Pat, Anne, and Other Montgomery Characters in the Polish Kitchen

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The paper examines the names of food and celebratory traditions in the Polish translations of L.M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* series, *Pat of Silver Bush*, and *Jane of Lantern Hill*, highlighting the major changes made in translating those references that reflect the strategy of domestication.

"Yer Aunt Edith always do be saying it takes a born lady to make a rale fruit cake

and maybe she is right."

—L.M. Montgomery, *Pat of Silver Bush*[1]

It is a truth universally acknowledged that L.M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables* is one of the most popular books in Poland. Since the first Polish translation by R. Bernsteinowa[2] in 1912, there have been numerous editions, one hundred different covers, and sixteen other translations. The first part of the *Anne* series is still on the recommended reading list in primary schools.[3] For years the dominant trend in the Polish translations of Montgomery's books was domestication, which Wenfen Yang identifies as a strategy whereby words tied to the source culture are replaced with ones connected to the target culture.[4] For example, in the earliest translations, the names of Montgomery's characters were either translated into Polish equivalents or changed to similar sounding Polish names, and foreign plants native to Prince Edward Island were changed to flora more familiar to Poles. This domestication trend started to shift from the early 2000s toward more faithful translations,[5] and, nowadays, there is a significant trend to move away from domestication toward foreignization, identified by Yang as a strategy whereby a target text retains some of

the original's exoticism,[6] to show Polish readers the world Montgomery created as she originally described it, with all the details.[7]

Recent translations often leave the names of the characters and places, such as the names of villages and cities, in their English versions, and they focus on accurate names for plants native to PEI,[8] reflecting Montgomery's appreciation of the outside world and its influence on the mood of the characters. These attempts have been met with varying degrees of enthusiasm and acceptance from Polish readers, who often feel very protective of the names Bersteinowa gave to beloved characters over a hundred years ago, even if they are completely different from the original ones. Introducing English words, and through them the culture of PEI from a century ago, means that well-known texts become more distant, albeit more faithful to the original. However, the same attention to correct names of characters, places, and nature is not given to references to customary names of the foods characters prepare and consume, nor to customs for celebrations in Montgomery's books. This means that Polish readers learn about Montgomery's world through the lens of the translator's linguistic choices and, as such, experience her novels differently, from a more distanced perspective, than native English speakers, especially Canadian readers.[9]

Domesticating Foreign Texts

There are numerous mistranslations of terms in Montgomery's books related to the names or types of food. Some of them were probably caused by a lack of available resources at the time of the original translations, and some by the translator following the trend of domesticating foreign texts, as in Ewa Fiszer's sole Polish translation of *Pat of Silver Bush* from 1993. Fiszer changed many of the names of baked items to make them more familiar to Polish readers. Therefore "a pin-wheel cookie" has been changed to "*obwarzanek*," a bready, savoury treat, which was once sold during country fairs; "bishop's bread" has been replaced by the similarly sounding "*biszkopt*," an often-baked simple sponge cake, made mostly as a base to celebration cakes; and "blackberry roly-poly" becomes "*ciasto z jagodami*," a cake topped with bilberries. Some dishes have been completely changed. Fiszer translated "fudge"[10] as "*legumina*," a flour and egg-based dessert; "ribbon cake" became "*rolada*," a rolled sponge cake with filling, similar to a roly-poly. References to a "lily salad," a "fruit cake," and the description of Pat's unsuccessful attempt at making "Brown Betty," a baked apple dessert, have been completely removed. All of

the sweet treats named in the translation are easily recognizable for Polish readers but do not reflect accurately what was baked in Canadian households in the 1930s.[11]

Fruitcakes

Of all these changes, most notable perhaps is the omission of the fruitcake. It is a staple dessert in many of Montgomery's books, and the author herself often baked it.[12] Pat, Anne, Marilla, Susan Baker, Charlotta the Fourth, Jane, and Marigold always have a fruitcake in their pantries ready for unexpected guests. Even Rilla in her war diary mentions the ability to bake fruitcake as a badge of honour. Removing fruitcake from the translation is like removing it from their pantry shelves.[13]

There is also a problem with how "fruitcake" has been translated. Paweł Beręsewicz, in his translation of *Anne of Green Gables* and *Anne of Avonlea*, and Joanna Kazimierczyk, in her translation of *Jane of Lantern Hill*, are the closest to the true nature of this baked good with their choice of "*keks*," a sponge loaf cake, traditionally baked for Christmas, filled with dried and candied fruit and nuts. In the other books, including *Pat of Silver Bush*, when a fruitcake is mentioned, it is mistakenly translated as "*ciasto owocowe*," "*ciasto z owocami*," "*placek owocowy*," or "*placek z owocami*."[14] While these are correct as literal translations, the resulting type of the cake is completely different. "*Ciasto owocowe*" (a cake with fruit) is a batter-based cake with fresh, frozen, or canned fruit on top, with a relatively short shelf life. This detail is especially important in *Rilla of Ingleside* when Susan Baker prepares a parcel for Jem to take with him to Europe and packs a fruitcake, a shortbread, and a mince pie—all long-lasting and able to survive a lengthy journey. A cake with fruit from the Polish version would arrive in Europe inedible because it would have spoiled. Moreover, that list of baked goods reflects Susan's resourcefulness, so important during wartime. The reader can imagine her first baking a fruitcake (or two, to stock up the pantry at the same time), then using any leftover fruit mix for a mince pie,[15] and even making some shortbread with leftover pastry. Montgomery's heroines are always prepared to host a tea party and ensure nothing is wasted, but these qualities are lost in translation.

The Polish custom of making cakes with fresh fruit, and the popularity of plums in Poland generally, has led to "plum puddings," "plum cakes," and "plummy cakes"[16] being translated as cakes and desserts with plums, rather than with currants,

raisins, and candied peel as Montgomery's characters would have prepared them. While this detail indicates the differences between the two cuisines, it also indicates that the translators were unaware of seasonal availability of fresh produce throughout the year in the novels. "Plum cake hungry"[17] Davy cannot expect Anne to have a "*placek ze śliwkami*" (fresh plum cake)[18] ready for him in July, when PEI plums are in season in September. The boy also describes how Mrs. Harrison gives him "the scrapings out of a pan she's mixed up a plum cake in" where "a good many plums stick to the sides" in the same chapter that Miss Lavendar is excited about early strawberries.[19] Not only are these two fruits not in season together, but fresh plums left in a mixing bowl would have been a waste Mrs. Harrison would have never allowed.[20] Because of this lack of understanding about the seasonal availability of plums, Polish readers are given different versions of celebration cakes mentioned across the books. Montgomery's English-speaking Rilla talks to Susan about "a beautiful, plummy, eggy, citron-peely wedding-cake," which was later iced, [21] while Polish Rilla asks for a cake with "*ze śliwkami*" (fresh plums) decorated with cream and fruit. Birthday and wedding cakes are no longer traditional English fruitcakes, covered with icing or marzipan, which could be prepared in advance, but instead Polish sponge cakes with fresh fruit, decorated with fresh cream. This changes the look and the flavour of the dessert in the reader's imagination. Furthermore, Polish readers will not be familiar with the custom of storing the leftover cake for years and bringing it out on anniversaries or christenings, as this cannot be done with Polish bakes.

Biscuits

The Polish preference for sponge-based cakes and desserts could explain why "biscuits" has been translated as "*biszkopciki*" (ladyfingers) or "*ciasteczka*" (cookies) in all sixteen Polish versions of *Anne of Green Gables* and Montgomery's other novels. Furthermore, *Całuski Pani Darling* (*Mrs. Darling's Kisses*), a cookbook compiled by Polish author Małgorzata Musierowicz, which contains recipes inspired by fictional characters, includes one for "Anne Shirley's Golden Ladyfingers" and identifies this bake as one of the treats Marilla and Anne prepare for an afternoon tea for Mr. and Mrs. Allan.[22] However, an avid baker and a careful reader will find clues in how Montgomery writes about these biscuits: She mentions Marilla and Anne adding baking powder, making them just before tea (delicate ladyfingers are not something a good baker would make at the last minute), and serving them hot, as tea biscuits taste best fresh out of the oven.[23] *Anne of Green Gables* and *Jane of*

Lantern Hill emphasize the difficult mastery of the baking of biscuits, and even Susan Baker cannot teach Rilla the skills required in *Rilla of Ingleside*.24 The same biscuits are mentioned in *Mistress Pat*, *A Tangled Web*, and *Magic for Marigold*. This particular bake is not well known in Poland, and one word would not really describe it accurately. The custom of eating quick-bread-type treats with cream and jam is quite foreign. Therefore, translators perhaps chose to change biscuits into a sweet treat because in Montgomery's novels biscuits are usually mentioned as an accompaniment to tea, and in Poland, "tea" rarely refers to an afternoon meal.25 Another attempt of domestication can be seen in *Pat of Silver Bush,* when Hilary, who has been invited to dinner, is asked if he takes cream and sugar.26 In her translation, Fiszer changes this question about how he takes his drink to a question about whether he would like to eat his "*szarlotkę z kremem*" (apple-cake with cream).27 Fiszer made this change possibly because Polish people tend to drink their tea black and adding milk or cream is unusual. While all of these little changes create a different, but more familiar, picture of traditional afternoon tea to Polish readers, it is further from the original description in the book, which is so deeply rooted in the culture of the British Isles.

Celebrations

In keeping with the trend of domestication before the 2000s, translators also familiarized the details of holidays such as Halloween and Christmas for Polish readers. In *Pat of Silver Bush*, for example, when Halloween is mentioned, Fiszer has translated it as *Zaduszki*, the day of prayers "*za dusze*" (for the souls), a Catholic holiday celebrated on 2 November. In the 1990s, when Fiszer translated *Pat*, Halloween celebrations of any kind were uncommon, and any imagery attached to them that was known in Poland at that time came from Americanized pop culture. By switching the celebratory day to November, however, Fiszer should have changed the earlier mention of October ("The October day was burning low").28 Fiszer translates an interesting detail connected to Judy and her Irish heritage concerning "turnip lanterns" as "*latarnie z dyni*" (pumpkin lanterns). Although neither of these kinds of carved lantern is part of Polish traditions, pumpkin lanterns would have been better known at the time the book was translated, as visually they are strongly attached to Halloween through American influences and probably the reason that Fiszer chose to switch the vegetables Sid uses in the book.

Surprisingly, in the same novel, Fiszer has not translated “Christmas Day” as “Christmas Eve,” a change that Bernsteinowa had made in *Anne of Green Gables* and Zawisza-Krasucka in *Rilla of Ingleside* and that can strongly influence how a Polish reader imagines the day, another attempt at domestication. As a result of a translator’s switching the day of main celebration during the festive season to 24 December, Polish readers might envision the Cuthbert or Blythe family sitting down in Green Gables or Ingleside, respectively, to a traditional supper served in Poland on Christmas Eve, consisting of twelve dishes, made from mushrooms, grains, honey, and fish but no meat. In the Polish reader’s mind’s eye, there is no traditional Canadian Christmas dinner with poultry and cranberry, no Christmas pudding or mince pies; instead, they might have an image of beetroot soup, dumplings stuffed with sauerkraut and mushrooms, and yeast-roll cake with a poppy-seed filling. In keeping with Polish customs, Anne receives her brown puff-sleeved dress from Matthew a day early, on Christmas Eve morning. Yes, it brings the characters closer to the Polish reader, but it also replaces British and Protestant traditions with Polish and Catholic customs.

Conclusion: A Seat at the Table

Each bake and each dish in Montgomery’s novels tells readers something about the characters, their cooking skills (or lack thereof), and their social and financial situation; about customs and food common in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries; and about historical background, such as traditions that were made popular during Queen Victoria's reign (for example, serving fruitcake as a wedding cake). As well, ingredients used in food preparation hint at the seasons described in chapters if they are not otherwise stated. Cultural adaptation or cultural erasure affects characterization and the historical accuracy of the translated books. In Montgomery’s novels, teas, dinners, and gatherings are often occasions when humorous but significant events occur, such as when Anne serves a liniment cake, when Diana enjoys a little bit too much “raspberry cordial” (and does not even try Marilla’s fruitcake!), and when a mouse drowns in the plum-pudding sauce. The heroines’ growth is frequently signalled by their preparation of a feast or their baking a particularly tricky cake, as Anne later comes to do. Certain recipes are repeated in different books, giving the reader an impression that everything happens in the same universe, where the thirty-six-eggs pound cake that Rebecca Dew bakes in *Anne of Windy Poplars* reappears in *Pat of Silver Bush*, this time as a traditional bride or wedding cake.[29] When Little Fellow’s father bakes some

turnovers for him,30 he not only makes him a sweet treat but also gives him his time, patience, and skill; that is why it is important for readers to know that it was a turnover and not something else.

Montgomery was an avid home cook and baker. It is not incidental that her first short story, published in July 1895 in *Ladies' Journal*, was titled "A Baking of Gingersnaps."31 Moreover, preparing food and hosting were central to Montgomery's life. Her world is a world of people who feel attached to places, one of these places being the kitchen with a seat reserved at the table, where an unexpected guest would always be welcomed with a cup of tea and a slice of cake. Translators who challenge their readers' vision of the world take them out of the Polish kitchen to a kitchen in Prince Edward Island at the turn of the previous century and introduce them to traditions and snippets of everyday life that are at the heart of Anne's, Pat's, and other Montgomery heroines' stories.

About the Author: Joanna Lipinski graduated from the University of Gdańsk in Poland in 2008 with an M.A. in Polish Philology. Her Master's thesis focused on how Bruno Schulz depicts women in his stories and illustrations. She specializes in teaching Polish language and literature, and since 2014 she has been teaching Polish as a foreign language in England. In her independent studies she focuses on Polish translations of Montgomery's novels as well as symbolism and literary allusions. In 2022 she gave her first presentation during the L.M. Montgomery Institute's international conference at UPEI.

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Banner Image: Photo by Joanna Lipinski, 2023.

- 1 Montgomery, *PSB*, Chapter 35.3.
- 2 In the first edition and for many years afterwards, the publishing house gave the first name of the translator Bersteinowa as only "R," but since the 1980s, the publishing house has added the name "Rozalia." However, this may not be the translator's actual name, and there are Polish scholars trying to discover more about this mysterious translator and whether "Bernstein/Bernsteinowa" was perhaps a pseudonym. Agnieszka Maruszewska writes more about this topic on her blog, *Pokrewne dusze: Świat L.M. Montgomery w Polsce (Kindred Spirits: The World of L.M. Montgomery in Poland)*, http://pokrewne-dusze-

maud.blogspot.com/2019/08/r-czyli.html.

- 3 As discussed by Fijałkowski, *Aneksja kulturowa (Cultural Annexation)* 209, 224.
- 4 Yang, “Brief Study” 77.
- 5 This is discussed by Fijałkowski 215.
- 6 Yang 77.
- 7 Only in the most recent translation of *Anne of Green Gables*, by Anna Bańkowska, do all of the characters retain their original English names. Most often Anne is translated as “Ania,” Marilla “Maryla,” Matthew “Mateusz,” and Rachel “Małgorzata.” In 2003, Agnieszka Kuc was the first translator to decide to keep most of the original names of characters (apart from Anne’s); however, the publishing house Wydawnictwo Literackie went back to the Polish names in the following editions of her translation.
- 8 In his blog on Montgomery, *Zielnik L.M. Montgomery (L.M. Montgomery’s Herbarium)*, Stanisław Kucharzyk accurately identifies and names flora found in PEI and provides the Polish name for mayflowers (*majowniki*), https://zielnikmontgomery.blogspot.com.
- 9 Eugene Nida discusses generally how translators’ choices affect readers’ experiences and responses. Nida, *Language and Culture* 118.
- 10 Probably the closest Polish equivalent to fudge is “*krówki*,” a sweet made from milk, cream, sugar, butter, and vanilla.
- 11 I presented my findings on these and other sweet treats during the 2022 L.M. Montgomery Institute international conference, “L.M. Montgomery and Re-vision,” in a paper titled “Polish Pat—Lost in Translation.”
- 12 On 8 March 1929, Montgomery writes, “it is always a comfort to my soul to know there is a great juicy, plummy, spicy fruit cake in my cellar box lest ‘unexpected company’ come” (Montgomery, *CJ* 6: 255). The recipe for her Christmas cake is included in Elaine and Kelly Crawford’s *Aunt Maud’s Recipe Book: From the Kitchen of L.M. Montgomery* (Norval ON, 1996).
- 13 Fruitcake has disappeared from not only the Polish *Pat of Silver Bush* as translated by Ewa Fiszer but also the Polish *Anne of Avonlea* as translated by Bernsteinowa.
- 14 These terms are from the translations of *Anne of Green Gables* (*Ania z Zielonego Wzgórza* by Bernsteinowa and *Anne z Zielonych Szczytów* by Bańkowska), *Anne of Avonlea* (*Ania z Avonlea* by Bernsteinowa and *Anne z Avonlea* by Bańkowska), and *Anne of the Island* (*Ania na uniwersytecie* by Janina Zawisza-Krasucka and *Anne z Redmondu* by Bańkowska).

- 15 Mince pies are not popular in Poland and have been wrongly identified as savoury meat rolls in some of the translations, such as in the recent *Anne z Avonlea* by Bańkowska.
- 16 In *Anne of Green Gables*, *Anne of Ingleside*, and *Rilla of Ingleside*.
- 17 Montgomery, *AA* 154.
- 18 Beręsewicz, *Ania z Avonlea* 203.
- 19 Montgomery, *AA* 283, 288.
- 20 Beręsewicz makes this more probable by writing in *Ania z Avonlea* about "*kawałki śliwek*" ("pieces of plums") (278), and Bańkowska's Davy, in *Anne z Avonlea*, talks about scraping the pan after the cake has been baked in it and fresh plums got stuck to it (290).
- 21 Montgomery, *RI* 195.
- 22 Musierowicz, *Całuski Pani Darling* (*Mrs. Darling's Kisses*) 163.
- 23 Montgomery, *AGG* 195. Montgomery's recipe for baking-powder biscuits is included in the Crawfords' *Aunt Maud's Recipe Book* (42), which contains the author's favourite recipes.
- 24 The bran biscuits that Susan plans to bake in chapter 27 of *Rilla of Ingleside* disappear from the Polish translation by Zawisza-Krasucka because they are mentioned in the three chapters that were omitted.
- 25 In chapter 28 of the first edition of the Polish translation of *Anne of Green Gables* by Bernsteinowa (1912), when Anne is invited to Diana's home for tea, Mrs. Barry asks Mr. Barry to pass the "*sucharki*" (rusks). In their 2018 article, Oczko, Nastulczyk, and Powieśnik have proven that in her work Bernsteinowa was influenced by the first Swedish translation by Karin Lindforss Jensen. In the Swedish text "biscuits" was translated as "*skorpkorgen*" (basket of rusks). In the following editions of Bernsteinowa's translation, which contained some amendments, "*sucharki*" was changed to "*biszkopty*" (ladyfingers).
- 26 Montgomery, *PSB*, Chapter 11.1.
- 27 Fiszer, *Pat ze Srebrnego Gaju* (*Pat of Silver Bush*) 75.
- 28 Montgomery, *PSB*, Chapter 12.3.
- 29 Translators have difficulties translating "pound cake" in Polish. Beręsewicz in *Ania z Zielonego Wzgórza* calls it "*biszkopt*" (sponge cake) and "*ciasto drożdżowe*" (yeast cake) (176, 206); Bernsteinowa in her translation of the same book, "*ciastka z kremem*" (cookies with cream) (248); and Zawisza-Krasucka in *Ania na uniwersytecie*, "*babka*" (bundt cake) (198). In Aleksandra Kowalak-Bojarczuk's *Ania z Szumiących Topoli* (*Anne of Windy Poplars*), "sweating" of the baked cake has been replaced by "*rosnąć*" (to prove) and this

step is done before baking, not after as suggested in the original.

- 30 Montgomery, *Anne of Windy Willows* 176.
- 31 On the back of this short story manuscript, Montgomery later wrote part of chapter 15 of the *Anne of Green Gables* manuscript. The two first pages, including the title page (with the pen name “Maud Cavendish”), are a part of verso pages collection in the digitized manuscript of *Anne of Green Gables* that was launched in January 2023 (pages 239, 241), https://annemanuscript.ca/verso-pages/?verso_ch=15#scrolltochapter.

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