From an American Plantation to Interwar Poland: How Uncle Remus Became Bam-Bo the Negro

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ABSTRACT

The article opens with the introduction of Joel Chandler Harris and his literary output. As one of “local colourists,” Harris depicted American plantation life in 19th-century Georgia and included many cultural as well as folk elements in his works. The following analysis of his stories about Uncle Remus focuses on (1) the levels of narration; (2) the linguistic complexity of the text (the stories abound in slang and dialectal expressions); (3) the form; and (4) the folklore value. These four aspects guide the discussion of the only Polish translation of the Uncle Remus stories. Prepared by Władysława Wielińska in 1929, it was addressed to children. Therefore, the article aims to determine the profile of the translation as a children’s book, to consider it in relation to the skopos of the source text and to establish the extent to which it preserved the peculiar character of the Uncle Remus stories.

Keywords: folktale, dialect, Joel Chandler Harris, Uncle Remus, local colour