

Natalia Kamovnikova

Pushkin Leningrad State University

10 Peterburgskoye shosse, 196605, St. Petersburg, Russian Federation

E-mail: natalie_kamov@yahoo.com

Research interests: translation history, translation and manipulation, literary translation, sociolinguistics

IDEOLOGY IN LITERARY TRANSLATION, OR WHAT IS, AFTER ALL, “THE WHITE MAN’S BURDEN”?

A literary translation invariably reflects the historical and cultural features of the time and place of its production. The perception of literary texts is determined by the political and cultural situation in a given language community, and the literary translation, therefore, is justly seen as the negotiation that aims at reaching a compromise between two languages, two geographical spaces, and two historic times. Literary translation is as well regarded as a manipulation, an attempt to make the translation fit in with the target audience culture, social situation, or ideology.

The famous poem “The White Man’s Burden” by Rudyard Kipling was alternately seen as racist and Eurocentric or as missionary and philanthropic. The translations made into different European languages conveyed the ideology of the poem differently as well, the interpretation depending on the historic time, the targeted language community, and the social requirements to literature and translation. These social factors preconditioned the difference in interpretation of such controversial issues of the poem as race, difference, and religion in the five translations analysed in this article. The article offers a comparative study of the strategies applied by Russian, Bulgarian, and French translators of the poem who worked under different historical and social conditions.

KEY WORDS: *translation, ideology, Kipling, poetry, “The White Man’s Burden”.*

The problem of ideology in literary translation, as well as the problem of text manipulation and its transformation under the influence of social conditions are currently in the focus of the Translation Studies. Political and ideological influence is recognized as an important factor which is able to affect both the translation process and the literary trends (Rundle, Sturge 2010: 3). In line with the modern tendencies, the article offers a case study and aims at demonstrating how the change of historical and ideological conditions affected translations of the highly Eurocentric poem of Rudyard Kipling “The White Man’s Burden” throughout the 20th century.

The practical material is comprised of three Russian translations: by Mikhail Froman (Kipling 1983), Andrey Sergeev (Киплинг 1976), and Victor Toporov (Киплинг 1989), one Bulgarian translation by Stoyan Mednikarov (Киплинг 1992), and one French translation jointly produced by Jacques Bouillon and Anne-Marie Sohn (Kipling 1981). These five translations stand for five social situations under which they were created. The translations are studied with the application of the comparative method, descriptive method, and the method of contextual analysis.

The influence of ideology over text, discourse, and translation is closely studied by the modern researchers. A detailed analysis of ideological issues in discourse is offered in the monograph of Teun A. van Dijk *Ideology: A Multidisciplinary Approach* (1998) and his article “Ideology and Discourse Analysis” (2006). Articles by active researchers in the field of Translation Studies describe translation in different political contexts and offer case-studies in the books *Post-Colonial Translation*, edited by Susan Bassnett and Harish Trivedi (1999); *Translation and Power*, edited by Maria Tymoczko and Edwin Gentzler (2002); *Translation, Resistance and Activism*, edited by Maria Tymoczko (2010); *Globalization, Political Violence and Translation*, edited by Esperanza Bielza and Christopher W. Hughes (2009); *Translation under Fascism*, edited by Christopher Rundle and Kate Sturge (2010). Mona Baker’s monograph *Translation and Conflict* (2006) studies the translation problem of social and cultural transfer through the prism of the narrative. The polarity of translation strategies was described in detail by Lawrence Venuti in his seminal monograph *The Translator’s Invisibility* (1995). Translation as a text manipulation was studied by André Lefevere (1992a, 1992b). The studies of text transfer were performed by Anthony Pym in his monograph *The Moving Text* (2004) and Antoine Berman in his classic article “Translation and the Trials of the Foreign” (2003).

Ideology can be defined as the tacit assumptions, beliefs, and value systems which are shared collectively by a social group (Hatim 2005: 120) and which are relevant to the maintenance of power structures within a given language community (Zhang 2012: 754). Within the field of ideology, the translation might be not purely the manipulation of the text (Lefevere 1992b: 8), but the manipulation of the reader and the public opinion. As Tymoczko (2009: 183) states, “the exchange of culture is never ‘free’: there are always economic and ideological interests at play in decisions about what cultural elements are worthy of translation”. Therefore, the translations, in the opinion of Lefevere (1992a: 14), can be “potentially threatening precisely because they confront the receiving culture with another, different way of looking at life and society”. The translation is always modified by the socio-cultural factors, even if the translator remains unaware of being a subject of this influence (Toury 1999: 18).

Indeed, the strategies applied in the translation, as any discourse strategies, are never exclusively ideological and do not target a sole purpose of reproducing an ideology (Van Dijk

2006: 129). As Van Dijk (2006: 128) notes, within an ideological communication, the way the discourse comes across and is interpreted is as important as the initial intention of the sender. Therefore, this paper will not dwell purely on the translators' strategies determined by the social and historical conditions of their time, but also on how the translations are currently seen in the light of the new historical situation and social context.

Rudyard Kipling's poem "The White Man's Burden" (1983: 76–78) was originally published in 1899 with the subtitle "The United States and the Philippine Islands" to mark the recent U.S. colonization of the Philippines that were won in the Spanish-American war. The poem described Kipling's historical ideal and dwelt on the presumed responsibility of white people to govern and impart their culture to other races. Thus, the poem became one of the most controversial literary works written in the English language. Until now, it evokes contradicting interpretations, is seen both as an anthem of ruthless colonialism and as the solemn assumption of responsibilities for the formerly disadvantaged peoples.

Despite, or, probably, due to its apparent controversy, the poem enjoyed popularity in many cultures and was translated into most European languages. This article will study three Russian translations: the first made in the second quarter of the 20th century by Mikhail Froman, the second released in the 1970s by Andrey Sergeyev, and the third published at the end of the 1980s by Victor Toporov. Moreover, the article will as well dwell upon one Bulgarian translation published by Stoyan Mednikarov in the beginning of the 1990s, and one French translation jointly produced by Jacques Bouillon and Anne-Marie Sohn in 1981. These five translations stand for five social situations under which they were created.

The translation of Mikhail Froman was chronologically first; it was produced in the USSR in the period between the two world wars. This time of the Soviet history was marked by the active propaganda of the centralized power, as well as atheism, which involved the destruction of churches and the prosecution of church activists. Several decades later came the translation of Andrey Sergeyev. By that time, the influence of Kipling on the Russian Soviet literature has already been quite substantial. As the famous translator and critic Valery Dymshits (ДЫМШИЦ 1994: 19) later described this influence, "There is no free will for [Kipling], no freedom of moral choice between good and evil, there is only the impersonal Law – Law of the pack, tribe, regiment, empire, age. ... The only (questionable) reward for the hero is his good name and the memory of the generations to come. This is Kipling's ideal, this is the ideal of his Soviet students." Kipling was a friendly figure above imperialism for the Russian reader of the 1970s: a loyal soldier, an honest doer, a courageous traveller, but not the invader and aggressor, as suggested by his poem.

The 1980s shattered the old communist regime, which was followed by immediate changes in literary views, which created favourable conditions for the literary experiments. The latest of the three Russian translations was then produced by Victor Toporov, a famous Russian translator, writer, and literary critic, who was known for his radical views on translation. “To create something of interest in translation,” he wrote, “one has to make sure that there is an unoccupied place for it in the Russian treasury of poetry. ... One has to translate as if writing the text for the first time. ... If the temperature of the original makes 37, it has to soar up to 39 in the translation, otherwise the reader, of the translation, won’t feel anything” (Топоров 1999: 184-186). This translation philosophy of Toporov marked a new approach which was becoming ever more possible in the light of gradually changing political situation of the 1980s. Similar political changes took place in the 1980s in Bulgaria, which coincided with the translation of the poem into Bulgarian made by Stoyan Mednikarov.

The French translation by Jacques Bouillon and Anne-Marie Sohn was cited by them in their monograph *Le XIX siècle et ses racines* in 1981. By that time, the decolonization events were already in the past, but not quite forgotten, because the national feelings had been quite strong at the time the events took place. After the World War II, the opinion polls proved the nation’s general tendency to struggle for the preservation of the empire (Sorum 1977: 7); the subsequent war in Indochina, events in Algeria, and the eventual loss of most part of the colonies could not right away erase the memories of the colonial past.

Each of the translations created a different image of the white colonists, local peoples, and their relations. It is interesting, though, that despite the time and language, most significant shifts of meaning took place when the translators dealt with the same textual elements. These elements can be conventionally divided into:

- 1) the recurring line of the poem;
- 2) markers of racial difference;
- 3) markers of religion.

Throughout the 20th century, the title of the poem became euphemistic of the alleged white race’s duty to enlighten and take care of the other races. The title is reiterated in each stanza of the poem, all of them are starting with the line *Take up the white man’s burden*. Two translators chose to omit this recurring mention of the white man, thus, mitigating the colonial tone of the poem. This decision was made, for instance, by the Russian translator Sergeyev who translated the introductory line of stanzas as *Неси это гордое Бремя* (*Carry this noble Burden*). This decision allows the translator to avoid the contradictory mentioning of the imperialistic antithesis of the *white* and *non-white* people, which was especially important in the background of the ideologically declared friendship between the nations in the dangerous times of the Cold

War, as well as the romantic image of Kipling in the contemporary literature. It is as well notable that the imperative *Carry this noble Burden* used by Sergeyev differs from the imperative used by Kipling in the original. If in the original Kipling calls for taking up the burden, and, thus, making a choice, there is no choice in the translation: the burden is already taken up, and all one has to do is to carry it.

A similar decision was later made by the Bulgarian translator Mednikarov, who translated the recurring line as *Носете своѝто бремене* (*Carry your burden*). This version as well implies the absence of choice, but the usage of the possessive pronoun *your* as opposed to the demonstrative pronoun *this* employed by Sergeyev is semantically closer to the image created in the poem: *you* and *white man* relate to the symbolic figure of the colonial enlightener, whereas the pronoun *this* stands for the fact that the burden is not a part of the colonial soldier's existence and by itself is a reward to him.

The French translators of the poem changed the grammatical structure of the recurring line, which, in contrast to Sergeyev, lead to the enhancement of the emotional tone of the poem in general. In the French translation, the line reads as *O, Blanc, reprend ton lourd fardeau* (*Oh, White, take up your heavy burden*) which puts the racial issue in the focus of the poem: in the original, the white man's burden can be, in theory, taken up by any subject of the empire, whereas in the translation this right is restricted solely to the white race.

The poem makes a special focus on the cultural, intellectual, and behavioural differences of the white colonists and the colonized peoples. Among the most apparent markers of racial difference are the negatively-connoted definitions of the colonized nations: Kipling alternately calls them *wild, fluttered, sullen, half devil and half child*, leading *savage wars*, full of *Sloth and heathen Folly*. As an antithesis, the white men are seen as those who *wait* on the captives *in heavy harness, seek another profit and work another gain*, giving their lives for the better future of those who *blame and hate*.

The three Russian translations differ in their transfer of colonial images of the poem and the interpretation of the white man's mission. The earliest translation made by Froman preserves the emotional charge of the poem, as well as the markers of colonial space, using such words as: *племена* (*tribes*), *лентяй* (*sloth*), *глупец* (*fool*), *упрямые дикари* (*stubborn savages*). The second translation, made by Sergeyev, modifies the image of the captive peoples as well as the white colonists. For instance, the final lines of the second stanza *To seek another profit,/ And work another gain* were translated as *Чтобы твой подопечный / Щедрый снял урожай* (*So that your paternalized one / Reaps a generous harvest*). Thus, the original presents the antithesis of *you* and *your people* as opposed to *another* and *other people*, whereas the translation offers no antithesis: the captive nations automatically join the empire, becoming *paternalized* and,

therefore, having a direct relation to the colonists. The destruction of the antitheses continues in the following stanza, when rendering the lines *And when the goal is nearest / The end for others sought, / Watch Sloth and heathen Folly / Bring all your hopes to nought* Sergeyev again avoids using the antithesis *you – them* and dwells purely on the abstract nouns describing features of local peoples without mentioning the effect these features have on the white man's life: *Но чем ты к успеху ближе, / Тем лучше распознаешь / Языческую Нерадивость, / Предательскую Ложь* (*And the closer you are to success / The better you get to recognize / The heathen Sloth, / The treacherous Lie*).

The colonist himself is presented in Sergeyev's translation as a soldier and subordinate, not as an officer and decision-maker: in the fifth stanza of the poem, the translator introduces commanders who find fault with those who carry the heavy burden. Those commanders are not mentioned anywhere in the original; thus, this strategy can be described in Berman's terms (2003: 292-293) as the destruction of underlying networks of signification. These decisions are especially interesting in the light of the fact that it was Sergeyev who translated the central recurring line of the poem *Carry this noble Burden*. The image created in Sergeyev's translation is that of a loyal soldier serving his empire and the new colonized nations; he was entrusted with the burden by order from above; he enjoys no freedom of choice, and sees less difference between the captive nations and himself in comparison with the original.

Toporov's translation of "The White Man's Burden" contrasts Sergeyev's translation in the way it renders the markers of the racial difference. Where Sergeyev resorts to mitigation, Toporov uses intensification and employs words with negative connotations that are much stronger than those in the original for the sake of achievement of equivalent effect on the target audience. For example, Toporov calls *the captives* in the fourth line of the poem *темные сыны земли* (*dark sons of the earth*) and *sullen people* at the end of the first stanza as *тупая толпа* (*dumb crowd*). The translator omits the mentioning of *Sloth and heathen Folly* in the third stanza substituting them by the derogatory description of the captives: *языческая орда* (*the heathen horde*). The relatively neutral line of the original *The hate of those you guard* was transformed by Toporov into *И злоба пасомых стад* (*The anger of pastured herds*), which enhances the derogatory image of the captives, putting an accent on their dullness and indifference.

It is interesting that the Bulgarian translation of Mednikarov, which promptly followed the translation of Toporov, demonstrates similar tendencies. Thus, *fluttered folk and wild* is translated by Mednikarov as *варварски народу* (*barbaric peoples*), the mentioning of *Sloth and heathen Folly* as *дивашкото безумство* (*wild Madness*), and the parallel constructions in the fifth stanza *And reap his old reward: / The blame of those ye better, / The hate of those ye guard* are substituted by the metaphorical description of the relations between the colonized and the

colonists: *И приемете в дар / Вековната омраза / На роб към господар (Accept as a gift / An ancient hate / Of a slave towards his master)*. Apart from the change of imagery, this substitution as well changes the structure of the main antithesis of the poem *we – they*, where *they* are different, aggressive, and ungrateful, but not subordinate. In Toporov's and Mednikarov's translation, the captives are strikingly inferior to the colonists, which can be accounted for as a substantial semantic shift in the translation.

The translators as well differ in their interpretation of the two important religious markers. In both British and American cultures, religion is an integral part of a centralized power: in Kipling's view, the colonization is performed for the good of the captured; therefore, it can be seen as a part of God's will. Thus, in the fifth stanza, Kipling alludes to the Book of Exodus (Ex., 14:12), when Moses was confronted by his peoples, who repined against being taken from the Egyptian slavery: *Why brought ye us from bondage, / Our loved Egyptian night?* Froman resorts to qualitative impoverishment (Berman 2003: 291) and omits the quotation using the two lines for creating an antithesis: *С таким терпеньем к свету / Из тьмы тащили вы (With such patience to the light / Dragging from darkness)*. The omission of the allusion can be accounted for as a popularizing strategy (Berman 2003: 291) in the time of the atheism propaganda. The period between the two world wars in the Soviet Russia was as well the time of the introduction and development of universal schooling, which was symbolically seen as *light*, whereas ignorance was traditionally described as *darkness*. Therefore, the antithesis employed by the translator was well known to the new generation of readers and evoked less rejection in them in comparison to the biblical quote. Froman as well avoids the mentioning of *Gods* in the line *The silent, sullen peoples / Shall weigh your Gods and you* and substitutes it by the description of the indifference of the *stubborn savages*: *Все будет безразлично / Упрямым дикарям*.

It is notable that there is no trace of this intentional avoidance of religion in the later translations into Slavic languages. In the relatively recent Bulgarian translation by Mednikarov, the strategy is quite opposite: the mentioning of *Gods* in the original is transformed into the mentioning of *Christ*: *Дуваците ще съдят / за вас и за Христос (The savages will judge / you and Christ)*, which puts a heavier accent on religion rather than the whole system of values symbolized by the word *God* in the plural form. Despite the fact that initially Kipling used the word *God* in the singular (Kipling 1899), he later gave preference to the plural form, thus, blurring the religious aspect of this stanza. Sergeyev and Toporov preserve the word *Gods* in their translations in the plural form. The Biblical quote is as well preserved in the Bulgarian and two Russian translations with impressive preciseness.

It is striking that, as well as Froman did in the first half of the 20th century in the Soviet Russia, Bouillon and Sohn in their French translation of the poem omit the biblical quote and employ the antithesis, but in this case the antithesis is more complex as it metonymically opposes darkness to liberty as a natural consequence of light: *Pourquoi dissiper nos tenebres, / Nous offrir la liberte? (Why dissipate our darkness / Offer us liberty?)* The mentioning of liberty as the central value of the French culture displaces the allusion; the employed tone by the translators is ironic, which can as well be accounted for as a popularization technique. The image created by the translators is familiar to the French readers who have lived through the hard time of French decolonization and are able to relate the emotions described in the poem to their own experience.

As it can be seen from the analysis made above, the different historical and social conditions in different time periods in three different countries had their impact over each of the five translations of “The White Man’s Burden”. Bouillon and Sohn relate the emotion described in the poem to their memories of French decolonization and employ a vast network of implications recognizable by the French reader. Political surveillance, censorship, and social control of the literary activity limited Froman and Sergeyev in their freedom of expression; both translators had to seek for alternative ways of depicting Kipling’s images and ideas and resort to the mitigation of the racial aspects of the poem, avoidance of markers of religious difference, substitution of images, and application of popularization techniques. The change of the political climate in Bulgaria and Russia in the end of 1980s gave Mednikarov and Toporov the opportunity for literary experimentation, which resulted in the intensification and emotive enhancement, especially in the translation of Toporov whose translation turned into a vivid example of his literary philosophy.

One cannot ascribe all translators’ choices to purely ideological motives. However, translation as a cultural strategy “in the realm of change and survival” (Lefevere 1992a: 10) is greatly influenced by the extra-linguistic factors and ideology is one of them. The original and translation created within two different ideological contexts can become quite different or even contradictory in their contents and emotional tone. However, as Toury (1999: 18) observes, “sometimes it becomes extremely difficult for a translation scholar to justify whether the ideological discrepancies observed between the source text and the target text are the results of the translator’s subconscious ideological interpretation or of his/her intentional ideological intervention.” Further cognitive studies will hopefully clear up the extent to which the translator’s thinking can be influenced by the sociocultural context.

References

- BAKER, M., 2006. *Translation and Conflict*. London and New York: Routledge.
- BASSNETT, S., TRIVEDI, H., 1999. *Post-Colonial Translation*. London and New York: Routledge.
- BERMAN, A., 2003. Translation and the Trials of the Foreign. In: L. VENUTI. *The Translation Studies Reader*. London: Routledge, 284–297.
- BIELSA, E., HUGHES, CH. W., 2009. *Globalization. Political Violence and Translation*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- HATIM, B., MASON, I., 2005. *The Translator as Communicator*. London and New York: Routledge.
- KIPLING, R., 1899. The White Man's Burden. *McClure's Magazine*, 12, 290–291.
- KIPLING, R., 1981. Le fardeau de l'homme blanc. In: J. BOUILLON, F. BRUNEL, A. M. SOHN. *Le XIX siècle et ses racines*. Paris: Bordas, 345.
- KIPLING, R., 1983. The White Man's Burden. In: R. KIPLING. *Poems. Short Stories*. Moscow: Raduga Publishers, 76–78.
- LEFEVERE, A., 1992a. *Translation/History/Culture*. London and New York: Routledge.
- LEFEVERE, A., 1992b. *Translation, Rewriting and the Manipulation of Literary Fame*. London: Routledge.
- PYM, A., 2004. *The Moving Text: Localization, Translation, and Distribution*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- RUNDLE, CH., STURGE, K., 2010. Translation and the History of Fascism. In: CH. RUNDLE, K. STURGE. *Translation under Fascism*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 3–12.
- RUNDLE, CH., STURGE, K., 2010. *Translation under Fascism*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- SORUM, P. C., 1977. *Intellectuals and Decolonization in France*. UNC: University of North Carolina Press.
- TOURY, G., 1998. A Handful of Paragraphs on 'Translation' and 'Norms'. In: CH. SCHÄFFNER. *Translation and Norms*. Philadelphia: Multilingual Matters, 10–32.
- TYMOCZKO, M., GENTZLER, E., 2002. *Translation and Power*. Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press.
- TYMOCZKO, M., 2009. Translation, Ethics and Ideology in a Violent Globalizing World. In: E. BIELSA, CH.W. HUGHES. *Globalization. Political Violence and Translation*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 171–194.
- TYMOCZKO, M., 2010. *Translation, Resistance, Activism*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.
- VAN DIJK, T. A., 2006. Ideology and Discourse Analysis. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, 11(2), 115–140.
- VAN DIJK, T. A., 1998. *Ideology: A Multidisciplinary Approach*. London: Sage.
- VENUTI, L., 1995. *The Translator's Invisibility*. London: Routledge.
- ZHANG, M., 2012. Translation Manipulated by Ideology and Poetics – A Case Study of "The Jade Mountain". *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 2 (4), 754–758.
- ДЫМШИЦ, В., 1994. Редьярд Киплинг. In: Р. КИПЛИНГ. *Стихотворения*. Санкт-Петербург: Северо-Запад, 5–23.
- КИПЛИНГ, Р., 1976. Бремя белого человека. In: Р. КИПЛИНГ. *Стихотворения. Рассказы*. Москва: Художественная литература, 212–213.
- КИПЛИНГ, Р., 1983. Бремя белых. In: R. KIPLING. *Poems. Short Stories*. Moscow: Raduga Publishers, 354–356.

КИПЛИНГ, Р., 1989. Бремя белых. *In*: Р. КИПЛИНГ. *Рассказы. Стихотворения*. Ленинград: Художественная литература, 291–293.

КИПЛИНГ, Р., 1992. *Бремeто на бeлия чoвек*. Available from: <http://chitanka.info/text/6769> [30 May 2014].

ТОПОРОВ, В. Л., 1999. *Двойное дно. Признания скандалиста*. Москва: Захаров.

Gauta 2014 06 12

Printa publikuoti 2014 12 12