based queries at least since June 2013, when my online research began. N.B., the English Wikipedia entry on Schulz also references *schulzian.net*.

team of academics, or a national government-supported body such as the Polish Book Institute, whose statutory mission is the popularisation of ambitious Polish literature (cf. Cronin 2013: 110). On the other hand, even at first glance the relatively basic layout of the site suggests against an institutionally-sponsored provenance. *Schulzian.net* does not feature JavaScript or Flash elements, nor any content management solutions, even open-source ones such as Joomla, Drupal or Wordpress; instead, only the most basic languages of site construction are employed, namely HTML and CSS.

Moving from the level of graphics to the level of ownership, no name or logo of a university, foundation or publisher is located within the site. Set against the background of one of Schulz's sketches, there is only the simple headline "Bruno Schulz's Stories and Other Writings", followed by four hyperlinked titles which lead to the respective translations: *The Cinnamon Shops* (Schulz's first story collection, originally published in 1934), *The Sanatorium at the Sign of the Hourglass* (second collection, originally published 1937), *The Comet and Other Stories* (uncollected stories), and *Essays*. At the bottom of this online "front cover-*cum*-contents table", a note reads: "Translated by John Curran Davis". It turns out that Davis is in fact the sole originator of *schulzian.net* and all its vast content, a self-appointed ambassador of Bruno Schulz to the realm of Anglophone web.

As Davis's website does not feature any date reference, in order to determine the temporal origins of his work, one must engage in online archaeology. It would seem that the Internet resists such investigations, since web pages can be put up and taken down at any time. In fact, however, it is often possible to retrieve older versions of online content. One simple way to do this is to search the archiving service Wayback Machine (web.archive.org).[6] It turns out that *schulzian.net* was saved 104 times between 14 September 2004 and 25 December 2014, most likely by John Curran Davis himself, although the use of the service is anonymous. Even though this does not necessarily correspond to the number of Davis's updates of his website, it gives us an idea of the development of *schulzian.net* in time.

---

[6] Offered in open access by the non-profit digital library Internet Archive, the Wayback Machine enables users to archive the content of any web page that allows "crawlers", i.e. special software applications (bots) browsing the World Wide Web. The service registers when a given version was saved and provides easy access to the archived content.

When first saved in 2004, *schulzian.net* was already labelled "The Stories of Bruno Schulz translated by John Curran Davis", but it did not contain any translations yet. For several months, it only featured links to critical writings about Schulz in English. The first portion of translated stories was uploaded in August 2005,[7] and new pieces were added gradually. In December 2006, *The Cinnamon Shops* was complete, and *Sanatorium under the Sign of the Hourglass* was available in whole four years later. The graphic layout of the site changed several times. A research time-travel in the Wayback Machine shows *schulzian.net* to have been a work-in-progress. Indirectly, it suggests that John Curran Davis has been preparing the translations at his own pace, which could not have been very fast, given that he has worked on Schulz in his free time. Spanning more than a decade, the project testifies to Davis's determination to make all of the Polish author's work available to Anglophone Internet users. It also follows that for seven years, i.e. between 2005 and 2012, the public availability of Davis's translation entailed a legal violation, since Schulz's work was still in copyright. I shall return to this issue in the discussion of the ontological status of Davis's text; meanwhile, let us see what the translator himself has to say about the origins of his project.

Scrolling down the front page of *schulzian.net* in its current form, we find a miniature screenshot and a link to a 2012 interview with John Curran Davis at *WeirdFicionReview.com*. This is how he reminisces about his first meeting with the Polish author:

> I became a translator precisely because of my encounter with Bruno Schulz. Until then, I don't think the thought had ever entered my mind. For my day job, I work in the Creative Studies department of a school, where I cover the practical side of various media courses, advising students on how to make short films and animations. … Some years ago, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to spend four months studying at a university in Poland, and Bruno Schulz was recommended to me as a suitable subject of research. I had never heard of him. Neither, incidentally, did I speak any Polish. … Who could have imagined that [Schulz's book] would radically change my life? I was on a tram … when I first began to read Bruno Schulz. … I claim, I maintain, I swear that, before I had reached the bottom of the first page, I knew that, one day, I would read Bruno Schulz in the original. And that is how the translation began. At first, it wasn't even meant to be a translation; it simply grew into one (Davis 2012a).

---

[7] In this case, Wayback Machine provides precise information: as archived on 28th August, *schulzian.net*, does not contain translated text, and on the following day it does.

As this statement reveals, Davis first approached Schulz's text as an ordinary reader, and not a translator. Moreover, it was as a reader of the previous English translation rather than the Polish original. This makes him a perfect embodiment of what Michael Cronin termed "translation prosumption", a process in which "the consumer becomes an active producer, or a prosumer" (Cronin 2013: 100). It is important to point out, however, that this concept was proposed with reference to crowdsourced, i.e. collaborative translation, to describe a situation in which a group usually located at the passive end of the translation chain now assumes an active role: "it is the *potential* audience for the translation that does the translation" (Cronin 2013: 100, my emphasis). In the case of Davis, it is not about potentiality or group identity; here, an individual reader is the actual consumer of a particular translation of a particular text, and subsequently produces his own version.

Why would he? Later in the same interview, Davis adds: "When I first began reading Bruno Schulz (in the well-known translation by Celina Wieniewska), I already had, although I cannot say exactly how, a definite sense that something was amiss with the translation." The vagueness of Davis's critique begs the question of how he can speak of a life-changing experience of encountering Schulz, and at the same time find fault with the translation. After all, he read Wieniewska's English words, and had no direct access to the Polish author. It is as though the spirit of the original miraculously spoke to the reader from behind the veil of the imperfect translation. However, the logic of this view seems less important than its effect, namely the prospective retranslator's strong motivation to learn Polish and read the original, and ultimately produce his own retranslation. Without this "foundational myth", as we might call Davis's story, the new fan translation would have probably never seen the light of day.[8]

Davis's emphatic manner of speaking about Schulz indeed suggests strong attachment typical for a fan-idol relationship (Hills 2002: 60-81). Arguably, since there is no financial motivation involved, without this emotional factor fan translation would hardly be possible. Also civic participatory translation initiatives require strong engagement. What sets Davis's initiative apart, however, is its individual rather than collaborative character, and its

---

[8] Interestingly, a strikingly similar account is given by Wei-Yun Lin Górecka, author of the recently published translation of Schulz's fiction into Chinese. In an essay very tellingly entitled *Transpacific transcendence*, the Taiwanese translator recalls how she first came across Bruno Schulz's writing when she studied in London. Like Davis, she first read his stories in Wieniewska's English translation: "A mere two pages into the book, I felt his secret handshake under the table which seemed to stand between us. When I finished, I had a strong conviction that I must go to Poland, learn Polish, and translate Schulz into Chinese." (Lin-Górecka 2013: 114, my translation).

orientation on challenging, high-brow older literature rather than on popular, contemporary entertainment, let alone a pressing political or social agenda. In his single-handed, inspired effort, in terms of translator's image Davis seems closer to St Jerome working alone in the desert than to a group of teenagers fansubbing their favourite films (cf. e.g. Diaz Cintas and Muñoz Sánchez 2006, Pérez González 2006, O'Hagan 2009), or a community of activists united by a common cause, translating under time pressure and sometimes in life-threatening circumstances in order to facilitate or indeed enable communication (cf. e.g. Baker 2009, Pérez González 2014). For Davis, it seems, translating Schulz was above all a personal experience. What mattered for him was:

> [t]he pleasure of discovery, of finding buried treasure; and also the pleasure of personal growth. I have spent rather a long time on this project, a long time side-by-side with Bruno Schulz, and his way of looking at the world, his insights and his aesthetic sense have grown into me (Davis 2012a).

Finally, the interview also brings up the question of professional identification. If we treat translation as a profession, and define a translator as somebody who has received professional training in translation and/or practices translation as her/his source of income, John Curran Davis cannot go by this name. On the other hand, if we consider experience as the decisive factor, a person who has translated approximately three hundred pages of highly sophisticated literature surely has the right to think of himself as a translator, even if his activity is not financially profitable. Interestingly, Davis's statements reveal a certain degree of instability as regards self-identification. In the interview at *Weird Fiction Review*, he refers to himself as a translator, but in the description on his Twitter account, he writes about himself: "Runs a 3D computer graphics club for schoolkids. Has translated Bruno Schulz." (Davis 2012b), significantly using the verbal rather than nominal form. The Leeds-based Twitter user does not call himself a "translator", but says that he does "translate", and this verb refers here specifically to his work on Schulz, rather than to his general activity. When asked by the *WFR* interviewer about his other translation projects, Davis mentions occasionally working "for the benefit of people in the academic sphere" (presumably doing paid freelance translations), as well as planning further translations of Polish literature; however, an online search only reveals his translatorial links with Schulz. In any case, the importance of the *schulzian.net* project in Davis's life is clearly confirmed by the fact that in the Twitter description he chose it as one of two pieces of information which define him. Nevertheless,

his status as a translator remains uncertain. As we shall see below, the status of his English version of Schulz's text as a translation is not definitely established either.

Ontology

Among readers' comments posted at *Weird Fiction Review* under the interview with Davis is the following, highly interesting remark by Marek Podstolski, the grandson of Bruno Schulz's brother:

> As the executor to Bruno Schulz´s Estate and the copy right [*sic*] owner, I have the pleasure to inform you all, that Polish Book Institute has commissioned, with my blessing, Prof. Dr. Madeline G. Levine from University of North Carolina to translate works of Bruno Schulz into English (Podstolski 2012).

In order to interpret the implied meaning of this seemingly neutral and purely informative comment, let us recall Theo Hermans's concept of equivalence as "primarily a matter of status and only secondarily a matter of semantics" (2007: 9). This will help us understand how Podstolski challenges the validity of Davis's translation without needing to criticise its quality.

> Equivalence [understood as] equality in value and status, is not a feature that can be extrapolated on the basis of textual comparison. Rather than being extracted from texts, equivalence is imposed on them through an external intervention in a particular institutional context. … equivalence is proclaimed, not found (Hermans 2007: 6).

Podstolski's comment can be read as a proclamation of equivalence of Levine's forthcoming retranslation with the Polish original, and, consequently, of non-equivalence of Davis's version. Schulz's relative supports his claim with a number of power indicators, skilfully accumulated in the space of one sentence. Whether he considers the online retranslation a poor or an accurate rendition of Schulz's original is irrelevant; what counts is the announcement of the rightful and lawful English version of Schulz, which has the patronage of the copyright owner, a powerful cultural institution, a university, and, last but not least, the authority of the "Professor Doctor" herself.[9] Thus, the implied meaning of this utterance is

---

[9] To be fair, one needs to note that this doubling of academic titles, which did not go unnoticed by *WFR* readers, who ridiculed it in their comments, is very probably a calque from German. Podstolski has lived in Germany most of his life, and to his ear this would be a perfectly natural way of speaking to or about academics.

that Davis's version, whatever its literary merits, is not an accepted, authorised translation; its equivalence with the Polish original is denied.[10]

Interestingly, even Podstolski's rhetoric echoes the theological and liturgical terminology employed by Hermans in his discussion of the relation between original and translation in light of the Christian doctrine of Real Presence (Hermans 2007: 86-108). By giving his "blessing" to Levine's yet-unfinished translation, Podstolski, entitled by copyright law to speak on behalf of the author himself, declares with reference to the new English translation: *hoc est opus meum*, this is my work, and thus, through an illocutionary act with a perlocutionary effect, establishes its equivalence with Schulz's text (Hermans 2007: 91). Since Davis's version is not sanctioned or authenticated in this way, it remains – according to Marek Podstolski, who represents here the official system of translation circulation – just a text written alongside another, pre-existing text (Schulz's original), but emphatically not its translation. Hence, it can be said that copyright violation – a fact of legal and economic significance, external to the translated text itself – can actually affect its very ontological status. Seeing that Davis did not publish his translation for profit, Marek Podstolski decided not take legal steps to ban it (Podstolski 2013). Thus, in the case of *schulzian.net* copyright law was ultimately used as a "soft power" measure (Nye 2004) rather than as a legal instrument: instead of coercing the translation stakeholders, it was aimed at convincing the readers that Levine's translation should be the preferred alternative to Davis's text.

As mentioned before, meanwhile the work of Bruno Schulz entered the public domain. Davis's initiative is no longer illegal. However, its mode of existence and scope of reception is still markedly different from that of Wieniewska's and, paradoxically, Levine's versions, the latter having already received much publicity, especially from Schulz scholars, even though as yet nobody could read it. Copyright seems not to be the only factor which can prevent a text from entering official circulation, bringing about all practical consequences of this banishment. Due to the lack of a publisher's patronage, for example, Davis's version will not feature in library catalogues or in UNESCO's Index Translationum – World Bibliography of Translation; to the official publishing system, it remains non-existent.

---

[10] Podstolski does not mention Wieniewska's version, perhaps because after almost half a century long monopoly, its status as the canonical English Schulz seems obvious to him. Needless to say, all editions are authenticated by the name of a Schulz family member. For reasons which require further research, some bear the name of Marek Podstolski's mother: © Ella Podstolski-Schulz, others – that of her brother: © Jakub Schulz.

Impact

Speaking about the "system" of institutional and non-institutional circulation of translated literature, I am using the term in the general sense, rather than referring to specific concepts of systems theory (Hermans 2007, Tyulenev 2011). The notion is a useful, operative abstraction, allowing the researcher to order reality, name tendencies, make sense of the world. On this level, Davis's text indeed belongs to a different order than Wieniewska's or Levine's. This neat distinction, however, gets complicated when the human factor comes into play.[11] After all, as demonstrated in the opening paragraphs of this paper, anyone looking online for information about Schulz in English will come across Davis's translations – and this of course includes students and researchers representing the official, institutional system of academia, which remains closely connected to the publishing market. The question is not so much whether members of academic circles know about the existence of Davis's translation, but rather, whether they decide to quote it in their publications, and by so doing incorporate it into the official system.

In a paper written when I first came across *schulzian.net*, I argued that Davis's text is hardly acknowledged by international academia and the publishing system (Ziemann 2013). Two years later, evidence to the contrary is still limited. Probably the earliest examples of the use of Davis's translation as a source text, both from 2006, are Piotr Jędrzejczak's unpublished Masters dissertation on Schulz and Faulkner (Jędrzejczak 2006), and a book on Schulz by Brian Banks, a writer and independent researcher (Banks 2006). Since both texts are referenced on *schulzian.net*, and date from a time when not all of Davis's translations were yet available online, it seems most likely that the translator shared his work with the authors privately. An interesting case of asymmetrical coexistence of Wieniewska's and Davis's versions of Schulz is the acclaimed volume of Schulz criticism *(Un)masking Bruno Schulz* (De Bruyn and van Heuckelom 2009). Out of its twenty-three international authors, only one quotes Schulz in Davis's translation. He is referenced in a footnote and works cited list in her paper, but he does not figure in the index of names at the end of the volume, whereas Celina Wieniewska's name is listed in the index with seventeen page references. This gives one the impression that the presence of Davis's translation in the otherwise Wieniewska-dominated volume might have been an oversight on the part of the editors. Basing an MA-thesis on a

---

[11] This is perhaps why Theo Hermans refers to social systems theory as "posthumanist" (2007: 113) – it must disregard people if it is to work as a theoretical *system.*

copyright-infringing retranslation rather than on the official translation also seems an exception to the rules of academia. The example of *schulzian.net* clearly shows that as far as the division between the official and unofficial system is concerned, both border-crossing and gate-keeping ultimately lies in the hands of individuals.

The expiry of the copyright protection, and the ensuing "amnesty" of Davis's translation, should, arguably, contribute to the growing acceptance of this version among academic authors and editors in the near future. Meanwhile, his version of Schulz prospers in a very different environment, to the benefit of readers and the Polish author's position. The most salient example of Davis's colonisation of a cultural realm hitherto unpenetrated by Schulz is the *Weird Fiction Review* connection. As we read in the description on the main page of the website,

> This site is meant to be an ongoing exploration into all facets of the weird, in all of its many forms – a kind of non-denominational approach that appreciates Lovecraft but also Kafka, Angela Carter and Clark Ashton Smith, Shirley Jackson and Fritz Leiber – along with the next generation of weird writers and international weird.

The more conservative representatives of Schulz scholarship would certainly frown if they learnt that the Polish high Modernist is discussed in such a setting, even if he shares this lot with the respectable Kafka. Emphasising its "non-denominational" approach, *WFR* is a highly postmodern milieu, where traditional categorisations of literature and the arts are disregarded, and the editors publish whatever they see fit. What is important from the point of view of our discussion is that the many members of the *WFR* community of readers would not have heard about Schulz, had it not been for the interview with Davis, or the subsequent anthologisation of Schulz as one of "101 Weird Writers" (Nolen 2013). Thanks to its promotion on the popular portal, Davis's translation is read not only by those who search for Schulz online, but also by a host of new readers, who are not necessarily typical fans of high Modernism or Eastern-European literary heritage. From the point of view of the development of Schulz's posthumous international career, Davis's translation, by placing the Polish author in unexpected contexts, certainly plays an important role in the dissemination of his work.

Internet users appreciate not only Schulz's (and Davis's) work itself, but also the fact that it is made freely available to them. The following comment to the interview with Davis is a good

case in point, and an interesting counterbalance to Marek Podstolski's utterance quoted before:

> Thank you for this interview. I am wild about Schulz and, having already read many of the stories on Davis' [*sic*] website, feel deeply grateful for his tender treatment of the master and the generosity of posting it for anyone, everyone, to read (Anonymous 2013).

Could there be anything more rewarding for a fan translator, who spent years working on his favourite author, than to hear such declaration of support and gratitude from a fellow fan?

Conclusion

On the one hand, "posting it for anyone, everyone to read" without copyright holder's or publisher's control is what stigmatises Davis's translation as non-professional (or, in the eyes of the harshest critics, unprofessional), and makes it suspicious as a reference text. On the other hand, it is precisely the online, open access mode of existence of *schulzian.net*, enabling the immediacy of reader-text interaction, that has been decisive for its success, if by success we define the winning of new Anglophone readership for Bruno Schulz. The accessibility of Davis's text and its connectivity, i.e. the capacity to appear in different online contexts in the form of hyperlinks, make it absolutely unique in the long and rich history of translation of the canonical Polish author. It is all the more remarkable that this initiative was undertaken by someone who professionally had nothing to do with literature, translation, or academia, the last-named being traditionally seen as the natural environment of Schulz's difficult writing. His project proves that in the digital age, systemic divisions or institutional power struggles cannot stop individual initiative, provided that its author is motivated and determined enough.

Unlike the best-known forms of fan translation, *schulzian.net* is neither collaborative nor centred on popular literary or audiovisual texts. By the single effort of one translator, it promotes older literature using new technologies, and indeed promotes it successfully where it has not been promoted before. It bridges, or rather destroys by ignoring, the gap between the old and the new, and the elite and popular. As I have demonstrated on the basis of my paratextual analysis, the case of Davis's project can provide valuable insights into the diversity of online fan translation, and its functioning in the broader context of circulation of cultural goods. And even though in the interview at *Weird Fiction Review*, John Curran Davis voiced his scepticism towards the research interests of the author and, presumably, the reader

of this paper, saying that "[o]ne should read up on translation theory; and subscribe to not a word of it" (Davis 2012a), I believe that this scepticism should not be mutual, since his initiative is too interesting to be ignored as a research topic.

References

Anonymous (nick: kkrousseau) (2013), Reader's comment, *Weird Fiction Review* 4th May, retrieved from: http://weirdfictionreview.com/2012/01/interview-translator-john-curran-davis-on-polish-writer-bruno-schulz/ (accessed 26 March 2015)

Baker, Mona (2009) 'Resisting State Terror : Theorizing Communities of Activist Translators and Interpreters', in Esperanza Bielsa and Christopher W. Hughes (eds) *Globalisation, Political Violence and Translation*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 222-242.

Banks, Brian (2006) *Muse and Messiah: The Life, Imagination and Legacy of Bruno Schulz (1892-1942)*, Ashby-de-la-Zouch: InkerMen Press.

Borowski, Gabriel (2013) 'Pół roku Schulza. O pierwszej fali recepcji bryzylijskiego przekładu prozy zebranej' [Six Months of Schulz: On the First Phase of the Brazilian Reception of His Collected Prose], *Przekładaniec* 27: 26-42.

Cronin, Michael (2013) *Translation in the Digital Age*, London and New York: Routledge.

Deane-Cox, Sharon (2014) *Retranslation: Translation, Literature and Reinterpretation*, London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

De Bruyn, Dieter, and Kris van Heuckelom (eds.) (2009) *(Un)masking Bruno Schulz: New Interpretations, Further Fragmentations, Ultimate Reintegrations*, Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi.

Diaz Cintas, Jorge, and Pablo Muñoz Sánchez (2006) 'Fansubs: Audiovisual Translation in an Amateur Environment', *JoSTrans: The Journal of Specialised Translation* (6): 37-52.

Davis, John Curran (2012a) 'Interview: Translator John Curran Davis on Polish Writer Bruno Schulz', *Weird Fiction Review* 23 Jan, retrieved from: http://weirdfictionreview.com/2012/01/interview-translator-john-curran-davis-on-polish-writer-bruno-schulz/ (accessed 12 March 2015)

------ (2012b) retrieved from: https://twitter.com/johncurrandavis, (accessed 22 March 2015)

------ (undated) retrieved from: www.schulzian.net (accessed 22 March 2015)

Dłużniewska-Łoś, Katarzyna (2009) 'Hiszpańskojęzyczni tłumacze wobec zabiegu udosłownienia metafory leksykalnej w *Sklepach cynamonowych* Brunona Schulza' [Spanish Translators and the Strategy of Literalization of Lexical Metaphor in Bruno Schulz's *Cinnamon Shops*], *Poradnik Językowy* 5: 82-95.

Ficowski, Jerzy (2013) *Regions of the Great Heresy: Bruno Schulz, A Biographical Portrait*, trans. and ed. Theodosia Roberson, New York and London: W.W. Norton&Co.

Genette, Gerard (1997) *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation*, trans. Jane E. Lewin, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Górecka, Marta (2012) 'Looking for a Map of Bruno Schulz – a Critique of

Attempts to Translate and Interpret His Fiction' in Ewa Borkowska, Tomasz Burzyński and Maciej Nowak (eds) *The Language of Sense, Common-sense and Non-sense*, Bielsko-Biała: Wyższa Szkoła Ekonomiczno-Humanistyczna, 199-210.

Hermans, Theo (2007) *The Conference of the Tongues*, Manchester – Kinderhook, NY: St Jerome.

Hills, Matt (2002) *Fan Cultures*, London and New York: Routledge.

Kitowska-Łysiak, Małgorzata (2006) 'Internet', in Włodzimierz Bolecki, Jerzy Jarzębski and Stanisław Rosiek (eds) *Słownik schulzowski* [Schulz dictionary], Gdańsk: słowo/obraz terytoria, 155.

Lin-Górecka, Wei-Yun (2013)'Transpacyficzna transcendencja. O tłumaczeniu Schulza na język chiński' [Transpacific Transcendence: On Translating Schulz into Chinese] *Schulz/Forum* 2: 113-118.

O'Hagan, Minako (2009) 'Evolution of User-Generated Translation: Fansubs, Translation Hacking and Crowdsourcing', *Journal of Internationalization and Localization* 1(1): 94-121.

Jędrzejak, Piotr (2006) *The Bloody Tyrant: Time in the fiction of William Faulkner and Bruno Schulz*, unpublished MA dissertation, Poznań: Adam Mickiewicz University, retrieved from: http://www.schulzian.net/critique/jedrzejak/tyrant.htm (accessed 26 March 2015)

Nowakowska, Ewa Elżbieta (1996) "Selected Liquid Metaphors in Bruno Schulz's Fiction in an English Translation", *Przekładaniec* 2: 23-31.

Nolen, Larry (2013) 'The Fragile Reality of *Sanatorium Under the Sign of the Hourglass*', *Weird Fiction Review*, 4th June, retrieved from: http://weirdfictionreview.com/2013/06/101-weird-writers-25-bruno-schulz/#comments (accessed 25 March 2015)

Nye, Joseph (2004) *Soft Power: The Means to Succeed in World Politics*, New York: Public Affairs.

Pérez-González, Luis (2006) 'Fansubbing Anime: Insights into the Butterfly Effect of Globalisation on Audiovisual Translation', *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology* 14 (4): 260-277.

------ (2014) 'Translation and New(s) Media: Participatory Subtitling Practices in Networked Mediascapes', in Juliane House (ed) *Translation*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 200-221.

Podstolski, Marek (2012) Reader's comment. *Weird Fiction Review* 5 Feb, retrieved from: http://weirdfictionreview.com/2012/01/interview-translator-john-curran-davis-on-polish-writer-bruno-schulz/ (accessed 22 March 2015)

------ (2013) Personal email correspondence, 8th Jan.

Reiman, Judit (1998) 'Tłumacząc Brunona Schulza na węgierski' [Translating Bruno Schulz into Hungarian], *Między Oryginałem a Przekładem* 4: 75-82.

Schulz, Bruno (2008) *Księga listów* [Book of Letters], ed. Jerzy Ficowski, Gdańsk: słowo/obraz terytoria, 3rd edition.

Stojanović, Branislava (n.d.) retrieved from: www.brunoschulz.org (accessed 12 June 2015)

Szwebs Weronika (2014) *Strategie reprezentacji jako problem przekładu. O*

mechanizmie mimetyzacji w angielskim tłumaczeniu prozy Brunona Schulza [Strategies of Representation as a Translation Problem. On Mimetization in the English Translation of the Prose by Bruno Schulz], unpublished MA dissertation, Poznań: Adam Mickiewicz University.

Tyulenev, Sergey (2011) *Applying Luhmann to Translation Studies: Translation in Society*, London and New York: Routledge.

Völkel, Benjamin (2010) 'Poetik und Strategie der Übersetzung von Bruno Schulz' *Die Zimtläden*. Eine vergleichende Analyse der Übersetzungen von Josef Hahn und Doreen Daume' [Poetics and strategy of translating Bruno Schulz: A comparative analysis of translations by Josef Hahn and Doreen Daume], unpublished MA dissertation, Berlin: Humboldt-Universität.

Wayback Machine, Wikipedia entry, retrieved from: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wayback_Machine (accessed 25 March 2015)

Ziemann, Zofia (2013) 'Heretycki i występny eksperyment z materią Autentyku czy cenna oddolna inicjatywa popularyzatorska? Angielski przekład opowiadań Brunona Schulza online autorstwa Johna Currana Davisa' [A heretic and sinful experiment on the matter of the Authentic or a valuable grassroot promotional initiative? John Curran Davis's online English translation of the stories of Bruno Schulz], *Przekładaniec* 27: 43-57.

----- (2014) 'The Inner and Outer Workings of Translation Reception: Coetzee on (Wieniewska's) Schulz', in Bożena Kucała and Rober Kusek (eds) *Travelling Texts. J. M. Coeztee and Other Writers*, Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 89-91.