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"IT TAKES A GENIUS TO SET THE TUNE, AND A POET TO PLAY VARIATIONS ON IT": SOME REMARKS ON THE IRKSOME (IM) POSSIBILITY OF EDITING SHAKESPEARE IN TRANSLATION*

Abstract

Drawing on the results of research into the scale and distribution of Polish translation activity with regard to the Shakespeare an canon in the 19th century, the article discusses the various roles assumed by both professional and informal editors working with Shakespeare translators over time. Understandably enough, the editorial efforts serve to ensure the quality and reception of the text, and range from publisher's pressure and copyediting to aesthetic (or societal) patronage and complementary efforts to append the text with critical commentary. The article juxtaposes the intimacy of the translation process with the inherently intrusive role of an editor, foregrounding the fragile psychological balance which preconditions effective collaboration and long-term commitment. Finally, the article discusses the need for editorial policies attuned to Shakespeare in translation, which would take into account both the literary intricacy of

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the original(s) and the specificity of retranslation dialectics, with the necessary positioning of new rewritings against past canon(s).

Keywords: Shakespeare, translator studies, editorship, retranslation, critical editions

The collection of the National Gallery in London features a portrait titled *The Tailor*. Dating from 1570–1575, it was painted by the Italian artist Giovanni Battista Moroni. On the surface, the painting shows the mundanity of a craftsman's life: a banal act of cutting fabric. Yet the artist managed to capture a special moment: an instance of cogitation so intense as to acquire a metaphysical dimension. Moroni's tailor does not act in a state of frenzy; his work requires precision, so that the large, heavy scissors cut through the material exactly where it is marked with chalk lines. Modern-day interpreters of Moroni's painting often emphasize its revolutionary overtones: portraying craftsmen full of professional dignity, the artist challenged class divisions, which were othervise successfully perpetuated by the commercial art of the time. It may well be that this was the case in Bergamo, where Moroni became famous as a portraitist. In London, however, throughout the Elizabethan era extraordinary social advancement was possible: here, theatre masterpieces were created by such upstarts as Marlowe, the son of a shoemaker, or Shakespeare, the son of a glover. Their talent flourished on the public stage, while the artistry of tailors blossomed within the bounds of models and measurements. Moroni's apotheosis of intense scruting in fact represents the vocational ethos of all those who follow some kind of model in their work – like the translator, the editor, the critic.

1. Our Shakespeare translator: that is, who?

In most European countries, Shakespeare's reception began at a time that did not encourage bringing out this "craftsmanship" aspect of working on a text. Shakespeare captured the hearts and minds non-English speakers before it became apparent how his works would sound in the language of translation. A wave of idolatrous fascination had spread across Europe long before the texts of his plays arrive from the British Isles. In Poland, the eventual multitude of theatrical abridgegments was neither the cause

nor even a symptom of this collective madness. The confidence in the great value of Shakespearean drama precedes the audience's confrontation with the text, and also raises the bar for translators. What should the Shakespeare translator be like according to 19th-century Polish critics? Reviewing the first Polish translations of Shakespeare, Józef Przecławski, editor of the influential weekly *Tygodnik Petersburski*, leaves no illusions in this regard; it is only to poets that he accords the right to translate authors of genius:

> The genius sets the tone of the song of his times… The genius begins, the modern poet continues, the ungainly copier follows at the back, picking up crumbs; the genius sets the theme, the poet plays variations on it, the copier clumsily weaves together bits of long-sung chords into an out-of-tune whole (Em. herbu Glaubicz 1840, part 1: 241).

Today having a somewhat humorous effect, this rhetoric of rapture is in fact deeply normative and ruthlessly judgemental. Only an individual of outstanding talent can translate a genius; only a brilliant poet who knows how to play variations on a theme and combine them into a harmonious song of his times. One will not find in these deliberations any reflection on aesthetic doctrines competing within the target culture. But who could combine the elegance and harmony of Classicism with the metaphysical depth and captivating *topoi* of the Romantics? Moreover, who could introduce into Polish literature a completely new quality, hitherto unknown, yet already so much admired *a priori*?

The Poles were not alone in their craving for translations of Shakespeare. In post-Napoleonic Europe, many countries and nations, in the process of defining their identity, turned to translating masterpieces to uphold the vitality of their own literature, which was under threat or was only just coming to life. A great role was played here by German doctrines, formulated in opposition to the French model; in place of a regressive definition of culture as a treasure house of the past, they advocated the concept of *Bildung*, i.e. a dynamic, open, expansive culture growing stronger as it absorbs and assimilates the foreign (cf. Berman 1992). The expectations of the age become clearer when Przecławski's inspired proclamation is considered in the immediate context of the concurrent publication of two initial Polish translations of *Romeo and Juliet*, or, to use a stronger expression, their clash against each other.

In 1839, the first volume of Ignacy Hołowiński's translations from Shakespeare was published in Vilnius, comprising *Romeo and Juliet*, *Midsummer*

Night's Dream, and *Hamlet*. A year later, Julian Korsak brought out a competing version of *Romeo and Juliet*. Hołowiński's translations polarized the critics.[1] On the one hand, the very fact that the translations appeared was warmly welcomed; on the other, it seemed that the texts did not quite meet the hopes that had been cultivated for so long. Hołowiński was criticized especially for his carefree, inconsistent prosody, which undermined the reader's trust regarding other aspects of his translation. Korsak, in turn, included in his translation the rendering of a passage from Act 2, Scene 2, by the Romantic bard Adam Mickiewicz, and followed his example in translating the whole play in rhyming thirteen-syllable metre, "the Polish alexandrine". In 1840, Przecławski's above-quoted extensive review of Korsak's *Romeo and Juliet* was published in two consecutive issues of the popular weekly. On the face of it, the reviewer seems to have placed this translator's achievement on a par with Hołowinski's; however, his castigation of "slavishness" in translating, although seemingly "theoretical", was in fact targeted at the latter author. After all, Przecławski want a translation that would combine the genius of Shakespeare with that of Mickiewicz.

Influential as it was, Przecławski's opinion was of course not the only one. Hołowiński could count on the helping pen of the young Józef Ignacy Kraszewski, who decidedly ruled that his translations were more faithful to the "real" Shakespeare (Kraszewski 1840: 305). The strongest support for Hołowiński, however, came at that time from Michał Grabowski, a major critic of the Petersburg *coterie*, who wrote: "[In] Kefaliński [Hołowiński] is the English Shakespeare, with his physopgnomy, his habits, the accent of his tongue, which, like a familiar voice, make us recognize him in every play and every spot in a play (Grabowski 1843: 151). What is more, in defending Hołowiński's strategy, Grabowski did not hesitate to challenge the translation by Mickiewicz himself:

> As I wrote these words, I was not quite aware of my temerity; knowing Mr Korsak's poetry only from the excerpts included in *Tygodnik* [*Petersburski*], I did not suspect that I was comparing Kefaliński not with Korsak, but with Mickiewicz (…). And yet I am not going to redeem my inadvertent mistake! These poems may indeed be very beautiful in themselves, especially according to our ideas of grandeur and excess (…), but, placed alongside the new translator's

[1] For a more comprehensive discussion of the reception of Hołowiński's translations (reviews, polemical exchanges, letters), see Cetera 2009. His correspondence with the writer and historian Józef Ignacy Kraszewski is also discussed in Budrewicz-Beratan 2005.

> blank verse, they reveal that Mickiewicz's texture is but a garb, and a garb not becoming to the simple and bare poetry of Shakespeare (Grabowski 1843: 153).

Grabowski emphasized that Mickiewicz gave to Polish poetry "brilliant boldness, grace, variety, imagination, feeling" (154), but he also pointed to the value of poetry "rooted in nature", raw, not subject to elaborate processing. This was how he saw Shakespeare's work. "To transport such poetry in chunks, in lumps to produce as real play is quite different indeed from poeticizing this or that in the most fortunate, most splendid manner", he concluded with reproof (155).

Both then and now, the opinions of Przecławski and Grabowski could be challenged, but that is not our point. The critics' assessment was not based on detailed comparisons with the original, but rather reflected a clash between the respective translations and the poetics of the target culture; both translations were treated as more or less satisfactory from the point of view of a nineteenth-century Shakespeare admirer who had already "bought him blind". Translators, too, often legitimized their work on Shakespeare not so much with their technical skill as with the power of their feelings. Hołowiński envisaged his author as follows:

> Shakespeare (…) is an eagle that, having risen above the plane, seems to be the unrivalled king of all times, and takes everywhere and everything whatever he finds suitable for rendering his high thought, not caring in the least for the age to whose whims he refers his art. It is a great lesson indeed to collect traces from the path through which the genius flew, or to watch how he overcame various obstacles (*Dzieła Wilhelma Shakspeara* 1839: 481).

In his letters, the translator confessed: "Shakespeare has spoken to me; I loved him with all my soul; I made him my world; I attached the memories of my life to the translation of his works, and now, rereading the more beautiful passages, I recall the only happy moments in my life, when I was glad at rendering them" (Hołowiński 1840b).

Discernible underneath Hołowiński's sentimentally affected declarations is a purely hermeneutic translation strategy, based on a deep insight into and identification of the author's intention. Experienced in both torment and rapture, it is this brotherhood of the souls that constitutes the context of the translator's work. It is a deep, intimate, and inevitably possessive relationship. Is there a place for a third party within this scheme of things? And if so, what would be this person's role?

2. Editing Shakespeare: but now?

Notwithstanding the recurent suggestions of a solitary struggle with enflamed emotions, the history of the first Polish translations from Shakespeare features several archetypes of the translator's collaboration with someone fulfilling variously understood editorial functions. The first clue leads to the publishing house.

Archetype One: "Mr Publisher"

As the publishing market has developed, copyright law and editorial practice have worked out a number of principles, including the extent of the expected and acceptable intervention in a published text. Although even today things may get tense at various stages of editing translated texts, we usually know who suggests revisions and why. At the time when the first Polish translations of Shakespeare saw the light of day, spelling and punctuation were the responsibility of publishers, but common sense would usually make them refrain from more serious interferences, of the kind that the aggrieved Holowiński complains about:

> This first volume came out during my absence from Poland, (…) and the invaluable Mr. Glücksberg, excessively concerned about my fame (…) took great liberties with my translation, and, in response to an arbitrary opinion by the Mr. Publisher of *Tygodnik* [Józef Przecławski] armed with an ABC, as he himself says, transformed my poor *Sen letniej nocy* [Summer Night's Dream] into some foreign *Wigilia Św. Jana* [St. John's Eve] (Hołowiński 1840a).

Such corrections, i.e. changes imposed by the publisher, are an eternal cause of dispute, also among the theoreticians of text editing: some want to identify and mark them, others would prefer to reinstate the author's original intentions, still others consider these revisions as fulfilling the expectations of the author, who submitted the manuscript to be improved in the editorial process. In the third case, the published text is interpreted as a testimony to the balance of power between the author and publisher – a fragile balance stabilized in this very form for the purposes of publication – and thus as an important source of knowledge about the cultural matrices that influenced literature and art in a particular historical period. Sour relations with

"institutional" editors do not entail, however, that the translator does not feel the need to perfect his text; he does, and he looks for help from others. And this conscious need leads to….

Archetype Two, or "thorough mauling"

On the private level, intense collaboration often takes place. On the one hand, it is of great importance for the shape of the text; on the other, in a sense it remains hidden, if we disregard the conventional thanks for reading the manuscript. This was the case with Ignacy Hołowiński and his friend Placyd Jankowski (also known as John Dycalp), a writer and translator of Shakespeare.

The relationship between Hołowiński and Jankowski, who had met when studying at Vilnius University, is amicable, relaxed and casual, but it may involve too much pride and irony to bear good fruit. We have no insight into the beginnings of their collaboration (neither letters nor manuscripts from that period have survived); however, we do have a manuscript of Hołowiński's unpublished translation of *Othello*, in which Jankowski not only suggests a number of revisions, but concludes with the following address:

> Pray forgive me for turning yet again to the horse I like to ride so much: your metres. They are even more faulty than your far-fetched endings. In the line ends, commonplace rhymes sing in falsetto, and your regular verse can rarely do without: *nader* [very] *nazbyt* [overly] *prawdziwie* [veritably] *istotnie* [indeed] *straszny* [terrible] *ogromny* [enormous] *niepomierny* [immense] [author's emphasis]. Tis a bad and boring trait; it weakens the most beautiful verse and at times brings tragicality closer to farcicality (…).
>
> I have not mauled the black man as thoroughly as the plays I used to read in the past, since despite permitting my improvements, you do not turn them into any good in my beneficial favour. I have seen an example of this in *Romeo and Juliet*. In that play, I recommended a number of spots for emendation, and what fate befell my exclamation marks and glosses? You tell me now, what fate befell my exclamations and glosses?! My exclamations and glosses! (Hołowiński [undated])

Given the fate of Hołowiński's translations, one cannot deny that Dycalp had a point when he berated his colleague for succumbing to prosodic extravaganza. However, the final commentary – as far as we allow conclusions drawn from such a small example – points to another, very important aspect

of their collaboration, which today would probably lend itself to a psychological interpretation. Dycalp is a competent reader, a fellow translator, proofreading the Polish version alongside the original text. At the same time, he turns into an ironic, persiflage-dealing adversary when he feels that the translator will not listen to his good advice. Discouraged, he refuses to continue revising Hołowiński's translations, and later puts his ideas into practice in his own versions.[2] The first Polish translator of Shakespeare probably feels offended, too, even though he sent in the manuscripts of his own accord… Today one can only guess whether a slightly different attitude on both sides would have resulted in more and better translations being published by Hołowiński. What is certain, though, is that he realized that, apart from his friend's attentive reading, he needed a different kind of patronage, a true pass into the deep end of literature, and hence…

Archetype Three, or "literary relations"

Encouraged by the first favourable review of his translations published by Kraszewski, Hołowiński reached out to him with this confession:

> But I have long desired to enter into literary relations with you, Hon.[ourable] Gentleman (…). I would consider it my mortal sin not to write to you: oh, how I need these relations; not only because in our country those who work individually cannot aspire to set a nationwide pattern, but also your youthful zeal could awaken me from the lethargy that often possesses me, and a higher manner of seeing and multifarious learning could bring so many benefits to my painstaking labours and scribblings! (Hołowiński 1840a)

A discussion of the years-long friendship between the two writers would require a separate article; also, a precise reconstruction of all motivations and emotions connected with this relationship is not possible. What is important here, however, is that in seeking Kraszewski's favour, Hołowiński wanted an intellectual alliance: smug enough to reject Dycalp's suggestions, he nevertheless did not feel quite confident in literary circles. Even though he was supported by the Volhynia-Petersburg cultural *milieu*, the Eastern

[2] After Hołowiński abandoned his project of translating Shakespeare, in 1842–1847 Placyd Jankowski published four translations of his own (for a discussion of the relations between Hołowiński and Jankowski, see Cetera 2009).

Borderlands were still a long way away from the elites of Warsaw and Kraków, let alone the Parisian émigré circles. Thus, Hołowiński regarded "literary relations" as a precondition for the success of his undertaking, which, without positive reviews by esteemed critics, would have faded into oblivion.

Many years later, Polish translators will similarly seek the approval of the eminent Shakespeare scholar Jan Kott, of great artists or respectable institutions. The dynamics of such relations, factors such as loyalty, consistency, and tactfulness, are often crucial to the success of translation projects, especially when the translators themselves lose faith in the sense of their activity, or when the continuation of their work requires too many sacrifices, including economic ones. A sad regularity in the history of early Polish translations of Shakespeare is their unprofitability, as evidenced in letters by Hołowiński, as well as later translators: Józef Paszkowski and Leon Ulrich… In such cases, the support, however small, of a handful of declared admirers of the translator's talent proves invaluable. But beyond the immediate circle of people directly involved with the translator, there is a yet another area where the fate of the translations is decided. The status of a masterpiece, accorded *a priori*, is not enough for a text to properly settle in the target culture. This is mentioned by one of the reviewers, who thus introduces….

Archetype Four: "strict scrutiny"

Faulty editions sometimes drew harsh charges:

> Above all, we are struck by the almost complete lack of strict scrutiny of the published plays. We do not mean here indicating individual beauties, for these will be discovered by every reader with even one drop of poetic sense, but a general view of the marvelous economy of each particular drama (…). In our opinion, this kind of work is indispensable for every new translation of Shakespeare ("Dzieła W. Shakespeare…" 1849: 409).

Obvious as these expectations seem, a glance at the Polish editions of Shakespeare reveals that this postulate is put into practice only with great difficulty. Is Shakespeare really such a universal author that we can do without explanations? Or is he so "contemporary" that all interpretations are provisional, short-lived, and ultimately not worth putting down? The publishing

industry's reluctance towards heavily annotated editions does have a bearing on translation strategies. In a sense, it enforces strongly domesticated translations, imposing on the translator the role of the commentator: the explainer of a text who, for lack of other possibilities, now and again reaches for dynamic equivalence, interpolates interpretative guidelines or disregards passages overloaded with cultural references. When this tendency turns into a convention, publishers prefer translations that are "clean", "literary", transparent, free of footnotes. Add to this the pressure from the theatre and the illocutionary purity valued by actors, and the question of the strategy of translating drama seems largely predetermined. The academic and publishing policy disinclined towards critical editions speaks poorly of our times; it also undermines the 19th-century tradition, whereby numerous introductions and afterwords not only served Shakespeare, but also painted a picture of the age, with its methodology, ethics and aesthetics. What is important, critical editions build extra space around the translated text, a buffer zone in which the translator does not have to take desperate measures to eliminate (or mask) the cultural distance. Sometimes, it is the presence of a literary critic that restores the translator's freedom of action and encourages him or her to take risks in places duly elucidated by someone else. It was for such a partner that Hołowiński was striving from the very beginning.

Extending the perspective to include a few dozen other 19th-century Polish translators of Shakespeare, we discover a striking recurrence of similar circumstances and schemes.[3] For example, the decision to commence translating is often triggered by a personal misfortune that tragically cuts the future translator off from his family, community or even his country. This was the case with deportation or forced resettlement (e.g. Gustaw Ehrenberg, Adam Pług, Józef Korzeniowski), emigration (Leon Ulrich, Krystyn Ostrowski) or illness (Władysław Matlakowski, Józef Paszkowski). A broader perspective also reveals a repetition of publishing patterns: attempts to establish a series and difficulties in maintaining the pace of work, translations published at one's own expense, and then dispersed and ignored by critics and the theatre. Often, favourable reception upon publication is followed by obscurity in the subsequent decades, and it is only by comparing successful and unsuccessful projects that we can fully assess which factors

[3] There were about thirty Polish translators of Shakespeare active in the 19th century. This number does not include those who left their texts in manuscript or published only excerpts of their translations.

determined the success of the former and the failure of the latter. Incidentally, even without an extensive apparatus of New Historicism, the analysis of materials pushed out of mainstream reception can be a source of valuable knowledge about the epoch in question. Extended studies also highlight the internal dynamics of the various groups that supported the translators and contributed to the publication of their work. In every case, these circles exhibited variously understood editorial archetypes.

3. The canonical translation or a canon of translations?

It would be difficult to imagine a contemporary editor of Shakespeare in translation as the midwife and commentator of only one text in the target language. After all, over the centuries, translations and retranslations have created a separate corpus of texts that, apart from their natural function of representing the original, also have an impact on the texts yet to be written. In the case of works translated many times across centuries, it is this translation sequence, the diachronic development of translations, that becomes a source of knowledge about the poetics of the past, and – quite importantly indeed – about the intertextual dialectics of retranslation. The images of reality encoded in the particular versions of the text reflect not only Shakespeare's universe, but also that of each successive epoch. What conclusions can be drawn from a comparison of images preserved in such droplets of translation resin?

Setting aside romantic loyalties, let us return to the competitive translations of *Romeo and Juliet* which divided 19th-century critics so much. The translation duel takes place in the balcony scene, in Romeo's monologue, where he admires Juliet standing against a starlit sky. In Mickiewicz's translation, this passage sounds as follows:

> Lecz stójmy! co tam w oknie błysnęło zarazem.
> To wschód słońca, a słońcem są Julii lica; (…)
> Dwie gwiazdy w pilnej kędyś posłane potrzebie,
> Proszą oczu Julii, by raczyły w niebie
> Świecić, nim gwiazdy wrócą i znowu zaświecą.
> I cóż jeśli jej oczy do niebios ulecą?
> I cóż jeżeli gwiazdy błysną śród jej czoła?
> Blask Julii oblicza gwiazdy zaćmić zdoła,
> Jako dzień gasi lampy; a niebo jej okiem

Powietrzną jasność takim lałoby potokiem,
Ze ptaki dzień w omylnym witałyby dźwięku.
(Korsak 1840: 51)

To the Polish ear, the metre unimistakably evokes Mickiewicz's masterpiece, the narrative poem *Pan Tadeusz*. One gets the impression that these lines could be uttered by Tadeusz, the protagonist of "the Polish national epic", had he first seen his beloved Zosia at night under the Italian sky, rather than in broad daylight in the vegetable patch of a small manor house in Lithuania. Shakspeare's/ Mickiewicz's/Korsak's verse flows lightly, rhythmically, with perfectly fitting rhetorical periods. *Lecz stójmy!* [But let's stand still], Romeo exclaims, as if inviting the audience to join him in the Capulets' garden and hear out the graceful description of his love. Hołowiński's Romeo, in turn, is rather alone (*Cicho!* [Quiet]), and he immediately falls into a breakneck sequence of grammatical forms inhumanly contracted to the point of contortion:

Cicho! przez okno blask jakiś pada!
Wschódże-to piękny, Juliaż słońce! …
Dwie najpiękniejsze gwiazdy na niebie
Mając odjechać w pilnej potrzebie,
Proszą jej oczu, nim wrócą z jazdy
Aby świeciły w górnej ich sferze.
Gdy oczy w niebie, w jej twarzy gwiazdy
Chciałyby mieszkać: gwiazdom odbierze
Blask ich ze wstydem Julii lice
Jako dzień lampie; z jej oczu w niebie
Strumień światłości zleje się taki,
Że oszukane ozwą się ptaki,
Jakby witały słońce przy wschodzie.
(*Dzieła Wilhelma Shakspeara* 1839: 255)

Even if we consider Mickiewicz's padded alexandrine as over-the-top, Hołowiński rickety ten-syllable metre does not inspire trust either. Leavng prosody aside, it is worth noting that Romeo's original monologue contains a fantastic image easily distorted in translation:

But, soft! what light through yonder window breaks?
It is the east, and Juliet is the sun. (…)
Two of the fairest stars in all the heaven,

Having some business, do entreat her eyes
To twinkle in their spheres till they return.
What if her eyes were there, they in her head?
The brightness of her cheek would shame those stars,
As daylight doth a lamp; her eyes in heaven
Would through the airy region stream so bright
That birds would sing and think it were not night.

(Shakespeare 2003: II 2.2–3, 15–22)

In the 16th century, convention turned ardent professions of love into the raw material of poetry. As he was creating his teenage protagonists, Shakespeare was well aware of how hackneyed the language of love had turned. Romeo's confessions are full of sonnet clichés, which only gradually give way to simple, compact and powerful poetry, under the rule of Eros and Thanatos. For most of the play, however, the lovers speak a well-worn, mannered language; at times, it is funny, although this comedic swing is not always properly recognized by translators and critics. Juliet's eyes flickering in outer space are sheer madness, but Romeo demonstrates quite expert skill in describing this bizarre phenomenon; he is aware of the structure of the Ptolemaic universe, in which planets must leave crystal orbs to make room for the girl's sparkling eyes. Romeo's idea is ridiculous, even monstrous, and only shows that the infatuated boy's raging imagination has confused his head. But this passage also ties in with a significant sequence of intratextual references to the stars, each of which, starting with the famous prologue, forebodes a catastrophe.[4] What is more, even without other ominous prophecies, this image alone, if reversed, menacingly suggests the symbol of death, with its gaping eye sockets. Such a sudden, proleptic parting of the curtain, a glimpse of the future, is Shakespeare's characteristic dramatic trick, employed with the most exquisite skill in *Macbeth*, though there it does not involve astronomical references. In *Romeo and Juliet*, the action takes place in a world ruled by evil stars, which bring down disaster, and, more specifically: the plague.

In Shakespeare's lifetime, the black death ravaged England several times, and one of the largest epidemics spread in 1593–1594, just before *Romeo*

[4] Cf. the famous description of Romeo and Juliet in the prologue as "a pair of star-crossed lovers".

and Juliet was staged.[5] The plague causes panic. It kills tens of thousands of people: between 1563 and 1603, every fourth inhabitant of London falls victim to it. With the exception of *Romeo and Juliet*, Shakespeare does not mention in his works this greatest trauma of his times, it is the sudden outbreak of the plague that traps under quarantine the messenger who carries from Verona the news of Juliet's faked death. The Elizabethans don't know what causes the illness: it might be brought about by damp air, or by an inauspicious alignment of the stars. Fear makes everyone more alert to the signs given by nature; no wonder, then, that when Romeo describes stars abandoning their spheres and a night bright as day, the audience senses disaster.[6] In Mickiewicz's translation, "two stars" of indeterminate kind travel "somewhere" in the sky, while Juliet's eyes – like the soul – "fly away to heaven", thus obliterating the trace of the concept of the cosmos upon which Shakespeare's image is based[7]. Paradoxically, it is Hołowiński, thrifty with syllables, who, like Shakespeare, orders the most beautiful stars (Venus? Mars?) away from their spheres, keeping Romeo's cosmic madness within the bounds of the contemporary cosmological paradigm.

4. Is Shakespere (re)editable?

It goes without saying that the vision of a Shakespeare translation entangled in a thicket of footnotes, in the pillory of introductions and commentaries, may discourage the reader. The thing is, however, that Shakespeare sauté entails an illusion of accessibility, based i.a. on the belief that a good translation will explain all that is elaborated on at length by literary scholars. The role of a Shakespeare editor is primarily to elucidate the nature of the text, to cooperate with the translator, and, finally, to position the translation within the target culture, at both its past and contemporary stage of development.

[5] During the epidemic, theatres were closed. It is assumed that the play, printed in 1597, was performed in the summer of 1596.

[6] A computer simulation of the sky above London in June 1596, when *Romeo and Juliet* was probably staged, shows a conjunction of Mars and Venus near the always sinister Saturn. Shakespeare's audience might have felt alarmed by such a skyscape.

[7] Similar shifts can be found in 20th-century translations of the play by Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz and Stanisław Barańczak.

The first task is very difficult, especially when the target culture has not developed a tradition of discussing such issues.[8] Very few of Shakespeare's plays are extant in only one version, and even these have been subject to various emendations due to alleged printing errors, mistakes made by copyists etc. Editors of the English Shakespeare usually have to concentrate on establishing the version closest to the original copy-text (the basis for printing), which means painstaking toing and froing between the surviving early printed versions, which in turn are based on manuscripts of varying status and origin (these include the author's drafts or their copies, prompt books, scripts reconstructed from memory, adaptations, etc.). This age-old editorial effort concerns all levels of the text: the division into acts and scenes, the *dramatis personae*, dialogue headings, stage directions, the spelling and punctuation, prosody, and finally the selection of lexical and interpretative variants. At the same time, in recent decades this editorial tradition has been strongly challenged: the revisionist school of editing, as it is called, first of all postulates respect for the integrality of the extant versions (after all, the differences between them may be due not to transmission errors, but, for example, to the evolution of the author's vision of a play, reflected in his own revisions), and, secondly, insists on retracting a number of emendations introduced as a result of an overly puristic approach to Shakespeare's text, e.g. the classification of various prosodic irregularities as copyists' mistakes. The third impulse for change comes from the area of authorship studies, including computer-assisted research, stylometry, etc. Here, the result is a more exposed presence of the "foreign hand" in Shakespeare's texts, as well as evidence of his contribution to plays written in collaboration, which has led, among other things, to the publication of such titles as *The Two Noble Kinsmen* (1997), *Double Falshood* (2010), and *Thomas More* (2011) in the prestigious Arden Shakespeare series.

Of course, not all dilemmas of the editors of the English text are shared by their counterparts working on Shakespeare translations. Translation neutralizes spelling and punctuation variants; moreover, translated texts usually exhibit greater metrical regularity, as well as inflation, i.e. extra lines. Without critical editions, the readers of a translation are, in a sense, kept in the

[8] In Poland, the counterexamples to this trend are Juliusz Kydryński's translations of *Hamlet* from Quarto 1 (1987) and Witold Chwalewik's from Quarto 2 and Folio by Chwalewik (1975). The textual basis is discussed in all volumes of Piotr Kamiński's translations published after 2009.

dark about these problems; they are unaware of the complex derivation of the original text or the eclectic nature of the basis used by the translator in constructing the target version.

The second area of the editor's activity is direct cooperation with the translator. A critical reading of the translation may involve checking the accuracy of semantics or prosody; in any case, it should be based on the editor's knowledge of the original, as well as acquaintance with previous translations, deliberately avoided by some retranslators for fear of unwanted similarities or the influence of someone else's interpretation. Proofreading a translation, it is worth taking into account the consistency of particular characters by isolating individual parts from the play, as actors do. It is very important to identify all inter- and intratexual references in order to preserve their sequences present in the original, and to dismantle those accidentally created in translation. Sometimes, quite favourably, the translator and the editor have complementary sets of skills: for example, the editor has a visual imagination that smoothly moves from text to image, while the translator attaches greater importance to euphony, prioritizing sound and rhythm. It is always crucial to respect the translator's aesthetics or general strategy, so that the translated text retains the features given to it by its author, rather than including any forcefully imposed solutions.

The third area of editorial activity consists in positioning the translation in the context of the past and present target culture. Commentaries written to this effect should also cover the history of translations, without which the theatrical and critical reception would not have been possible.

The history of every individual translation is unique; what seems to remain unchanged, however, are the general principles of retranslation. No translation can definitely replace the original. On the other hand, translations rejected by their epoch remain outside the mainstream of reception, although they can play a role in the making of new translations. The lack of critical editions enforces translation strategies based on strong domestication of the text; due to a false idea of the homogeneity of Shakespeare's style, such strategies also eliminate the differences in style and register exhibited by the originals.

The decline of critical editions testifies to a crisis in the humanities.

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