

CONRAD'S VISIT TO CRACOW UNDER POLISH EYES

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Abstract: Conrad visited Poland in 1914, on the eve of World War I. He related his eventful sojourn in Cracow and Zakopane in two short essays entitled 'Poland Revisited' (1915) and 'First News' (1918). These narratives have been translated into Polish at various times by several different translators and with different purposes in mind. The aim of this article is to examine how Polish translators 'manipulated' the English texts in order to tailor them to a Polish readership and its contemporary 'horizon of expectations'.

Keywords: Conrad, Poland Revisited, Cracow, translation, manipulation

Conrad visited Poland several times: in 1890, 1893 and 1914. On his third visit, he arrived in Cracow (together with his wife and their two sons) on 28th July 1914, which was the day on which Austria-Hungary declared war on Serbia.¹ Here he spent several nights at the Grand Hotel in Sławkowska Street.² As well as walking down Floriańska Street and listening to the traditional hourly bugle call in St. Mary's Square,³ he visited the Royal Wawel Castle, the Rakowice Cemetery and took one of his sons to see the Jagiellonian Library.⁴ After general mobilization was officially declared, he moved to Zakopane, where he and his family stayed at Aniela Zagórska's boarding house (called the "Kontantynówka") and where he was visited by a number of prominent Polish intellectuals, with whom he discussed politics and literature.⁵

Although Conrad later wrote two narrative accounts based on his sojourn in war-torn Poland – 'Poland Revisited' (1915) and 'First News' (1918) – he did not describe

¹ Z. Najder. *Joseph Conrad: a Life*. Suffolk: Camden House, 2007, pp. 461-468. S. Zabierowski. "Conrad's Cracow". *Yearbook of Conrad Studies (Poland)* 2012, Vol. VII, pp. 25-45.

² S. Zabierowski. "Joseph Conrad w krakowskim Grand Hotelu". *Kraków* 2015, № 1, pp. 52-55.

³ J. Conrad. "Poland Revisited". In: J. Conrad. *Notes on Life and Letters*. Ed. J.H. Stape. Cambridge: CUP, 2004. Hereafter cited as PR in the text.

⁴ Z. Najder. *Joseph Conrad: a Life*, p. 461; W. Krajka, K. Sokołowska. "Conrad's Polish Footprints". In: *Contexts for Conrad*. Eds. K. Carabine, O. Knowles, W. Krajka. Boulder-Lublin-New York: Columbia UP, 1993, pp. 3-21.

⁵ L. Krzyżanowski. "J. Conrad: Some Polish Documents". In: *Joseph Conrad: Centennial Essays*, Ed. L. Krzyżanowski. New York: The Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences in America, 1960, p. 127.

“actual war experiences”,⁶ but instead concentrated on his own private observations and personal emotions. These narratives have been translated into Polish at various times by several different translators and with different purposes in mind. The following discussion will focus on the translations of ‘Poland Revisited’ and the cultural context in which they were made. The paper will argue that Polish translators ‘manipulated’ the English original in order to tailor it to a Polish readership and its contemporary ‘horizons of expectation’. I shall use the methodology of cultural translation studies proposed by Gideon Toury, Susan Bassnett and André Lefevere (among others), as well as the *skopos* theory developed by Hans Vermeer and Katherina Reis.

METHODOLOGY

As I have argued elsewhere, the main objectives of Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) are to describe translational phenomena and explain their function and reception in the target culture.⁷ Studies of this type begin by situating the translation within the recipient literary system. The text should be analysed in terms of acceptability, i.e. the degree in which it corresponds to the cultural, linguistic and literary conventions prevailing at the time of translation. The founder of DTS – Gideon Toury – assigned priority to the *function* of translations within a given culture, since it is the function that determines the desired properties of the text and thus governs the process of translation. Toury suggested that “translations be regarded as facts of the culture which hosts them”⁸ and claimed that “the text’s position (and function), including the position and function which go with a text being regarded as a translation, are determined first and foremost by considerations originating in the culture which hosts them.”⁹

The aim of this contrastive analysis of the retranslations of “Poland Revisited” is therefore not prescriptive, i.e. saying how it should have been translated, but descriptive, i.e. showing the cultural and historical factors which influenced the translator and the techniques which he or she used in order to make it “acceptable” to contemporary readers. These factors are the components of the process of manipulation of the original which takes place in order to make it accessible to foreign readers. As Theo Hermans aptly observes in an essay on literary translation, “From the point of view of the target literature, all translation implies a degree of manipulation of the

⁶ Eugene F. Saxon letter to James Pinker, 22 January 1915. Quoted in J.H. Stape. “The Texts”. In: J. Conrad. *Notes on Life and Letters*, p. 278.

⁷ A. Adamowicz-Pośpiech. “Conrad in Polish Periodicals”. *Yearbook of Conrad Studies (Poland)* 2013, Vol. VIII, pp. 85-101.

⁸ G. Toury. “The Notion of ‘Assumed Translation’ – An Invitation to a New Discussion”. In: *Letterlijkheid, Woordelijkheid / Literality, Verbality*. Eds. H. Bloemen, E. Hertog, W. Segers. Antwerpen/Harmelen: Fantom, 1995, p. 136.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 137.

source text for certain purposes.”¹⁰ Lawrence Venuti develops this approach and claims that like every cultural practice, “translation involves the creation of values, literary and linguistic, religious and political, commercial and educational.”¹¹ Furthermore, Venuti argues that linguistic analyses of the translated texts should be “linked to the cultural and political factors that invest [the texts] with significance and value. Foremost among these issues is the translator’s agency, the ensemble of motivations, conditions and consequences that decisively inform the work of translating and allow it to produce far-reaching social effects.”¹² Contextualizing the translated text reveals “the role of history in translation, not only the influence of the historical moment in which the translator works, but also the literary and cultural histories on which the translator draws to bring the source text into the translating language.”¹³

Last but not least, I shall use the concept of *skopos* – introduced by the German linguist Hans Vermeer – to explain the various versions of “Poland Revisited” that were prepared for Polish journals. The *skopos* theory views translation as being part of a translational action that is based on the source text. Translation as a form of action must have an aim or purpose (*skopos* being the Greek for “aim”, “purpose”).¹⁴ Vermeer stressed the often overlooked fact that to translate means to produce a target text in a target setting for a target purpose. And this is crucial in the case of the present analysis, since the translator is allowed to choose those elements of the source text which he or she finds relevant for the intended addressees. If the *skopos* is clearly defined, it “expands the possibilities of translation, increases the range of possible translation strategies, and releases the translator from the corset of an enforced [...] literalness”.¹⁵ As translations are usually commissioned by someone (a person or an institution) who specifies the purpose or *skopos*, the translator manipulates the text in order to tailor it to the specified readership, place and time of publication. In the following presentation I shall demonstrate how translations of “Poland Revisited” have been modified because of a particular *skopos*.

“POLAND REVISITED” IN POLISH PERIODICALS

Various parts of “Poland Revisited” have been translated by several translators under different titles:

¹⁰ T. Hermans. *The Manipulation of Literature: Studies in Literary Translation*. London: Croom Helm, 1985, p. 11. Cf. also A. Lefevere. *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*. London–New York: Routledge, 1992.

¹¹ L. Venuti. “Retranslations: The Creation of Value”. In: L. Venuti. *Translation Changes Everything. Theory and Practice*. London–New York: Routledge, 2013, p. 96.

¹² *Ibid.*, p. 98.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 99.

¹⁴ H. Vermeer. “Skopos and Commission in Translation Theory”. In: L. Venuti. *The Translation Studies Reader*. 3rd ed. London–New York: Routledge, 2013, p. 191.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 201.

1. "Conrad w Krakowie w r. 1914" (Conrad in Cracow in 1914). Transl. B. Neufeldówna. *Wiadomości Literackie* 1924: 33, p. 4.
2. "Conrad w Krakowie w r. 1914" (Conrad in Cracow in 1914). Transl. B. Neufeldówna. *Poradnik dla Pracowników Świetlic Żołnierskich* 1943, pp. 223-224.
3. "Podróż do Polski" (A Journey to Poland). Transl. K. Zagórska. *Tygodnik Powszechny* 1952: 15, pp. 3-4.
4. "Jeszcze raz w Polsce" (Once again in Poland). Transl. M. Boduszyńska-Borowikowa. In: J. Conrad. *O życiu i literaturze*. Ed. Z. Najder. Warszawa: PIW, 1974, pp. 91-125 (this translation was published as a book).

"Poland Revisited" was translated for the first time just after the writer's death in 1924 and published in *Wiadomości Literackie* (Literary News) in a commemorative issue devoted to Joseph Conrad.¹⁶ The piece was carefully selected and ideally adapted to the general theme of the issue, for which two essays were chosen for publication and translation: an excerpt from *The Mirror of the Sea* and "Poland Revisited". The idea of the issue was to present Conrad firstly as a maritime author and secondly as an artist possessing strong Polish roots. The mastermind behind this issue of *Wiadomości Literackie* was the eminent Polish writer Stefan Żeromski (1864-1925), who wrote a leading article in which he presented the two main interpretative pillars on which he was to base his activities as a popularizer of Conrad's writing throughout the interwar period in Poland: firstly, that Conrad was first and foremost a maritime writer and, secondly, that his Polish background was of crucial importance for his artistic career.

"CONRAD W KRAKOWIE W R. 1914" (CONRAD IN CRACOW IN 1914, WIADOMOŚCI LITERACKIE)

The first version of "Poland Revisited" was produced by the journalist and translator Bronisława Neufeldówna (1857-1931),¹⁷ who began her career as a journalist in the *Nowiny* (News) magazine edited by the eminent Polish novelist Bolesław Prus (1847-1912). She was one of the first Polish women journalists and was responsible for reviewing French, English, German and Russian journals and daily newspapers. In 1884 she began to work as a translator, translating from English (A. Conan Doyle, G.B. Shaw), French (T. Gautier, H.J. Tharaud), German (B. Suttner, B. Kellermann), Danish (K. Michaelis) and Dutch (E.D. Dekker). For her rendering of "Poland Revisited" – the only Conradian text that she ever translated¹⁸ – she selected certain

¹⁶ Elsewhere I have written at length on this subject. Cf. A. Adamowicz-Pośpiech. "Conrad in Polish Periodicals: The Mirror of the Sea in *Wiadomości Literackie* (1924)". *Yearbook of Conrad Studies (Poland)* 2013, Vol. VIII, pp. 85-101.

¹⁷ *Polski słownik biograficzny*, Vol. 22. Eds. W. Konopczyński et al. Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 1977, pp. 683-684.

¹⁸ W. Perczak. *Polska bibliografia conradowska 1896-1992*. Toruń: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, 1993, p. 343.

parts of the essay and gave this version a new title – “Conrad w Krakowie w r. 1914” (Conrad in Cracow in 1914). This had far-reaching consequences, as literary titles have a special significance and perform several different functions,¹⁹ one of them being the “identifying function”. In other words, the title of a book or article functions as its name and the reader knows that he or she is dealing with the same work. Furthermore, as often as not the title puts the content of the book (or any other text) in a nutshell (this being “the presentative function”)²⁰ and so, by formulating the title in a new way, Neufeldówna consciously modelled the reception of the text, channeling the reader’s interest into one single strand of the rambling essay, i.e. Conrad’s sojourn in Cracow. In addition, the text was not ostensibly presented as an essay by Conrad, as his name was not given above or beneath the title. The reader could have been misled into believing that the article was a brief account of Conrad’s visit to Cracow that had been written by a journalist or a friend. Only in the middle of the second paragraph was the reader informed – by means of an embedded aside – that what followed was Conrad’s own recollection of his stay in Cracow. This detail is all the more conspicuous as in the other translation that was published in the same issue (“The Character of the Foe”), Conrad’s name was printed above the Polish title “Dusza przeciwnika” (The Soul of the Adversary).

As she had provided her own title, Neufeldówna had to write a few words of explanation in order to let the reader know which text was being translated. This rendering is therefore preceded by a succinct clarification in which the translator gives the original title of the essay, though unfortunately she distorts it as “Poland Revisiting” (sic!). It is briefly stated that – though he was not a journalist himself – Conrad wrote a series of articles on numerous themes that interested him, collecting them in 1921 in a volume entitled “Life and Letters”. Neufeldówna summarizes the content of the essay, which in her opinion comprises a description of the writer’s return to Cracow – the town where he had spent his childhood and adolescent years and where he had lost his father.²¹ This is the second major ‘manipulation’ (the first being the new title) which seems to have been introduced in order to tailor the text to suit the Polish reader’s “horizons of expectation”.²² The essay was presented as though it chiefly contained Conrad’s recollections of his visit to Cracow, whereas these in fact only accounted for a quarter of the entire work (Part IV).

¹⁹ K. Hejwowski. “The relevance of titles in literary translation”. *Relevance Studies in Poland* 2004, Vol. 1, p. 179.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 181.

²¹ B. Neufeldówna [introduction] in: Conrad w Krakowie w r. 1914, *Wiadomości Literackie* 1924: 33, p. 4.

²² The term was introduced by Hans Robert Jauss to describe “the structure by which a reader comprehends, decodes and appraises any text based on cultural codes and conventions particular to their time in history. These horizons are therefore historically flexible, meaning readers may interpret and value a text differently from a previous generation.” Jauss stressed the role of the reader as a significant factor in the processing of texts, describing it thus: “a literary work is not an object which stands by itself and which offers the same face to each reader in each period”. Reading is therefore not an “autonomous, free and individual” experience, but rather “a collection of mutual concepts fitting a period or a people.” (*The Oxford Dictionary of Literary Terms*, 3rd ed.).

What were the “horizons of expectation” at that time? What was the *skopos* – the purpose of such a translation? As I have discussed the specific nature of the political and historical context of Poland during the interwar period elsewhere, I shall here give only a brief recapitulation of the main points.²³ This was a time when Poland had recovered her independence and had gained access to the sea. A number of initiatives were then launched to demonstrate the importance of the sea for the new Polish State: a new harbour and shipyard were built in Gdynia, a naval school was established in Tczew and – last but not least – great maritime literature had to be provided in order to instil a love of the sea in the Polish nation.²⁴ Although he was certainly one of the most ardent propagators of love for the sea, Żeromski knew that there was a dearth of Polish maritime literature. Hence his active encouragement of new translations of Conrad, whom he presented as a Polish novelist who mainly wrote about the sea, albeit in English.

Neufeldówna’s text is heavily abridged: Parts I and IV have been considerably shortened, while Parts II and III have been left out. As these omissions are not indicated in the text, the contemporary reader may have had the impression that the essay was solely devoted to Conrad’s visit to Cracow. As has already been pointed out, the translator’s aim was to channel the reader’s attention to Conrad’s Polish roots and to the writer’s interest in Polish matters. Accordingly, she adapted the original in order to cater for the needs of her Polish contemporaries, bearing in mind their scope of interest. This ‘*skopos*’ meant cutting all the parts that were devoted to general themes such as the Conrads’ stay in London, the outward sea voyage, the author’s descriptions of eccentric passengers, his hectic departure for Zakopane, his desperate efforts to get out of wartime Austria and the return voyage to Britain.

Apart from these major changes, the translator simplified some sentences and added phrases to make the text more specific. As considerations of space do not allow me to quote long passages, I shall give just one example that perfectly illustrates the technique of omission that has been applied throughout the text, while other passages will be briefly discussed later. Analysing the deletions in detail provides an insight into the *skopos* of the translation, i.e. what was important for the translator at that particular time and how she (and the editors who had commissioned the translation) wished to present Conrad to Polish readers.²⁵ In the following passage, those parts of the text which were left out by the translator have been struck through:

It was within those historical walls that I began to understand things, form affections, lay up a store of memories and a fund of sensations ~~with which I was to break violently by throwing~~

²³ A. Adamowicz-Pośpiech. *Yearbook of Conrad Studies (Poland) 2013*, Vol. VIII, p. 85-101 and “Conrad „skolonizowany” czyli jak tłumaczono Conrada w międzywojniu”. In: *Przekład: kolonizacja czy szansa?* Eds. P. Fast et al. Katowice: Śląsk, 2013, pp. 165-180.

²⁴ Cf. B. Miazgowski. *Morze w literaturze polskiej*. Gdynia: Wydawnictwo Morskie, 1963, pp. 130, 212-213.

²⁵ Lefevere perceives such activities as a form of “rewriting” the original for the actual aims of the receiving culture. He perceptively demonstrates how the process of rewriting works of literature manipulates them to specific ideological, historical and/or artistic ends, so that the rewritten (*read translated*) text is given a new, historical or literary status. (A. Lefevere. *Translation, Rewriting, and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*).

myself into an unrelated existence. It was like the experience of another world. The wings of time made a great dusk over all this, and I feared at first that if I ventured bodily in there I would discover that I who have had to do with a good many imaginary lives have been embracing mere shadows in my youth. I feared. But fear in itself may become a fascination. Men have gone, alone and trembling, into graveyards at midnight – just to see what would happen. And this adventure was to be pursued in sunshine. Neither would it be pursued alone. The invitation was extended to us all. This journey would have something of a migratory character, the invasion of a tribe. My present, all that gave solidity and value to it, at any rate, would stand by me in this test of the reality of my past. I was pleased with the idea of showing my companions what Polish country life was like; to visit the town where I was at school before the boys by my side should grow too old, and gaining an individual past of their own, should lose their unsophisticated interest in mine. It is only in the short instants of early youth that we have the faculty of coming out of ourselves to see dimly the visions and share the emotions of another soul. For youth all is reality in this world, and with justice, since it apprehends so vividly its images behind which a longer life makes one doubt whether there is any substance. I trusted to the fresh receptivity of these young beings in whom, unless Heredity is an empty word, there should have been a fibre which would answer to the sight, to the atmosphere, to the memories of that corner of the earth where my own boyhood had received its earliest independent impressions. (PR 117)

Śród tych historycznych murów zacząłem rozumieć to, co dzieje się na świecie, tam kształtowały się moje uczucia, tam wzięły początek wspomnienia i wrażenia. _____²⁶ Obawiałem się, że czas rozpostarł nad tem wszystkim swoje mroczne skrzydła, _____ i że ja, który przeżyłem tyle urojonych istnień, przyjdę do przekonania, iż w młodości swej goniłem tylko cienie. Obawiałem się. Ale obawa sama w sobie może mieć urok. Niejeden człowiek szedł samotny i drżący, o północy na cmentarz – jedynie poto, żeby się przekonać co się stanie. A moja wyprawa miała się odbyć śród blasku słonecznego. I nie samotnie Zaproszeni zostaliśmy wszyscy. _____ Byłby to zatem poniekąd najazd plemienia koczującego. Rad byłem myśli, że towarzysze moi poznają życie wiejskie w Polsce; że miasto, w którem oczęszczałem do szkół, zwiedzę z synami swoimi, zanim dojrzeją i mając już przeszłość własną, przestaną interesować się moją przeszłością. _____ (CwK 4)

In the excerpt quoted above, Neufeldówna skipped all phrases and sentences that were of a general reflective character. According to the assumed skopos, this passage (as well as the whole essay) should have one focus – Conrad's return to Cracow – while the narration should be coherent and lucid, with no digressions. All references to the ghostlike dimension of the journey have therefore been deleted and, likewise, the general meditation on the nature of youth. The same strategy has been applied in the fragment beginning with "We arrived in Cracow late at night" (PR 131). The focus has not changed, which is why all digressive phrases have been edited out.

A different type of deletion can be observed towards the end of part IV, where Conrad describes his meetings with prominent Poles at the Grand Hotel:

For the next two days I went about amongst my fellow men, who welcomed me with the utmost consideration and friendliness, but unanimously derided my fears of a war. They would not believe in it. It was impossible. On the evening of the second day I was in the hotel's smoking room, an irrationally private apartment, a sanctuary for a few choice minds of the town, always pervaded by a dim religious light, and more hushed than any club reading-room I have ever

²⁶ This line indicates the phrases and sentences that have been left out.

been in. Gathered into a small knot, we were discussing the situation in subdued tones suitable to the genius of the place:

A gentleman with a fine head of white hair suddenly pointed an impatient finger in my direction and apostrophised me:

~~“What I want to know is whether, should there be war, England would come in.”~~

The time to draw a breath, and I spoke out for the Cabinet without faltering.

~~“Most assuredly. I should think all Europe knows that by this time.”~~

He took hold of the lapel of my coat, and, giving it a slight jerk for greater emphasis, said forcibly:

~~“Then, if England will, as you say, and all the world knows it, there can be no war. Germany won’t be so mad as that.”~~

On the morrow by noon we read of the German ultimatum. (PR 135)

Przez dwa dni następne odwiedzałem kolegów, którzy witali mnie z najwyższym szacunkiem i życzliwością, ale jednogłośnie wyśmiewali moje obawy wojenne. Nie wierzyli w wojnę. Była niemożliwa _____ Następnego dnia rano przeczytaliśmy ultimatum niemieckie. (CwK 4)

Here, I think, there was a different reason for the omission: in this little vignette, we glimpse Conrad as a representative of Britain who had inside knowledge of her foreign policy. Such a view did not correspond to the general portrayal and construct of Conrad as ‘our countryman’ – a vision that had been painstakingly created by Żeromski²⁷ in his desire to emphasize the author’s Polishness.

The additions made by the translator were intended to make the text clearer for the target readers, examples being “to my companion” (PR 132) – “rzekłem znacząco do syna” (CwK 4, [I said to my son]) and “health resort” (PR 135) – Zakopane (CwK 4). Neufeldówna was unable to cope adequately with the culture-specific items or with the intertextual aspect of the original. She either omitted the cultural or intertextual references (e.g. “Upas tree”²⁸ [PR 118]) or translated word for word – using small letters (thereby reducing the “intertextual signal”)²⁹ – instead of looking for a Polish equivalent referring to the same item, e.g. “blue books, yellow books, white books”³⁰ [PR 118] – “księgi błękitne, księgi żółte i księgi białe” [CwK 4], “Tree of Cynical Wisdom”³¹ [PR 118] – “drzewo cynicznej mądrości”. An exceptional case of intertextual reference is the paraphrase of the title of R. Kipling’s poem “The White Man’s Burden” as “the perfect man’s burden” (PR 118), which Neufeldówna translated literally as “rolę człowieka zupełnego” (CwK 4, [the role of the complete man]). As the poem had yet to be translated,³² she could not of course refer the Polish reader to its

²⁷ Żeromski called Conrad “our countryman” (rodak).

²⁸ A tree notorious for its toxic properties. Its gum was used as a poison for arrows and darts.

²⁹ B. Hatim, I. Mason. *Discourse and the Translator*. New York: Routledge, 2013, p. 134.

³⁰ Official travel documents allowing their holders to cross borders. Each country printed wrappers in a different colour: Britain – blue, France – yellow, and Germany – white. (J.H. Stape. “Notes”, p. 428).

³¹ The phrase refers to the biblical expression of the Tree of Wisdom (“Wisdom is a tree of life to those who embrace her; happy are those who hold her tightly” (Prov, 3:18). By capitalizing the words, Conrad makes the reference stronger and easier to decode for his readers.

³² *Poeci angielscy: wybór poezji* (English Poets: a Selection). Transl. J. Kaspróicz. Lwów–Warszawa: Księgarnia H. Altenberga: E. Wende i Spółka, 1907. The poem was not translated until 1931 (S. Helsztyński. “Sahib Rudyard Kipling 1865-1936”. *Wiadomości Literackie* 1936, № 5).

Polish version. Although she certainly misunderstood the phrase, in Poland Kipling was known primarily as a novelist and there was scant interest in his poetry.³³ Rightly enough, she omitted the remark “in Polish it is much shorter” (PR 134), since this was an explanation that was intended for English readers only.

The graphical layout of the article was similar to the structure of a Chinese box. The translation constituted a frame for three other texts embedded in it. The first text – entitled “Lata dziecinne Conrada” (Conrad’s Childhood Years) – briefly described the political activism of the author’s father Apollo Korzeniowski and reprinted several letters which Conrad and his mother had once written to him. The second article – entitled “Conrad a literatura polska” (Conrad and Polish Literature) – concentrated on Conrad’s knowledge of contemporary Polish writers. The third text – entitled “Śmierć elementu” (The Death of the Element) – discussed the quality of his art in eulogistic terms. Thus a complete and cohesive entity was created. The frame consisted of Conrad’s own recollections of his visit to Cracow (together with reminiscences of his childhood), while the other texts were written by critics who upheld the vision of Conrad’s Polish heritage by supplying more details and facts (letters) about his past.

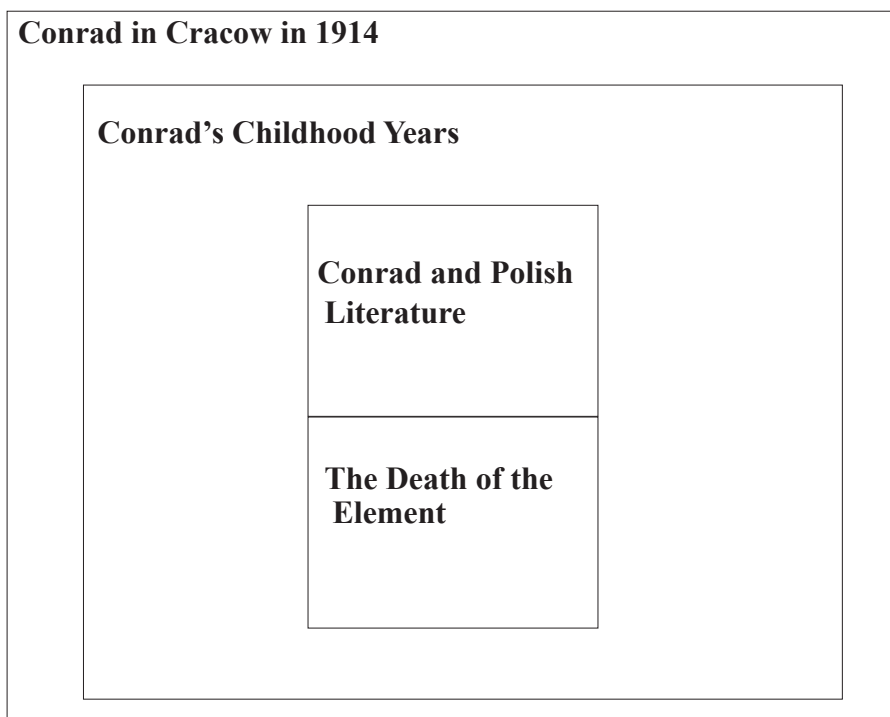


Illustration № 1: The layout of Neufeldówna’s translation – a Chinese box structure

³³ W. Krajewska. *Recepcja literatury angielskiej w Polsce w okresie modernizmu (1887-1918): informacje – sądy – przekłady* (The Reception of English Literature in Poland in Modernism (1887-1918): data – evaluations – translations). Polska Akademia Nauk. Komitet Neofilologiczny. Kipling’s poetry was neither translated nor anthologised except for several poems that were published in literary journals, e.g. “The Seven Seas,” “France,” “Shillin’a Day,” “The Palace”. “The White Man’s Burden” was known only through second-hand accounts. (W. Krajewska. *Recepcja...*, pp. 124, 207).

All in all, on the basis of the changes introduced by the translator (among other things a new title and omissions of sections not directly connected with Conrad's sojourn in Cracow), we can say that Neufeldówna used the strategy of adaptation by removing potential signals of foreignness and by modelling the content of the original so that it concentrated exclusively on Polish – or, to be more precise – Cracovian aspects.

“CONRAD W KRAKOWIE W R. 1914” (CONRAD IN CRACOW, PORADNIK ŚWIETLICOWY)

Neufeldówna's translation was reprinted during World War II in a publication entitled *Poradnik dla Pracowników Świetlic Żołnierskich* (Adviser for Workers in Soldiers' Social Centres) – with even more deletions.³⁴ This guide was published in London by the Polish section of the YMCA. Its aim was to propagate Polish culture and traditional values. The title of the translation was similar to that of the previous publication in *Wiadomości Literackie*, but there were further alterations. Firstly, the translation began with the misspelt title of the original essay – “Poland Revisiting” – and was preceded by a shorter introduction than before, informing readers that what they were about to read was Conrad's description of his return to Cracow, where he had been orphaned and where he had spent his childhood. As in the previous edition, the author's name was not given above the title. Secondly, there were even greater omissions than in the earlier translation: the entire section concerning Germany had been cut, beginning with: “The enterprise at first seemed to me considerable” (PR 117) and ending with “By watching.” (PR 131). In this publication, therefore, the focus became even narrower: no general political reflections, just reminiscences of Cracow. These further deletions had probably been made because Conrad's reflections referred to the Germany of the first decade of the twentieth century, whereas this translation was reprinted during the dramatically different circumstances of World War II.

“PODRÓŻ DO POLSKI” (JOURNEY TO POLAND)

“Poland Revisited” was translated for the second time in 1952, when it was published in the *Tygodnik Powszechny*³⁵ (General Weekly) magazine. It is worth noting that the translator was the younger of the Zagórski sisters, i.e. Karola Zagórska

³⁴ “Conrad w Krakowie w r. 1914”. Transl. B. Neufeldówna. *Poradnik dla Pracowników Świetlic Żołnierskich* (Adviser for Workers in Soldiers' Social Centres) 1943, 8, pp. 223-224. In 1946 the title of the magazine was changed to *Poradnik Świetlicowy* (Adviser for Social Centres).

³⁵ *Tygodnik Powszechny* 1952, 15, pp. 3-4. Hereafter cited as PdP in the text.

(1885-1955) – not Aniela Zagórska.³⁶ Karola Zagórska was an opera singer who had lived in Italy and the United States. She had visited Conrad at Oswalds in 1920 and the writer had given her some financial support. She had translated only one other text by Conrad – “The Author’s Note” to *The Golden Arrow*³⁷ – and was probably asked to make a translation of “Poland Revisited” because her sister was dead, which meant that it was she who now held the translation rights to Conrad’s work in Poland and Russia.

It was no accident that Conrad’s work was published in the *Tygodnik Powszechny*, which was a Catholic weekly published in Cracow. After World War II, the magazine gathered those Polish intellectuals who were critical of the communist regime. Its publication was suspended in 1953 after the editorial staff had refused to print an obituary for Joseph Stalin.³⁸ Its columnists included prominent clerics such as Karol Wojtyła (who later became Pope John Paul II), poets such as Czesław Miłosz (who was later awarded a Nobel Prize), philosophers such as Leszek Kołakowski and other writers such as Stanisław Lem, Antoni Gołubiew, Jan Józef Szczepański and Leszek Prorok. Some of the latter were former Home Army soldiers, for whom – as I have written elsewhere³⁹ – Conrad represented a “high moral order denying the reality of the [war’s] time of humiliation. [...] Conrad gave us [the Home Army soldiers] some support in our perilous existence. Such for us was the meaning of his heroism for heroism’s sake [...]”.⁴⁰

Although Zagórska’s translation also bore a new title – “Podróż do Polski” (Journey to Poland) – this time the name of the author (Józef Conrad-Korzeniowski) was placed above the text. Underneath was a short note giving the original English title, together with the date and place of publication and also the title of the volume in which it had been reprinted.

This version had also been abridged, though not as heavily as that of Neufeldówna, major omissions being indicated by a dotted line. Part I had mostly been abridged, while all of Part III had been left out. There were several other minor omissions in Parts I and IV that had not been marked in the text. In Zagórska’s rendition, some of Conrad’s general reflections and descriptions had been included, though the major focus was still on the writer’s visit to Cracow. In contrast to Neufeldówna, Zagórska preserved the foreign component of the essay by using a high number of foreign expressions, for example: hansom cab, Whitechapel, Mansion House, Liverpool Street and Waterloo (PdP 3). However, she had problems giving accurate translations of seamen’s ranks, such as Ordinary Seaman (PR 121) and Able Seaman (PR 123), which

³⁶ It was Aniela Zagórska (1881-1943) who translated most of Conrad works into Polish.

³⁷ J. Conrad. “Kilka słów od autora”. Transl. K. Zagórska. In: J. Conrad. *Złota strzala*. Transl. A. Zagórska, J. Kornilowiczowa. Kraków: IW “Poziom”, 1948.

³⁸ Until 1956 it was edited by representatives of a pro-government association. After the Polish “October Thaw” of 1956 the former editors were allowed to resume their posts.

³⁹ A. Adamowicz-Pośpiech. “G. Herling-Grudziński as a Reader of Conrad”. *Yearbook of Conrad Studies (Poland)* 2008, Vol. III, pp. 181-182.

⁴⁰ L. Prorok. “A Watch with Conrad”. In: *Joseph Conrad Conference in Poland. 5-12 September 1972. Contributions*. Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1979, p. 118.

are given capital letters in the original and which she translated as “zwykły marynarz” and “wykwalifikowany członek załogi” (PdP 3) respectively, using no capitals.

Since smaller sections of text had been omitted as compared with Neufeldówna’s translation, Zagórska managed to retain intratextual references that give coherency to this digressive essay. It has been amply demonstrated in numerous works of Conrad criticism that the writer’s narrative techniques are based on – among other things – the recurrence of certain words, phrases, metaphors and themes.⁴¹ An apparently disconnected story is seamlessly bound by a tiny but essential detail that crops up again at different moments of the narrative.⁴² In “Poland Revisited”, the image of the moon is one such narrative loop which recurs in part IV. It is closely connected with another image that permeates the story, namely that of the ghost and the Shades of the past. Although in part IV the image of the moon (and moonlight) occurs five times (PR 131 x 4, 134 x 1), Zagórska has preserved only three of these references:

Conrad	Zagórska
I had to watch my own personality returning from another world, as it were, to revisit <i>the glimpses of old moons</i> . (PR 131)	Mnie zaś wypadło śledzić własną osobowość, powracającą jakby z innego świata – aby się spotkać z <i>wejrzaniem dawnych księżyców</i> . (PdP 4)
We stepped out of the portal of the hotel into an empty street, very silent and bright with <i>moonlight</i> . I was indeed revisiting <i>the glimpses of old moon</i> . (PR 131)	Wyszliśmy z bramy hotelu w pustą ulicę [...] jasną od <i>światła księżycy</i> . A więc istotnie odnajdywałem znowu jego dawny blask! (PdP 4)
In the <i>moonlight</i> -flooded silence of the old town of glorious tombs and tragic memories, I could see again the small boy of that day following a hearse [...]. (PR 134)	W zalanej <i>światłem księżycy</i> milczącej ulicy tego starego miasta, o grobowcach pełnych chwały i tragicznych wspomnieniach, ujrzałem znowu małego chłopca, który owego dnia szedł za karawanem [...]. (PdP 4)

These intratextual references are very important for the whole meaning of the story, since together with the metaphor of the Shades they constitute a structural and interpretative axis for the essay.⁴³ Apart from that, they link this text with Conrad’s previous works – and the *Personal Record* in particular – in which the same motif is used.⁴⁴ Such repeated metaphors and themes which recur in Conrad’s many works

⁴¹ J.W. Beach. *The Twentieth-Century Novel*. New York: Collier Books, 1932, pp. 362-364; J. Lothe. *Conrad’s Narrative Method*. Oxford: OUP, 1989, pp. 155, 160.

⁴² Cf. A. Adamowicz-Pościech. “Intertextual Masks of Joseph Conrad’s Reminiscences”. *Annales Neophilologiarum* 2011, Vol. V, pp. 75-89.

⁴³ Cf. G. Gasyna. “Between Exilic Self-Fashioning and Nostalgia of the Return: Some Thoughts on Conrad’s Polish Writings”. In: *From Szlachta Culture to the 21st Century, Between East and West. New Essays on Joseph Conrad*. Ed. W. Krajka. Boulder–Lublin–New York: Columbia UP, 2013, pp. 212-216.

⁴⁴ J. Conrad. “Author’s Note”. In: J. Conrad. *Personal Record*. Oxford: OUP, 1996, p. x. In his correspondence Conrad confessed that writing this volume of reminiscences was like “stirring up of all

should not only be transferred to the target version, but should also be translated with attention to detail, as they disclose issues that were of great importance to the writer – issues with which he grappled throughout his life.

Another component that should be retained in the translated version is intertextuality. There are various aspects of this in Conrad's text, but I would like to focus on only one form of intertextuality: intertextual references to other literary texts. In "Poland Revisited", we can trace two references to *Hamlet*.⁴⁵ Planning his journey to Poland, Conrad perceives it as a journey in time:

Each of us is a fascinating spectacle to himself, and I had to watch my own personality returning from another world, as it were, to revisit the glimpses of old moons. (PR 131, emphasis added)

Having arrived in Cracow, the writer repeats the same expression:

I was *indeed* revisiting the glimpses of the moon. (PR 131, emphasis added)

The repetition makes the phrase all the more significant and makes it easier for the reader to activate his or her literary 'repertoire'. The same wording – "revisit the glimpses of old moons" – was used by Hamlet when he met his father's ghost:

What may this mean,
That thou, dead corse, again in complete steel
Revisit'st thus the glimpses of the moon,
[...]?⁴⁶

When decoded, this reference is significant, as it gives additional meaning to Conrad's essay. The quotation from *Hamlet* generates a rupture in the text and opens the essay to the "voice" of another text, thus putting it in a new frame: Conrad's return to Cracow and his late evening stroll⁴⁷ round the main square – together with his recollections of dead relatives – may be viewed against the momentous scene in Shakespeare's play when Hamlet sees the ghost and – taken aback – poses a series of questions to it in order to verify its nature and purpose. Just as we observe Hamlet's uncertainty as to the objective reality of the apparition, so too is Conrad unsure about the verisimilitude of his experience. The parallel with Hamlet's confusion would (in my opinion) seem to be stressed by the fact that the writer compares himself to a ghost: "I felt so much like a ghost [...]" (PR 131). As a backdrop, the scene from *Hamlet* broadens our perspective and enables us to understand the momentous nature of Conrad's experience, i.e. that this visit is no small matter, for – on the contrary – it is like a confrontation with the dead. Bearing in mind the Shakespearean intertext, we realize that this was not a mere tourist excursion to the writer's native land, but that it had a different dimension – that of a journey into the realm of memories of the past and of dead relatives. The words "It seemed to me that if I remained longer there in

these dead", a somewhat ghoulish [enterprise]." (Conrad's letter of 3 November 1908; *The Collected Letters of Joseph Conrad*, Vol. IV. Eds. F. Karl, L. Davies. Cambridge: CUP, 1990, p. 149).

⁴⁵ Cf. J.H. Stape. "Notes", pp. 431-432.

⁴⁶ W. Shakespeare. *Hamlet*, I.iv.51-3.

⁴⁷ Conrad's nocturnal stroll and Hamlet's meeting with the ghost both take place around midnight.

that narrow street I should become the helpless prey of the Shadows I had called up” (PR 135) are therefore all the more compelling. The recognition of the quotation – “the alien element” – thus leads to the resumption of reading on a higher “level of awareness”.⁴⁸

To facilitate access to the intertext, Zagórska should have used a parallel phrase from one of the Polish versions of *Hamlet*. Most probably this would have been Józef Paszkowski’s translation, which at that time was regarded as being canonical.⁴⁹ However, she did not decipher the intertextual reference and so gave a literal translation of the passage.

Another reference to *Hamlet* can be found in Conrad’s explanation of the name of one of the sides of the main square:

We youngsters regarded that name as a fine jest, the invention of a most excellent fancy. (PR 132)

The phrase is repeated at the end of the paragraph:

A Municipality had stolen an invention of excellent fancy, and a fine jest had turned into a horrid piece of cast-iron. (PR 132)

The expression used by Conrad corresponds to that uttered by Hamlet when he comes across Yorick’s skull in a cemetery:

Alas, poor Yorick! I knew him [...], a fellow of infinite jest, of most excellent fancy: [...]⁵⁰

Here the function of the intertext is quite different. Whereas in the former example it served to emphasize the significance of Conrad’s journey, this time it is used humorously. Hamlet is appalled to come across the jester’s skull because he remembers the playful times he once spent with him. Similarly, Conrad is horrified to see that the Cracow municipal authorities have adopted what used to be a playful and secret name – used exclusively by youngsters – as the official designation for one side of the main square: “I proposed that we should walk to the other end of the line, using the profaned name, not only without gusto, but with positive distaste” (PR 132). However, it is evident that in the excerpt quoted above Conrad is speaking tongue in cheek, hence the nature and intensity of the emotions involved are different from those of the previous intertextual reference. And again: for the target readers to share this insight and to experience the equivalent effect⁵¹ – i.e. to participate in Conrad’s play on liter-

⁴⁸ H. Plett. “Intertextualities”. In: *Intertextuality*. Ed. H. Plett. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1991, p. 16.

⁴⁹ I have discussed the status of the Paszkowski translations in: A. Adamowicz-Pośpiech. *Seria w przekładzie*. Katowice: Wyd. UŚ, 2013, pp. 265-270. The Polish version of the excerpt reads as follows: “Co to znaczy? Że ty trup, nazad w kompletnym rynsztunku / Podksiężycowy ten padół odwiedzasz.” (W. Shakespeare. *Hamlet*. Transl. J. Paszkowski. Lwów–Złoczów: Księgarnia Wilhelma Zukerkandla, [1900], p. 26).

⁵⁰ W. Shakespeare. *Hamlet*, V.i.178-9.

⁵¹ E. Nida. “Principles of Correspondence”. In: *The Translation Studies Reader*. 3rd ed. London–New York: Routledge, p. 144.

ary tradition – Zagórska would have had to use Paszkowski's translation of *Hamlet*,⁵² but – regrettably – failed to do so.

Lastly – unlike Neufeldówna – Zagórska did not leave out the passage concerning Conrad's fears about visiting his native land. This particular passage was important, as it had a bearing on what had been a heated biographical debate (in the Poland of the interwar period) on the reasons for Conrad's departure from Poland as a young man.⁵³

Moreover as we sat together in the same railway carriage they [Conrad's family] were looking forward to a voyage in space whereas I felt more and more plainly that what I had started on was a journey in time, into the past; a fearful enough prospect for the most consistent, but to him who had not known how to preserve against his impulses the order and continuity of his life – *so that at times it presented itself to his conscience as a series of betrayals* – still more dreadful. (PR 120; emphasis added)

Poza tym, gdyśmy tak razem siedzieli w jednym przedziale wagonu, zdawałem sobie sprawę, że dla nich była to podróż w przestrzeń, podczas gdy ja – czułem coraz wyraźniej – rozpocząłem podróż w czas, w przeszłość. Nawet dla człowieka najbardziej odpornego jest to perspektywa zastraszająca. Ale dla tego, który nie potrafił zabezpieczyć przed własną impulsywnością ciągłości linii i ładu swojego życia, dla człowieka, który niekiedy ważył w sumieniu, *czy nie popełnił szeregu przewierstw* – cofanie się w przeszłość było tym straszniejsze. (PdP 3; emphasis added)

The key word in this passage is 'betrayal', whose nearest Polish equivalent is 'zdrada'. Strangely enough, Zagórska used the less common and outmoded word 'przeniewierstwo' (disloyalty).⁵⁴ The obvious equivalent to use for 'betrayal' in this context was 'zdrada', because a similar statement had already been translated by Aniela Zagórska in the Polish version of *a Personal Record*:

Za długo by mi przyszło wyjaśniać ścisły związek przeciwieństw w ludzkiej naturze, związek, który nawet miłości nadaje niekiedy rozpaczliwy pozór *zdrady*.⁵⁵

It would take too long to explain the intimate alliance of contradictions in human nature which makes love itself wear at times the desperate shape of *betrayal*.⁵⁶

Why, then, did Karola Zagórska opt for another equivalent? It is my contention that she deliberately chose a different word in order to tone down the accusatory force

⁵² The Polish version reads as follows: "Biedny Yoryku! Znałem go [...]; był to człowiek niewyczerpany w żartach, niezrównanego humoru [...]" (W. Shakespeare. *Hamlet*, p. 120).

⁵³ Conrad was accused by some of having betrayed his father's legacy and his country. The debates on Conrad's biography and the artistic value of his works have been extensively discussed by S. Zabierowski. "Między totalizmem a personalizmem". In: S. Zabierowski. *Conrad w perspektywie odbioru*. Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Morskie, 1979, pp. 9-29.

⁵⁴ In the *Wielki słownik języka polskiego* [The Great Dictionary of Polish Language]. Ed. W. Doroszewski, the word "przeniewierstwo" is qualified as 'archaic'.

⁵⁵ J. Conrad. *Ze wspomnień*. Transl. A. Zagórska. Warszawa: Dom Książki Polskiej Spółka Akcyjna, 1934, p. 64 (emphasis added).

⁵⁶ J. Conrad. *A Personal Record*. Eds. J.H. Stape, Z. Najder. Cambridge: CUP, 2008 (emphasis added).

of the expression “a series of betrayals”, so as not to reopen the old debate and not to add further fuel to the flames.

“JESZCZE RAZ W POLSCE” (ONCE AGAIN IN POLAND)

It was only in 1970 that the complete version of “Poland Revisited” was translated into Polish. This translation – by Maria Boduszyńska Borowikowa (1910-1992) – was included in volume XXI of the magisterial complete Polish-language edition of Conrad’s works edited by Zdzisław Najder. Maria Boduszyńska-Borowikowa translated the cluster of essays in the first part of *Notes on Life and Letters* entitled “Literature”. Being an outstanding translator who specialized in English and French maritime literature, she worked for the Baltic Institute [Instytut Bałtycki] in the Polish Department of Maritime Affairs and published articles on maritime economics in journals such as *Gospodarka Morska* [Maritime Economy], *Technika Morza i Wybrzeża* [Sea and Coast Technology], and *Tygodnik Morski* [Maritime Weekly]. She translated (inter alia) R.H. Dana’s *Journal of a Voyage Round the World*, Frederick Marryat’s *The Phantom Ship*, Daniel Defoe’s *Captain Singleton*, C.R. Boxer’s *The Dutch Seaborne Empire*, Fernand Braudel’s *La Méditerranée et le Monde Méditerranéen à l’Époque de Philippe II* as well as many critical books on Conrad, e.g. Jerry Allen’s *The Sea Years of J. Conrad*, Ian Watt’s *Conrad in the Nineteenth Century* and Norman Sherry’s *Conrad’s Western World*.⁵⁷

Boduszyńska-Borowikowa’s translation is complete and precise. She decoded almost all the intertextual references: *Tree of Cynical Wisdom* (PR 118) – *Drzewo Cynicznej Mądrości* (JP 97), *Upas tree* (PR 118) – “drzewa upas” (JP 97), *great Master* (PR 122) – “wielki mistrz pióra” (here she used small letters and expanded the phrase in order to make it clearer for Polish readers [*great master of the pen*]; JP 103) and traced the paraphrase of Kipling’s poem, i.e. *the “perfect man’s burden”* (PR 118) – “brzemie człowieka doskonałego” (JP 97). Regrettably, instead of explaining the terms *blue books*, *yellow books* and *white books* (PR 118), she translated them word for word – “niebieskie księgi, żółte księgi, białe księgi” (JP 97). The concept of travel documents associated with these terms thus remained unintelligible to the target readers.

Moreover, Boduszyńska-Borowikowa did not decipher either reference to *Hamlet* (Act I and Act V). “To revisit the glimpses of old moons” is translated as “nawiedzić przelotne blaski dawnych księżyców” (JP 116), which does not correspond to any Polish version of *Hamlet*. The Yorrick fragment is translated as follows: “uważaliśmy tę nazwę za *doskonały dowcip*, za twór *wybornej wyobraźni*” (JP 118). She did not repeat the phrase in the same form as it was in the original, but changed the adjectives: “ukradł twór *światłej wyobraźni* i *doskonały dowcip*” (JP 118). In the case of intertextual references, repetition is of prime importance, as it emphasizes the in-

⁵⁷ M. Misiorny. *Pisarze gdańscy*. Gdańsk: Wydawnictwo Morskie, 1969, pp. 14-15.

tertext, thus making it easier to be discovered. Because of the literal translation, this particular intertextual space was irrevocably closed to Polish readers.

Like Zagórska, Boduszyńska-Borowikowa retained the exotic component of the essay (*City, Mansion House, Lowestoft, Whitechapel, Liverpool Street, Waterloo* [JP 100, 103, 104, 105]). The only foreign phrase which she translated (and which Zagórska had left) was *hansom cab (londyńska dorożka)* (JP 102). As she was an expert on maritime subjects, Boduszyńska-Borowikowa competently translated all the vocabulary connected with the sea: seamen's ranks such as "Ordinary Seaman" (PR 121) and "Able Seaman" (PR 123), "deckboy" (PR 126) – "prosty marynarz", "starszy marynarz", "chłopiec okrętowy" (JP 101, 104, 110) – as well as specialized terms such as: "agent" (PR 121) – "agent żeglugowy" (JP 102), "berth before the mast" (PR 123) – "kubryk" (JP 104), "deck-house" (PR 126) – "nadbudówka pokładowa" (JP 109), "coaster" (PR 121) – "kabożowiec" (JP 101), "trawlers" (PR 124) – "trałowiec" (JP 107), and "a head-sea" (PR 128) – "fala dziobowa" (JP 112).

Since no parts of the essay were left out, Boduszyńska-Borowikowa retained the intratextual references relating to the image of the moon and moonlight (JP 116x3, 119, 121). Regrettably, she did not recognize the references to *Hamlet*, and so this particular intertextual space remained closed to Polish readers (JP 116, 118).

As far as the significant passage relating to Conrad's fears about visiting his native land is concerned, Boduszyńska-Borowikowa used the word "zdrada", which is the closest Polish equivalent of "betrayal":

... but to him who had not known how to preserve against his impulses the order and continuity of his life – so that at times it presented itself to his conscience as *a series of betrayals* – still more dreadful. (PR 120, emphasis added)

... ale dla kogoś, kto nie potrafił uchronić ładu i ciągłości swojego życia przed własnymi impulsami, tak że niekiedy widział to życie w sumieniu swoim jako *łańcuch zrad* – jest to jeszcze bardziej okropne. (JP 100, emphasis added)

Given that a hundred years had passed since the seventeen-year-old Conrad's departure from Poland – and that many years had also passed since the heated debates which that departure had later engendered there – Boduszyńska-Borowikowa was clearly not afraid that she might be re-opening old wounds.

All in all, what is important in the case of the abridged versions is – in my opinion – the nature of the omissions, i.e. which parts were left out and why, as on the basis of the character of these deletions we can deduct what a given translator (i.e. A model reader) deemed to be important and what he or she regarded as being negligible at that particular moment in time. In this way, the translated versions become mirrors of fluctuating horizons of expectations and changes in the receiving culture. This corroborates Venuti's observation that by studying retranslations we can find out more about the Society and culture in which they were produced. By means of a contrastive analysis of four diverse versions of "Poland Revisited", we can observe how the scope of interest of Polish readers changed at different times because of various historical and cultural factors. In the first version by Bronisława Neufeldówna (1924), the accent was placed primarily on Conrad's visit to Cracow, with the digression

about the evil nature of Germany being added in. It seems that shortly after World War I Conrad's reflections on the sinister intentions of Germany were still valid and so the editors who had commissioned the translation wished to show that Conrad was right in foreseeing the German threat. In the next version (1943) – published during World War II – only the Cracow part remained in focus, while other parts were pruned. The new war would seem to have overshadowed the reflections on Germany, which had been invalidated by the Nazi regime and its new racial policy. Karola Zagórska's version is proof of the broadening of the reader's horizon of expectations, for his attention was drawn not only to Conrad's return to Cracow, but also to his sojourn in London and to his career as a seafarer, while the reflections on Germany were edited out. Most probably at that time the fact that one of their compatriots had made a distinguished maritime career abroad was a matter of pride, whereas in 1924 – just after Poland had regained her independence – this was viewed differently. The latest translation (1972) testifies to the desire on the part of the editor and translator alike to give the Polish reader a complete and definitive version. It is the work of a competent and specialized translator – Maria Boduszyńska-Borowikowa – aided by the experienced maritime consultant Captain Józef Miłobędzki and the eminent Conrad scholar and biographer Zdzisław Najder.

In conclusion, we may say that the Polish versions of “Poland Revisited” differ considerably. The translators chose diverse passages to translate and omitted those which they regarded as being unimportant at the time of translation. Two of them highlighted Conrad's sojourn in Cracow as the essential part of the essay. The skopos was probably to stress Conrad's Polish heritage and his personal opinions connected with Poland's political situation on the eve of World War I. Intriguingly, these were the very reasons why the text was initially rejected for publication in America, where it was deemed too personal: “Impossible to sell Conrad – Saxton cabled to Pinker – without second article”, as the writer had not described “actual war experience”.⁵⁸ Paradoxically, although to begin with the essay did not sell in America, it did sell well – and in several versions – in Poland.

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