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TRANSLATION AND POWER.
ON POLISH TRANSLATIONS OF FYODOR DOSTOYEVSKY'S
THE BROTHERS KARAMAZOV

ABSTRACT

The thesis provides a comparative analysis of Polish translations of Dostoyevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* in the context of power struggles between the author and the translators within and beyond the translated text.

The methodology applied in the research is based on Michail Bakhtin's polyphony theory, which has been used and developed in the field of translation studies by Theo Hermans in his book *The Conference of the Tongues*. Hermans approaches translation as an impure, polyphonic text, where the translator's voice is constantly confronting the values expressed in the original work and, therefore, is forced to negotiate them. This confrontation can be analyzed as we consider a particular issue of a translation as an unique presentation of the foreign text, where both translated text and paratexts (all forms of the translator's or publishers' comments accompanying a particular translation) are equally relevant. The "framing utterance" implies a specific interpretation of the presented text. Taking this perspective, I approach the history of *The Brothers Karamazov* translations not only as a translation series, but also as a series of editions created and released in order to respond to the particular interests of the target culture. There are five translations of this book and since 1913 they have been released 23 times in total. Moreover, at the beginning of the 21st century all translations made in the previous century have been republished and two new translations have been made. As the contemporary readers have access to all translations of *The Brothers Karamazov*, the research presented in the thesis includes both diachronic and synchronic approaches, and also certain aspects of studies on reception.

In my comparative interpretation of these translations I put emphasis on those parts of Dostoyevsky's novel that seemed controversial to the Polish readers in particular, because of historical, cultural and political matters (i.e. Polish protagonists presented as villains, messianism in father Zosima's prophecies, etc.). The aim of my analysis was to show how the

translators, commentators and editors manipulated the source text in order to avoid inconvenient questions or to neutralize them so that the novel could be accepted in the target culture as a canonical masterpiece of the world literature.