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**TROUBLESOME EPIPHANY IN A SNOWSTORM  
ALEKSANDR BLOK'S *ДВЕНАДЦАТЬ*  
IN POLISH AND ENGLISH REWRITINGS**

In his preface to *The Manipulation of Literature. Studies in Literary Translation*, Theo Hermans asserts that from the target perspective “all translation implies a degree of manipulation of the source-text for a certain purpose”<sup>1</sup> so that the process of translating will bring the target text into line with a particular socio-political and cultural model and hence a particular notion of correctness, and thus secure social acceptance, even acclaim<sup>2</sup>. This target-oriented, functionalist approach to translation represented by the Manipulation School prevalent in Translation Studies<sup>3</sup> is based on the concept of the literary polysystem, derived both from the Russian Formalists and the Prague Structuralists and further elaborated by Gideon Toury and Itamar Even-Zohar in *Papers in Historical Poetics*, 1978<sup>4</sup>. The Tel Aviv scholars posited that literature functioning within a given society is always a collection of various interconnected systems, in which diverse genres, schools, tendencies are constantly jockeying for a dominant position and competing for prestige and power. Seen in this light, “literature is no longer the stately and fairly static thing it tends to be for the canonists, but a highly kinetic situation in which things are

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<sup>1</sup> T. Hermans: *Introduction: Translation Studies and a New Paradigm*. In: *The Manipulation of Literature. Studies in Literary Translation*. Ed. T. Hermans. London–Sydney: Croom Helm 1985, p. 11.

<sup>2</sup> See T. Hermans: *Translational Norms and Correct Translations*. In: *Translation Studies. The State of the Art*. Eds. K. van Leuven-Zwart and T. Naaijken. Amsterdam–Atlanta: Rodopi 1991, p. 166.

<sup>3</sup> See M. Shuttleworth, M. Cowie: *Dictionary of Translation Studies*. Manchester, UK: St Jerome Publishing 1997, p. 101.

<sup>4</sup> See E. Gentzler: *Contemporary Translation Theories*. London: Routledge 1993, p. 105–143.

constantly changing”<sup>5</sup>. Literary translation, playing frequently a primary, innovative and subversive role within the cultural polysystem, is conceived as one of the elements participating in the constant struggle for survival and domination in this stratified conglomerate of interrelated elements, and thus, an autonomous text-type in its own right, a historical and literary fact and an integral part of the target culture. In such a paradigm, translation is no longer perceived as a marginal, servile or inferior activity and the target text does not stand in a lower position vis-à-vis the hegemonic position of the source text. Instead, its tremendously influential power is being constantly emphasized.

The crucial idea of refraction<sup>6</sup> and the ensuing concept of rewriting crystallized by Andre Lefevere<sup>7</sup>, enter the very center of this discourse as referring to a range of processes, which can be said to reinterpret, alter or manipulate an original text. Since rewriting is inseparably connected with the political and literary power structures operating within a given target culture, the processes of adaptation and manipulation, which rewriters perform, lead predominantly to the production of texts which reflect the dominant ideology and poetics. Once considered a subservient, transparent filter through which a text could pass without adulteration or refraction, translation is now reappraised as an activity in which the translator’s intervention in the linguistic transfer is “far from innocent and very visible indeed”<sup>8</sup>. The aesthetic presuppositions of the rewriter are always governed by social norms, literary conventions, prevailing poetics, the historical horizon and current political situation characteristic of the target system.

According to Lefevere, translation “as the most obviously recognizable type of rewriting”<sup>9</sup> contributes greatly to constructing the image of a writer and an original in the target culture, particularly for non-professional readers who have no access to the reality of the source text and remain exposed to rewritings. This representation can undoubtedly be inadequate, misleading or deceptive, insofar as the translator can distort and manipulate the reality of the original because of the pressure of a series of constraints systemically

<sup>5</sup> J. S. Holmes: *The State of Two Arts: Literary Translation and Translation Studies in the West Today*. In: idem, *Translated! Papers on Literary Translation and Translation Studies*. Amsterdam: Rodopi 1988, p. 107.

<sup>6</sup> See A. Lefevere: *Mother Courage’s Cucumbers: Text, System and Refraction in a Theory of Literature*. In: “Modern Language Studies” 1982, Vol. 12, № 4.

<sup>7</sup> See A. Lefevere: *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*. London–New York: Routledge 1992.

<sup>8</sup> S. Bassnett: *The Meek or the Mighty. Reappraising the Role of the Translator*. In: *Translation, Power, Subversion*. Eds. R. Álvarez and M. Carmen-África Vidal. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters 1996, p. 23.

<sup>9</sup> A. Lefevere: *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame...*, p. 9.

governing the production of texts and ensuring the readers' acceptance or rejection of literary translations, which Lefevere denotes as ideological, poetical and economic, typical of the target culture. Faithfulness is thus understood as "one translational strategy that can be inspired by the collocation of a certain ideology with a certain poetics"<sup>10</sup> and the concept of the "intended equivalence" is dethroned in favour of the Manipulation School's idea of "admitted manipulation"<sup>11</sup>.

The translator's (consciously directed or unconsciously filtered) ideology, defined as "the grillwork of form, convention, and belief which orders our actions"<sup>12</sup>, is reflected in the way he/she treats the original's Universe of Discourse comprising "the objects, concepts, customs belonging to the world that was familiar to the writer of the original"<sup>13</sup>. According to Lefevere, the translator's attitude to such items is further conditioned by the status of the original, the self-image of the culture that text is translated into, the types of texts deemed acceptable in that culture, the intended audience, the cultural scripts that audience is used to or willing to accept and, last but not least, the translator's personal preferences. The second constraint which operates in translation is the poetics dominant in the target culture, that is an inventory of literary devices, genres, motifs, characters, situations and symbols<sup>14</sup> as well as the culture's notion of what the role of literature in the social system should be. The poetological/ideological motivation behind the production of rewritings can be either conforming to or rebelling against the dominant target culture and politics.

Apart from the power of professionals (translators, critics, reviewers, teachers) acting within the literary system, whose intervention can determine the poetological/ideological shape of a source text or ensure that the way in which it is perceived fits in with the reigning orthodoxy of a culture, the literary system in which translations function is necessarily controlled by patronage operating outside the literary system. "Patronage" denotes those influential and powerful individuals (political leaders, dictators, the apparatus of a totalitarian state, a political class or party) or institutions (the educational establishment, academic journals, the media, etc.) that regulate the selection, production and distribution of literature and literary ideas, further or hinder the reading, writing and rewriting of texts<sup>15</sup>. Uncovering

<sup>10</sup> In the work cited above, p. 51.

<sup>11</sup> See M. Snell-Hornby: *Translation Studies: An Integrated Approach*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins 1988, p. 22.

<sup>12</sup> A. Lefevere: *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame...*, p. 16.

<sup>13</sup> In the work cited above, p. 41.

<sup>14</sup> See the work cited above, p. 26.

<sup>15</sup> See A. Lefevere: *Translating Literature. Practice and Theory in a Comparative Literature Context*. New York: The Modern Language Association of America 1992, p. 15.

the mechanisms of canonization, integration, exclusion, and manipulation being at work at literary, social and political levels, the study of rewritings necessarily acquires relevance beyond the realm of literary and linguistic disciplines<sup>16</sup>. It is these methodological premises that allow for an interesting reconstruction of the poetological and ideological dimension of the textual presence of translators as rewriters and interpreters. The importance of deconstructing the manipulatory parameters in the production of literary translations cannot be overemphasized.

Andre Lefevere's thesis that "rewriting manipulates, and it is effective"<sup>17</sup> provides a productive framework for the discussion of the typically Foucauldian binary essence of the power/ knowledge opposition as conveyed via translation. Rewritings can give rise to the problem of ostentation and even abuse of power in transmission, relocation and reinterpretation of knowledge of the "Other" and become a form of control, particularly if there already exist preconceived stereotypes about the source culture in the target culture as is the case with Polish-Russian relationships. For, what makes power hold and accepted is the fact that it does not only weigh on originals and their authors as a repressive force but "that it [also] traverses and produces things, it induces pleasure, forms knowledge, produces discourse"<sup>18</sup>. It is therefore important that the all-powerful target image of a work of literature and the rewritings constituting that image and influenced by patronage, ideology and poetics be studied alongside its reality.

It could admittedly be argued that the Manipulation school methodological framework is nowhere as productive as in the comparative analysis of English and Polish rewritings of the Russians' immediate poetic reactions to political changes after the Bolshevik upheaval of 1917. The incredible fertility of the Russian Modernist revolutionary poetry for the discussion in the light of target-oriented Translation Studies reaches its plateau in Aleksander Blok's *Двенадцать* which boasts thick encrustations of interpretation and, consequently, a whole concatenation of contradictory rewritings.

Blok's prophetic remark is the best point to enter *in medias res*:

Правда заключается в том, что поэма написана в ту исключительную и всегда короткую пору, когда проносющийся революционный циклон производит бурю во всех морях — природы, жизни и искусства [...]. Моря природы, жизни и искусства разбушевались, брызги встали радугой над нами. Я смотрел на радугу, когда писал *Двенадцать*; оттого в поэме осталась капля политики. Посмотрим,

<sup>16</sup> In the work cited above, p. 3.

<sup>17</sup> A. Lefevere: *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame...*, p. 9.

<sup>18</sup> *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings by Michel Foucault, 1972–1977*. Ed. C. Gordon. New York: Pantheon Books 1980, p. 119, qtd. by A. Lefevere: *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame...*, p. 15.

что делает с этим время. Может быть, всякая политика так грязна, что одна капля ее замутит и разложит все остальное; может быть, она не убьет смысла моей поэмы; может быть, наконец — кто знает — окажется бродилом, благодаря которому *Двенадцать* прочтут когда-нибудь в не наши времена. Сам я теперь могу говорить об этом только с иронией; но — не будем сейчас брать на себя решительного суда<sup>19</sup>.

Puzzlingly enough, it is the vicissitudes of this “drop of politics” as comprised by the rewritings of Blok’s politically slanted *œuvre* that provide an insight into the way ideology shapes literary discourse and, conversely, the way discourse practices help to reinforce governing ideologies. Mirroring the amalgam of ideological and poetological motivations and constraints governing the translators’ strategies, the following empirical corpus sheds an interesting light on the construction of the image of a writer belonging to one culture in another culture, and the manipulation of his literary as well as political fame.

Written amidst the chaos of the 1917–1918 St Petersburg uprising and considered as the watershed separating pre-revolutionary from Soviet Russian literature, *Двенадцать* presents a deceptively simple narrative. Against a background of a degenerate society, twelve Red Guardsmen march through the wind-and-snow-swept streets of an unnamed but unmistakable city, nocturnal Petrograd, a capital in which (as William Butler Yeats wrote of revolutionary Dublin in 1916) “All changed, changed utterly/ a terrible beauty is born”<sup>20</sup>. Twelve men, uncouth “Apostles” of the Revolution, patrol the streets, shouting, singing, shooting, looting, killing. Accidentally, they meet a sledge in which their former comrade, now a renegade, escorts Kat’ka, who is a prostitute and the ex-mistress of Pet’ka, a member of the Twelve. Having killed the girl in a momentary fit of fury, they continue on their way while Jesus Christ, mysteriously and unseen (or unidentified) by them, precedes them through the streets:

...Так идут державным шагом,  
Позади — голодный пес,  
Впереди — с кровавым флагом,  
И за вьюгой невидим,  
И от пули невредим,  
Нежной поступью надвьюжной,  
Снежной россыпью жемчужной,  
В белом венчике из роз —  
Впереди — Исус Христос<sup>21</sup>.

<sup>19</sup> А. Блок: *Сочинения в 2-х томах. Стихотворения, поэмы, театр. Из дневников и записных книжек. Письма*. Москва: Художественная литература 1955, Т. 1, с. 774.

<sup>20</sup> W. B. Yeats: *The Collected Poems*. London: Macmillan 1952, p. 202–205.

<sup>21</sup> В. Иванов-Разумник: *Испытания в грозе и буре*. Блок: *Скифы. Двенадцать*. Берлин: Издательство “Скифы” 1920, с. 42.

Though striking and even sudden at first glance, this Christophany in the snow-storm is not an ill-conceived, irrelevant appendage or a mere effective literary ornament<sup>22</sup> since the close reading of Blok's *œuvre* reveals a careful aesthetic, phraseological and iconographical preparation for the final image throughout the poem<sup>23</sup>. Furthermore, it has been suggested that the last verse

is not only the climax of the poem, but the one in which the whole of its emotional plan is contained, so that the entire work in its own way amounts to variations, hesitations, and deviations from the theme of its conclusion<sup>24</sup>.

In point of fact, it is precisely the mystifying portrayal of the Twelve's mysterious patron in the last sequence of Blok's poem that caused more confusion and discord among literary critics, historiographers and translators than all the 334 lines that preceded it. Understandably, the scale of divergences between various interpretations and evaluations of the role of the outcasts and Christ has always been very substantial. It could admittedly be argued that this fierce controversy concerning the reception of *Двенадцать* was of vital importance for the very process of the translation of Blok's revolutionary masterpiece and for the strategies adopted by translators while approaching its Universe of Discourse.

Serving as the official propaganda line, the Russian Marxist school of literary criticism received *Двенадцать* with great *éclat*, as a brilliant evocation of the revolutionary scene and an irrefutable proof of the poet's acceptance of the severe but just laws of the October Revolution as well as his positive attitude to the condition of Russia under the Bolshevik regime<sup>25</sup>. Having read *Двенадцать*, Vladimir Korolenko exclaimed: "Christ tells us about the pro-Bolshevik affiliations of the author!"<sup>26</sup> and thus — according to Vladimir Orlov — "immediately grasped the right sense of the image"<sup>27</sup>. Also the very title of Stanisław Rogoż's article "on the Bolshevik poem of Blok"<sup>28</sup> does not raise the slightest doubt with regard to the perspective and

<sup>22</sup> See К. Чуковский: *Александр Блок как человек и поэт. Введение в поэзию Блока*. Петроград: А.Ф. Маркс 1924, с. 27–28.

<sup>23</sup> S. Hackel: *The Poet and the Revolution. Aleksandr Blok's "The Twelve"*. Oxford: Clarendon Press 1975, pp. 84–88.

<sup>24</sup> Ю. Тынянов: *Блок*. В: *Его же, Поэтика. История литературы. Кино*. Подг. изд. и коммент. Е. Тоддес, А. Чудаков, М. Чудакова. Москва: Наука 1977, с. 123.

<sup>25</sup> *Historia literatury rosyjskiej XX wieku*. Red. A. Drawicz. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN 1977, p. 183.

<sup>26</sup> В. Короленко: *Новая русская книга*. Берлин 1923, № 5/6, с. 14; В. Орлов: *Поэма Александра Блока „Двенадцать“*. *Страница из истории советской литературы*. Изд. второе, дополненное. Москва: Художественная литература 1967, с. 90.

<sup>27</sup> Там же.

<sup>28</sup> S. Rogoż: *O bolszewickim poemacie A. Błoka*. In: „Przegląd Współczesny” 1923, № 14, pp. 48–62.

interpretive strategy the Polish critic adopted. Treating the figure of Christ (“at first sight even ambiguous”<sup>29</sup>) as the author’s argument justifying, vindicating and even sanctifying the atrocities of the Revolution and blessing the Bolshevik coup d’etat remained the obligatory interpretation of Blok’s poem; for “the red flag in Christ’s hands leaves no doubt that he leads the revolution”<sup>30</sup> and “He himself is the personification of a new, universal and common religion as well as a new morality [...]”<sup>31</sup>. A substantial part of the pro-Bolshevik press declared that Blok likened the Red Guards to the twelve disciples in the Gospels. Leon Trotzky confirmed that Blok wanted “to save the artistic image of Christ by propping it up with the Revolution”<sup>32</sup>. He sanctified the revolutionary change provocatively with the blessing of Christ. Significant is Mark Slonim’s confident and blunt assertion that it is “Christ himself” who appears at the end of the poem as the “invisible leader” of the Red Soldiers. “Thus the twelve criminals become the twelve apostles, and out of the blood and filth emerges the image of a new gospel that justifies the terror and the destructiveness of Bolshevism”<sup>33</sup>. The murderous revolt acquires a religious significance and moral sanction. For the English Slavist, Blok’s poem sounds like a dirge for the Old Russia which, like an Easter Mass announcing the Resurrection, blends death and the hope for a splendid future with “Russia as the savior of humanity and the builder of a new society”<sup>34</sup>, though, according to Slonim, “the Communists had not been quite content with the vision of the Crucified as the bearer of the innermost revolutionary truth”<sup>35</sup>.

Needless to say, the unofficial literary critics, notwithstanding the Marxist unanimous enthronement of Blok’s Christ as the leader of the revolutionary movement, emphasized the poet’s ambivalent, searching and distrustful attitude to the October Revolution and preferred to think that Christ was not the one who led the Red Guardsmen but rather the one who was led to a place of execution by a firing squad<sup>36</sup>. Questioning the validity of a comparison of the Twelve with the Apostles, Voloshyn asked whether Christ’s followers have ever gone hunting for their Messiah („что же это за апостолы, которые выходят охотиться на своего Христа?”<sup>37</sup>). The Koktebel poet argued:

<sup>29</sup> В. Орлов: *Поэма Александра Блока „Двенадцать”*..., с. 90.

<sup>30</sup> Там же, с. 91.

<sup>31</sup> Там же, с. 105.

<sup>32</sup> L. Trotzky: *Literature and Revolution*. Ed. W. Keach. Chicago: Haymarket Books 2005, p. 107.

<sup>33</sup> M. Slonim: *Soviet Russian Literature. Writers and Problems 1917–1977*. London–Oxford–New York: Oxford University Press 1977, p. 8.

<sup>34</sup> In the work cited above, p. 9.

<sup>35</sup> See the work cited above, p. 8.

<sup>36</sup> See *Historia literatury rosyjskiej XX wieku...*, p. 183.

<sup>37</sup> М. Волошин: *Поэзия и революция*. В кн.: Его же: *Собрание сочинений*. Под общей ред. В. П. Купченко и А. В. Лаврова при участии Р. П. Хрулевой, т. 6, кн. 2: *Проза*

Христос вовсе не идет во главе двенадцати красногвардейцев, а, напротив, преследуется ими [...]. Красный флаг в руках у Христа? В этом тоже нет никакой кощунственной двусмысленности. Кровавый флаг — это новый крест Христа, символ его теперешних распятий<sup>38</sup>.

Blok's ambivalent attitude to both Christ and Christianity as revealed in the poet's personal diary and letters to Vyacheslav Ivanov<sup>39</sup> throws a dim light on this matter and makes the epiphany in the snowstorm even more mysterious and troublesome. Commenting on the Soviet critics' practices aiming at "blurring and drowning out the ambiguity of Blok's attitude towards the Revolution", Struve emphasises the poet's ambivalence, even political disengagement and ventures an opinion that "the assimilation of Blok to the 'Soviet culture' is a sheer usurpation"<sup>40</sup>. Proving his point, the Russian critic quotes Blok's protest against Gorky's arbitrary interpretation of *Двенадцать* as a malicious satire on the recent events and the poet's comment: "those who consider *Dvenadtsat*' a political poem are either very blind to art, immersed in political dirt up to their ears, or completely possessed by great wrath"<sup>41</sup>.

It is precisely this interpretive openness inherent in *Двенадцать* and an impression of "a grandiose unresolved dissonance"<sup>42</sup> that has presumably become the ultimate cause of the excessive productivity and hence giant proportions of the series of translations based on Blok's verse epic<sup>43</sup>. For seldom can a Russian Modernist literary work boast as many as twenty Polish translations<sup>44</sup> and sixteen English renditions<sup>45</sup>, not to mention its numerous versions in other languages of the world<sup>46</sup>.

1900–1927. Очерки, статьи, лекции, рецензии, наброски, планы. Москва: "Эллис Лак 2000" 2008, с. 33.

<sup>38</sup> Там же, с. 31–32, 33.

<sup>39</sup> See S. Hackel: *The Poet and the Revolution. Aleksandr Blok's "The Twelve"*..., p. 88–96; Л. Илюнина: *А. Блок и В. Иванов в годы первой русской революции (К вопросу о генезисе образа Христа в поэме 'Двенадцать')*. „Ученые записки Тартуского государственного университета” 1991, № 10: *Блокковский сборник. А. Блок и русский символизм. Проблемы текста и жанра*, с. 21–31.

<sup>40</sup> Г. Струве: *О четырех поэтах: Блок, Сологуб, Гумилев, Мандельштам. Сборник статей*. London: Overseas Publications Interchange Ltd 1981, с. 19–20.

<sup>41</sup> Цит. по: Г. Струве: *О четырех поэтах: Блок, Сологуб, Гумилев, Мандельштам...*, с. 7.

<sup>42</sup> V. Zhirmunsky, qtd. by V. Terras: *Handbook of Russian Literature*. New Haven–London: Yale University Press 1985, p. 56.

<sup>43</sup> See A. Legeżyńska: *Thumacz i jego kompetencje autorskie*. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PWN 1999, s. 215.

<sup>44</sup> See the work cited above, p. 188.

<sup>45</sup> См.: А. Пымен: *Об английских переводах стихотворения А. Блока*. В кн.: *Международные связи русской литературы. Сборник статей*. Ред. М. Алексеев. Москва–Ленинград: Изд-во АН СССР 1963, с. 417, 430.

<sup>46</sup> См.: Х. Дудевский: *Рецепция поэмы Двенадцать А. А. Блока в Болгарии. Воздействие, переводы*. W: *Literatura rosyjska i jej związki międzynarodowe. Materiały z II Międzynarodowej Konferencji Naukowej*. Red. E. Kucharska. Szczecin: Wydawnictwa Naukowe US 1988.



Deeply embroiled in most acrimonious and interminable controversy centering on its ideological sense, Blok's revolutionary masterpiece immediately became "the traditional prey of Polish translators"<sup>47</sup> validating the poem by the revolution or, to the contrary, the revolution by the poem. For it was the poetic interpretation of revolutionary events treated as a reliable testimony of Blok's personal attitude towards the Bolshevik upheaval and not traces of the literary avant-garde that the Polish audience of the 1920's actually sought in *Двенадцать*. Not only was the ideological interpretation of the poem of primary concern, but also the translators' choices became at the same time their ideological and political acts. Remarkably enough, the first inter-war Polish renditions of *Двенадцать* were signed by the translators' pseudonyms, rather than their real names: Jerzy Karwin (Karol Winawer), 1919; Jan Hutnik (Zofia Wojnarowska), 1921; Czesław Wrocki (Przeclaw Smolik), 1922, the dates being significant as directly preceding and following the Polish-Bolshevik War of 1920-1921. Moreover, the reception of the Polish Blok of the 1920's was strongly influenced by the predominant anti-Bolshevik attitude of the Polish society resulting in strong prejudices against the culture of the Russian "red tsars"<sup>48</sup>.

Since "the essence of a series of translations does not lie in the destruction of senses programmed in the original, but in the very tension built between what bursts those senses and what unites them"<sup>49</sup>, it has to be admitted that all the translations strive to give some substance and some definition to the revolutionary Christ appearing in the closing sequence of Aleksander Blok's poem, albeit the results, illustrating various kinds of manipulative techniques and clashes of ideologies as well as poetics, vary to a considerable extent. The methodological formula of the present inquiry has been inspired by James S. Holmes' thesis that:

all translations are maps, the territories are the originals, and since no map is definitive, but will serve only the specific purpose for which it was made, it is necessary to have a variety of translations of a poem in order to achieve a fuller understanding of the original<sup>50</sup>.

<sup>47</sup> F. Siedlecki: *Przekłady z poezji rosyjskiej*. „Skamander” 1936, pp. 71-73.

<sup>48</sup> E. Pogonowska: „*Bez cara carska*” — *wizja Rosji sowieckiej w poezji polskiej po r. 1917*. In: *Materiały Międzynarodowej Konferencji „Współczesne Problemy Uniwersalizmu w Europie Środkowej i Wschodniej — Wspólnotowość, Regionalizm, Globalizm*. Red. A. Góralski. Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Polskiego Towarzystwa Uniwersalizmu 1996.

<sup>49</sup> E. Balcerzan: *Literatura z literatury (strategie tłumaczy)*. Katowice: „Śląsk” 1998, p. 21.

<sup>50</sup> J.S. Holmes: *On Matching and Making Maps: From a Translator's Notebook*. In his: *Translated! Papers on Literary Translation and Translation Studies...*, p. 58.

Not only does mapping reveal that various rewritings of a single work of literature can provide the target reader with an accurate reflection only of certain aspects of the original, but — what is of crucial importance here — also allows for a clear documentation of the degree of manipulation occurring in translation as the source and the refracted target texts can be confronted and analysed comparatively. Furthermore, the application of mapping as a method of investigating the relationship between source text and target text is conducive to the deconstruction of the image of the Other as projected by translations. The present study is precisely an attempt at the simultaneous analysis of various historical and literary products.

Holmes's method of mapping allows us to highlight the differentiated strategies translators adopted to deal with this "ideologically doubtful" masterpiece that at the same time was well established in the Russian literary canon. Both the Polish and English rewritings will be provided, the latter serving as a dialogical, contrastive background for Polish renditions reflecting manipulative strategies conditioned by Polish state politics and cultural ideology under the patronage of the neighbouring Soviet Union. Having arisen in a country remaining under direct and immense influence of Soviet cultural politics<sup>51</sup> and reflecting subsequent stages of the Polish political orientation (after the Bolshevik war, World War II, and, finally, the Thaw after Stalin's death) they necessarily constitute more illuminating and blatant examples of translatory manipulation than the English renditions created on the other side of the iron curtain. Since the Polish polemical rewritings form a more cogent evidence substantiating the Manipulation School assumptions, they will be discussed extensively. The decision to quote as many as nine Polish translations (out of twenty) vis-à-vis five English ones has been motivated by an exceptional visibility of the diachrony of Polish literature as mirrored in the Polish rewritings. The confrontation of subsequent Polish renditions uncovers an immense influence of poetic schools reigning in the Polish polysystem on translational practices. The English texts, being frequently literal renditions incorporated into literary deliberations on Russian Modernist poetry and not existing autonomously, are much less stigmatised by English poetic systems.

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<sup>51</sup> See W. Piotrowski: *Kryteria oceny i promocji twórczości literackiej w porewolucyjnej Rosji. Od Października do pieriestrojki*. In: *Rusycystyczne studia literaturoznawcze. Rosyjska literatura popularna*. Ed. B. Stempczyńska. Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego 1994, № 18, pp. 17–25.

...Idą krokiem tak miarowym —  
z tyłu — głodny, wstrętny pies —  
A z sztandarem purpurowym, —  
I zadymką otulony,  
I od kul zabezpieczony,  
Lekko idąc przez puchowe  
Przez płateczki: te perłowe, —  
W wianku z róż, kryjącym głóg  
W dal ich wiedzy Chrystus-Bóg.

(trans. by K. Winawer<sup>52</sup>)

...Władnym krokiem idą żwawo...  
Poza nimi głodny pies,  
a na przodzie z płachtą krwawą,  
za wichurą niewidzialny,  
i dla kul nieosiągalny,  
lekką stopą ponadśnieżystą,  
w dal perlistą i bezbrzeżną,  
w wieńcu z róż — przez gęsty mrok,  
Jezus Chrystus niesie krok.

(trans. by J. Łobodowski<sup>54</sup>)

...Idą, idą krokiem twardym —  
Głodny pies za nimi goni,  
Przodem — niosąc krwawy sztandar,  
Za wichurą niewidzialny  
I dla kul nieosiągalny,  
Lekką stopą nadśnieżystą  
Przez perliste rozsypisko,  
W wieńcu białych róż na skroni,  
Idzie przodem — Jezus Chrystus.

(trans. by S. Pollak<sup>56</sup>)

...I grzmi rytmicznie krok ich żwawy —  
(Za nimi pies w rozpacznej biedzie...)  
Na czele dzierżąc sztandar krwawy,  
Wśród mgieł kurniawy niewidzialny,  
Dla kul złoczyńców nietykalny  
Spowity w pyły zawieruchy,  
Ledwie trącając śnieżne puchy,  
W wieńcu z róż białych — krocząc na  
przecie,

Chrystus szyk wiedzie!

(trans. by M. Tuszowski<sup>53</sup>)

...Idą, idą władnym krokiem...  
Głodny pies za nimi bokiem,  
Przed nimi — z krwawym sztandarem,  
Niewidzialny ludzkim okiem,  
Oślaniany od kul czarem,  
Mocniejszy od złej zawieji,  
W śniegów perłowej rozchwiei,  
Jasny światłem wszystkich zórz,  
Kryjąc w wianku białych róż  
Krwawienie krzyżowych ran,  
Prowadzi ich — Chrystus Pan.  
(trans. by W. Denhoff-Czarnecki<sup>55</sup>)

Maszerują tak z kurzawą,  
A za nimi — głodne psisko,  
A przed nimi — z flagą krwawą,  
Pośród śniegu niewidzialny,  
Pośród ognia nietykalny,  
Nad padolem wrących burz,  
Ścieżką pereł, amatystów,  
W śnieżnobiałym wianku z róż —  
Prowadzi ich — Jezus Chrystus.  
(trans. by W. Woroszyński<sup>57</sup>)

<sup>52</sup> A. Błok: *Dwunastu (poemat o rewolucji)*. Transl. K. Winawer. Warszawa: Skład główny w Księgarni Społecznej „Książka” 1921, p. 12.

<sup>53</sup> A. Błok: *Dwunastka*. Transl. M. Tuszowski. Warszawa: Drukarnia Artystyczna 1928, p. 22.

<sup>54</sup> A. Błok: *Dwunastu*. Transl. J. Łobodowski. In his: *U przyjaciół*. Lublin–Warszawa: Biblioteka poetycka Dźwigarów 1935, p. 63.

<sup>55</sup> A. Błok: *Dwunastu*. Transl. W. Denhoff-Czarnecki. In: *Nowa poezja rosyjska*. Eds. W. Denhoff-Czarnecki, L. Podhorski-Okołów. Warszawa: Nakład Towarzystwa Wydawniczego WATRA 1923, p. 36.

<sup>56</sup> A. Błok: *Dwunastu*. Transl. S. Pollak. Warszawa: Wydawnictwa Artystyczne i Filmowe 1957, p. 29.

<sup>57</sup> A. Błok: *Dwunastu*. Transl. W. Woroszyński. In: *Antologia nowoczesnej poezji rosyjskiej 1880–1967*. Eds. W. Dąbrowski, W. Woroszyński, A. Mandalian. Wrocław: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich 1971, Vol. 1, p. 231.

...Idą hardo, wiatr się wzmaga —  
 Z tyłu, — wygłodniałe psisko,  
 A przed nimi, — z krwawą flagą,  
 Niewidzialny na wietrzysku,  
 Nietykalny dla pocisków,  
 W zaćmie, gdzie śnieżycą dymi  
 Wydmuchami perlistymi,  
 W białym wianku z róż, przed nimi —  
 Jezus Chrystus.

(trans. by J. Waczków<sup>58</sup>)

Idą równo i z powagą  
 a za nimi głodny pies  
 a przed nimi z krwawą flagą,  
 choć w zadymce z ocz im szczeźł  
 nie drażnięty pociskami,  
 krokiem lżejszym niż ta zamieć —  
 poprzez wichru świst  
 w śnieżne, perłolotne mrowie,  
 z wiankiem białych róż na głowie  
 idzie przodem Chryst.

(trans. by B. Drozdowski<sup>60</sup>)

So they march with sovereign tread:  
 Behind them a hungry dog,  
 Before them, with a blood-stained banner,  
 Unseen through the blizzard,  
 Unscathed by the bullets,  
 With soft step above the storms,  
 In a pearly whirl of snow,  
 With a white halo of roses,  
 Before them — Jesus Christ

(trans. by G. Struve<sup>62</sup>)

...On they march with sovereign tread,—  
 With a starving dog behind,  
 With a blood-red flag ahead,  
 Through the storm where none  
 can see,  
 From the rifle-bullets free,

Dwunastu kroczy w śnieżnych mgłach.  
 Z tyłu zgłodniały przypadł pies.  
 Na przodzie sztandar z wiatrem gra...  
 Niewidzialny w mroźnym błysku,  
 Nietykalny dla pocisków,  
 W perłowej zaćmie brodzi już —  
 Na głowie wieniec z białych róż,  
 Stopami gładząc śnieżny łąn —  
 Na przędzie kroczy Chrystus Pan.

(trans. by B. Dohnalik<sup>59</sup>)

Forward as a haughty host they tread.  
 A hungry mongrel shambles in the rear.  
 Bearing forth the banner's windy red,  
 Where the vagrant snow-veils veer,  
 In dim hands no bullets sear,  
 On the tempest gently thrown,  
 Like a snow of diamonds blown  
 In mist-white roses garlanded —  
 Christ marches on. And twelve are led.  
 (trans. by B. Deutsch and A. Yarmolinsky<sup>61</sup>)

Forward they go commandingly  
 A starving cur behind them,  
 A blood-red banner in advance:  
 Unseen in blinding snow,  
 Unharmed by flying bullets,  
 And walking softly through the storm  
 of tossing, pearly flakes,  
 And crowned with roses, Christ  
 Marches before them by himself.

(trans. by H. T. Moore and A. Parry<sup>63</sup>)

...So they march with sovereign tread:  
 In they rear, the hungry cur,  
 And with blood-red flag ahead,  
 Unseen, since the blizard's there,  
 Unharmed as the bullets fly,

<sup>58</sup> A. Błok: *Dwunastu*. Transl. J. Waczków. Warszawa: Iskry 1977, pp. 40, 42.

<sup>59</sup> A. Błok: *Dwunastu*. Transl. B. Dohnalik. In: „Nowy Wyraz” 1980, № 101, p. 14.

<sup>60</sup> A. Błok: *Dwunastu*. Transl. B. Drozdowski. In: „Poezja” 1977, № 10, p. 11.

<sup>61</sup> *An Anthology of World Poetry*. Ed. M. Van Doren, New York: Albert & Charles Boni 1928, p. 1017.

<sup>62</sup> G. Struve: *Russian Literature under Lenin and Stalin 1917–1953*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press 1971, p. 8.

<sup>63</sup> H. T. Moore, A. Perry: *Twentieth-Century Russian Literature*. Preface by H. T. Moore, London: Heinemann Educational Books 1976, p. 20.

Gently walking on the snow  
Where the pearly snow-flakes glow,  
Marches rose-crowned in the van  
Jesus Christ, the Son of Man.  
(trans. by C. M. Bowra<sup>64</sup>)

Stepping gently, blizzard high,  
Sprinkling pearly trails of snow,  
With garland of white  
roses spliced –  
Up in front is Jesus Christ.  
(trans. by S. Hackel<sup>65</sup>)

Curious as it may seem, the orthography of the name (*Исус Христов*) suggesting the Old Believers' origin of Blok's Christ and having vital repercussions on the interpretation of the poem<sup>66</sup> has not been preserved in any of the renditions.

In the original, Christ is situated in front of the Red Guardsmen — “*впереди*”, which allows for a broad interpretation. Seweryn Pollak asserts in a conciliatory spirit: “irrespectively of all interpretations, [Christ] goes along in a garland of white roses; whether in front of the Red Guardsmen squad or only as a phantom in the snowstorm phantasmagoria”<sup>67</sup>. It is Sergei Hackel's rendition („Up in front is Jesus Christ”), Struve's proposal (“Before them — Jesus Christ”) and Józef Waczków's solution („[...] przed nimi –/ Jezus Chrystus”) that preserve the *double entendre* inherent in Blok's ideologically slanted closing verse: either Jesus leads the twelve “Apostles” of the Revolution or, to the contrary, he floats above them, unseen and indifferent. Presenting his own literal, polemical translation integrated into the literary discourse on Russian literature under Lenin and Stalin, Gleb Struve explains in a footnote:

I give this passage in my own translation, aiming at the greatest possible accuracy and disregarding the subtle beauty and music of the original. All the existing English verse translations take some liberties with Blok's text [...] [and] destroy the effect of Blok's ambiguity by making his Christ lead the Twelve<sup>68</sup>.

Further on, emphasising the rich polyphonic quality of the poem interweaving realism with symbolism, the scholar wonders:

is Christ leading the Twelve (whose number seems symbolically significant?), or are they shooting at him, suspecting in him an enemy lurking round the corner in the winter darkness? The former interpretation is the more usual, and was probably the one intended by Blok<sup>69</sup>.

<sup>64</sup> C. M. Bowra: *Poetry and Politics 1900–1960*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1966, pp. 49–50.

<sup>65</sup> S. Hackel: *The Poet and the Revolution. Aleksandr Blok's „The Twelve”*..., p. 229.

<sup>66</sup> See in the work cited above, pp. 109–118.

<sup>67</sup> S. Pollak: *Nieprzypisany*. In: A. Biely: *Poezje*. Opracował i słowem wstępnym opatrzył S. Pollak. Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy 1975, p. 28.

<sup>68</sup> G. Struve: *Russian Literature under Lenin and Stalin 1917–1953*..., p. 8.

<sup>69</sup> In the work cited above.

Taking the liberty of singling out one of the possible senses of the source text, Józef Łobodowski, Karol Winawer, Waclaw Denhoff-Czarnecki, Wiktor Woroszyński, Roman Tuszowski, Cecil Maurice Bowra, Avrahm Yarmolinsky and Babette Deutsch not only reduced the polyphony of the poem and thus deprived its dénouement of a variety of dimensions, but also ascribed the chosen sense, in the target reader's consciousness, to the author's axiology<sup>70</sup>. Their rewritings presenting Christ as the leader of the Red Guardsmen necessarily imply the positive attitude of Blok towards the October Revolution: „W dal ich wiedzie — Chrystus-Bóg” (Winawer), „Prowadzi ich — Chrystus Pan” (Denhoff-Czarnecki), „Prowadzi ich — Jezus Chrystus” (Woroszyński), „[...] krocząc na przdzie, Chrystus szyk wiedzie” (Tuszowski), „Jezus Chrystus niesie krok” (Łobodowski), „Marches [...] in the van Jesus Christ, the Son of Man” (Bowra). However, this alternative interpretation is most explicitly and blatantly stated in Deutsch and Yarmolinsky's rewriting introducing a strong, rhetoric amplification: “Christ marches on. And twelve are led”.

In his preface to *Dwunastu* (notabene affixed with the telling subtitle *Poemat o rewolucji*), Winawer authoritatively arrives at the conclusion that the final chord of the poem depicts “a new power rising from the heavily bleeding body of the revolution”<sup>71</sup>. Intertwined with the idea of Christ, it constitutes

an altogether interesting combination of evangelical theories of redemption and present-day socialism; a power, that — according to the poet — will crown the wrath and blood of the revolution by a garland of roses... The poet puts the red banner into Christ's hands thus making him ‘wieść w dal’, ‘w mrok i chłód’ the twelve of her blodshedding apostles<sup>72</sup>.

Significantly enough, Winawer quotes his own translation as Blok's own words.

Not any less high-handed is the explanation of what the march of the soldiers through the snowstorm means offered by Bowra. The author of one of the English versions of *Двенадцать* argues:

Blok introduced Christ as the leader of the Revolution [...] because he could not see the Russian people on the march without him. [...] For him [Blok] Christ is not the Christ of the Orthodox Church, nor of any theology, but simply the incarnation of the most tender and most generous impulses in the Russian soul. Blok creates his own religion and finds his own symbol for it, and among them is Christ, who is needed as the only possible figure that can give meaning to so tumultuous and so

<sup>70</sup> See A. Legeżyńska: *Tłumacz i jego kompetencje autorskie...*, pp. 202–204.

<sup>71</sup> K. Winawer: *Przedmowa*. In: A. Blok, *Dwunastu (poemat o rewolucji)...*, p. 1.

<sup>72</sup> In the work cited above, p. 1–2.

violent a change. [...] Blok makes no forecast of the future beyond indicating a divine leadership towards some undescribed goal<sup>73</sup>.

Despite his declared conviction that „Christ is a symbol, not himself<sup>74</sup>, the translator uses verbs connoting the reality and substantiality of the Messiah’s figure (“walking”, “marches”). Similar in this respect are the rewritings of Seweryn Pollak, Barbara Dohnalik and Bohdan Drozdowski, who, albeit preserving some hint of ambiguity in the last verse, desymbolize and subsequently “materialize” Christ, compelling him to march just as the Guardsmen do: “Na przedzie kroczy Chrystus Pan” (Dohnalik), “idzie przodem Chryst” (Drozdowski), “[...] idzie przodem — Jezus Chrystus” (Pollak).

Unlike in the original, where not a single verb refers to Christ’s movement, the figure presented in the above Polish and English rewritings is no more a mysterious epiphany, but a real, flesh and blood man. The sphere of reality and the symbolic representation of *dramatis personae* and events become thus completely unified as a result of manipulating the Universe of Discourse. Hence, far-reaching is the translators’ choice to use the same verb denoting the movement of both the Twelve and their mysterious patron: “...Idą, idą krokiem twardym [...] / Przodem idzie Jezus Chrystus” (Pollak), “Dwunastu kroczy w śnieżnych mgłach [...] / Na przedzie kroczy Chrystus Pan” (Dohnalik), “Idą równo i z powagą [...] / idzie przodem Chryst” (Drozdowski), “...On they march with sovereign tread, — [...] / Marches [...] in the van / Jesus Christ...” (Bowra), “Forward they go [...] / walking softly through the storm [...] Christ / Marches before them by himself” (Moore and Parry), “...Władnym krokiem idą żwawo” and synonymous: “Jezus Chrystus niesie krok” (Łobodowski), “...I grzmi rytmicznie krok ich żwawy — [...] / krocząc na przedzie, / Chrystus szyk wiedzie!” (Tuszowski). Unquestionably, the rewriters’ power to project positive or negative images of the text, the poet, and the whole Russian Modernist revolutionary poetry is very visible. The physical unity of Christ and the Twelve in these renditions implies the unity of the revolutionary ideology, the *profanum* and religious ideas, the *sacrum* whereas preserving the double-plan construction of the world presented in Blok’s poem seems to be crucial in order to achieve the ideological ambiguity inherent to *Двенадцать*.

Antoni Demianowicz’s rendition (“Z przodu płynie — Chrystus Pan”), Pollak’s expression “lekka stopa nadśnieżysta”, Łobodowski’s “lekka stopa ponadśnieżysta”, Drozdowski’s “krok lżejszy niż ta zamieć”, Winawer’s “[...] lekko idąc przez puchowe / Przez płateczki: te perłowe”, and finally, Hackel’s rewriting (“Stepping gently, blizzard high, / sprinkling pearly trails

<sup>73</sup> C. M. Bowra: *Poetry and Politics 1900-1960...*, p. 50.

<sup>74</sup> In the work cited above, p. 52.

of snow [...]”) — strive to compensate for the interpretive abuse and suggest Messiah’s immaterial, elusive appearance. Tuszowski’s faint attempt to emphasize Christ’s lightness, fragility and ethereal constitution: “ledwie trącając śnieżne puchy...” is abandoned in the very next verse: “[...] krocząc na przedzie / Chrystus szyk wiezie!”. A similar inconsistency in portraying Christ’s movement is apparent in Dohnalik’s translation: an enigmatic figure “stopami gładz[i] śnieżny łąn” only to wade through the snow after a while: “w perłowej zaćmie brodzi” and tread in the vanguard: “na przedzie kroczy” like the Twelve who “krocz[ą] w śnieżnych mgłach”. It is Struve’s literal rendition that preserves the “verblessness” of Blok’s final accord and employs past participle forms while describing Christ. The localization of figures is conveyed only via prepositions (“behind” and “before”).

It has been frequently argued that Blok’s Christ has a “feminine apparition”<sup>75</sup>, which could have been influenced by Vladimir Solovev’s Platonistic writings on androgynism suggesting the presence of a feminine element in the *totus Christus* or, amazingly enough, the very concept of Sophia, Divine Wisdom and Eternal Feminine central to his philosophical system<sup>76</sup>. Convincing parallels can be also drawn between Blok’s literary method of presenting Christ’s figure with the 19th century typical Russian convention of describing the parusion of the utterly silent Messiah: Mikhail Nesterov’s painting of Holy Russia, Fyodor Tiutchev’s Russian Christ from *Эти бедные селения*, Apollon Maikov’s Christ at the vanguard of the Russian army, the Christ of Sergei Esenin’s *Товарищ*, the Silent Christ of Fyodor Dostoyevski’s *Братья Карамазовы*, as well as Andrei Belyi’s *Христос воскрес* and Vsevolod Krestovskii’s revolutionary Christ<sup>77</sup>.

Blok’s mild, silent and tender figure, moving gently and daintily over the blizzard is distinguished by a tiny, delicate garland of white roses, as opposed to the biblical crown of thorns. The use of the diminutive “венчик” strengthens the impression of delicacy of the image and emphasises the poet’s effort to efface Christ’s very masculinity. Blok’s personal diary legitimizes such an interpretation of Christ’s figure<sup>78</sup>. Oddly enough, nobody from

<sup>75</sup> R. Przybylski: *Muzyka rewolucji. ‘Dwunastu’ Aleksandra Bloka*. In: „Poezja” 1967, № 10, pp. 29, 32; A. Горелов: *Подвиг русской литературы*. Ленинград: Советский писатель 1957, с. 419; S. Hackel: *The Poet and the Revolution. Aleksandr Blok’s „The Twelve”...*, pp. 118–143.

<sup>76</sup> See S. Hackel: *The Poet and the Revolution. Aleksandr Blok’s “The Twelve”...*, p. 122.

<sup>77</sup> See the work cited above, p. 98–109; T. Brzostowska: *Tryptyk z Milczącym Chrystusem*. In: *Almanach Myśli Rosyjskiej. Wokół Tolstoja i Dostojewskiego*. Red. J. Dobieszewski, Warszawa: Wydział Filozofii i Socjologii Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego 2000, pp. 58–72.

<sup>78</sup> See A. Blok: *Dzienniki 1901–1921*. Przekład M. Leśniewska, przedmowa J. Szymak-Reiferowa. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie 1974, p. 255.



among the Polish translators decided to render this “*белый венчик из роз*” into “biały wianuszek z róż”. They carefully used either „wianek białych róż” (Drozdowski), “śnieżnobiały wianek z róż” (Woroszyński), “wieniec białych róż” (Pollak), “wieniec z białych róż” (Dohnalik), “wieniec z róż białych” (Tuszowski) or “garland of white roses spliced” (Hackel) instead. Similarly, Christ is “mist-white roses garlanded” in Deutsch and Yarmolinsky’s rewriting. Remarkably, Struve’s “white halo of roses” differs from all these proposals as referring to the iconographic convention of portraying saints, angels and the Holy Family with nimbuses encircling their heads. In Denhoff-Czarnocki’s amplifying description (“*Kryjąc w wianku białych róż/ Krwawienie krzyżowych ran*”) and Winawer’s interpretation (“wianek z róż, kryjący głóg”), Christ’s march with the Twelve unexpectedly parallels the Way of the Cross and thus corresponds with Wasilii Masiutin’s explication of the sense of *Двенадцать*: „In this march with sovereign tread one can detect the glory of going to meet doom. The double march. And the double sacrifice”<sup>79</sup>. For, as the critic argues, apart from the secular sacrifice of the old world, there is the second, divine one, which “[...] weighs down with the bloody flag as if with the burden of the cross, and climbs Golgotha. After the dark, snowy night the spring dawn of the Resurrection will come”<sup>80</sup>. Celina Becker’s Polish translation of Blok’s final stanza “*W aureoli białych kwiatów/ Jezus Chrystus Zbawca Światów*” (notabene quoted by Siedlecki (1936) as the most scandalous rendition of *Двенадцать* of inter-war Poland) would conform to this interpretation as well. Considering the figure of Christ, “crowned with roses” and walking ahead of the revolutionists who patrol the icy streets of Petrograd, H. T. Moore and A. Parry ponder: “It is not clear whether Christ is actually leading them, or whether he is again a martyr”<sup>81</sup>. Bowra’s “rose-crowned” suggests a similar interpretation.

It is beyond doubt that each of the interpretations as well as various linguistic shapes of the closing sequence of Blok’s poem discussed above are part of an overall strategy individual translators developed to translate the text as a whole. They emerged as a result of various poetics and ideologies impinging upon the rewriters’ techniques adopted while approaching the original’s Universe of Discourse. The translators’ tactics were further conditioned by the status of the original in the source cultural polysystem (Blok’s *oeuvre* belongs to the Russian Modernist literary canon), the target audience’s horizon of expectations with regard to the translated work of literature as well as the self-image and the status of the receiving culture. The

<sup>79</sup> А. Блок: *Двенадцать*. С 4-мя гравюрами В. Масютина. Берлин: Нева 1923 (page numbers not given).

<sup>80</sup> Там же.

<sup>81</sup> H. T. Moore, A. Perry: *Twentieth-Century Russian Literature...*, p. 19.

rewritings are always constructed within the confines of a given literature, which has its own generic and stylistic features, and which is, in its turn, embedded in a whole target cultural formation.

According to Even-Zohar's polysystem theory, neither the ideology of a culture nor the poetics is monolithic and stable. They always consist of one dominant current and various countercurrents or peripheral tendencies ready to dethrone the central formation<sup>82</sup>. Being an integral part of the cultural polysystem, which develops according to the principle of polarity and evolves constantly in a sinusoidal manner into its own country system, rewritings mirror the clash of rival poetics and constitute „a perfect gauge to measure the extent to which a poetics has been internalized”<sup>83</sup> by individual translators. The diachronic analysis of the Polish corpus under consideration provides a lucid account of historically variable poetological constraints conceived as manipulative factors in translation. The subversive and innovative power of various poetics dominant at subsequent stages of the evolution of the Polish literary system is reflected in „Polish Bloks” rewritten according to successive stylistic devices endemic to the target national literature: the „Young Poland” stylistic convention and language registers, the poetics of Polish symbolism, post-war realism and, finally, stylized folklore. Profound are the accompanying genre transformations of Blok's poem: from a romance in verse (Winawer) through a report from a revolutionary city (Pollak) to a folk epos (Drozdowski) and a dramatic performance (Waczków). Furthermore, it transpires that all the Polish rewritings of Blok have been evidently designed to fit in with the poetics dominant at the time the translation was published. Accompanying shifts of the ideological meaning of Blok's *oeuvre* are also easily detectable<sup>84</sup>.

The translators take liberties with reinterpreting the senses of the original with profound political implications and ensure that the way in which the original is perceived fits in with the reigning orthodoxy of the target culture. They also prompt the reader to perform axiological actions and make arbitrary judgements on the author's ideological stance. Unquestionably, they are „image makers, exerting the power of subversion under the guise of

<sup>82</sup> See I. Even-Zohar: *The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem*. In: *Literature and Translation. New Perspectives in Literary Studies with a Basic Bibliography of Books on Translation Studies*. Eds. J. Holmes, J. Lambert, R. von den Broeck. Leuven, Belgium: Acco 1978, pp. 119–124; A. Lefevere: *Translating Literature. Practice and Theory in a Comparative Literature Context...*

<sup>83</sup> A. Lefevere: *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame...*, p. 38.

<sup>84</sup> Subsequent historioliterary conventions of Polish translations of Blok's *Двенадцать* have been already extensively discussed by A. Legeżyńska: *Tłumacz i jego kompetencje autorskie...*, pp. 188–215.

objectivity<sup>85</sup>. Reassessing the role of translators by analysing their powerful and ideologically far-reaching intervention in the process of linguistic transfer is therefore of paramount importance. There is no escaping the fact that in the snowstorm each rewriter has seen his own Christ through the prism of his own cultural formation and dominant ideology.

„Far from [being] innocent and very visible, indeed<sup>86</sup>, the subsequent rewritings of Blok's *Двенадцать* confirm Anton Popovič's thesis that translation always disambiguates the original's Universe of Discourse and reduces its polyphony. Most emphatically, it is these rewritings that exert an enormous power on shaping common knowledge of Russian Modernist poetry and reinforce national stereotypes. Furthermore, they give birth to other influential and powerful rewritings: pieces of literary criticism, anthologies and dictionaries, frequently containing such highly authoritative and arbitrary assertions as:

Blok greeted the 1917 Revolution with fresh enthusiasm, and made common cause with the Bolsheviks. His great poem *The Twelve* celebrates his fervent acceptance of the October revolution. [...] Apparently Christ serves to consecrate the revolutionary activity of the Red Guardsmen [...] Indeed Blok embraced the 1917 Revolution because he believed that it would purify Russia through suffering and give her a new spiritual birth<sup>87</sup>.

The translators assume the author's power to determine implicit meanings of the final version and, consequently, the ideological sense of the target text which, most emphatically, is the original<sup>88</sup> for the mass readership which has no direct access to the reality of the source text and frequently boasts only a nodding acquaintance with classical Russian literature. Vital is the translators' interpretive activity aiming at disambiguating the original's Universe of Discourse and, consequently, uniting the Revolution of 1917 and God in an apocalyptic vision in which twelve Red Army men become apostles of the New World, headed by Christ. Needless to say, to accept such renditions is to detract from the polyphonic complexity of *Двенадцать*, a poem which allows different, even mutually contradictory, interpretations.

Andre Lefevere's rhetorical question seems to be adequate to conclude the present deliberations on Russian poetry of the October Revolution in English and Polish translations: "And what if all literature is, to some extent,

<sup>85</sup> A. Lefevere: *Translating Literature...*, p. 7.

<sup>86</sup> S. Bassnett: *The Meek or the Mighty...*, p. 23.

<sup>87</sup> W. E. Harkins: *Dictionary of Russian Literature*. The New Students Outline Series. Patterson, New Jersey: Littlefield, Adams, and Co. 1959, pp. 22, 24.

<sup>88</sup> A. Lefevere: *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame...*, p. 110.

transmitted of necessity in the same manipulatory manner?”<sup>89</sup>. Therefore, it would be highly desirable and prolific to apply the methodology of the Manipulation School and the concept of refraction not only to the revolutionary writings of the Russian Modernists, but also to the broader field of contemporary Russian literature whose reception has been long manipulated in Polish and Anglo-American cultural polysystems.

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НИЕПОКОЈАЩА ЕПИФАНІА В СЊІЕЖЫЦЫ. ДВУНАСТУ АЛЕКСАНДРА БЛОКА  
В ПРЗЕКЛАДАХ ПОЛСКИХ І АНГІІСКИХ

Streszczenie

Przedmiotem artykułu jest interpretacja ideologicznie ambiwalentnego zwieńczenia poematu Aleksandra Błoka *Двенадцать* zarówno w macierzystym porewolucyjnym kontekście literacko-ideologicznym, jak w kolejnych przekładach polskich i angielskich. Metodologicznym układem odniesienia analizy serii translatorskiej *Dwunastu* i *The Twelve* są translologiczne rozpoznania tzw. „Szkoły Manipulacyjnej”. Konfrontacja poszczególnych przekładów rewolucyjnego poematu rosyjskiego symbolisty-sofiologa unaocznia nieuchronne ideologiczne ujednoznaczenie finałowego obrazu Chrystusa zgodne z aktualnymi historyczno-ideologicznymi i literackimi parametrami kultury docelowej.

*Тамара Бжостовска- Терешкевич*

БЕСПОКОЈАЩЕЕ ВЪЮЖНОЕ БОГОЯВЛЕНИЕ. ПОЛЬСКИЕ И АНГЛИЙСКИЕ  
ПЕРЕВОДЫ ДВЕНАДЦАТИ АЛЕКСАНДРА БЛОКА

Резюме

Предметом настоящей статьи является интерпретация идеологически неоднозначного завершения поэмы Александра Блока *Двенадцать* как в литературно-идеологическом контексте пореволюционной России так и в очередных польских и английских переводах. Аналитические исследования переводческих серий основываются на методологических принципах т.н. школы манипуляции в западноевропейском переводевании. Сравнительный анализ нескольких польских и английских переводов революционной поэмы русского символиста-софиолога показывает неизбежную идеологическую дисамбиугацию финального представления Христа в зависимости от исторически-идеологических и литературных параметров принимающей культуры.

<sup>89</sup> In the work cited above, p. 58.