

CALL FOR PAPERS

Przekładaniec Journal of Translation Studies, Krakow

Poetry Translation East-West

ed. by Zakhar Ishov and Michał Mrugalski

Poetry translation is perpetually enveloped in a paradox: on the one hand, “poetry is what gets lost in translation” (Frost 1995, Croce 1926, Jakobson 1959); on the other, practiced since antiquity, poetry translation has been universally a major moving force behind cultural transfer (Highet 1957, Steiner 1975: 251, Venclova 1979). Throughout literary history, poets, critics and theorists of poetry translation have been proposing various solutions as to how to square this circle and reconcile the conflicts inherent in poetry translation (Steiner 1975: 261-262). At the same time, translation practitioners, regardless of their stance towards theory, have been confronting the impossibility of poetry translation as their daily reality, making choices in search of “whatever must be done” (Rosenzweig 1995, Lotman 1990: 6).

In this special themed issue of *Przekładaniec* we will consider the cultural history, theory and practice of poetry translation in the Slavic context, especially the transfer between Slavic literatures and languages and Western ones. This space is fraught with tensions and contrasts, but sometimes also with parallels and overlaps from grammatical to prosodic ones, from cultural to political, etc. etc. The dichotomy of translatability-untranslatability implies a continuous “accretion of meaning in the process of translational transformations” (Lotman 1990: 3). Each poetic “rewriting” (Lefevre 1992) of texts presupposes an equivalent rewriting of theories as well

(Flotow 2000; Munday 2007; Venuti 2013). Therefore, we invite proposals that deal not only with Western-Slavic practices of poetry translation, but also Slavic translation theories.

Although the principal differences between poetry and prose translation have been long identified (Mayenowa 1961: 369-371; Levy 2011: 189), Raluca Tanasescu (2016) has recently shown that poetry's untranslatability is also addressed by TS scholars who do not explicitly deal with poetry translation. This, in turn, confirms the Lotmanian notion that poetry is "a creative art" *par excellence* as it constantly generates asymmetrical relationships in the language (Lotman 1990: 6); on the other, it shows that poetry translation provides *argumentum crucis* for the entire realm of Translation Studies. The publication we plan aims at systematizing various aspects of poetry translation, which contribute to its centrality for Translation Studies.

Another important aspect that we would like to cover is the bi-directionality of cultural transfer between Slavic and Western cultures. Bi-directionality can imply relations between "large" and "small" cultures and differing literary fields (see also Dathe 2013). We also invite contributors to explore the East-West contrasts of the Cold War and beyond, and their specific repercussions for the already contentious field of poetry translation. These can include reflections on such extreme cases where "meaning could be dislocated in common speech" by ideologies as Nazism or Stalinism, so that words can signify the complete opposite of what they are supposed to mean, making translation in the ordinary sense impossible (Steiner 1975: 34). Conversely, they can also incorporate examples of translation providing the poet-translator with an outlet for Aesopian expression (Loseff 1984). This would be very relevant during the periods of especially strict censorship restriction on original writing (Friedberg 1997).

Suggested topics:

- the role of poetry translation in the development of national literatures and their theories;
- main currents and forces behind the East-West cultural transfer;
- cultural, historical and political preconditions for poetry transfer;
- linguistic contrasts/similarities hampering or facilitating poetry transfer;
- contrasting prosodic systems and their impact on translation;
- foreign policy and cultural policy and their repercussions for poetry translation.

Paper proposals (ca. 300 words) in English or Polish, together with a brief bio note should be submitted to Zakhar Ishov (zakhar.ishov@aya.yale.edu) and Michal Mrugalski (michal.mrugalski@hu-berlin.de) by January 30, 2019. Successful authors will be asked to submit full papers by 30 May 2019.