Representation of Character in Translation

HELEN FIELDING’S BRIDGET JONES’S DIARY

INTRODUCTION

Helen Fielding’s heroine, Bridget Jones, has proven to be among the most memorable female characters in recent English fiction. According to Amina Elbendary, “in her character Bridget Helen Fielding has created a startling parody of the life of a single woman, in this case one living in a big Western city, at the end of the twentieth century.” To a large extent, Elbendary holds, the book’s success is conditioned by the fact that many readers take delight in the impression of “how true to life Bridget sounds, and how true the [novel rings]” (Elbendary). Recreating the enduring attraction of the sound and ring of the original, without any doubt, is the goal of the translator. In Walter Benjamin’s often quoted phrase, “The task of the translator consists in finding that intended effect [Intention] upon the language into which he is translating which produces in it the echo of the original” (Benjamin 1973: 76).

The Lithuanian translation of Helen Fielding’s Bridget Jones’s Diary (1996) by Rasa Drazdauskienė (1999) exhibits many resonances of this echo. The intension of this study is to analyse these resonances and to discuss their impact on the constitution of character by approaching both the original and the translation from the perspective of the reader who is, to quote Susan Bassnett, “not so much a consumer as a producer of the text” (Bassnett 1991: 79). In the text-reader interrelation, the translator becomes a locus where meaning is generated as an arbitrary relation between the signifier and the signified. Yet, as Susan Bassnett reminds us, reading / interpretation / translation perceived as an endless signification process and “the enormous freedom this vision bestows must be handled responsibly” (ibid. 79).

In the discussion of aspects that affect the reader’s / translator’s reading, by extension the production of meaning, this paper focuses on intertextuality as a form of ‘dialogism,’ which both opens up the text for multiple levels of interpretation and limits interpretative boundaries due to thematic and structural figurations implicit in intertextual links. The analysis of the intertextual context, in the first part of the paper, aims to point to intertextual aspects in Helen Fielding’s novel Bridget Jones’s Diary. It also serves as an illustration of José Lambert’s statement that “An essential preparation for the translation [is] careful reading and rereading and accompanying research of source text and other work by the au-
thor” (Lambert 2001: 129). The purpose, in the second part, is to discuss to what extent intertextuality affec
ts characterization from the point of view of the chal-
lenges it poses for translation.

SITUATING
BRIDGET JONES’S DIARY
IN (INTERTEXTUAL) CONTEXT

In Helen Fielding’s Bridget Jones’s Diary, among other textual features, intertextu-
tality plays a significant part. Intertextuality, as Ross Murfin and Supryia M. Ray define it, is “the condition of inter-
connected among texts, or the concept that any text is an amalgam of others, either because it exhibits signs of influence or because its language inevitably contains common points of reference with other texts through such things as allu-
sion, quotation, genre, style, and even revisions” (Murfin and Ray 2003: 219). Murfin and Ray remind us that Julia Kristeva “popularized and is often cre-
dited with coining this term” (ibid. 219). Kristeva’s theory of intertextuality is based on the assumption that “any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transfor-
mation of another” (Kristeva 1986: 37). Apart from the meaning of literary in-
fluences, the term intertextuality, as per Kristeva, comes to signify that any text is a product of a specific culture. The ideological particularities of a culture, manifested in specific discursive structures, are reflective of their relationship with prevailing ideologies. In other words, perceived as a web of intertextual links, the text reveals a complex pattern of inher-
ten structures that constitute the ba-
sis for an individual perception of the world mediated in language.

What Helen Fielding’s Bridget Jones’s Diary has in common with the afore-
mentioned tenets is that it is replete with references to other texts. Its status as an autonomous text among other texts can be illustrated by referring to Susan Bassnett. She defines the link between an individual text and the body of texts that comprise an intertextual web as follows: “the text [is] understood to be in a dialectical relationship with other texts [intertextuality] and located within a specific historical context” (Bassnett 1991: 117). Thus, the point is that the different levels, possible for approaching Helen Fielding’s text, reveal what Bassnett defines as the “dialectical relation-
ship with other texts” and the condition of being “located within a specific historical context.” At this juncture, prior to discussing specific translation problems that may arise, the multidimen-
sionality of these levels in Fielding’s novel are first demonstrated.

On the surface, the novel depicts “New Years Resolutions” (Fielding, Bridget Jones’s Diary; hereafter Bridget 1997: 1). These are decisions that involve a perti-
nent and perceptive self-criticism and a determination to change what the hero-
ine regards as erratic patterns of beha-
vour, largely those which affect her physical appearance and relations with the outer world. Bridget’s efforts reveal that her self-perception is very much affected by gender stereotypes and gender related goals transmitted through different me-
dia ranging from classical literature to mass culture. As the heroine puts it, “I am a child of Cosmopolitan culture [and] have been traumatized by supermodels and too many quizzes and know that neither my personality nor my body is up to it if left to its own devices” (ibid. 59).

The heroine does display some attempt to fit into the stereotype of a pretty, in-
telligent woman who succeeds in com-
binig marriage, motherhood and career, a modern version of womanhood that Co-
mopolitan perpetuates. On the other hand, Bridget’s interest in literature that reflects gender sensitivity, such as Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus by John Gray (ibid. 21, 75); Women Who Love Too Much: When You Keep Wishing and Hoping He’ll Change by Robin Norwood (ibid. 21); or Backlash by Susan Faludi (ibid. 14), represents her efforts to adopt a learned and rational attitude to relationships with members of the opposite sex rather than to rely on pure intuition. When speaking about social or work relations or “love life” – and this seems to be the most frequent topic among Bridget and her confidantes (a male homosexual among them) – the question of a theoretical/comparative framework is bound to arise sooner or later. The novel, for that matter, is replete with references to public and political figures, TV showmen and writers and their works. A reference to Amina Elbendary may illustrate the abundance of these intertextual references:

Most of the self-help books that Bridget and her friends refer to have to do with men: What Men Want; How Men Think; What Men Feel; Why Men Feel They Want What They Think They Want. Then there are the more general titles: The Rules; Ignoring the Rules; Not Now, Honey, I’m Watching the Game; How to Seek and Find the Love you Want; How to Find The Love you Want Without Seeking It; How to Find You Want the Love You Didn’t Seek. And there are various exercises in consolation: Happy to Be Single; How not to be Single Among Others. (Elbendary)

These references reveal existing cultural goals and values as well as show the heroine’s attempts to clarify her own identity through acceptance or rejection of values embodied therein. The following excerpts from the novel serve as cases in point:

I read in an article that Kathleen Tynan, late wife of the late Kenneth, had ‘inner poise’ and, when writing, was to be found immaculately dressed, sitting a small table in the centre of the room sipping at a glass of chilled white wine. Kathleen Tynan would not, when late with a press release for Pertua, lie fully dressed and terrified under the duvet, chain smoking, glugging cold sake out of a beaker and putting on make up as a hysterical displacement activity. Kathleen Tynan would not allow Daniel Cleaver to sleep with her whenever he felt like it but not to be her boyfriend. Nor would she become insensible with drink and be sick. Wish to be like Kathleen Tynan (though not, obviously, dead). (Fielding, Bridget, 1997: 89)

Another is:

4 p.m. Going out to meet Tom for tea. Decided needed to spend more time on appearance like Hollywood stars and have therefore spent ages putting concealer under eyes, blusher on cheeks and defining fading features.

‘Good God,’ said Tom when I arrived. ‘What?’ I said. ‘What?’

‘Your face. You look like Barbara Cartland.’

I started blinking very rapidly, trying to come to terms with the realization that some hideous time-bomb in my skin had suddenly, irrevocably, shrivelled it up. (ibid. 148)

Essential to Bridget, who is overcome by “thirties panic” (ibid. 63), is the need to cope with tensions arising from the social pressure to have a boyfriend and hence, satisfy the standard of normalcy. From Bridget’s perspective, this involves a transformation from a “Singleton” into a “Smug Married.” This thematic configuration has added an significance in light of Helen Fielding’s statement that, in Bridget Jones’s Diary, she used “the plot from Pride and Prejudice to fit it all together in a shell” (Fielding in “Author Interviews” by Weich). The novel reflects the prevailing theme in Jane Austen’s fiction, which is marriage as a social imperative.

Just like Pride and Prejudice, Austen’s unforgettable comedy of manners, Fielding’s Bridget Jones’s Diary opens with the mother’s concern about getting the daughter involved in a social event which will be attended by a single young man,
Mr. Darcy, a potential husband for the daughter. The use of the same name for the hero in Fielding’s novel may serve as a common denominator for the values that are associated with a socially favourable and personally rewarding marriage both in Austen’s time and in contemporary society. Another theme that points to a close intertextual link between the novels is the development of the heroine’s relationship with the male character, Darcy. In Jane Austen’s Pride and Prejudice, as Margaret Kirkham argues,

Elizabeth Bennet’s role, as the heroine who puts too high a value on first impressions, can still be seen in her infatuation with Mr. Wickham, and in her initial dislike of Mr. Darcy, but it becomes unimportant as the novel develops. Half way through the second volume Elizabeth receives the letter from Mr Darcy in which a true account of past events is made plain to her. Once she has read it and reflected upon its contents, which she does with the speed and a remarkable display of judicious critical acumen, taking due note of the interest of the writer and the quality of his language, as well as of events and conduct which she had previously misunderstood, she becomes the best informed, as well as the most intelligent character in the entire novel. Quicker and cleverer than the hero, she soon sees that she has solid virtues of head and heart which largely outweigh his tendency to solemnity and self-importance – qualities which his education and upbringing, as well as his wealth, have imposed upon a naturally affectionate heart and a critical mind. From this point onwards Elizabeth Bennet takes on the character of the later Austen heroine; she becomes the central intelligence through whose eyes and understanding events and character are mediated to the reader. (Kirkham 1986: 91)

Fielding’s novel retains the same thematic network, as far as the change of Bridget’s attitude to her partners is concerned. In Bridget Jones’s Diary, however, the same basic situation undergoes constant transformations to allow the exposure of different hues of irony to shine supreme in the construction of Bridget’s character. Differently from Eliza-beth Bennet, who is regarded as an embodiment of righteousness as well as the witty and independent spirit,3 Bridget Jones is presented as “a disorganized, insecure, weight-obsessed woman, with disaster-prone friends and family,” to quote Catherine Arnst (Arnst). Despite Bridget’s low self-esteem, Arnst argues,

She is even more fun than the serious people in her own diary. Take Mark Darcy. He’s a dull lawyer Bridget initially rejects and then – even though he never gets more interesting – becomes infatuated with after he rescues her parents from financial ruin. It’s the one false note. At the end of the millennium, single women are more likely to rescue themselves than to find a prince in shining armor to do the job for them. (Arnst)

In other words, as Helen Fielding has said in an interview with Ashton Applewhite, the novel enlarges the plot of Austen’s novel through pointing out that “things have changed hugely. Roles have shifted enormously, in terms of economic power for one thing” (Fielding in “Author Interview” by Applewhite). What Fielding’s heroine illustrates with particular clarity is the problem of a never fully resolved relationship between the individual and society, the literary representation of which inevitably involves adding a critical dimension both to the portrayal of the many individual identities and to the representation of the socio-cultural context.

The criticism is most explicit in Bridget’s mother’s insistence to get the daughter married and the daughter’s resistance to being fitted into a mould of convention. The treatment of generation gap problems overlaps with intertextual significations. Put starkly, the tension that Bridget experiences because of her mother’s constant allusions to the standards of conventionality reminds of the early nineteenth century social conventions implied in Pride and Prejudice by Jane Austen. As do many other texts by Austen, this novel depicts the problem of
marriage and personal freedom. This has to be considered in light of the fact that in Austen’s time, marriage was one of the main means for both men and women to rise or fall socially. A young man could gain a better social position by marrying a woman with money; similarly, a young woman can hope to rise socially by marrying a wealthy man. Everything – birth, land, income, education and physical appearance – plays a significant role when it comes to marriage as a means of increasing one’s social value.⁴

Posed in this way, the question of intertextuality is meant to highlight that Bridget’s ironically treated wavering between a desire for personal freedom that education has provided her and the pressure for marriage reminds us of the dilemmas that the heroine faces in the traditional romance. This has to be considered in the context of Bridget’s critical evaluation of the not so successful lives of her successfully married friends. Her considerations also intertwine with the ideal of womanhood that her mother and her mother’s circle of friends want to impose on her. This situation, even upon reflection of the changes in the social context over the past century, acquires an added significance if the ideological underpinnings that are encoded in the narrative sequence of the romance are taken into consideration.⁵ Rachel Blau DuPlessis states that in eighteenth and nineteenth century women’s literature, the most frequent pattern of women’s quest for identity is embedded in the romance plot. Such a patterning of the narrative serves as an ideological “script” of social conventions. Their imperative implications are most explicit in the resolution of the romance plot, where the typical ending is either marriage or the heroine’s death (DuPlessis 1985: 2-3). DuPlessis explains the meaning of the ending:

Why are these endings in marriage and death both part of a cultural practice of romance? Marriage celebrates the ability to negotiate with sexuality and kinship; death is caused by inabilities or improprieties in this negotiation, a way of deflecting attention from man-made norms to cosmic sanctions. This is a practice prominent in the novel from its inception on. For the eighteenth century novel, Nancy Miller explores exactly these poles governing the heroine’s accent and integration into society and her descent into death. The “euphoric” pole, with its ending in marriage, is a successful integration with society, in which the gain is both financial and romantic success in the “heterosexual contract”; the “dysphoric” pole, with an ending in death, is a betrayal by male authority and aggression (ibid. 4).

Taken in this manner, the intertextual link between the two novels may be seen as an act of revision in that it depicts an attempt to expose conventional meanings. This is done to demonstrate the changing nature of sexual and cultural codes that constitute the essence of both successful gender socialization and social / gender restrictions.⁶ These aspects are unavoidably embodied in the narrative representation of tensions that Fielding’s heroine encounters in her search for self-actualization.

Although Bridget often perceives herself as a person with a life style that is not taking her anywhere, the organization of the book challenges such self-perception. Each section of Bridget’s diary starts with exactly the same formula that includes, to quote, Catherine Arnst, “her weight, number of calories eaten, alcohol ‘units’ consumed, cigarettes smoked, and moments spent having negative thoughts” (Arnst). This kind of organization of the diary creates an impression of a determined woman striving towards discipline and logic. This is very much in line with the resolutions for the New Year, which Catherine Arnst summarizes as follows: “to quit smoking, lose 10 pounds, find a decent boyfriend,
and develop ‘inner poise’” (Arnst).

Goal orientation that seems to dominate the thematic level of Bridget Jones’s Diary intertwines with the romance and quest patterns of its subtext, Austen’s Pride and Prejudice. Also it successively triggers a “dialectical relationship with other texts,” to use Bassnett’s term, that form the intricate intertextual network of the novel. The diverse crisscrossing of meanings within these intertextual links destabilizes the traditional significations of the quest which, according to Piotr Sadowski, is:

a sequence of events and adventures, involving the main protagonist(s), leading towards some goal or solution. The sequential nature of the quest implies a linear, goal oriented and purposeful movement in time from one important event or stage of action to another, usually framed within a fictitious life span of some exemplary individual. (Sadowski 1996: 51)

In Fielding’s novel, just as the heroine herself, the goals of the quest are embedded in conflicting choices or rather a paradox. As Bridget puts it, she sets her goals as follows: “I will not sink about having no boyfriend and instead develop inner poise and authority and sense of self as woman of substance, complete without boyfriend, as best way to obtain boyfriend” (Fielding, Bridget, 1997: 2).

In other words, romance remains the ultimate goal of her quest, which in the diary is designated as “resolutions” just for one year. Yet, what can be gleaned from the confusing rhetorical patterning of the resolution is that Bridget strives for autonomous selfhood and subjectivity. What she wants and what her behaviour most often manifests – though she hardly ever verbalizes this directly – is a relationship of two equal subjects. This is a significant departure from the traditional romance plot grounded in the heroine’s submission and succumbing to the status of an object in the service of male desire. Viewed from the perspec-

tive of intertextual links with Austen’s Pride and Prejudice, the revisionist mode reminds us of Rachel Blau DuPlessis’ statement that “To change a story signals a dissent from social norms as well as narrative forms” (DuPlessis 1985: 2). However, the kind of liberation from the constraints of the traditional plot, by implication, from the ideological prescriptions embedded in the narrative form that Bridget Jones’s Diary acquires disturbs some critics. Amina Elbendary states:

Many feminists have criticised Fielding’s books for their attitudes, arguing that the important advances women have accomplished since the 1960s are now being eroded by characters like Bridget, who is a fan of popular culture, of television and of women’s magazines, a woman who appears superficial and seems willing to put men first under almost any circumstances. Bridget is a woman who measures out her days (and her life) by the weight she has lost or gained, by the number of cigarettes or drinks she has had and by the number of calories she has eaten. Her first concern is how to attract men and how to gain their approval.

... It is strange how men and women are still struggling to understand each other, now apparently more than ever. Published at the turn of the century, Bridget Jones’s Diary and Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason show us that men and women are hardly any closer to understanding each other than they ever were. It is therefore easy to identify with Bridget. Perhaps this is why we laugh so hard; laughing at Bridget we are also laughing at ourselves. (Elbendary)

However, the fact that the character of Bridget brings fresh hues of reflection to the numberless revisionist representations of women in literature and popular culture is perhaps part of the book’s success. Rather than causing pity, Bridget makes her readers laugh at her misfortunes. The laughter can be regarded through the lenses of the Bakhtinian concept of the ‘carnivalesque’, i.e. overthrowing all of authority in the form of possible prescriptions of gender roles. Rather,
the novel celebrates the multiplicity of manifestations of gender expression.

Having said this much about the context and intertextual links, what has to be stressed is that the transmission of intertextual significations from the source language into the target language (hereafter referred to as SL and TL, respectively) unavoidably involves making certain choices. These include the problem of register, stylistic, rhetorical and syntactic patterning, not to mention strategies of the SL or TL orientation, as defined by Peter Newmark (1988). Following Julia Kristeva’s theory of intertextuality, it is important to point out that these choices are essential for recreating equivalent discursive constructs in the target language. However, these constructs become part of an intertextual web in a different culture enclosed within a specific language and restricted to a specific ideology. Lastly, intertextual implications affect the constitution and, by implication perception of character in that it is a fictional construct created in language. By the same token, character is defined by the thematic and structural underpinnings implicit in the multifarious levels of meanings created through the interaction of the totality of (inter)textual elements. In other words, these levels constitute an important interpretative framework that shapes the range of meanings which the translator/reader attaches to the character.

**CHARACTER IN TRANSLATION**

The aim of the following is to investigate how translation works in and upon characterization. The problem of intertextuality combined with that of register is treated as a primary means of characterization and as a locus that reveals various sites of tension between the original and the translation. This is discussed within two thematic frameworks. The first one covers characterization of Mark Darcy and the second one focuses on the characterization of Bridget’s mother to reveal problematic aspects in the mother-daughter-relationship and the impact of this relationship on Bridget’s self-perception. Both thematic spans also help to reveal Bridget’s character via her actions and speech. Shlomith Rimmon-Kenan, in writing on this aspect of character construction, comments that “what one character says about another may characterize, not only the one spoken about but also, the one who speaks” (Rimmon-Kenan 1996: 64). From such a perspective, it will be considered how the focal points that epitomize narrative progression centred on the revelation of character are designated in the SL and the TL.

**CHARACTERIZATION AND ROMANCE**

As stated previously, the way Bridget and her friends see the world around them is largely shaped by different fictional and non-fictional discourses that circulate in their socio-cultural context. Bridget’s familiarity with a large number of popular and “great” works of literature can be ascribed to her having “a degree in English” (Fielding, *Bridget*, 1997: 26). However, as indicated by her conversations with her friends, they also know various genres of literature perfectly well and follow the latest cultural and social events. Therefore, it is no surprise that they formulate an understanding about a person by a comparison to some literary or nonliterary character.

Thus the first time Bridget meets Mark Darcy, considered the most eligible bachelor in their milieu by her mother and her mother’s close friends along with certain of her own friends, Bridget sizes
Table 1

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| The rich, divorced-by-cruel-wife Mark – quite tall – was standing with his back to the room, scrutinizing the contents of Alconbury's bookshelves: mainly leather-bound series of books about the Third Reich, which Geoffrey sends off from Reader’s Digest. It struck me as pretty ridiculous to be called Mr Darcy and to stand on your own looking snooty at a party. It’s like being called Heathcliff and insisting on spending the entire evening in the garden, shouting ‘Cathy’ and banging your head against a tree. (13) | Turtingasis Markas, išsiskyręs su žiauriau japone žmona, – tarp kita ko, pakankamai aukštas, – stovėjo nusikes nuo svečių ir apžiūrinėjo Alkonberių knygų lenta, pilnas oda įrišų leidinių apie Trečiąją Reichą, kuriuos Džefris užsisako per „Reader’s Digest.“ Pagalvojau, kad visai juokinga, kai žmogus vadinasi ponas Darsis ir niūrus bei vienišas stovi pilnai svečių kambaryje. Tai tas pats kaip vadintis Hitkliifu ir visą vakarą praleisti sode, šaukiant „Kete!“ bei daužant galva į medžius. (17)

him up by comparing him with literary heroes (Table 1).

The translator includes a footnote, which explains that “Mr Darcy is a romantic hero from Jane Austen’s novel *Pride and Prejudice.*”7 Another object of comparison is Heathcliff whom the translator describes as “an unrestrained, passionate lover from Emily Bronte’s novel *Wuthering Heights*” (tr. Drazdauskienė 1999: 17). In literary translation, footnoting as a strategy of bringing cultural references closer to the target audience has been discussed by Clifford E. Landers:

Often, difficulties arise not only from vocabulary but also from cultural artefacts not found in the target culture. The greater the cultural distance between the source and the target culture, the more the translator will need to bridge the gap. How much explanation does the TL reader need to make sense of the text – a great deal, not much, none at all? Any wide gap between the SL and the TL cultures will introduce the problem of whether to attempt to provide sufficient background to approximate the SL reader’s response to that word or phrase.

There are three basic ways to cope with the lacunae in the TL reader’s knowledge of the SL culture: footnotes, interpolations and omission. (Landers 2001: 93)

Further, Landers says that certain literary translators, “especially academicians,” consistently use footnotes. Their desire is to transmit as much information as they find relevant to a specific text while retaining the pertinent standard of objectivity. The effort is to form the most favourable conditions for comprehension and assessment of the work that they are translating. Landers argues that, no doubt, the use of footnotes constitutes “worthy goals.” However, he also asks:

are they consistent with the ends of literature? In the absence of footnotes in the original, the translation that includes them is a warped reflection. Why? Because they destroy the mimetic effect, the attempt by (most) fiction writers to create the illusion that the reader is actually witnessing, if not experiencing, the events described. Footnotes break the flow, disturbing the continuity by drawing the eye, albeit briefly, away from the text to a piece of information that, however, useful, is still a disrupter of the ‘willing suspension of disbelief.’” (ibid. 93)

In light of this controversy, the discussion of the reasons for a translator’s choice to use footnotes rather than to avoid running any risk of undermining the “mimetic effect” of the work in question may include considering the implications of the juxtaposition of Mr Darcy and Heathcliff. The names of the two literary characters in canonical nineteenth century novels invoke two different resolutions of the romance plot. Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, where Mr. Dar-
cy and Elizabeth Bennet are central characters, ends in marriage. Yet, Margaret Kirkham states, “marriage is acceptable only if it is properly distanced from life by the formal requirements of plot and part” (Kirkham 1986: 92). Death of the female protagonist, Catherine, followed by the death of her beloved Heathcliff, with whom she was unable to link her fate due to societal standards, is at the resolution of *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte. In *Bridget Jones’s Diary*, then, the characterization of Mark Darcy by analogy with the aforementioned male characters reminds us of the thematic and social implications of the romance plot, with its typical ending in marriage or death, as discussed in the previous section. Fielding’s revisionist engagement with Austen’s and Bronte’s novels may be read as a retrospective glance at the representation of gender roles in literary and social history. By delving into the meaning of these characters in terms of the romance plot and its outcomes, the reader / translator is better able to sense the complexity of the character of Bridget judging by the way she characterizes Mark Darcy. Simultaneously, this explains why the translator saw the necessity of including at least minimal information regarding these intertextual references in order to retain what Basil Hatim and Ian Mason calls “meaning potential” of the original (Hatim and Mason 1990: 10).

Before moving to a discussion of other aspects, it can be noted that the meaning of the name Cathy is not explained in the footnotes. Yet, the name should also be treated as an indispensable signifier in the signifying chain that reveals the meaning of Heathcliff. Another aspect for discussion would be the translation of the premodifying phrase used to modify the head noun “Mark.” In the SL it reads as follows: “The rich, divorced-by-cruel-wife, Mark – …” The use of hyphenation in the premodifier creates an ironic effect. This stylistic form may be read as echoing the comic collapse of the introductory sentence in *Pride and Prejudice*: “It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife” (Austen 1985: 51). The Lithuanian translation is: “Turtingasis Markas, išsiskyres su žiauria japone žmona ...” The hyphenated premodifying phrase of the SL has an addition, “japonė,” a strategy that indicates TL reader orientation. It may also be read as compensation for the changes in the premodifying phrase. The hyphenated premodifier of the SL, in TL, is replaced by a postmodifier, and ordinary punctuation is used. It is here that Mona Baker’s discussion of grammatical equivalence in translation may be invoked: “Differences in the grammatical structures of the source and the target languages often result in some change in the information content of the message during the process of translation.” Baker highlights the aspects of “ease” and the presence or absence of certain grammatical categories in the SL and the TL (Baker 1992: 82-83; 86).

The tension between the original and the translation, discernable in the position of the modifier and the mode of punctuation, can be ascribed to the structural differences of the languages. In the SL, it is common to use a hyphen to join (several) compound nouns. The SL version, “divorced-by-cruel-wife,” though it is not a commonly used hyphenated phrase but coined in a specific text to produce an ironic effect, according to the word formation system in English. Conversely, in Lithuanian, such word formation is uncommon. Despite these grammatical differences, it has to be stated that, to a large extent, the ironic effect is lost in the TL and, hence, the
Table 2

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<td><strong>10.30 a.m.</strong> Jude has just called and we spent twenty minutes <strong>growling</strong>, ‘Faww, that Mr Darcy.’ I love the way he talks, sort of as if he can’t be bothered. Ding-dong! Then we had a long discussion about the comparative merits of Mr Darcy and Mark Darcy, both agreeing that Mr Darcy was more attractive because he was <strong>ruder</strong> but that being imaginary was a disadvantage that not could be overlooked. (247)</td>
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<td><strong>10.30 ryt.</strong> Ka tik paskambino Džudė, ir abi dviešimt minučių <strong>mūkėm</strong>: „Oooo, tas ponas Darsis!” Taip fantastiškai kalba, tarsi jam ant visko pasaulyje nusipjaunt. Po to sekė ilga diskusija apie lyginamuoju pono Darsio ir Marko Darsio privalumus; abi su-tikome, kad ponas Darsis žymiai patrauklesnis, nes <strong>labai arogantiškas</strong>, bet faktas, kad yra išgalvotas, smarkiai menkina jo šansus. (217)</td>
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</table>

Intertextual significations implied in character constitution are undermined. That the comparative context is important can be gleaned from the following statement of Bridget (Table 2).

The translation retains the general tone of the original; just as in the SL, in the TL, it is predominantly irony intermingled with overtones of sophistication. However, the report verb “mūkėm,” if backtranslated, is closest to the meaning of “mooed.” Such a meaning underlines the degree of sophistication implied in the original, for it invokes immediate associations with the source of this sound, the cow. This, in turn, brings to mind implications of brainwashed femininity, a signification that opposes the meaning of the SL with regard to characterization. In the original, Bridget and her friend Jude are presented as having a strong opinion about both the literary character, Mr Darcy, and the ineligible single man, Mark Darcy. On the whole, the discourse of the interlocutors characterises them as educated, strong-willed women who perceive themselves as subjects in their own right. The tone of their communication is casual; however, they use language correctly and hardly ever use diction of lower register. The target text opts for a phrase of lower register in the translation of the phrase “as if he can’t be bothered” into “jam ant visko pasaulyje nusipjaut” (“he spits on everything in this world”). The lexical choice presents a problem of tone, simultaneously lowering the characters into a position below that which is discursively constructed in the original. A variation in character construction/reception is also created by the translation of “ruder” into “labai arogantiškas” (“extremely arrogant”). In any case, “extremely arrogant” is not a lexical equivalent of “ruder.” What may have affected the translator’s decision of using this attribute is the fact that, in Austen’s novel, it is namely in this way that Elizabeth Bennet initially perceives Mr Darcy. 10

The following section continues the analysis of translation choices regarding stylistic, rhetorical and syntactic patterning in relation to register coupled with the discussion of intertextuality within a different thematic framework. Central in the following discussion is the rendering of Bridget’s perception of her relationship with her mother. The second thematic area, in which Bridget reveals the void of self-identification that her troubled relationship with the mother has inflicted, is her reflections on the role models of womanhood and the meaning of femininity per se.

CHARACTERIZATION AND WOMANHOOD

Characterization by comparison to other women is a frequently used strategy in the novel. As it is illustrated in the
following example, besides its primary purpose, which is characterization of Bridget’s mother, has some repercussions for the characterization of Bridget.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source language</th>
<th>Target language</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I switched channels and lurched in horror. It was a trailer for the Anne and Nick show and there, frozen in a video effect diamond between Anne and Nick on the sofa, <strong>was</strong> my mother, all bouffed and made up, <em>as if she were Katie Bloody Boyle or someone.</em> (90)</td>
<td>Perjungiau kanalą ir iš siaubo susigūžiau. Rodė Anės ir Niko šou anonsą. Tarp jų ant sofos, sustingusi vaizdo efektų apibrėžtame keturkampioje, išdažytą ir pašiaištą riogsojo mano motina, tarsi kokia prakeikta Ophra Vinfri. (83)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The episode describes the surprise or rather shock that Bridget experiences when she sees her mother in the British television show, *This Morning,* directed by Anne Diamond and Nick Owen. In the original, overcome by unexpectedness, Bridget compares her mother to Katie Bloody Boyle, who most likely stands for a television show person who used to present game shows and Eurovision song contests in the seventies. The TL opts for Ophra Winfrey, the famous American talk show director instead of Katie Bloody Boyle. In terms of translation strategies, such a replacement may be understood as the translator’s choice to avoid the abundance of explanation of culture specific terms either by footnoting or by interpolation.

The translator may have regarded that the TL reading audience could be more familiar with the name of Ophra Winfrey than with that of Katie Bloody Boyle. However, the attempt to reduce the cultural distance between the SL and the TL is somehow problematic. Ophra Winfrey is an extremely popular and successful television talk show director. Therefore, the use of the attribute “prakeikta” (“damned”) is ill-suited, for it does not convey the generally held opinion about this television star. The attribute used in the TL to characterize Bridget’s mother is equally unsuited by the register of the verb “riogsojo” (“hanging around or purposelessly lounging around”) irrespective of all the irony that Bridget invests in the representation of her mother.

Presented from Bridget’s perspective, Bridget’s mother embodies all possible meanings that the term “matrophobia,” coined by Adrienne Rich in the 1970s, may encompass. The term stands for the daughter’s fear of becoming like her mother. The fear is grounded in the fact that society expects the daughter to adopt the same gender roles as the mother has done. Another source of the fear is that mothers tend to experience their daughters as extensions of their own selfhood and femininity and are, therefore, reluctant to treat their daughters as independent subjects.

Overtones of these psychoanalytical ideas are implicit in Fielding’s novel. Bridget’s brother has not adopted the problems of his parents in his life the way that Bridget does. And, the mother does not entertain the least thought about bonding with her son the same way she does with her adult daughter. This inability to find common grounds for discussion between mother and daughter is treated like a typical generation gap problem that Bridget views with an indulgent irony. Against this backdrop of irony, the essence of conventional motherhood is also captured in an ironic twist. This is obvious in the mother’s complaints about never having had a career (Fielding, *Bridget*, 1997: 134) or in the scenes where the mother is making all efforts to compensate for the pleasures of life that had escaped her during her
youth. In this way, the representation of Bridget’s mother creates an intertextual dialogue of diversity which intrinsically alludes to a complex set of discourses that shape the formation of gender identity of both mother and daughter.

Bridget makes no effort to analyze her relationship with her mother through the prism of any of such discourses nor does she overtly demonstrate that she has read them. Nevertheless, she is aware of language being an important part of her identity and a source of power. This is to say that she tries to uphold an impression of an educated independent middle class woman. She seldom, if ever, resorts in any communicative sphere to the language of the lower register having connotations of offensiveness, disrespect or other aspects of antisocial behaviour. These thematic and discursive accents can be considered with regard to Susan Bassnett’s statement that it is crucial in prose translation to treat each and all textual elements as “component units in a complex overall structure” (Bassnett 1991: 115).

The above discussion may serve as an interpretative framework for the analysis of register of the verb “riogsojo” presented in Table 3. In the source text, this state is designated by the word “was.” It is of neutral register and thus devoid of judgemental implications discernible in the verb “riogsojo” used to translate the SL “was” into the TL. Apart from the consideration that the use of language is one of the most important ways of revealing character, Bridget’s use of register has to be considered in the view of intertextual links with Jane Austen’s novel.

As many critics have observed, Austen is a profound moralist. In her novels, the representation of society is based on the neoclassical idea that each person has to do one’s social duty so that society can function uninterrupted by anger. The character trait that was most highly valued in this period was wit. Perhaps it will be not too far fetched to treat irony which is an inseparable aspect of Bridget’s character as a resonance of this trait.

In the two examples presented above, the technique of “telling,” to use Percy Lubbock’s term, is used to describe the characters of Mr. Darcy and Mrs. Jones. In other words, the characters are described in the way another character, Bridget, sees them. The following example in Table 3 presents an instance of “showing” as a way of character construction. As Jeremy Hawthorn explains Lubbock’s terms, “showing” allows us to “decide what a character is like when we observe him or her behaving in front of us; we can use our critical intelligence and our knowledge of human beings to reach an assessment of them, whereas when we are told something we can only take it or leave it” (Hawthorn 2005: 108).

As illustrated below, the way Bridget’s mother uses language serves as a fundamental device for her characterization. The excerpt describes the opening scene of the novel. Bridget recounts her conversation with the mother when she called her “at 8.30 in the morning last August Bank Holiday” (Fielding, Bridget, 1997: 8). The official reason for calling was to enquire about the present that Bridget wishes for Christmas. The actual reason, though, is to persuade her to go to the New Year’s Day Turkey Curry Buffet party, which will be held by the best friends of Bridget’s parents. What is most appealing about the party, from the perspective of Bridget’s mother, is that it will be attended by Mark Darcy. Instead of going straight into the heart of the matter, Mrs. Jones almost drives her daughter mad by inquiring about a Christmas present in a roundabout way, as illustrated in Table 4.
The fact that Bridget’s mother chooses Mary Poppins as a referent in her comparison has several implications. Firstly, it aligns well with her role as an endlessly lecturing mother who treats her adult daughter as if she still were a child. Secondly, the use of this referent suggests that most probably, she is not so well read in as many fields as is her daughter. Therefore, she is unable to refer to other discourses as promptly as can her daughter. Nonetheless, this does not provide the least grounds for using the attribution, “valkataujanti” (“bumming around, a vagrant”), about Mary Poppins in the TL.

This choice may be considered in the light of, what Susan Bassnett calls “general rules for the translator of prose texts,” which she outlines in reference to Hilaire Belloc. The rule of utmost importance for the purpose of the present discussion is that “the essence of translating is ‘the resurrection of an alien thing in a native body’” (Bassnett 1991: 116-117). Read within the overall context of translation strategies for prose texts, this dictum is to be considered as part of the integral set of tasks involved in rendering a text from the source language into the target language. According to Bassnett, the emphasis here is on the “the need for the translator to consider

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source language</th>
<th>Target language</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘Why don’t I get you a little suitcase with wheels attached.’ You know, like air hostesses have.’</td>
<td>- Tai gal aš tau padovanočiau tokį lagaminį su ratukais? Žinai, tokius turi stiuardesės.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘I’ve already got a bag.’ ‘Oh, darling, you can’t go around with that tatty green canvas thing. You look like some sort of Mary Poppins person who’s fallen on hard times.’ (8)</td>
<td>- Aš turiu krepsį. - Oi meilute, negi visą gyvenimą ir vežiosies tą žalią medžiaginį draisikalą. Atrodai kaip valkataujanti Merė Poppins. (13)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

the prose text as a structured whole whilst bearing in mind the stylistic and syntactic exigencies of the TL” (ibid. 117).

Even when conceding that “the stylistic and syntactic exigencies of the TL” to use Bassnett’s phrasing, have to be taken into account, what also has to be pointed out is that the TL translation “kaip valkataujanti Merė Poppins” is simply wrong and results in an inadequate rendering of the original. The original seems to stress financial constraints that preclude Mary Poppins from purchasing a new bag. For an English reader (and the Lithuanian reader as well), the very mention of Mary Poppins evokes associations with a serious-minded playfulness testing the limits of imagination. If viewed from the perspective of intertextuality, it may be remembered that reference to other texts inevitably involves a critique of the old text and subsequently triggers a dialogue within the context of the meanings created in the new text. However, the dialogic exchange of meanings within the limits of the discursive specificity of Fielding’s novel hardly broadens the boundaries of the reader’s perception of the character named Mary Poppins to the extent that it includes the very negative connotation, implicit in the attribute “valkataujanti”, implying that Mary Poppins is a bum.

Pertinent to characterization by ‘showing,’ the use of diction like “valkataujanti” is uncharacteristic of Mrs. Jones’s discourse, since Bridget’s mother tends to use discourse of a formal and neutral register. This can be read as her self-identification with the British middle class. There are memorable episodes when Bridget’s mother demonstrates conscious awareness between her class / personal identity and language. In those situations, when her actions are paradoxically not in keeping with the role of the mother as her daughter’s caretaker,
Bridget’s mother does not forget to remind her daughter to speak politely. Her words, “Don’t say ‘what,’ Bridget, say ‘pardon,’” become an ironic leitmotif, embodying the essence of Mrs. Jones’s character and, by extension, the mother-daughter relationship.

Much as Bridget is worried about the troubled relationship with her mother, she also thinks about the possible positive role models of successful womanhood. In such instances, Bridget’s discourse, as a rule, exhibits a high level of sophistication as in the following example:

Table 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Target language</strong></th>
<th><strong>Source language</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Stereotypical notions of shelves, spinning wheels and sexual scrapheaps conspire to make you feel stupid, no matter how much time you spend thinking about Joanna Lumley and Susan Sarandon. (20)</td>
<td>Stereotipinis pakopų, besisukančių ratių ir seksualinių griuvėsių sąvokos verčia įaustis kvaila, kad ir kiek mąstymu apie Džoaną Lamli ar Sūžen Sarandon. (23)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Lithuanian translation captures the contemplative tone of the original. It is expressed in a mixture of diction pertaining to a neutral and higher register. Against the backdrop of Bridget’s inner anxiety, the objects of comparison, i.e. Joanna Lumley and Susan Sarandon (Fielding, *Brigid*, 1997: 20), leave a hint about what constitutes an embodiment of womanhood for her. A footnote explains that “Joanna Lumley is a middle aged British actress of excellent appearance (tr. Drazdauskienė 1999: 23). As for Susan Sarandon, no explanation is provided. Most likely, it is assumed that Susan Sarandon, “sometimes credited as Susan Tomalin,”21 is a more familiar name to the target language reader. The motifs behind the imagined fusion of boundaries between Bridget and the famous actress become more explicit when considered that “Now in her early 50s, Susan Sarandon is still strikingly beautiful and retains her fierce independence and integrity... Susan currently lives in New York City with Tim Robbins and successfully manages to pursue her acting career, raise three children and continue as one of Hollywood’s most visible activists, lending her name, time and presence to many political, cultural and health problems.”22 Such a successful realization of the private and the public seems to be a mode of femininity to which Bridget strives. Thus, it would have been appropriate to include a footnote presenting information on the role model that Bridget chooses. The footnote would provide a subtext for the interpretation of Bridget’s character rather than be a “disrupter” of the text, recalling Clifford E. Landers’s remark about the dangers of overuse of footnotes in a literary work.

CONCLUSION

Intertextuality, as illustrated by the above discussed examples, affects character constitution. It is also a locus that provides the interpretative context for the reading / translation of Helen Fielding’s novel *Bridget Jones’s Diary*. The examination of translation choices regarding stylistic, rhetorical and syntactic patterning in the source text and the target text is related to the analysis of register coupled with the discussion of intertextuality within two thematic frameworks to reveal various sites of tension between the original and the translation. Finally, it is argued that characterization, even if regarded through the lenses of the reader’s participation in the construction of meaning conditioned by the (intertextual) signification process, is to a large extent determined by the way intertextual significations are rendered in the target language.
NOTES

1 Emphasis is in the original.
2 As it will be mentioned in further discussion, the paper draws on Kristeva’s notion of intertextuality which is very much influenced by Bakhtin’s ‘dialogism’ (Kristeva 1986: 34).
3 For the discussion of Elizabeth Bennet’s character, the present paper draws on a number of sources. E.g. Margaret Kirkham, John Odmark, Mary Lascelles, to mention but a few.
4 For the discussion of the socio-cultural context of Austen’s works, see Mary Lascelles (Lascelles 1963: 1-41).
5 I am drawing here on the statement by Rachel Blau DuPlessis that “Narrative in the most general terms is a version of, or a special expression of, ideology; representations by which we construct and accept values and institutions. Any fiction express ideology; for example, romance plots of various kinds and the fate of female characters express attitudes at least toward family, sexuality, and gender” (DuPlessis 1985: x).
6 In describing the tenets of revisionist writing, Rachel Blau DuPlessis states that if a woman writer wants to revise the texts of her literary predecessors in order to represent their sexual and cultural codes from her own perspective as a woman, “She must de-story the old story, lift the weight of the accustomed tale so that she can tell her own” (ibid. 24).
7 My translation from Lithuanian into English.
8 My translation from Lithuanian into English.
9 Emphasis is in the original.
10 This is how the initial reaction of Elizabeth to Mr Darcy is described by Margaret Kirkham (Kirkham 1986: 91).
12 http://www.lynpaulwebsite.org/IX-A.htm
14 For the discussion of differences in the sociopsychological and sexual socialization of the genders, see Marianne Hirsch The Mother/ Daughter Plot: Narratives, Psychoanalysis, Feminism (Hirsch 1989).
15 For the discussion of Austen’s use of language in relation to the neoclassical values, see Mary Lascelles (Lascelles 1963: 87-117).
16 Lubbock’s terms are explained in reference to Jeremy Hawthorne (2005).
17 Emphasis in the original.
18 Italics are used both in the original and in translation.
19 The emphasis here is on, what Julia Kristeva has defined as the disruptive aspect of intertextuality as a way to invoke new meanings (Kristeva 1986: 36-37).
20 My translation from Lithuanian into English.
21 http://www.imdb.com/name/nm0000215/
22 http://www.chrisbaker.co.uk/aboutsusan.htm.
23 My translation from English into Lithuanian.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHARAKTERIO PERTEIKIMAS VERTIME
Helen Fielding romanas „Bridžitos Džouns dienoraštis”
S a n t r a u k a

Straipsnyje aptaria Helen Fielding romano „Bridžitos Džouns dienoraštis” charakterio per-teikimo vertime į lietuvių kalbą problema. Teigiamai, kad remiantis šiulakine kūrinio reikšmės samprata, literatūros kūrinio vertėjas yra prilyginimas skaitytøjui, kurio skaitymas sąlygoja kūrinio suvokimo reikšmės. Teksto reikšmė suvokiamai kaip daugiaplanė signifikacija, priklausoma nuo intertekstinių sandūrų. Pagal Julia Kristevo intertekstualumo teoriją „visi tekstai yra tik citatų mozaika, kiekvienas tekstas atsiranda kaip kito teksto absorbavimo ir transformavimo padarinas”.

Straipsnyje pabrėžiama, kad Helen Fielding romane „Bridžitos Džouns dienoraštis” ypač ryški intertekstualumo problema, nes kūrinijė gausu atvira ir paslėpta forma pertekiamų sąsajų su „auksčiosios kultūros”, t.y. literatūros, populiarinios kultūros, politinių, socialinių, psychoanalitinio ir kitais diskursais. Šie diskursai sudaro kūrinio suvokimą, kurio reikšmės veikia teksto interpretaciją / vertimą. Šiuo požiūriu literatūros kūrinio vertimas yra galutinė skaitytøjui pateikianti per vertėjo interpretacijos prizmę suvokta kūrinio reikšmė. Intersekstinių sąsajų interpretacija yra svarbi šios reikšmės dalis, nuo kurios priklauso daugelis vertėjo sprendimu. Remiantis temiškai sugrupuotais pavyzdžiais, straipsnyje iliustruojama, kaip tai paveikia vertinimo teksto retorika, stilistiką bei registram – aptaria, kokią įtaką diskuršinė išraiška turi charakterio suvokimui.

Ypač daug dėmesio skiriama Helen Fielding romano sąsajoms su Jane Austen romanu „Puikybė ir prietarai” – atsižvelgia į Fielding teiginių, jog „Bridžitos Džouns dienoraštis” parašytas pasinaudojus minimo Austen romano siūžetu (pilot) ir suteikus jam kitokią naratyvinę raišką. Tokia intertekstualumo forma straipsnyje analizuojama remiantis Rachel Blau DuPlessis teiginiu, kad tradicinių naratyvo formų, tokių kaip meilės romanas (romance) ar tamsos romanas (quest) pakeitimas prilygsta socialinių bei ideologinių normų, įkūnynų tikiuose naratyvuose, kritikai. Analizuojant charakterio per-teikimo vertime problemą, teigiami, jog versi-niame tekste pastebimi charakterizavimo aspektai skatina kritiškai vertinti struktūrinus skirtumus tarp originalo ir vertimo kalbų bei intertekstiniuose ryšiųose atsirandancias konotacijas.