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IMAGOLOGICAL ASPECT OF RE-CREATING LITERARY IMAGES IN TRANSLATION

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The article is dedicated to the imagological aspect of recreating literary images in translation. Literary image is understood as an object creatively reproduced in a belles-lettres text as a result of the reality assimilation by the author. This definition implies that any image is always rooted in reality and consequently in some particular culture. It would be logical to assume that the underlying culture for an image is that of an author, but we should also remember that though created by the author, literary images can portray representatives of cultures alien to him or her. In either case the formation and functioning of all literary images are always subject to ethnic stereotypes, either 'internal', i.e. concerning the representatives of the same culture as the author, or 'external' – concerning the representatives of some other, and thus alien, culture. The importance of belles-lettres literature as a regulator of social life and behavior leads to the fact that literary images turn into a public opinion instrument whose importance should not be underestimated. This fact explains the development of imagology – a new discipline dealing with formation and functioning of images in literary discourse. In its history, Imagology has come a long way: from a comparative analysis theory to a full-fledged branch of philology equally related to its main components: literary studies, linguistics and translation studies. The literary aspect of imagology deals with the genesis and aesthetics of a literary image. The linguistic aspect of imagology is responsible for the selection and arrangement of linguistic and stylistic means of a literary image embodiment. Finally, translational aspect of imagology sheds light on the translator's strategies for rendering a literary image in a new and alien linguistic and cultural environment. According to the functionalist approach, the translator's actions are guided by his or her willingness to adapt a literary image for the target audience proceeding from their cultural norms and values.

Key words: *imagology, linguistics, literary image, literary studies, translation studies, stylistic means.*

ІМАГОЛОГІЧНИЙ АСПЕКТ ВІДТВОРЕННЯ ХУДОЖНЬОГО ОБРАЗУ В ПЕРЕКЛАДІ

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Статтю присвячено імагологічному аспекту відтворення художнього образу в перекладі. Художній образ розуміється як об'єкт, творчо відтворений в художньому тексті внаслідок засвоєння дійсності автором. Це визначення передбачає, що кожен художній образ завжди укорінений у дійсності і, відповідно, в певній культурі. Було би логічним припустити, що культура, яка перебуває в основі художнього образу, є авторською, але водночас варто пам'ятати, що, хоча і створені автором, художні образи можуть відтворювати представників чужих йому культур. В будь-якому випадку, формування та функціонування художніх образів завжди відбувається

під впливом етнічних стереотипів, або «внутрішніх», тобто таких, що стосуються представників однієї з автором культури, або «зовнішніх», тобто таких, що стосуються представників інших, а отже чужих, культур. Важливість художньої літератури як регулятора соціального життя та поведінки визначає той факт, що роль художніх образів як інструменту громадської думки важко переоцінити. Він і пояснює становлення імагології – нової дисципліни, що має справу з формуванням та функціонуванням художніх образів в художньому розділі філології співвідносного з її трьома провідними відгалуженнями: літературознавством, мовознавством і перекладознавством. Літературознавчий аспект імагології вивчає генезис та естетику художнього образу. Мовознавчий аспект імагології вивчає відбір та організацію мовних та стилістичних засобів втілення художнього образу. Врешті-решт, перекладознавчий аспект імагології вивчає стратегії перекладача задля відтворення художнього образу в новому і чужому мовному і культурному середовищі. У відповідності до функційного підходу, дії перекладача скеровуються прагненням адаптувати художній образ для цільової аудиторії, виходячи з її культурних норм і цінностей.

Ключові слова: імагологія, літературознавство, мовознавство, перекладознавство, стилістичний засіб, художній образ.

1. Introduction. Today, translation studies is a dynamic philological discipline that is being developed on the foundation of two major principles of the Humanities: interdisciplinarity and polyparadigmatism. Initially conceived as a synthetic branch based on the methodological foundation of linguistics and literary studies, modern translation studies maintains the trend of attracting to its orbit new and prospective theories capable to shed more light on such an ancient and fundamental human activity as translation. One of those is imagology whose name comes from combining the Latin root morpheme *imago* (“image”, “picture”) with the Greek one *logos* (“word”, “thought”) and thus indicates that it is engaged in studying images, or, to be more precise, literary ones. The current research’s **topicality** is determined by the need to write imagology into the coordinate grid of the modern translation studies as a valuable theoretical and methodological instrument for investigating the specifics of recreating literary images in a new and alien linguistic and cultural environment. Consequently, the **aim** of the research is twofold: firstly, to determine how imagology distributes its interests among the three major branches of philology – literary studies, linguistics and translation studies; and secondly, to investigate how the provisions of imagology can guide the translator’s actions in determining the strategies, methods and means of reproducing literary images in translation.

The **object** of research is historical, theoretical and methodological aspects of imagology and its **subject** is their translational application in regard to re-creating literary images of distant cultures in target texts.

2. Definition of imagology, its historical and scientific background. Manfred Beller and Joep Leerssen describe imagology as a “critical analysis of national stereotypes in literature (and in other forms of cultural representation)” (Beller,

Leerssen, 2007: xiii). This laconic definition is supplemented by two important clarifications. The first refers to the fact that imagology applies to “research in the field of our mental images of the Other and of ourselves” (ibid.). The second adds that “imagology is not a form of sociology; it aims to understand a discourse rather than a society” taking into account that “literary works unambiguously demonstrate that national characterizations are commonplace and hearsay rather than empirical observation or statements of fact” (ibid.). The researchers in fact confirm that the abovementioned stereotypes are embodied in culture-bound images that can be of different ontology. Beller further specifies that images are layered and multi-medium, in addition to literature they “can also be found in paintings and caricatures, they are projected optically, perceived in their outward appearance and also defined metaphorically, but the most important sphere of origin of all national-typological fictions are the mental imaginations, ideas and *Vorstellungsbilder*” (Beller, 2007: 3–4). If we try and reformulate these observations in terms customary for the Ukrainian philological tradition we come to the conclusion that literary (artistic) images that are studied by imagology are formed in the author’s mind as stereotypically-colored mental representations (concepts) and then verbalized on the pages of belles-lettres works. When the reader processes a literary text (s)he performs the opposite actions: decoding the image depicted by the author leads to the formation of their own mental representation but this time with the involvement of their own national stereotypes. As a result, this new target image will never be identical to the author’s (source) one in terms of both creation and reception.

We find several detailed definitions of imagology by Ukrainian authors. In particular, Yuriy Kovaliv states that “imagology is a branch of comparative literary studies that is focused on



the functioning of artistic images and systems of images in different types of relations (*I – the Other, one's own – alien*), their genesis, role and place in the history of the national and world literatures, connections to social reality” (Kovaliv, 2007: 412). In addition to specifying imagology's research object (one's own and alien images), this definition clarifies its subject (genesis and functions of images), which makes it methodologically accurate and attractive.

Another Ukrainian specialist in the field of image studies is Dmytro Nalyvajko, who accentuates its interdisciplinary status: “According to its character and structure, imagology is an interdisciplinary branch; in addition to literature researchers, it attracts anthropologists and ethnologists, historians of mentalities and historians of ideas, psychologists, etc. Literary imagology exists not separately but in connection and in cooperation with the mentioned fields” (Nalyvajko, 2009: 69). In our mind, two more disciplines are to be added to this impressive list of imagology's contributors – linguistics and translation studies.

How are the imagological “duties” distributed among the three branches of philology? From the literary studies standpoint, imagology is part of comparative literary studies for which “of special importance are national and cultural identities that can be united into ethnocultural identity”, and “due to exposing our own ethnocultural identity we can understand who we are in the modern world and by discovering this culture anew we discover anew ourselves, our authentic ‘I’” (Nalyvajko, 2020: 19)

According to Iryna Pupurs, “for the last few decades the vector of literary studies has been more and more pointed towards studying intercultural relations. It has led to the situation when contemporary literary studies cannot factually do without the components of terminology of literary imagology and imagological method takes a prominent position in it” (Pupurs, 2020: 59). And within this method, special attention is given to “the issues of the Other (Alien), their relations to one's Own (native) and the image of one's ‘I’”, together with “the issues of an ethnocultural myth, image-mirage, cliché, stereotype, imagema, national character, image of a foreigner, otherness, imagoposition, imagoperception, etc.” (ibid.).

Thus, in its literary dimension, imagology is predominantly understood as a category of a literary image and the object of its study, according to Vasyl Budnyj and Mykola

Il'nyts'kyj, is “literary ethnoimage” understood by these scholars as “a literary image that constructs not only individual traits but also ethnic (national) identity of depicted personages, landscapes or historic past, presenting their certain characteristics as typical for a certain country and peculiar of the whole nation (Budnyj, Il'nyts'kyj, 2008: 251).

3. Imagology and Mo Yan's magic realism.

One of the important literary avenues of imagology is a postcolonial one, connected with a grotesque portrayal of the images (both individual and collective such as, for instance, “the image of China” and “the image of a Chinese”) of many unfortunate nations in the literatures of their colonizers. The paradox of the postcolonial period in the history of many formerly oppressed nations is in their inability to overcome the postcolonial trauma: trying to separate themselves from their former colonizers, the former colonized still imitate them in different aspects of their social and private lives realizing at the same time the futility of their aspirations. This paradox is among the major motifs of all postcolonial literature. Modern China's dreams of the world hegemony are not just an echo of the ancient imperial grandeur but also a reaction to not-so-ancient colonial past. Though formally China never was a colony of any European country, it in fact remained under control of the then global corporations of the British, French or German origin. China's relations with Japan that caused so much harm to the inhabitants of the Celestial Empire in the period around the two world wars are still rather tense.

Intentional concentration on uncivilizedness of the conquered, their imperfection or even inherent vice was aimed at justifying the attempts to erase their cultures. That is why one of the tasks of comparative literary studies is “to undermine and undo the definitive tendency of the dominant to appropriate the emergent” (Spivak, 2003: 100). This claim concerns not only the cultures of the colonized nations in a broad sense, but also their literatures in a narrow sense together with the principles of their research. It results in the elaboration of the so called postcolonial literary canon among the distinctive features of which are the following: excessive politicization that is revealed in the protest against the imperial culture and its stereotypes; decentralization that is revealed in the refusal from the traditional model “center-periphery” in relations with other countries and cultures, and in the call to cultural plurality and multiculturalism; rejection of the standards of the European and American literary canons that is embodied in a pluralistic

worldview, popularization of literary hybridity, refusal from simplification and standardization of cultural forms, etc.; distinctive psychologism within which the writers demonstrate internal dramas of their characters, who were traumatized by the complex of national inferiority, the feeling of guilt before their country, nostalgia or hatred towards the occupants (Budnyj, Il'nyts'kyj, 2008: 228–229).

An attentive reader will find the features of this canon in the works by the outstanding Chinese writer, Nobel Prize laureate Mo Yan whose creative method is often described as “magic realism”. As Tetiana Konovalenko writes, “in its postcolonial period the literature of magic realism fosters the changes in cultural hierarchy imposed by the colonizers and these changes happen due the re-evaluation of alternative, non-western systems of thinking, representing them as those correcting and supplementing the dominant worldview. This literature teaches us that science and rationalism alone cannot adequately represent humankind’s vast experience” (Konovalenko, 2016: 128).

Anne Hegerfeldt, in her turn, emphasizes the existence of the special – postcolonial – interpretation of magic realism, “according to which the mode’s characteristic fusion of realistic and fantastic elements originates in the material reality not only of Latin America, but of the postcolonial situation *per se*, which is likewise characterized by the co-existence of irreconcilable opposites, i.e. a dominant rational-scientific ‘Western’ and a marginalized mythical ‘native’ worldview” (Hegerfeldt, 2002: 63).

Taking into account the imagological angle of our own research, we raise the following question: how do postcolonial canon and magic realism determine the systems of images in Mo Yan’s works? In response to this question, we can propose some considerations as a result of studying the images of the author’s most renowned novel “Red Sorghum”:

- the author depicts an exotic image of China where some cultural norms, traditions and habits may look unattractive or even repulsive in the eyes of Western readers. In particular, due to this reason, the novel was for some time banned for publishing as the one projecting China’s negative image;

- the author intends to convey the idea that China despite being formally or factually colonized by Western or Eastern oppressors managed to preserve its cultural identity;

- the author not only supports different stereotypes about China as a symbol of South-

Eastern macro-culture, but also underlines and augments them thus creating his own orientalism opposing traditional Western one;

- the author often resorts to figurative and symbolic linguistic means, for instance the literal translation of the novel is 红高粱家族 – “Native land, family or tribe of red sorghum” as sorghum stands as a symbol of a family business uniting several generations and its color – red – symbolizes luck, joy, and happiness; it also represents celebration, vitality, and fertility in traditional Chinese color symbolism;

- the author describes his characters with the help of stylistic devices (mainly, metaphors and similes based on the nature’s attributes and physiology of human beings and animals);

- the author places the events of his novel into real geographical location (高密东北乡 – China’s North-East, Shandong province, Gaomi Township), but at the same time creates his own world parallel to the real one (“chronotope” in Mikhail Bakhtin’s terms), which results in a peculiar artistic configuration of time and space, real and surreal, household and magic;

- the author skillfully intertwines real historic events with invented personal stories: with the anticolonial war against the Japanese invaders in the background, he unfolds the story of love that confronts social and moral norms and culminates into violence and murder. Reproducing the life of the Chinese society through the lens of romantic fantasy, Mo Yan creates his own literary myth deeply grounded into the Chinese culture.

4. Imagology in its linguistic and translational dimensions. Liudmyla Ivanova proposes the term “linguimagology”, which, according to her, is “to be engaged in elaborating such issues as: reception of a certain country, nation or territory by representatives of another nation in synchrony and/or diachrony, reflection of one nation by another; first impressions about a new nation or country; etc.” (Ivanova, 2012: 75). This quote seems to contain a clear indication of imagology’s translational dimension, because translation is the only reliable channel of communication through which we can better comprehend those complex relations between the source and target systems of images in a literary work, especially in case of the so called distant cultures characterized by considerable differences in cultural norms and values.

The notion of cultural distance is understood here as proximity or, on the contrary, incompatibility of contacting cultures or cultural



groups. “The concept of cultural distance covers different aspects of human life that are relevant for intercultural communication: climate, attire, food, language, education, family, household, habits, etc.” (Rebrii, 2022: 15). At the same time, it cannot be measured on the basis of objective criteria, because “in addition to various aspects of human life and activity, it is influenced by such factors as military conflicts (both ancient and modern), level of linguistic affinity, economic and/or political superiority/inferiority, etc.” (ibid.).

The same ideas are expressed by Oded Shenkar when he writes that “the appeal of the CD [cultural distance – *O.R.*] construct is, unfortunately, illusory. It masks serious problems in conceptualization and measurement, from unsupported hidden assumptions to questionable methodological properties, undermining the validity of the construct and challenging its theoretical role and application” (Shenkar, 2001: 520). At the same time, there are obviously cases when we can assume the large scale of a cultural distance like in case of China and Ukraine that are not only quite different in all the above mentioned parameters but have no history of close contacts either. Translation-wise, we can assume the following regularity that is to be confirmed by further research: the larger the distance between the source and the target cultures the higher the level of the translator’s adaptive intrusions.

There is a clear connection between imagology and stylistics because “the problem of investigating the linguistic representation of foreign/alien national cultures <...> is related to the stylistic in its essence notion of ‘linguosthetic signs of a national culture’, which allows to highlight the expressive potential of a national language” (Hanzha, 2021: 66). Sharing this statement, we would like to expand its explanatory potential in regard to our own research interests.

Firstly, among linguistic means of a literary image actualization, major part belongs to those characterized by expressiveness on different levels of a language system – phonetic, morphemic, lexical, or syntactic. Their identification, classification and analysis will provide for a complex analysis of a macroimage of China in Mo Yan’s novel as well as its constituents in both original and Ukrainian translation, which is seen as a **prospect** of further research.

Secondly, stylistic approach to imagology is undoubtedly useful from intercultural communication standpoint. The matter is that the author while selecting linguistic means of a literary image actualization falls under

a strong influence of ethnic stereotypes, which themselves are typically axiologically marked, moreover this type of an assessment is often strongly emotive. In the process of intercultural transfer the assessment may be preserved in its form and function and perceived by a target recipient in a manner identical to that of a target recipient. Though, in many other cases the assessment contained in a stereotyped image can be lost, changed in form, or function, or both. In this respect, linguoimagological research can be quite useful to both authors of belles-lettres texts and their translators, because “at the borderline of two cultures, not only languages with their different conceptual spheres but also images of these two cultures come into contact: they seem to reflect the same objects but in a peculiar way, and this difference between images is revealed in the process of their comparison thus forming a special worldview in the mind of a person located at the borderline of two cultures” (ibid.: 67), i.e. the translator.

Interesting considerations as to the linguistic and stylistic embodiment of literary images of “one’s own” and “the Other” are found in the works by Daniel-Henry Pageaux. In his determination to expand the horizon of imagological research, this French scholar makes emphasis on the verbal aspect of an image formation. In particular, he writes about the necessity to “be maximally attentive to all the possible traces of cyclicity, repeats; to exposing any lexical eventualities and slips of tongue; to any cases of automatism in selecting lexical units denoting territory... and time; to vocabulary covering appearance or characters’ internal world; to selecting names and surnames (Pageaux, 2011: 409). We understand these words to be in line with a claim that excessive use of a certain linguistic or stylistic unit eventually turns it into a cliché or a trite phrase whose employment is the worst case of linguistic stereotyping. Proceeding from this assumption, the translator’s task, according to Pageaux, is to “naturalize all the alien for a recipient textual elements in an acceptable form, explain and decode them for them” (ibid.).

Imagology in its linguistic/translatological dimension cannot ignore the fact that “the images and imagotypical structures were not a reflection or so, of real collective qualities of the communities in question (‘nations’, ‘people’ and so on) but fictions, i.e. ideas that at some time in the course of history emerged in the countries or communities concerned” (Dyserinck 2003). Hence the conclusion that the true object

of linguistic imagological research should be “an ethnic linguistic mind” or “ethnic mentality” as “a language-mediated worldview of a certain culture, i.e. the combination of perceptive, conceptual and procedural knowledge of a representative of this culture about the objects of reality” (Брик 2020, с. 30–31).

5. Conclusions. In this research, we understand a literary image in a broad sense as any object creatively reproduced in a belles-lettres text as a result of the reality assimilation by the author, which means that any literary image is always deeply rooted in the culture of its creator. Among the most commonly distinguished images are those by people and countries that they belong to. Both these categories are typically drawn by the impact of stereotypes – either ‘internal’, i.e. concerning the representatives of the same culture as the author, or ‘external’ – concerning the representatives of some other, and thus alien, culture.

Popularity of a belles-lettres literature as a powerful regulator of social and individual life also means that literary images turn into a public opinion instrument whose importance should not be underestimated. Consequently, the development of imagology – as a synthetic philological theory about the functioning of images in literary discourse seems only but logical. So far, imagology has come a rather long way – from a comparative analysis theory to a full-fledged philological branch with its literary, linguistic and translational dimensions. In its literary dimension, imagology is interested in the genesis of a literary image and its aesthetic qualities. In its linguistic dimension, imagology is interested in the means of an image’s verbalization. In its translational dimension, imagology is interested in the specifics of reproducing a literary image in a new linguistic and cultural environment. Following the functionalist tradition in translation studies, we conclude that the translator’s task is to adapt a literary image to the expectations of target readers as representatives of an alien culture and do it exclusively on the linguistic/stylistic level without interfering into the author’s plot.

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