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## Literary translation and cultural transfer of an event and genre (based on Hunter S. Thompson's writing)

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**Abstract:** *This article is dedicated to the analysis of theory and practice of literary translation topical problems. There presented a review of contemporary translation models and explanation of translation as source text interpretation in existing discursive practice. This translation model as social phenomenon further explained based on translations of Hunter Thompson's gonzo-reporting. This hybrid form as journalism and literal writing of American author allows us to illustrate preservation in translation practice in one hand, and portioning of narrative structures concerning the same text from the other hand. The article also reveals ways of transferring culturally significant information, presents successful and controversial cases of resolving translation problems by linguistic means. The prospects of the theory of literary translation, which presuppose the preservation of genre originality and the accuracy of the transfer of culturological information, have been determined.*

**Key words:** *discourse, interpretation, criticism, cultural transfer, narrative, translation model, semiotics, literary translation*

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### Introduction

The definition of translation as a social activity presupposes an appeal to already established and emerging traditions in humanitarian paradigms. In modern researches on the theory of literary translation, the model of translation as a social phenomenon is rarely presented. The following critical remark is justified: "Sociological and cognitive research areas of translation activity have long been giving way to a comparative linguistic analysis of the texts of the original translation, the purpose of which was to establish the degree of semantic, at best stylistic equivalence between the original message and the message born as a result of translation» [1, p. 24].

What does the study of translation «immersed» in discursive practice mean? We are talking about a translation that reflects the social and aesthetic practice of the translator and the reader at the level of creation and perception of a secondary text. This approach has an exponential effect in the theory and practice of literary translation; it also correlates with the assessment of the translated text as interpretation that came from literary studies. How the discursive approach, conditioned by the Soviet and late Soviet translation practice, determined different interpretations of the same source text by Joseph Heller in the 70s of the last century in the first case as anti-war and already in the second - in the 90s as an actual anti-bureaucratic one is presented in the work [2]. What is it advisable to pay attention

to when studying a translated text as an example of discursive social practice? The elements of the text, designated by E.Ya. Tarshis, systematically and fully represent the possible directions of translation analysis: 1) the subject (creator) of the text, 2) the motive and intention of creation, 3) the aim (orientation to the effect of influence), 4) the concept (defining the subject and other elements of the text), 5) material: matter (sound, letters), reference objects - texts of culture, events, actions of people, messages about events, etc., 6) means: natural and other languages, formal elements (schemes) of creating a text (genre, plot), 7) sequence of actions, operations (elements of the text production process) [3, p. 42].

### Research methodology

According to Tarshis's table of text elements, we will consider one example, which is the novel by T.S. Hunter's «Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas,» written in 1971. First, the subject and author of the text is Thompson S. Hunter. Second, his motive was a working trip to shoot a Derby story that took place in Las Vegas to create a reportage. Third, his goal was to film and write an interesting derby story in order to get it published in the newspaper and make money. Also, travel to Las Vegas with a full baggage of drugs in the company of his friend Raul Duke, whom he called his attorney. Fourth, the idea was to write a reportage, but the journalistic investigation, which became a reportage, later developed into a fiction novel. Fifth, since the author describes in detail the entire trip from start to finish, the material of the study is the cultural event of the Derby races and the trip to Las Vegas. Sixth, the author writes a novel in gonzo style, describing everything that happens in the first person. As a result, the media reportage developed into a fiction novel. Seventh, the sequence of actions is preserved from beginning to the end. The author narrates everything as in a road book.

The culture and mentality of the author, as well as his primary picture of the world, affects the structure of the text and its content quite strongly. In this regard, the author E.Ya. Tarshis believes that "the central place in text formation

is occupied by the mentality of the individual - the content of culture (cultural texts) assimilated by him, presented in his consciousness. Mentality is that part of an individual's consciousness that is accessible to study" [3, p. 43], - when writing a text, the author resorts to his knowledge gained in his life and brings something of his own, new to the text. The author's picture of the world is built within the culture in which he grew up. Also E. Ya. Tarshis believes that "the texts are created from the texts produced earlier. Although the text is constructed from textual materials and usually using standard means - for the author himself it is a new text - it is created as the original one" [3, p. 44], - the original text may contain already existing knowledge, but nevertheless it is a recoded new work, which means a new text.

Each author pursues a specific goal when creating a novel. E. Ya. Tarshis believes that "the goal is to describe a certain referent situation or to influence a potential audience" [3, p. 115], - in the case of describing a certain referent situation, these situations can be either really happened or fictional. Sometimes even the situations that actually happened were modified according to some goals or vision of the author himself. Let's give an example, T.S. Hunter in his novel «Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas» describes the actual situation that has developed, there were horse races in Las Vegas, the audience gathered at this event. Author T.S. Hunter described what was happening in the event in the first person narration. As for influencing a potential audience, one can give an example from political or media books, where there is a strong ideological campaign. In the modern world, there are more books on personal growth, motivation and earning material resources in a short time - these books pursue the goal of influencing a potential audience.

In perspective, in relation to a specific literary model, it turns out to be possible to trace each of the indicated directions. Thus, when reprinting H. Thompson's novel in Russian, as a rule, all material signs are preserved - elements of the graphic design of the text: italics of significant words, capital letters when indicating real and possible titles of media texts, ink splashes when

writing a hero in an altered state consciousness [4]. Each of these elements in the theory and practice of translation has already received a real embodiment in the content of translated texts: communicative, formal and material. It is only in the discursive model of translation that the mentality of the author of the translated text acquires a decisive significance, since only through it social reality itself is reflected in the text. The designation of the latter only as the interaction of the translator with the social environment somewhat simplifies the translation situation itself. This approach allows you to see the model of the situation behind the translated text, the image of the content of the text.

However, an attempt to convey in Russian the altered state of consciousness of the main character (in two translations of Hunter Thompson's novel "Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas" [5, p. 6], as it is shown below, did not succeed in some cases. The book is written in the gonzo style, the main characters of the book, Dr. Gonzo and his partner Raul Duke, they have got a task from the publishing house, travel to Las Vegas to prepare a report on the legendary race on motorcycles «Mint»: "Jesus, just one hour ago we were sitting over there in that stinking baiginio, stone broke and paralyzed for the weekend, when a call comes through from some total stranger in New York, telling me to go to Las Vegas and expenses be damned – and then he sends me over to some office in Beverly Hills where another total stranger gives me \$300 raw cash for no reason at all... I tell you, my man, this is the American Dream in action!" [12, p. 11], this is how collection of gonzo-reporting started, later it turned to the novel text. [2, p. 49]. "Господи, да еще час назад мы сидели в той вонючей клоаке, выжатые как лимон, без сил и планов на уик-енд, когда последовал звонок от совершенно не знакомого человека из Нью-Йорка, сказавшего, что мне надо отправляться в Лас-Вегас... он посылает меня в какой-то офис в Беверли Хиллз, где другой абсолютно незнакомый мне человек дает мне налом триста баксов безо всякой на то причины... Говорю тебе, друг мой, это Американская Мечта в действии!" [5, p. 48]. The main idea of the novel is – to travel beyond

time and boundaries, in this case in the form of a travel diary saturated with the spirit of the hippie times, psychedelic rock music and complete personal freedom, in Russian translations did not receive anything real. Thompson Hunter's book "Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas" was translated not only by Alex Kervi [5], but also by another translator, Timofey Kopytov [6].

## Discussion

Thompson Hunter's individual style of writing causes a number of difficulties in translation and translators are forced to use translation transformations in order to preserve the individual style of the author in TL and, at the same time, so that the translation sounds adequate in Russian and is understandable to the Russian-speaking reader. When translating emotionally colored vocabulary, the translators used different lexical transformations. One of the translation methods was calque: Goddamn animals – "Чертовы твари"; Poor bastard – "Бедный ублюдок"; Rotten stuff – "Гнилой продукт"; Poor fool – "Бедный дурак"; Screamers – "Визгуны"; Laughters – "Хохотуны".

In his translation Alex Kervi preserved lexical meaning of the following words: goddamn – "чертов", poor – "бедный", "rotten" – гнилой. Translation into Russian language sounds equivalent enough to the meaning of those words in English. We suppose that the word "poor" could be translated differently, close to the lexical meaning of the word «несчастный» - "несчастный ублюдок, несчастный дурак". As for the phrase «Rotten stuff», its translation as «гнилой продукт» does not sound entirely adequate in Russian. In context, this phrase sounds: "There is nothing in the world more helpless and irresponsible and depraved than a man in the depth of an ether binge. And I knew we'd get into that rotten stuff pretty soon" [4, p. 37], - «Ничто в мире не бывает менее беспомощным, безответственным и порочным, чем человек в пропасти эфирного запоя. И я знал, мы очень скоро дорвемся до этого гнилого продукта» [5, p. 39]. This translation is equivalent to the original text.

All three methods of translation: substitution (close to literal translation), interpretation and

paraphrase [7, p. 123], - are used as methods of overcoming translation difficulties. It was in this case that «... translation theorists usually added to two more or less legitimate methods of translation a third term -»paraphrase»,»adaptation»,»imitation», etc., which already denoted an independent work, despite the fact that it is created» based on «Foreign language text» [8, p. 9]. The skill of conveying details in two translation options can be noticed in the following examples.

*«My attorney saw the hitchhiker long before I did. "Let's give this boy a lift," he said, and before I could mount any argument he was stopped and this poor Okie kid was running up to the car with a big grin on his face, saying, «Hot damn! I never rode in a convertible before!» [4, p. 5].*

*«Мой адвокат давно уже, в отличие от меня; заметил хитчхайкера. «Давай-ка подбросим парнишку», — проговорил он и, до того, как я успел выдвинуть какой-либо аргумент за или против, остановился, а этот несчастный оклахомский мудвин уже бежал со всех ног к машине, улыбаясь во весь рот и крича: «Черт возьми! Я никогда еще не ездил в тачке с открытым верхом!» [5, p. 40].*

*«Мой адвокат заметил автостопщика гораздо раньше, чем я. «Подвезем паренька», — сказал он и, не успев я возразить, как он остановился, а эта несчастная деревенщина, разинув рот в улыбке, уже бежала к машине: «Ни фига себе! Ни разу не катался в кабриолете!» [6, p. 13].*

Comparing the translations of this passage, it can be noticed that in the translation of Alex Kervi, the transliteration method «хитчхайкер» and «оклахомский мудвин» was used, which may cause confusion among the Russian-speaking reader. The use of this translation method can be explained by the fact that the translator decided to keep the context in order to add an American flavor to the translation. However, T. Kopytov decided to add Russian spirit and vibe to these words, translating them «автостопщик» and «деревенщина». Also T. Kopytov translated «кабриолет» the word «convertible», which is quite understandable for the Russian-speaking reader, in contrast to the translation of A. Kervi «тачка с открытым верхом». In relation to the above fragments, it is reasonable to conclude that

Timofey Kopytov's translation is more adequate and equivalent, and more understandable to the Russian-speaking reader.

The transfer of the narrative structure of this genre is especially difficult when translating a gonzo reporting. The hybrid genre of literature and journalism is difficult to convey in translation. The documentary style of narration - narrative - has a specific national and temporal reference. In addition to the latter, the emotionality of the text coming on behalf of the narrator and the eccentricity of the narrative, which includes a language free from all norms, also create difficulties in translation, which can be seen when referring to the translation plurality.

Translations in literary genre to different languages are also performed at different times, as a result, they remain unsuitable, since the translation invariant comes out later. Often, one book in the original has several translations in a certain language, this is due not only to the time of release, but also to the competition among translators. Every translation can be criticized. And the next translator offers his own version of the translation of the same work of fiction. For example, we consider the book by T.S. Hunter «Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas» written in 1971, in Russian has two versions of translation. One committed by Alex Kervi published in 1995 and later another translator Timofey Kopytov criticized A. Kervi's translation and released his own version of the translation. Translations of this kind create not only translation invariant, but also gives a choice to the reader. After examining both translation options, the reader can choose one of them. This creates competition and affects the quality of translation of literary text. However, the same situation with translations creates a certain problem with - translation plurality.

The Chinese scholar Lu Xin said that "even if a good translation has already been created, the author of a new translation can, with the help of the existing one, try to achieve perfection" [9, p. 78], - translated text often becomes the object of criticism, and if other translators take into account and correct the mistakes of the previous translator, then it is possible to get a better version of the novel translation, equivalent to the

original. In this regard, M. Snell-Hornby believes that "literary translation is a communicative act. A translation can rarely achieve the stability inherent to the original. Thus, later translation loses its communicative function as a literary work, functioning in the context of a constantly shifting cultural system, which leads to the need to create new translations" [9, p. 143], - inevitably the fact that time passes and everything changes, both the culture and the interests of people. Works written in the past centuries in accordance with the requirements, linguistic norms, cultural trends of that time, become no longer relevant, respectively, and its translation. Consequently, in order to return the novel to the bookshelves of modern readers, the novel is reprinted and re-translated several times.

## Results

Researchers of translation studies have been studying the problem of translation plurality for a long time. E.S. Sherstneva writes that there are two main reasons for which a translated plurality exist:

1. The desire of the translator to make a translation that will be better than the existing one, a translation in which the translator will offer his understanding of the original;

2. A constant change in the social context, as well as the evolution of translation norms, which determine the emergence of new translations.

We believe both factors are justified. It creates healthy competition among translators, gives rise to translation skills. In addition, the reader has a choice, or one translation can complement another translation for the reader. The following translator can correct those points missed in the first translation.

The reason for the emergence of translation plurality may also be the very method of translation chosen by the translator. In translation studies, there is a method of translation - domestication and foreignization. Some translators try hard enough to adapt the translated text to the requirements and norms of the translated language; after making a pragmatic adaptation, the translator adapts the text according to the

needs of the foreign language reader. Sometimes domestication can neglect the original text, and supplement and distort what the author put into the original text. In the case of foreignization, the translator tries not to distort the author's idea and convey the spirit, emotions, atmosphere, culture to the reader without adapting the text to the reader, even preserving some phrases or concepts in their original form, not taking into account its presence in the translated text. For a reader not experienced and not familiar with the culture of the country under study, such a translation can be quite difficult to understand.

In the process of translating fiction, either the translator can transmit the text by a common code, then a «close» translation appears, or he imposes his own fiction language on the text. In this case, the original text is re-encoded. As a result, the reader has two options: to refuse to understand this text, or by trial and error, he is convinced create a new, still unknown code. The interpretive approach, perhaps, is not new in essence, but in the scientific literature, it still has a declarative designation. Translation involves a number of interrelated operations and, first of all, one or another form of interpretation. It should be noted that any text is always an interpretation; perhaps interpretation is the only possible way to overcome translation difficulties. Translation is impossible without interpretation of the text - this is the main «procedure» when performing any type of translation, including literary translation. According to Yu. M. Lotman, "a literary text can be viewed as a specially arranged mechanism that has the ability to contain extremely highly concentrated information [9, p. 360].

Translation is carried out using the conventional system of equivalences adopted in this culture. It is important for any translator to study well the author, all his works, the manner of writing, the style of speech. According to N. Avtonomova: "if it is possible, it would be interesting to exchange experience with "Derrida's" translators into other languages and find out how they managed to preserve certain author's techniques by inventing idiomatic correspondences in their native language" [10, p. 430]. The analysis of the translated text can consist of two levels: the so-called «input analysis», concentrated on the

thematic aspect of the texts, and «depth analysis» aimed at a thorough and detailed analysis of the consistency and coherence of the texts «[11, p. 112]. Through transformations - logical increments - it is simultaneously possible to preserve and undermine narrative structures and overcome cultural traps.

### Conclusion

Each of the approaches, with all its specificity, makes it possible to understand a lot in the translator's activities, his attitude to the original source, and even predict the entry of a new text into a different linguistic and cultural reality.

Literary translation is necessary for wider distribution of literary work. Fiction novels are reprinted from time to time in the original language for various reasons, they become irrelevant and incomprehensible to modern

readers. When it comes to translating a novel, there are several translations of one novel in one language. This is good in the sense that the reader has a choice and competition is created among translators, due to this reason, they work on the quality of the translation. But this kind of translation creates not only translation invariant, but also a choice for the readers. After examining both translation options, the reader can choose one of them. This creates competition and affects the quality of translation of literary text. However, the same situation with translations creates a certain problem with - translation plurality. The reason for the emergence of the problem of translation plurality is related to the method of translation that the translator works, as domestication or foreignization. It cannot be argued that one translator is right and the other is wrong. Each reader chooses an understandable and convenient translation option.

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### Оқиға мен жанрдың көркем аудармасы және мәдени трансфері (Хантер С. Томпсонның шығармашылығы мысалында)

**Аңдатпа.** Мақалада көркем әдебиетінің аудармасының теориясының және тәжірибесінің өзекті мәселелерінің талдауы көрсетілген. Берілген жұмыста заманауи аударма моделдеріне шолу жасалған және дискурсивті тәжірибеде қолданылатын аударма түпнұсқа тіліндегі мәтіннің интерпретациясы деген түсінікке анықтама берілген. Аталмыш аударма моделі әлеуметтік құбылыс ретінде Хантер Томпсонның гонзо-репортаждарының аудармаларында көрініс тапқан. Мақаланың зерттеу материалы сол көркем әдебиетке негізделген. Американдық автордың гибридтік болып журналистика және әдебиет салаларын қамтитын жазба жұмыстарында бір мәтінде нарративтік құрылымдардың бір жағынан сақталғанын, екінші жағынан бұзылғанын көрсетуге мүмкіндік береді. Мақалада, сонымен қатар, мәдени тұрғыдан маңызды деп саналатын ақпаратты берудің жолдары көрсетілген, және аудармада туындаған мәселелерге лингвистикалық әдістерді пайдалана отырып шешілген сәтті және даулы мысалдары берілген. Әдеби аударманың жанрлық ерекшелігін сақтау және мәдени ақпаратты нақты беруі бойынша перспективалары анықталған.

**Түйін сөздер:** дискурс, интерпретация, критика, мәдени трансфер, нарратив, аударма моделі, семиотика, әдеби аударма.

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### Художественный перевод и культурный трансфер события и жанра (на примере творчества Хантера С.Томпсона)

**Аннотация:** В статье представлен анализ актуальных проблем теории и практики художественного перевода. В работе предлагается обзор современных моделей перевода и предложена трактовка перевода как интерпретации исходного текста в существующей дискурсивной практике. Данная модель перевода как социального явления далее развернута на материале переводов гонзо-репортажей Хантера Томпсона. Гибридная форма одновременно журналистского и литературного творчества американского автора позволяет продемонстрировать в одном случае переводной практики сохранение и в другом - подрыв нарративных структур по отношению к одному и тому же тексту. В статье также выявлены способы передачи культурно значимой информации, приведены удачные и спорные случаи разрешения лингвистическими средствами переводческих проблем. Определены перспективы теории художественного перевода, предполагающие сохранение жанрового своеобразия и точность передачи культурологической информации.

**Ключевые слова:** дискурс, интерпретация, критика, культурный трансфер, нарратив, модель перевода, семиотика, художественный перевод.

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