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Ideology and Strategy of Translation (Comparative Analysis of the Georgian Translations of the Works by Emily Dickinson and Sylvia Plath in the Soviet and Post-Soviet Era)

Ideology, directly or indirectly, affects many areas of human life. This became rather vivid with the spreading of de-constructivism and the development of culturological research, which became interested in the study of ideology, more specifically, power associated ideology, highlighting the effect of ideology on different aspects and areas of human life. No wonder that translation is no exception in this regard.

The translator's strategy can be influenced by a variety of ideologies. History of Translation shows many cases, when the translator fell under the pressure of moral, religious or cultural ideology, but most frequent is the translator becoming a bearer of a political ideology.

The main thing, that ideology-affected translations have is that it loses one of its most important signs – being the secondary (to recall the metaphors of translation: shadow, copy, reverse side of the carpet, widow, etc.) and starts to dominate over the original, by gaining the qualities that the original does not have. Therefore, it is impossible not to agree with the opinion that an equivalent translation of the original, along with other, should be more valued by the fact that such a strategy does not leave space for the ideological influence of the recipient culture.

It could be argued that ideologically-oriented translations not in all cases hold a deliberate and specific political purpose. Peter Fawcett, translator and professor at Leister University writes the following about the interrelation of ideology and translation:

„If we accept the definition of ideology as an action-oriented set of beliefs (Salinger 1976: 91-2, quoted in Ireland 1989: 131), and if we assume those beliefs, even where they call themselves aesthetic, religious or poetic, to be political in the sense that their application establishes relations of dominance, then we can see how, throughout the centuries, individuals and institutions have applied their particular beliefs to the production of certain effects in translation." [Routledge...1998:107].

Ideological influence does not necessarily mean that the translator of the particular work alters the original in such a way that spreads favourable beliefs of a particular political party or clique, but that the political environment has established and developed the translator's outlook, literary tastes and aesthetics in such a way that she/he instead of trying to provide a translation near to the original tries to seek a dominant position for her/his translation, thus changing several important aspects of the original source- the text.

Of course, we are far from thinking that during the Soviet regime, at least in the late days of the Soviet regime, the translators were given specific directive (except, perhaps, in some exceptional cases) of how to translate foreign literary works into Georgian, what to preserve from the original and what to reject; It should be also noted that there is no possibility that the translators, which are mentioned below, were given any kind of directives, but due the so-called "Iron curtain" and the "Cold War" and its subsequent ideological limitations their poetic tastes were being formed, which significantly hindered the adoption of something new and dramatically different, especially when it came from the "opposite camp" or the United States of America.

The fact that the Soviet Georgian Translational School, like any other "bodies" in the Soviet Union tried to distance itself from the trends of the Western world, was not left unnoticed by the Western scholars. In the "Translational Encyclopaedia" the author of the article writes the following about Soviet Translational School:

„At the same time, the methods used to reflect Marxist ideology, which is why Gachechiladze (1967) uses terms not normally found in other Western theories of translation. If the dominant theme of socialist art was social realism, achieved through a theory of reflection, then a theory of realistic translation must also be produced. In this theory, the free-literal dispute would be replaced by an appropriate Marxist dialectics in which the actual words used are secondary to the „artistic reality of the original" as it is cognitively „revivified" in the translator's mind (Gachechiladze 1967:90). As in all good dialectical practice, the thesis (source language) and antithesis (target language) are resolved in the synthesis of translation (ibid.:91)" [Routledge...1998:109].

Active interest towards the American literature in Soviet Georgia started from the sixties of the twentieth century. Obviously, the researchers and translators of American poetry noticed the prominent place of Emily Dickinson in American poetry. Zviad Gamsakhurdia, the first who translated Emily Dickinson's poems into Georgian (“A light exists in Spring” and “A Bird came down the Walk” published in 1971, in the anthology of “American poets”) wrote:

“Geoffrey Moore, the famous critic in his anthology of American poetry outlines that Emily Dickinson opened a new era. Generally, most researchers agree with the opinion that Emily Dickinson had a great influence on American poetry of, and creates a kind of polarity by confronting Walt Whitman. This is an extremely fine chamber lyric, which boasts by its airy, contemplative nature; the word she pictures creates intimate warmth and naturalness [Gamsakhurdia, 1972: 18].”

In 1981, translator and researcher Dali Intskirveli presented to the public a more or less complete collection of Emily Dickinson's poetry (“more or less” because Dickinson is the author of over 1800 poems, and of course, their full translation into any language is a rather difficult task). In the Afterword of the collection she writes:

Along with Walt Whitman and Edgar Poe with Emily Dickinson (1830-1886) played a crucial role in the shaping of American artistic poetic thought.” [Dickinson, 1981: 75]

The special contribution of Emily Dickinson to American poetry is also noticed by another translator, Giorgi Gachechiladze, who translated 32 poems by Dickinson and which are published in the “Anthology of English and American Poetry” of 1985.

Noteworthy is the bilingual collection of “Emily Dickinson – Collected poems” which was published in 2005 by the publishing house “Diogene” in 2005, with the poet’s twenty verses alongside with their Georgian translations (in most cases one poem is accompanied by two or more translation). Despite the year, the collection still contained many poems translated in the Soviet era or having Soviet-era aesthetics, regardless of the empirical date of its publication.

In addition, our attention is drawn to the above-mentioned “Anthology of English and American poetry” (translated by Giorgi Nishnianidze) and the three poems by Sylvia Plath “Mirror”, “Fall of Frogs” and “Death and Co”. Unfortunately, during the Soviet period no other translations of Sylvia Plath’s poems was done in Georgian, despite the fact that the American poet became enormously popular throughout the United States and also in Europe after her suicide (1963), because during her last years, Plath lived and worked in England. Sylvia Plath became a cult author and in this an important role played not only her creativity but her dramatic biography as well; also the fact that in those times the feminist movement in their campaign actively used the name of Sylvia Plath, sometimes even rather excessively. Interesting enough seems the thing, that such a famous writer was not included in the anthology compiled by Zviad Gamsakhurdia and even for the next fourteen years the Georgian literary space did not pay any attention to Sylvia Plath (at least on a formal level) and this can be due to the fact that the on-going literary processes in America came into Georgian Literary Society later. Noteworthy is that this happened not only because the scholars or translators purely from a technical point of view, had no access to overseas literary processes, but also the main reason lay in the fact that they had a completely different view about good poetry, as well

as radically different kind of social reality and interests, which created a different poetical ideology.

In the preface of the collection published in 2005 Manana Kobaidze describes the first publication of Emily Dickinson:

The editor "corrected" the poems according to the taste of the society: the words were added, as well as the amount of syllables in each row was changed, and by the end of the rows words were put, the rhythms of verse were "beautified"... the Editor, who is a mediator between the poet and readers willingly changed the spelling because of the existing rules" [Dickinson, 2005: 10]

The strategy, by which Emily Dickinson's poems were translated into Georgian during the Soviet-era are very reminiscent of this description. Soviet Georgia found it difficult to comprehend the novelty of Dickinson's poetry simply just as it was difficult for the 19th-century America. The latter had difficulties because of the writing style of a woman poet was completely unprecedented in the world, and in our country's case it was cultural insularity because of ideology.

First of all, Emily Dickinson's poems to the Soviet-era Georgian translations are distinguished by the fact that they often dominated over the original: they ignore the author's individualism and are guided by the established poetic taste. The dominance over the original is carried out in a few different ways, like:

1. Full freedom of the Translator - in many cases none of the components of the translation do not match the original. We can say that the translator takes this basic idea and the "skeleton" of the verse and creates a new one.

For example,

**This is my letter to the World
that never wrote to Me _
the simple News of Nature told _
with tender Majesty...
[Dickinson, 2005:22]**

**„ვეხმობ სამყაროს, დაუსაბამოს,
მე, მონატრული მისი ნუგეშის,
არ დამდებია გულზე მალამოდ,
არ ჩავეკვრივარ თბილად უბეში..."
[დიკინსონი, 2005:23]**

or

**Tis an honorable Thought,
And makes One lift One's Hat
As One encountered Gentlefolk
Upon a daily Street
[Dickinson, 2005:48]**

**„ზოგჯერ ფიქრები საოცარი გულს გაგიყურებს
და გინდა ქული მოუხადო ლამაზ მზანებას,
მტვრიან ქუჩაში თითქოს პრინცი შემოგხვდა უცებ
ან ჩაგიქროლეს მაღალი წრის ლამაზმანება".
[დიკინსონი, 2005:49]**

2) Deconstruction of Style - One of the most common case, when the translators ignore minimalist and laconic lines characteristic of Emily Dickinson's poetry and extend in the Georgian translation. The reason for this, above all, is the lack of tradition of minimalist verse in Georgian poetry, and the second is that due to the short span of words in the English language, the stanza is much capacious than in Georgian.

For example,

**Heart! We will forget him!
You and I - tonight!
You may forget the warmth I gave _
I will forget the light!
[დიკინსონი, 2005:40]**

**„გადავივინყოთ, გულო ჩემო, იგი ამაღამ!
გადავივინყოთ _ ვიდრე ინათებს!
შენ დაივინყე, რაც კი სითბო გახსოვდა მისგან _
მე დავივინყებ სხვის და სინათლეს!..."
[დიკინსონი, 2005:41]**

In addition, the use of archaic style, which, as pointed out the scholar Dali Panjikidze, become the generalized language of translation in that period. For example:

„...ჩემს ზეცას ავსებს ხმები ფრთოსანთა

და უხორცოთა დასთა ოსანა
მომესმის სულის ლურჯ გუმბათიდან."
[Dickinson, 2005:53]

Finally, Emily Dickinson's bleak, "dry" and plain narrative style and its complete reconstruction in Georgian translations seems an overwhelming task. Her imitation in Georgian often creates poetry, which is bleak and without any foundation, on the other hand, translators often "enriching", make it diverse and overload it with various ornaments, which cannot lead to equivalence. It should be noted that a simple and effective narrative style characteristic to Dickinson's poetry was established in Georgian by Zviad Ratiani.

Emily Dickinson's poems that are translated in Georgian change their structure according to the well-established, traditional verse units: translators increase the number of syllables, correct the "asymmetrical" rhythm of the lines, and create dynamic, sounding rhythms, which the reader enjoys; However, what they create is something new and not Emily Dickinson. For example:

„ვიყოთ მე და შენ ბედის ანაბრად,
კიდევ კარგი, რომ არვინ არა ვართ,
როგორ ადვილად ავცდით ორივე
აურზაურს და დავიღარაბას."
[Dickinson, 2005:27]

Also, there are cases when the Georgian translations totally ignore the so-called specialty or dashes characteristic to Emily Dickinson's poetry, or in some cases occurs a kind of compensation, when they are not being used in the sense of functional capacity, which the American poetess intended, but bring it as close as possible to the Georgian spelling norms.

Another individual characteristic of Emily Dickinson's poetry is the use of a capital letter in the middle of the line (and not the beginning of a sentence), which of course is impossible in Georgian. The translator is only able to take into account the poet's strategy and maintain the words beginning with a capital letter and having a particular importance in the translation.

The translator's aesthetic dominance is also a very obvious fact, while analysing Sylvia Plath's poems translated by Giorgi Nishnianidze. Before discussing the translation itself, it is necessary to note that Giorgi Nishnianidze is one of the best translators of his generation doing translations from into English and Scottish folk poetry; He has translated "The Canterbury Tales" by Geoffrey Chaucer, "The Ballad of the Reading Goal" by Oscar Wilde and many more. His translations are fairly recognized as classic examples of Georgian Translation; Giorgi Nishnianidze really has the ability to put his individual style aside and create an equivalent translation, but only in the case, if he understands the author's intention, as well as shares his poetic aesthetics.

In the translations of Sylvia Plath by Giorgi Nishnianidze, we come across a number of substantive violations. In some cases there also is a misunderstanding of the text. For example:

"Summer grows old, cold-blooded mother"

In the translation we read "Summer is becoming old, mother", which clearly shows that the translator does not understand that it is a comparison and not a address.

In the poem "In the Mirror" (narration is done by "the mirror", which tells about the life of a woman reflected in her) and the final, main stanzas are fully changed, that is why the verse loses its effect:

**„In me she has drowned a young girl, and in me an old woman
Rises toward her day after day as a terrible fish."**

„როგორ დაახრჩო ჩემს ტალღებში პატარა გოგო
და დღემდე მხოლოდ გაუმადლარ ზვიგენებს უხმობს!.."¹
[English... 1985:295]

¹ She drowned her little girl in my waves and now is calling upon the sharks each day

A similar case happens in the poem “Death & Co”, where “the nude verdigris of the condor” (meaning the green colour of the mineral) is being translated as follows “putting cream on his slippery vulture neck (?)”

In the translations mentioned above the author's individual style is almost completely neglected. Plath has scarce, accurate, and sharp vocabulary, which is translated according to the colourfulness of the oriental poetry. For example instead of writing simply “Flies failed us” the translator enriches it with different epithets and metaphors, thus diminishing the importance of the minimalist phrases. In many cases the translator also replaces the features of the poem, such as rhythm, rhyme structure, pace and dynamics.

Ultimately, we can conclude that the determination of Giorgi Nishnianidze when he was translating the poems by Sylvia Plath aimed at the perfection of the anthology, not the sincere interest towards the contemporary American poet. In those times nobody paid much attention towards it, because neither the social nor literary interest of that period created the basis for becoming interested in the American poet woman. The Period, when Georgian literature was ripe enough to take confessional poetry and absorb it, was the second half of the 90s, after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The shift of Georgian literary traditions occurred due to the establishment of the literary journals “Arili”, “Aprisa” and “Alternative”, around which had gathered the most progressive group of writers of the period. At first the totally new works, which were published in magazines, was not so easy to understand for the broad community and caused quite a bad reaction from the general public, but today we can argue that these publications played a turning role in the point of view of reception of foreign literature by the Georgian Society, and now some of their translations have become a classic. In the periodicals mentioned above were published for the first time Emily Dickinson and Sylvia Plath translated by Lela Samniashvili Shota Iatashvili’s translation of Sylvia Plath’s poems.

First of all, what distinguishes the new generation of translators from their predecessors, is that they wish to understand and go deeper into the original and not be guided by the existing poetic ideology; thus but an equivalent translation of the American poet they aim to expand the scope of Georgian literature. Lela Samniashvili’s translations of Emily Dickinson's poems manages never to retreat from the original content, and be more or less close to the American poet’s characteristic rhythmic and rhyme units not to make the poem too dynamic; she also accurately follows the function of dash used by the author's.

Even more clearly can we see the translator's emotional attitude towards the poet in the poems by Sylvia Plath translated by Lela Samniashvili. Plath’s collection of poems was published in 1999 with a preface by the translator by the Publishing House “Merani” under the series “American poets”. Although at that time the translator was rather young, and lacked experience, which in some cases becomes clear to the reader, it should be outlined that these translations are equivalent not only on a content and form level, but also at the emotional level, which led the Georgian literary circles to become interested in Sylvia Plath. In addition, Lela Samniashvili in her translations, regardless of innovation, still retains a connection to the traditional translational approach, whereas Shota Iatashvili completely dissociates himself from it. In order to understand this better, let us consider specific examples:

„სიყვარულმა დაგქოქა, როგორც ჯიბის სქელი
ოქროს საათი”
 (“Morning Song” translated by S. Iatashvili);
[American.. 2004:45]

„მენ სიყვარულმა აგანკნიკა, როგორც ბომბორა
ოქროს საათი”
 (“Morning Song” translated by L Samniashvili);
[Plath, 1999:34]

Iatashvili’s translation follows the original (so much that the semantic meaning of the word “watch” is specified, because for the Georgian reader it may be generally a clock, whereas Plath is speaking about a pocket-watch); Lela Samniashvili prefers the non-neutral connotation vocabulary: „აგანკნიკა” (tick-tock), „ბომბორა” (plump), that properly fit within the

context of the poem (the mother's care towards the infant) and adds more emotion to the translation.

<p>„არ მჭირდებოდა ყვავილები. მე მსურდა მხოლოდ ერთიანად დაცლილი და ხელეზამონწყობილი ვნოლილიყავი. ო, რა კარგია, როცა ფიქრები არ განუხებენ_“ (“Tulips” translated by S. Iatashvili); [American... 2004:25]</p>	<p>„მე არ მინდოდა ყვავილები. მე მინდოდა _ ვნოლილიყავი გადაგრეხილი ხელებით და ყოფილიყო სიცარიელე. სწორედ ეს არის თავისუფლება. სულ ერთია, შენ ვერ გაიგებ_“ (“Tulips” translated by L. Samniashvili). [Plath 1999:37]</p>
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In this case, as in the previous one, both translations are equivalent to the original, but it should be outlined Plath’s emotional intensity and the very spirit of this verse is better expressed in Lela Samniashvili’s translation.

Shota Iatashvili’s strategy as a translator, that is used in translating Sylvia Plath as well as other American poets (The collection “American Poets” was published in 2004) is based on translating the maximum, having almost a literally resemblance to the original, and as far as possible, excluding any initiative from the translator’s position. This is some kind of conflict with the previous generation’s translational trends and involves the dominance of the author in the text and not of the translator.

Translation Studies outlines that there is no specific course and “correct” strategy that will guarantee the translation to be successful. Neither does the present paper aim at demonstrating which translator managed to translate better the works of the American women poets. Our goal was to show how the political situation affects the translation; even when translators do not have a specific political ideology and how a political ideology can afterwards define the country’s poetical ideology.

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