TRANSLATING ANGLOPHONE LITERATURE IN SOVIET LATVIA: ERNEST HEMINGWAY'S EXAMPLE

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Abstract

Latvians were introduced to Ernest Hemingway's literary work in the second half of the 1950s. These were the years of Latvia being under Soviet rule with all the consequences that that implied: Sovietisation, propaganda of Soviet ideology, powerful and extensive apparatus of Soviet censorship controlling and influencing all spheres of human activity. Both physical and intangible expressions of culture were controlled and monitored by the Soviet officials. Considered as one of the most efficient tools of Soviet propaganda, literature was on a special account. As a result, internal and external structures of original and translated texts underwent a thorough censoring process. The choice of foreign authors accepted for translation was dictated by the guidelines of the Communist party and dependent on a quite changeable socio-political course taken in the metropolis - Moscow. To be on a safe side and avoid 'the red pencil of censorship', Latvian translators used to consult Russian translations of foreign literature, especially in the first two decades of Soviet occupation (1940s - 1950s). The present study examines some tendencies in translation policy related to Anglophone literature in Soviet Latvia of the 1950s basing on the first Latvian publication of Ernest Hemingway's novel A FAREWELL TO ARMS - the work which was chosen by the authorities to introduce the American writer to a Latvian reader. Being one of the first Hemingway's works translated in Soviet Latvia it demonstrates a general mechanism of introducing a foreign author and their literary heritage to the Soviet reader. Using the comparativist approach the first Latvian publication of the work is contrastively examined and juxtaposed with later Latvian edition and with the text in the original language. Additionally to the internal structure of the text, external structures (text selection, interpretation, facts) are also studied as an indivisible part of the translation policy.

Keywords: *Ernest Hemingway, A Farewell to Arms, Soviet regime, Soviet ideology, censorship, Latvia, translation*

1. INTRODUCTION

In Latvia the life and works of Ernest Hemingway have often been of interest to literary scholars and journalists. During the Soviet regime, due to the political censorship, the main discussion points were mostly connected with the prominent writer's sympathy with ordinary people's life and their struggle with the hardships of existence, simplicity of his writing with the focus on the form and not on the content. The Soviet interpretation of E. Hemingway's literary heritage was more connected with the writer's lifestyle than with his books. It was much written about E. Hemingway's participation in different war conflicts and his life in Cuba (*He Loved Cuba, Cuba Loved Him* [1], *Hemingway against submarines: On American Writer's life in Cuba during World War II* [2]), his hobbies (*Hemingway teaches fishing* [3], *Hemingway and Sport* [4]), or his life position (*Hemingway's principles* [5]). The crash of the Soviet Union "had a solutary effect on research into Soviet culture and society, [..] by liberating researchers from the often narrow and exclusive oppositions of Cold War thinking, [..]" [6]. After the Restoration of Latvia's Independence on May 4, 1990, in their studies devoted to the American writer Latvian researchers were open to new horizons which were either limited or closed to them during the Soviet occupation. In addition to Western literary criticism, which was now available, as well as opportunities to participate in various international conferences worldwide, changed the scientific focus. Now the studies concentrate on (a) Ernest Hemingway in the context of Latvia (e.g., Barbara Dauvarte's Master Thesis *The Reception of E. Hemingway in Latvia,* 2014 [7]), (b) comparative analysis of Latvian publications of his works carried out in Soviet Latvia and in emigration (e.g., Lilita Sinka's diploma paper *Comparison of translated versions of E. Hemingway's novel „A Farewell to Arms"*, 2009 [8]) or

(c) Ernest Hemingway as one of the most prominent representatives of American Modernism - a new trend in Latvia as in the Soviet Union Modernism was criticised and it was most often claimed that E. Hemingway was a representative of the critical realism [9] (e.g., nowadays at Daugavpils University, Latvia, in Bachelor programme of English Philology the course *The 20th century British and American literature* acquaints students with such great American modernists as F. S. Fitzgerald, W. Faulkner, E. Hemingway, and others).

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Materials

In the frames of the research project devoted to literary and political discourse of translations in Soviet Latvia, for the present report the Latvian publications of one of the most iconic American authors in the USSR - Ernest Hemingway - were chosen to represent the big picture, to discuss the main tendencies of introducing a new foreign author to Soviet public. The focus is on that E. Hemingway's work which was chosen by the Writers' Union of the Latvian SSR - the main controller over both original and translated literature in Latvia - as the first one to be introduced to Latvian readers: the novel *A Farewell to Arms* translated into Latvian and published by the Latvian State Publishing House in 1958. In fact, the same year the translation of E. Hemingway's short novel *The Old Man and the Sea* was also published in the collection of American writers' stories titled *Golden Mirage* [Zelta mirāža]. However, chronologically *A Farewell to Arms* appeared first and thus 'officially' introduced the author to the Soviet Latvian readership. By the lexeme 'officially' I mean book edition - it is the fact the significance of which cannot be underestimated in the context of Soviet culture.

Although in the present article the Latvian publication of *A Farewell to Arms* is chosen as the main source for analysis, some words are to be said about the Latvian translation of E. Hemingway's short novel *The Old Man and the Sea.* It appears in the 1958 collection "containing the best works by prominent progressive American storytellers of the 20th century" [10] (in the Soviet Union they loved to use the lexeme 'progressive' when referring to the authors from the capitalist bloc countries).

In this regard it is important to mention that some years before the year of issue - in 1955-1956, the short novel *The Old Man and the Sea* had been serialized in one of the local newspapers - *Bauska Work* [Bauskas Darbs]. It was a translation from Russian and later would not resonate in society or be referred to. However, in my opinion, this serialized translation must not be ignored and deserves some future research for several reasons.

1) It is one of the first cases of E. Hemingway's presence in the cultural space of Soviet Latvia.

2) Being a direct translation from the Russian language it represents a special case of the general picture of that time: much material (the Communist leaders' speeches, articles on various socio-political and cultural issues, film and book reviews, etc.), was republished from the Soviet Russian newspapers and magazines to ensure constant flow of 'appropriate,' ideologically tinted and 'safe' information. The publication of the short novel is preceded by a review containing some facts from the American author's life and career; at the very end of the article, it is said that "the Russian translation *The Old Man and the Sea* appeared this year, printed in the third issue of the magazine *Foreign Literature* [Innostrannaya Literatura] and received positive feedback from readers and critics. With this issue we are starting to publish it in our newspaper as well" [11].

3) Contrastive study of the short novel serialized in the newspaper with the translation of 1958 can possibly highlight certain shifts in approaches to the text; the differences between the two Latvian variants of one text can serve as a mirror of what happened in the translation scene in Soviet Latvia of the 1950s.

2.2. Methods

This article is an attempt to address some issues of translation in Soviet Latvian context across the disciplinary boundaries of Baltic Studies, Translation Studies and Soviet history. The example of E. Hemingway, of his entering the cultural space of Soviet Latvia demonstrates what distinguished Soviet

translation scene: repressive censorship, politicized foreign authors' reception process, bilingualism with dominance of the Russian language.

In the present article, in order to better understand the significance of the translated works in a foreign writer's reception process, the Latvian translation of the novel *A Farewell to Arms* is compared to the English text as well as the Russian translation (it is known that many works by foreign authors were translated 'in consultation' with the Russian version or even using the Russian translation as the main source text); two Latvian editions of the novel *A Farewell to Arms* (1958 and 1972) are also contrasted: comparing the two versions of the Latvian translation, identifying the differences between them, it can be concluded about possible changes and deviations in the text, which definitely affected the perception of the novel and the author in society. All cases of discrepancies detected in the first Latvian publication were summarised and basing on collected data the qualitative research was carried out. The present article contains only some examples to illustrate the translation situation in the late 1950s in Soviet Latvia.

3. DISCUSSION

3.1. Ernest Hemingway: The importance of being translated

In Soviet Latvia translations of Ernest Hemingway's works appeared quite late - these were the mid and late 1950s. A seemingly accidental introduction of the author to the Latvian reader in 1941 - serialized publication of E. Hemingway's novel *To Have and Have Not* translated from the Russian language and reprinted from the 1938 Russian magazine *International Literature* [Internatsionalnaya Literatura] in one of the Latvian entertainment magazines - *Leisure* [Atpūta] - was unnoticed by the public and in the later decades of the Soviet occupation was never referred to. In the 1950s, two of E. Hemingway's famous works - his novel *A Farewell to Arms* (originally published in 1929) and his short novel *The Old Man and the Sea* (originally published in 1952) - were translated and published in Soviet Latvia. The translations were accompanied by a real 'stir' organised around the American writer's personality in the public space which was especially well pronounced during the next decade - in the 1960s; suddenly E. Hemingway's name begins to be invoked in different situations by different means of communication and cultural expressions: radio, newspapers, magazines, literature, theatre. A phenomenon that is even more remarkable if we remember that there were many years before that the writer was either completely ignored or mentioned as if by the way.

This situation can be easily explained by the socio-political situation of Latvia of that time. Having been forcefully annexed by the Soviet Union Latvia became dependent on politics and ideology of the USSR. As a result, all cultural processes and expressions were strictly controlled and coordinated by Soviet ideologues and censors [12]. But as "Soviet lifestyle was subject to various ideological and political changes during its existence" [13], the local officials preferred to play it safe and follow, repeat, and even copy 'Big Brother's' position in any situation related to politics, education, culture, or social life.

At about the same time when in Soviet Latvia the first translations of E. Hemingway's works started to appear, in the USSR, namely, in Soviet Russia, a once forbidden American writer was rehabilitated. In their book *The '60s. The World of Soviet People* [60-e. Mir sovetskogo cheloveka] P. Vail and A. Genis write that starting with the very end of the 1950s when in Moscow E. Hemingway's *Selected Works* in two volumes were published "America and Hemingway became synonyms in Russia" [14]. They note that the writer was the main American in Soviet life. "In his books Soviet readers found ideals shaping the worldview of an entire generation. The style of his prose determined the style of the generation of the sixties" [15]. Following the metropolis, the similar processes were activated in other Soviet republics as well including Latvia.

3.2. Latvian publication of A FAREWELL TO ARMS: External structures

Although first book editions of two E. Hemingway's works translated into Latvian came out in one year, chronologically the novel *A Farewell to Arms* appears first, most likely in the translation of Tatjana Jarmolinska (the translator is not named in the book, but the bibliographic data in the library resources indicate Tatjana Jarmolinska). It can be stated that it is with the translation and publication of this work

that Ernest Hemingway's 'life' in the cultural space of Soviet Latvia begins. Significantly that *The Flag* [Karogs] - at that time the main Latvian-language literary magazine in Soviet Latvia - drastically changed its position towards Hemingway from highly critical to extremely positive exactly in the year when the first translations of Hemingway's works were published, thus playing an important role in ensuring the writer's reception process in accordance with Soviet ideology. Being the first Hemingway's work published in a book edition in Latvian, the novel *A Farewell to Arms* becomes one of the basic elements in the reception process of Ernest Hemingway implemented by the regime ideologues in the cultural space of Soviet Latvia. In this regard three important aspects need to be noted.

Firstly, the choice and acceptance of the novel itself for translation and publication is a fact that is extremely important if we consider the total control over literature and culture in general in Soviet Latvia. Literature was subjected to censorship throughout the whole period of Soviet occupation. Referring to the Latvian literary scholar Raimonds Briedis "Censorship during the Soviet era can be divided into three categories - political, moral, and aesthetic. Moral and aesthetic censorship are subordinated to political censorship" [16]. The novel was chosen as one of the connecting elements in the American writer's reception process, implemented by Soviet ideologues. In Soviet Latvia (as in the entire territory of the USSR), both in the original and translated literature, one of the main functions of multi-level censorship was the selection of authors and their works [17]. One can assume that the decision to choose *A Farewell to Arms* as the first to 'officially' introduce Hemingway to the Latvian reading audience was dictated by the position actively postulated in the Soviet Russian press and journalism and retranslated in Latvian information sources that it was the "writer's best novel" [18].

Secondly, if the work was published, it meant that texts and manuscripts had been examined by Soviet censorship at all stages of their development, each time putting the special censor's stamp of approval: "At each stage it was possible for the censors to become involved, and at each next stage the current censors would pass judgment on what had been done at the previous stage" [19]. Thus, the publication of the novel means that the work has passed all stages of Soviet censorship, has been approved for publication, has been officially accepted as 'appropriate' for the Soviet public, and, as a result, is part of the American writer's reception process organized by ideologues. Moreover, the edition of the novel is noteworthy - 30,000 copies; it can be claimed that this was an impressive number for Latvia of the 1950s.

Thirdly, the novel is actively exploited in creating the image of Ernest Hemingway in society; its interpretation offered by various media, but above all, of course, the press fits well into the 'official' writer's biography formed according to the Soviet ideology. Thus, one of the articles in *The Struggle* [Cīņa] - the official newspaper of the Communist Party of Latvia - informs that "The book *A Farewell to Arms* by the progressive American writer Ernest Hemingway has been published in Latvian", the author is called "one of the most outstanding prose writers of today, a humanist, a supporter of the idea of peace and cooperation between peoples" and immediately offers, according to the Soviet ideology, a biased and rather pretentious description of the writer's creative work: "Ernest Hemingway is a representative of the critical realism and in his works he often depicts the broken people of the old, capitalist world" [20].

The article, as it used to be in the Soviet press, is permeated by certain ideological clichés, for example, it is noted that Hemingway's latest works focus on "a creator of all values - the worker", the ideas expressed in his work "bring Hemingway closer to the Soviet reader", and the novel is relevant at the moment, because, although it is 'the first imperialist world war' that forms the background of the novel, "imperialists start saber-rattling again". Significantly, the author of the article, successfully manipulates with these clichés, ready-made phrases, which used to be repeated from article to article, traveling from one press publication to another and whose sounding was often more important than their meaning, and, by involving Hemingway and his novel (no matter how unusual it is), offers a peculiar interpretation of the best known communist slogan and the state motto in the Soviet Union 'Workers of the world, unite!': "The novel implies the idea, and life itself complements it - to fight the war, it is not enough to say a farewell to arms, turn your back on them. The war must be fought, in a conscious and organized way, using all the forces and weapons of progress" [21].

In general, the named article, introducing a newly translated and published novel by the foreign author and offering the 'correct' understanding of both the writer's personality and his work, is a bright example of how the reception process was organized in the Soviet Union. From the official state mouthpiece it was demanded to provide Soviet interpretation of literary works introduced to public and emphasize what is relevant to the socialist regime or, at least, make the reader think or believe it is present in the announced author's creation.

3.3. Latvian publication of A FAREWELL TO ARMS: Internal structure

To read *A Farewell to Arms* in the Latvian translation of 1958 is to experience a feeling that the translation was carried out in a hurry with insufficient editorial work - this is evidenced by the detected content errors, misinterpretation of the context, omissions in the text. It can be explained by the situation described before: in the end of the 1950s Ernest Hemingway's image was restored in Russia, his previous works were hurriedly republished, the new ones (e.g., *The Old Man and the Sea*) translated into Russian. Latvia follows the tendencies and guidelines dictated by 'Big Brother': the image of the prominent American author is passionately cultivated in public creating a feeling that Ernest Hemingway has always been present in the cultural space of Soviet Latvia. The main contradiction and the unusualness of the situation is that, unlike Russia where in the 1930s E. Hemingway's works were actively translated and published, in Latvia until certain moment E. Hemingway was unknown to a wider readership. In 1958, a real stir began around the personality of Hemingway and the publication of the novel seems a logical fact - the sooner E. Hemingway's works would be translated into Latvian, the better. Most probably there was not enough time to thoroughly read the manuscript or do a qualitative editing of the text translated. This statement seems justified, especially when comparing the later editions of the novel; for example, in 1971-1974, E. Hemingway's Collected Works in five volumes are published by the Latvian publisher *Liesma* and in the second volume *A Farewell to Arms* is included indicating the same translator of the novel - Tatjana Jarmolinska.

The sensitive study of both Latvian publications of the novel and the comparative analysis of the Latvian texts with the original source have revealed that for the next Latvian edition a more thorough work was done, more attentive reading into the text is observed. As a result, the textual flaws found in the Latvian publication of 1958, were fixed in the publication of 1972. In the present article some examples are chosen to demonstrate the differences between the first Latvian publication and the edited text of the later edition. The English equivalent is taken from the 1929 edition published by *Charles Scribner's Sons*.

Thus, one of the most remarkable omissions is observed in the episode when the finger game in the mess is described - the captain makes shadow puppets on the wall lit by the candlelight using his fingers and names each finger according to Italian army ranks: "He started with the upright thumb and named in their order the thumb and four fingers, 'soto-tenente' (the thumb), 'tenente' (first finger), 'capitano' (next finger), 'maggiore' (next to the little finger), and 'tenente-colonello' (the little finger) [22]. In the edition of 1958, the whole passage describing the game is omitted [23]; in the publication of 1972 it is translated and included [24].

In the episode when the main hero of the novel - Lieutenant Frederic Henry, the ambulance driver, tells about the planned attack and how the division for which he works is preparing for the offensive, he ironically comments on ambulance drivers' main responsibility before the attack - to work out the location of the posts for the cars: "It was one of those things that gave you a false feeling of soldiering" [25]. In the first Latvian publication this sentence is translated as if this activity led to the misconception of military service in general [26]. In the later publication the sentence is translated close to the author's version: "It was one of those activities that created an illusion that you were participating in battle yourself" [27].

In the publication of 1958, the cases of wrong translation are quite frequent and allow us to conclude that there was a certain haste in preparing E. Hemingway's novel for a Latvian reader. Mainly these are errors caused by the translator's carelessness: (a) omission of some translation units, (b) erroneous translation of words or (c) the translation that does not correspond to the context.

For example, the translation unit "The only son of the American Ambassador" [28] is translated as "It is the only representative of America" [29], but "You rank as an officer. I am an officer" [30] is translated "But your rank is the rank of an officer. I'm not an officer" [31].

Another peculiarity of the first Latvian publication of the novel that deserves a mention is that in Latvian E. Hemingway 'speaks' too expressively, his language is too poeticized, too beautiful. Much is said and written about the writer's famous 'telegraphic dialogue', laconic narrative style, his Iceberg Theory [32] [33]. In *A Farewell to Arms* "using a simple writing style and plain language, he omitted inessential adjectives and adverbs, rendering the violence of the Italian front in sparing prose. To give readers a sense of immediacy, Hemingway used short declarative clauses and made frequent use of the conjunction 'and'" [34].

Trying to reach the Latvian sounding of the text the translator chooses to 'polish' the American writer's language and 'improve' his writing style enriching it with more poetical synonyms and restructuring the sentences to make them sound in a more 'literary' way, but the narrative flow smoother. In the edition of the 1972 the translator has done some editing and tried to observe Hemingway's style, changing too poetical translation to a more direct one, closer to the original (it can be added that most probably while preparing a new Latvian edition of *A Farewell to Arms* there was some consultation with Y. Kalashnikova's Russian translation of the novel). In the first paragraph of the novel the sentences are replete with the conjunction 'and', the importance of which was noted by the author himself. For example, in the sentence "The trunks of the trees too were dusty and the leaves fell early that year and we saw the troops marching along the road and the dust rising and leaves, stirred by the breeze, falling and the soldiers marching and afterward the road bare and white except for the leaves" [35] there are seven cases of using the conjunction. In the first Latvian publication the translator lessened the number of using 'and' to five, preferring to separate translation units in a series by a comma [36]. It is remarkable that in the later edition the translator restores the original number of the conjunction usage in the sentence bringing the text closer to the original version [37].

There is one more reason I have chosen this very sentence as it also demonstrates another way of language embellishment applied by the translator in the first publication - to use more poetical synonyms instead of simple or neutral words. In the phrase "afterward the road bare and white" E. Hemingway prefers short and direct adjectives which are probably reminiscent of the steps of soldiers who have just passed, in her turn the translator decides to use more poetical Latvian lexemes "vientulīgs" [desolate/solitary] and "palss" [pale] to emphasize the image of the lonely road. In the later edition these adjectives are substituted with more neutral "tukšs" [empty/bare] and "balts" [white].

Thus, with the publication of 1958 E. Hemingway enters the Latvian language more sophisticated and literally eloquent than he really was. However, it cannot be stated that in the Latvian text E. Hemingway's deceptive directness and simplicity are lost completely.

Finally, it is impossible to talk about the translation of an Anglophone text in Soviet Latvia without any mention of Soviet censorship. In the Soviet Union "almost any public word, sound, drawing, picture - everything! - should have been censored" [38]. Censorship systematically involves in all literary processes in Latvia. Describing the influence of Soviet censorship on Latvian original literature R. Briedis notes that "Historical, religious or erotic motifs were most often subject to revisions. Such themes most often were relegated to the peripheries of the text, marginalized and transformed, affecting the reception of the text" [39]. The translated literature was also affected by censorial requirements. "Translations carried out in the Soviet Union were thoroughly censored and inevitably changed in accordance with the adopted ideology of that period" [40].

In the first Latvian publication several cases of text deviations caused by one of the three categories of Soviet censorship (moral, aesthetic, or political) were detected. For example, there is a tendency to decrease the use of words or phrases of sexual or too physiological nature by substituting or even omitting certain translation units (""The first labor is usually protracted," the nurse said" [41] is translated without any mentioning of childbirth "For the first time it is always dragged on" [42]; in the publication of 1972 it is corrected to "The first birth is always taking longer" [43]).

In some cases, the conversational style or slang words used by E. Hemingway are substituted with more neutral units. In the episode when several pejorative slurs for Italians are used the translator chooses to 'soften' the situation: "an ignorant wop" is translated as "You're rude nonsense"; "an ignorant foul-mouthed dago" - "You are numb goon" [44] [45].

What concerns religious motifs, it should be mentioned that, though with some exceptions, in the publication of 1958 the translator follows the author's version maintaining almost every single use of biblicisms from the original text: in interjections, soldiers' prayers or in the characters' discussion about Christianity. However, some marginalisation and transformation performed by T. Jarmolinska take the reader's attention away from a religious motif:

a) in some interjections "Christ!" or "By God" are substituted with more neutral "Oh" or "Honestly",

b) words that refer to God and the Bible are deliberately lowercased (this peculiarity is present in literary works throughout the whole Soviet era); in the Latvian publication not only 'God' [dievs], 'Our Lord' [mūsu kungs] or 'the Garden' [dārzs] are written in lowercase, but also the religious festival Christmas [ziemas svētki].

4. CONCLUSIONS

To sum up it can be stated that Ernest Hemingway's appearance in Soviet Latvia was artificially organised: of all the American authors in the 1950s metropolis of the Soviet Union - Moscow - brought to the fore E. Hemingway, hence, dictating the main literary trends in Latvia of that time. Local authorities urgently needed to reorient themselves as in the 1940s and in the first half of the 1950s E. Hemingway as one of the representatives of the capitalist system was more criticised than praised. They hastily started to create the image of the iconic American writer of the 20th century. The absurdity of the situation was that his works had not been published in Latvian yet. In such circumstances the first E. Hemingway's work in Latvian appeared. No wonder that the translation of the novel *A Farewell to Arms* gives a contradictory impression: on the one hand, it is Ernest Hemingway who speaks to us, on the other hand, the Latvian text causes a feeling of being written in a hurry; sometimes it addresses the reader in non-Hemingway's manner - being too lyrical and poetic when it needs to be more neutral and too neutral and tolerant when it needs to be more direct and expressive.

This article was an attempt to demonstrate how ideological imperatives of the Soviet power in Latvia of the 1950s dictated and thus also organised the public life. It was decided by the regime authorities what Latvians were allowed to watch, read, or listen. The example of Ernest Hemingway's entering the cultural space of Soviet Latvia reveals some specific features of the politicized and ideologized translation scene during the Soviet regime. The further study needs to be carried out examining next Latvian publications of Ernest Hemingway's works; it also seems useful to research how the Soviet system worked in the neighbouring countries - Lithuania and Estonia - when introducing and/or imposing foreign authors to be accepted and loved in society. My hypothesis is that the processes were like those in Latvia.

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