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## НАЦИОНАЛЬНЫЙ ЛИТЕРАТУРНЫЙ КАНОН ПРИ ПЕРЕВОДЕ

*Аннотация.* Статья посвящена проблемам литературного перевода, рецепции переводного текста, трансформации национального литературного канона и – как следствие – судьбе литературного произведения в переводящей культуре. При анализе материала сочетаются методы теории перевода и методы литературоведения и истории с привлечением сопоставительного анализа литературных текстов, а также сравнительного анализа текстов оригинала и перевода с учетом специфики принимающей культуры. Предметом изучения в статье становятся «программные» произведения классической русской литературы (А. С. Пушкина, Н. В. Гоголя, М. Ю. Лермонтова и др.) в английском переводе, их восприятие и оценка на Западе, а также произведения британской (Дж. Остин, Дж. К. Джемс, О. Уайлда и др.) и американской (М. Митчелл и др.) литературы в их переводе на русский язык.

Сопоставление русского национального литературного канона и его компонентов (литературных произведений) в оригинале с теми же произведениями в переводе позволяет выявить ряд регулярных изменений, которые эти произведения претерпевают, попадая в культуру переводящего языка, связанных, в частности, с приобретением при переводе писателем значимости в принимающей культуре, отсутствующей у него в культуре-источнике, и наоборот, выходом творчества писателя из центра на периферию и временными сдвигами, вызванными запоздалым/несвоевременным появлением переводов текстов того или иного писателя на другой язык и обусловленным конъюнктурными, политическими, идеологическими и иными причинами. В статье с опорой на ряд примеров рассматриваются эти закономерности. Предполагается, что исследуемые закономерности и описание причин их возникновения могут внести вклад как в теорию литературного перевода и сопоставительный анализ переводов, так и в историю отдельных национальных литератур и теорию литературных и культурных контактов. Подобные закономерности выявляются также при сопоставлении художественных произведений британской и американской литературы в русском переводе, приводящем к их искажению при попадании в культурную среду переводящего языка.

*Ключевые слова:* литературный перевод; литературный канон; переводная литература; художественные тексты; закономерности искажений.

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## NATIONAL LITERARY CANON UNDER TRANSLATION

*Abstract.* This study focuses on problems of literary translation and of national literary canon transformation in a target culture, and, as a result, the fate of the original text in the receiving culture. The authors refer to a number of methods, namely, comparative literary studies methods, and contrastive analysis in national translation history and in cross-cultural communication. They attempt to combine translation studies with literary theory and history. Case studies of classical Russian literature (A. S. Pushkin, N. V. Gogol, M. Yu. Lermontov, etc.) in translation, its reception and evaluation in the West, as well as the British (J. Austen, J. K. Jerome, O. Wilde, etc.) and American (M. Mitchell, etc.) literature in Russian, are studied and explored. A comparison of the Russian national literary canon and its components (literary texts) in the original with the same elements in translation reveals a number of displacement regularities, namely, priority acquisition, i. e. the transfer of the writer of the translated text into the category of primary authors of the language inexistent in the original culture; priority loss characterized by the author of the original losing their status and transferring to the periphery, and time shift, caused by a belated/untimely translation. These regularities are studied in detail and supported by a number of examples. The authors believe that the regularities under investigation can make a useful contribution not only to the theory of literary translation and translation comparative studies, but also to the history of particular national literatures and to literary-cultural contacts theory. The same regularities are clearly observed in comparison of the British and the American books of fiction in Russian translation, their displacement in the target environment and the target cultural evaluation.

*Keywords:* literary translation; literary canon; translation literature; artistic texts; displacement regularities.

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Literary translation has always been considered a literary pursuit in its own right. What is more, a translated work of literature can make a powerful impact on the target literature and culture – examples of this sort are numerous in any national literature. Translation is also viewed as communication across cultures: being primarily a linguistic act where two languages are involved, it is also a cultural interchange since language and culture cannot be separated – language is a culturally embedded phenomenon. There is no doubt that translators have «to link the source text in its cultural context to the target communicative-cultural conditions... into which the translation is to be 'fitted'» [House 2013: 12–13].

How do literary texts of some culture function in another culture? This question often arises when books of fiction are translated into foreign languages, and then, just as the adherents of the Reader Response theory maintain, the readers' reaction becomes extremely important to the meaning the text acquires in a new context. Beyond all doubt, the reader's response is an integral part of a book functioning in its native culture – but almost any translation can acquire some unexpected new understanding in target languages and cultures – «how many lives, after all, have been deeply affected by translations of the Bible and *Capital!*?» [Lefevre 1982: 240].

Discussing the 'enabling function of translation', Theo Herman claims that a finished translation «is deemed to offer the user a reliable image of its parent text because it bears a close and pertinent resemblance to that which itself remains beyond reach. ...A statement like 'I have read Dostoyevsky' ..., when we unpack it, means something like: what I read was actually a translation of Dostoyevsky, but because it was a sound translation, it was, to all intents and purposes, as good as reading the original» [Herman 2002: 11].

But was it really? Did it provide the same reader response as the original text provided?

There is little doubt that a body of texts of fiction translated from different languages makes an inseparable and influential part of every national literary and cultural background. It is obvious that this body is in constant flux since new translations constantly appear – their interrelations with the older translations, as well as with the national texts of fiction become complicated and interwoven; besides the very reception and evaluation of translated texts in the target culture seems to be complicated, characterized by many circumstances. However, as I. Even-Zohar stressed, «there is no awareness of the possible existence of translated literature as a particular literary system» [Even-Zohar 1990: 199].

As far back as in 1982 André Lefevre, aiming at establishing theoretical links between translation and theory/history of literature, claimed that «translation studies can hardly be said to have occupied a central position in much theoretical thinking about literature» [Lefevre 1982: 23]. True, relatively little research has been carried out so far in this area, that is why we will try to make an attempt to bridge the two.

So – what really happens to a text of fiction after it is translated into a foreign language? Does it immediately occupy the same place and get the status it used to have in its native culture? Are there any patterns and regularities

of a translated text of fiction occurrence and functioning in a target culture? What factors are these regularities determined by? To answer the questions and to make reliable conclusions, several methods are used, namely, comparative literary studies methods, contrastive analysis in national translation history and in cross-cultural communication.

To investigate the problem, we are going to operate the concept of canon in the way it was suggested and defined by H. Bloom in his much-debated book *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages* (1994). As it is well known, the Western canon is a term denoting a list of books, as well as the greatest works of art, that were influential enough to form, to shape and to define – collectively in their interaction – Western culture. Thus, the canon is commonly believed to embrace the greatest works of national culture.

According to H. Bloom, canon tends to have a well-defined center and diffused margins or periphery – thus, W. Shakespeare's works were proclaimed to have formed the Western canon core since his plays and poetry are at the very center of Western creativity. The scholar proclaimed that it was in the Bard's plays that a special introspective view of a man was first introduced that led to the modern understanding of human nature.

No doubt, canon can be and is often viewed as a constant competition that should result in designing special institutional, educational, and cultural policy. Not surprisingly, in the Russian tradition, where the very term canon (Рус. канон) is popular only with the scholars in the field of European studies and literatures, the corresponding term will be программное произведение. It should be stressed that canon is often understood as a variable notion, since one can easily imagine national canons, group canons, generation canons, etc. However, bearing this in mind, we have every ground to believe that every national literary canon is clearly constructed by the majority of readers – in collective national memory it remains stable and mainly non-controversial, though sometimes existing on the intuitive level of public perception.

The aim of our analysis can be formulated in the following way: to investigate the translated works of Western literature in Russian culture and of Russian works of literature in Western culture from the point of view of places they occupy in target cultures. The idea «that the translated text has its own independent significance... seen as particularly relevant to the translation of literature» [House 2013: 23] leads to different speculations on «how translated texts fit into and affect the target literary system» [House 2013: 24]. Was Vladimir Nabokov right when he stated translation to be only a handful of «reflected words» that shiver on the «black mirror of the river» [Nabokov 1955], words that have no dazzle of their own, or, conversely, are we justified to state that translated texts acquire new places and qualities in target cultures?

Naturally, when translated works of fiction function in a different cultural environment, a whole range of attendant circumstances are to be taken into consideration:

«Let us accept that refractions – the adaptation of a work of literature to a different audience – have always been with us in literature. Refractions are to be found in the obvious form of translation, or in the less obvious of criticism, ...commentary, historiography (of the plot

summary of famous works cum evaluation type, in which the evaluation is unabashedly based on the current concept of what 'good' literature should be), teaching, the collection of works in anthologies, the production of plays» [Lefevere 1982: 241].

Studying the long history of Russian literary translation, one cannot but notice a number of regularities. We believe that any national literary canon undergoes several transformations of different orders when its components (texts of fiction) are translated (refracted) into some foreign language. We also consider the most notable regularities under investigation to be the following: priority loss; priority acquisition; time shift. Each transformation will be discussed and supported with examples.

By this transformation, we mean cases when a text or an author central to a national literary canon loses its main/central place after translation. The history of the Russian literature of the nineteenth century provides several examples of the above-mentioned phenomena: though L. Tolstoy's, F. Dostoyevsky's, A. Chekhov's works are widely popular both with the Russian and with the Western readers and public, works by A. Pushkin, M. Lermontov, and N. Gogol are less known and often much less popular in the West. Meanwhile, it goes without saying that any Russian person will immediately name them as the most remarkable representatives of the Russian literature of the period and will be able to immediately quote their works. What is more, the books by these authors have been translated into English more than once by translators who proved their professional status and whose translations of different authors are widely acclaimed.

Both Russian and Western critics and commentators have drawn much attention to Alexander Pushkin's specific reception in the West. While Pushkin is widely read and remembered in the Russian-speaking community with almost everyone being able to quote a line or two on the spot, the poet seems to enjoy respectable reputation of a classic author whose works are read and studied mainly by specialists in the field of Russian literature abroad. Thus, the first chapter in A. D. P. Briggs's well-known volume *Alexander Pushkin: A Critical Study* is significantly entitled *The Problem of Pushkin* and its first part is devoted to *The Doubts Surrounding Pushkin's Reputation*. To give something of the author's debate, we will quote a passage that seems to be relevant to the above-stated argument:

«The extraordinary achievements of Alexander Pushkin, Russia's foremost poet (some would say leading writer) still requires a good deal of explanation. His position in Russian history is without parallel in any other country. ...By changing the course of the literature and the language, he passed on to his successors not only a fund of artistic potential but also the means of its practical realization. The results are known to the world, ironically better than his own works, in those of Tolstoy, Dostoyevsky, Turgenev, Gogol, Chekhov and many other famous Russian writers» [Briggs 1982: 17].

In this context, it is perhaps quite telling that, according to A. D. G. Briggs, numerous studies, articles, and books on Pushkin and his works have been written and published in the West – «this was neatly expressed by Donald Davie: "We continue to learn everything about Pushkin the poet

except his poetry." ...The worst part... is that as the years go by and Pushkin remains inadequately explained, those who began by taking him on trust are going to have their doubts» [Briggs 1982: 18].

Professor S. Ter-Minasova analyzed the Pushkin-in-the-West phenomenon in her article expressively entitled *Why cannot the Non-Russian World Evaluate Pushkin?* [Тер-Минасова 1999] in which she makes a conclusion that does not contradict, but rather supports A. D. G. Briggs's idea. The scholar claims: «The main reason for Pushkin's under-evaluation and non-recognition as the greatest Russian writer lies in the conflict of cultures, of mentalities, even of souls. I can easily anticipate questions like: But Dostoyevsky? Tolstoy? Chekhov? The answer is the following: the whole situation shows they are more international and less national» [Тер-Минасова 1999: 36]<sup>1</sup>.

The same is true about works by N. Gogol translated into English. Some time ago, when asked a question about Gogol's status with the English readers, Karen Hewitt, who had been teaching Russian literature in Oxford for many years, answered:

«This is tricky. The answer is while MANY educated readers will expect to read Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky, and even more will see Chekhov plays, Gogol comes way behind them and behind Turgenev. Those who read Gogol do so either because they are studying Russian at university, or because they are, for one reason or another, particularly keen on reading all Russian literature that they can.

When I do courses on 19th century Russian literature, I begin with stories by Pushkin (I refuse to study poetry in translation – it just comes out as banality); then I do short stories by Gogol – which most readers enjoy (The Overcoat, The Nose, perhaps Diary of a Madman) – but they are stories they have NEVER come across before. Gogol is available in our Penguin Classics series and in the OUP World's Classic Series; but I don't think many copies are sold» [Hewitt 2009].

The case with English literature in Russian translation and perception clearly demonstrates similar, if not parallel tendencies, of priority loss. Thus, a mere comparison of the native British canonical list of authors of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries with that of English literature in Russian translation clearly shows a marked discrepancy. To demonstrate this discrepancy, we will analyze a popular Soviet *English Literature Textbook for the IX Form of English Language Schools* by M. Hecker, T. Volosova and A. Doroshevich (Moscow, Prosveshcheniye Publishers, 1975) – a textbook for high school students. The textbook was recommended by the USSR Ministry of Education (the recommendation is printed on the front page), widely used and several times reprinted. The textbook is devoted to nineteenth and twentieth centuries English literature. The contents part includes several chapters. Chapter One *Critical Realism in England* gives an overview of the political background and characteristic features of the literary trend under investigation. The chapter opens with the following quotation from Karl Marx: «The present brilliant school

<sup>1</sup> Translated from Russian by the authors of the article.

of novelists in England, whose graphic and eloquent descriptions have revealed more political and social truths to the world that have all the politicians, publicists and moralists added together, has pictured all sections of the middle class... How have they been described by Dickens, Thackeray, Charlotte Bronte and Mrs. Gaskell?» [Marx 1854]. Of the four novelists named by K. Marx, Charlotte Bronte is only mentioned once on page 10, much like Elizabeth Gaskell on page 11 in the following context: «*Hard Times* by Charles Dickens and *Mary Barton* by Elizabeth Gaskell are among the best works of 19<sup>th</sup> century Critical Realism in which the Chartists movement is described» [Hecker et al 1975: 11]. The two remaining authors, namely, Ch. Dickens and W. M. Thackeray, are given much more attention: each writer's life and works are described in a separate chapter. Thus, the canon center was inherently outlined in the Russian students' minds, where Dickens and Thackeray were supposed to occupy a more important place than Ch. Bronte and E. Gaskell. By extension, marginal places were given to different authors who had not been mentioned in the textbook. George Eliot, A. Trollope and E. Bronte are among them – the writers who unquestionably belong to the central figures of the native canon, but do not enjoy the same status with the Russian readers. However, novels of all these writers have been translated into Russian.

What is more, though the English literary canon in Russian imagination was outlined by numerous textbooks, in real practice it could undergo certain diffusion. Though ideologically correct and approved by K. Marx, E. Gaskell was never very popular with the Russian readers, while Ch. Dickens enjoyed «the same phenomenal success as at home or in the United States» [Gifford 2015] from the very beginning. According to H. Gifford, «no foreign writer of that time (or since) ever became so thoroughly domiciled in the Russian imagination» [Ibid.].

Overall, as is known, Charles Dickens, W. M. Thackeray, and Charlotte Bronte were read and enjoyed by the Soviet and Russian readers, A. Trollope's, George Eliot's, Elizabeth Gaskell's novels remained – and, to a certain degree, still remain primarily within the domain of scholarly research. As we can easily understand, the reason is not only ideological (Karl Marx's indisputable authority was a valid argument for the Soviet publishers and curricular designers to advertise the writers in question), but, rather, mental and cultural, similar to the Pushkin-in-the-West case.

This transformation presupposes a shift of a peripheral, sometimes even marginal literary text to the central position after its translation into a foreign language and transplantation into a foreign culture.

Not infrequently, some secondary literary texts of a national culture become much more influential in a target culture and are often viewed as sample texts of a national literature from which they have been rendered. There are several reasons to explain the shifts in question. L. Volodarskaya [Володарская 2003] stressed that a literary interaction is impossible without two factors that are to meet – one nation creates some literary text of value that another nation is predisposed to accept – or, by extension, to reject it. Boris Pasternak [Пастернак 2004] supported the point, claiming translation to be not just rendering of separate books or texts into a foreign culture, but, rather, nations and cultures encountering. If this is the case, then

translatability/non-translatability is vastly determined by the fact of the target culture's deep interest in an author or work of literature, not just in its plot, but, rather, in its existential and metaphorical meaning for the target culture. Alternatively, if put in different words, «the degree to which the foreign writer is accepted into the native system will... be determined by the need the native system in a certain phase of its evolution» [Lefevre 1982: 243].

Russian literary history can provide several examples of the phenomenon in question. New Russian literature as opposed to Old Russian literature appeared in the eighteenth century after Peter I and his successors promoted the development of secular culture and education in Russia. Vassily Trediakovsky, one of the leading men of letters of the period, who was educated at the Sorbonne in Paris, in 1730 translated into Russian a French novel *Le Voyage de l'Isle d'Amour* by French writer Paul Tallemant (1642–1712). As a result, the book became the first novel of the new type in Russia and immediately won immense popularity with the reading public. Yury Lotman, who analyzed the role of the novel in his article, made the following conclusion: «Trediakovsky's translation was close to the original. But, being transplanted from the French cultural context into the Russian one, his *Voyage*... changed both its meaning and its cultural role... The text that had been an inseparable part of the French cultural space, became isolated and closed in itself... it became the Only Novel (in Russia – authors). A novel of modest value became a sample text» [Лотман 1992] that every author was eager to follow. The factor that determined the novel's role was, primarily, the precise historic moment – Russia was pursuing new modes of cultural westernization and seeking new cultural models to follow, engage, and emulate. Thus, the novel and other literary translations from French and German into Russian that immediately followed suggested examples of etiquette, behavior, social interaction, etc. for the rapidly growing group of the Russian reading public.

Another example to demonstrate priority acquisition in the target culture is *Three Men in a Boat* by Jerome K. Jerome in Russian translation. A comic travelogue occupying a modest place in English literature, *Three Men in a Boat* (1889) has been translated into Russian nine times starting from the 1890<sup>s</sup>. Jerome's book in different Russian translations has been published in millions of copies. Several generations of Russian readers considered the book to be an example of English humour and of Englishness itself. Stories from the English original were included into school textbooks, and thousands of people during the Soviet period were able to quote the text. In 1979, a Russian adaptation (director N. Birman) was made with three lady-travelers in a different boat to encounter the original men added by the film director, and, as is well-known, the film was very popular and is still well-remembered.

The same is true about Oscar Wilde and W. Somerset Maugham and the place their works occupy in the Russian readers' estimation. Both authors were popular with the Russian readers during the Soviet period in the English original and in translation. It is true that not so many foreign writers were translated in the USSR due to strict censorship based, primarily, on ideological reasons – the fact that many critics were inclined to use as an explanation of the popularity of the officially licensed few. Though

tempting, the explanation turned out to be not exhaustive, because Oscar Wilde remains to be very popular with contemporary readers, high school and college students irrespective of the fact that a vast quantity of the best works of literature are available in the original and Russian translation now. We can state that Oscar Wilde's books have never lost their appeal for the Russian reader. The tradition of reception can be said to be playing a certain role in this particular case of Oscar Wilde in Russian estimation when his works seem to occupy a much more central place in Russian readers' perception than in the English public evaluation.

So, due to the shift of translated books from the periphery to the center the English canon in Russian translation becomes different from the English canon in the original.

Time shift is a general term to describe a belated translation of a work of literature in a target culture caused by a number of reasons, with ideology, censorship, publishers' policy being the most obvious among them, not to mention accidental circumstances such as translators' preference and random choice.

The results of the above-mentioned late appearance of some important and influential source texts in a new cultural context can lead to a distortion of objective national literary history. Consequently, a new, imaginative canon of a foreign literature appears in the target culture – a canon characterized by a marked discrepancy as compared with the original canon.

Russian literary history provides numerous examples of the above-mentioned discrepancy. Some of them will be discussed in detail to clarify the point.

The reception history of Jane Austen's novels in Russia is, undoubtedly, a special case, though not a unique one. As C. Nepomnyashchy states in the chapter devoted to Russian reception of Austen in *The Reception of Jane Austen in Europe* volume, «the posthumous response to Austen's works across Europe has followed a rough pattern of discovery and appreciation by the educated elite and later adoption by a popular audience. This has made Austen's reception a bellwether for rival claims both by keepers of high culture and devotees of mass culture» [Nepomnyashchy 2007: 345].

Yet the pattern was slightly different in Russia – mostly due to the late translation of the author's works into Russian, which happened only in the late twentieth century.

Many leading English authors were well known in Russia in the eighteenth – nineteenth centuries, though there was an obvious shortage of translators from the English language at the beginning of the period, as French and German were the dominant European foreign languages in Russia. Most English works of literature used to come to the Russian reading public via the so-called Interlingua, the French language making the main mediator of the epoch, when English literary works were rendered into Russian from their French translations. Not surprisingly, Pushkin, a real Russian-French bilingual person (as many Russian aristocrats of the epoch) was first acquainted with the English works of literature in French. Only by the last decade of his life, Pushkin had learned English to be able to read English literature in the original.

Generally, though, it was not until the mid-nineteenth century when English books of fiction were translated into Russian directly from their originals en masse. Significantly, English works of fiction of the period were immediately

translated into Russian and published in the Russian journals that had gained immense popularity by the 1840s. Paradoxically, though, Jane Austen was neither translated nor reviewed for the whole period of the nineteenth – the most part of the twentieth centuries in Russia. *Pride and Prejudice* was first published in the USSR in English in 1961, and only after that in the Russian translation made by I. Marshak, which happened in 1967. Though the circulation of the volume with I. Marshak's translation and an introductory article by eminent scholar Nina Demurova was 20 000 copies (not a very big one by the late-Soviet standards), it was published by the academic publishing house of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR – we will agree that «Austen remained largely the property of the hide-bound Soviet scholarly establishment; very much, that is, in the realm of the academic» [Nepomnyashchy 2007: 346].

Undoubtedly, there exists a strong temptation to explain the Austen case – her absence in Russia – by political reasons, namely, the prevailing and oppressive domineering of the so-called socialist realism as the state-approved literary movement in the USSR, as T. Kenney does in her article entitled *Jane Austen, Revolution, Socialist Realism and Reception* (2011). The author states that «socialist realism was the only accepted artistic style in most Communist countries: abstract impressionism, the bourgeois novel, love stories, domestic comedy – all were considered decadent if not counter-revolutionary» [Kenney 2011: 98]. From our point of view, this is only partly true – though Soviet literary history is full of real drama when ideology dominated and suppressed creativity, officialdom with its socialist realism theory did not fully subdue the real literary development. Paradoxically, Jane Austen's novels were not just disapproved by the Soviet censors and critics but were generally overlooked by nineteenth century Russian critics, translators, and the public. It is a well-known fact that Jane Austen's name was mentioned in the Russian journals only twice, in 1854 and 1871, both times in passing, among other English women novelists, – and critically enough, since these writers' works were «not in the spirit of contemporary Russian literature: that is, novels that adopt strong social and political stances» [Nepomnyashchy 2007: 343]. Therefore, the Soviet neglect can be logically and with good reason viewed as a long-lasting reception tradition. The neglect showed not only in the absence of Jane Austen's books in Russian, but also in the total absence of her name in the Soviet textbooks on English literature, the situation that lasted almost until the end of the twentieth century. When all her novels were finally translated into Russian in the last decades of the twentieth century, their appearance coincided with the numerous Austen's screen-versions popularity, thus Austen's reception history in Russia did not fully follow the route suggested by C. Nepomnyashchy: Jane Austen's novels were appropriated by mass culture almost immediately after their translation into Russian. Thus, Jane Austen fell out of the Russian history of the English novel, which clearly shows in the shortage, almost lack of profound scholarly research of her works in Russian (with a few exceptions mentioned by C. Nepomnyashchy). It is true that Jane Austen's works have found their way to contemporary Russian textbooks of English literature, but the process is far from being complete. Significantly, the first Austen's biography in Russian was only released

in 2013 – Colibri Publishers in Moscow made a translation of *Jane Austen: A Life* by Claire Tomalin, a well-acclaimed biography that was first published in England in 2000.

From our point of view, the Austen case in Russia can vividly demonstrate that non-translation of some important text or texts of fiction results in different consequences. First, the original national canon (English in this case) is distorted in the target (Russian) culture. Besides, the belatedly translated books of fiction are displaced (more often than not) as compared with the place they occupy in the original canon, Jane Austen in Russian translation making a good example of the phenomenon.

A similar absence not only of individual English authors, but also of literary movements can be clearly seen in twentieth century English literature in Russian translation. To clarify the point, we suggest looking at the Contents of the *English Literature Textbook* by M. Hecker, T. Volosova, and A. Doroshevich, that reads in the following way (there are no omissions or changes):

«Periods in English 20<sup>th</sup> century Literature»

«William Somerset Maugham. *The Luncheon*» (*the text of the short story is given unabridged*)

«Katherine Mansfield. *A Cup of Tea*» (*the text of the short story is given unabridged*)

«Richard Aldington. *Death of a Hero*»

«Archibald Joseph Cronin. *The Citadel*»

«Graham Greene. *Life of Graham Greene. Literary work. The Quiet American*»

«James Aldridge» [Hecker et al 1975: 175]

There are clearly several points that attract the reader's attention: first, the names of all the English modernists are left out and never mentioned in the book; besides, the names of great authors (Graham Greene, who was much published and widely read in the USSR) go side by side with authors of more modest achievements. Though James Aldridge was much approved by the Soviet officials due to his political views, widely published, and awarded with the Lenin Prize in 1972, his books, except, probably, for *The Last Inch*, were never extremely popular with the readers.

Sometimes the absence of translation that has long lasting consequences can be explained by political reasons. To clarify the point, we will make a digression and suggest some examples from American literature in the Russian translation history. The Civil War of 1861–1865 in America is considered to have become one of the central events in the country's collective memory, where both sides, the Unionists and the Confederates are present and reflected by their own images. It is a well-known fact that during the American Civil War and immediately after it the Russian intelligentsia and broad public opinion ardently supported the Unionists (the North). The support applied to different spheres, including literature and translation, when books written from the Northern perspective were immediately translated and culturally appropriated, while the South-

ern perspective was rarely, if ever, mentioned. A famous anti-slavery novel *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe, which was first published in 1852, became immediately popular with the Russian intelligentsia, first in the English original, and later – in the Russian translation that followed in 1858. The translation was not easily published, since the Russian censors found too many correlations between the novel's plot and the Russian peasant revolts and disturbances – the 1850s were turbulent years, when Russian serfdom was much debated. During the second half of the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries, *Uncle Tom's Cabin* was translated into Russian several times, and its popularity constantly grew. By the late Soviet period, it got a status of a young adult historic fiction book enjoyed by a vast majority of the Soviet young adult readers. Conversely, the Southern perspective was crystallized in the myth of the 'Lost Cause', shaped Southern regional identity and was subsequently reflected in a number of books of fiction. The most famous of them *Gone with the Wind* by Margaret Mitchell appeared in print in 1936 and was an immediate and enormous success.

Despite its worldwide fame, the novel only appeared in Russian translation by Tatyana Ozerskaya in 1991. In the preface to the first Russian edition of M. Mitchell's novel, an eminent critic Peter Palievsky stated: «Scarlett O'Hara... has finally come to us dressed up in a new attire, which she liked so much, – in the Russian language» [Палиевский 1991: 7]<sup>1</sup>. The Russian translation appeared only three years after the famous 1939 Hollywood film *Gone with the Wind* was released in the Soviet Union, and millions of people speaking Russian enjoyed it for the first time in history. Thus, both the book and the film reception were delayed for more than half a century due to political preferences and reasoning, and the picture of the American literature objective development in the Russian perception was clearly distorted.

One might claim that literary translation is a specific field with its own target audience. What is more, other spheres of translation outnumber it vastly. However, it is this sphere that plays an extremely important role in cross-cultural communication since it shapes the foreign culture image in a target environment. The influence and interaction are far from being unidirectional, that is why a literary canon under translation undergoes a series of transformations. We have analyzed transformations in question using the Russian – English literary translations case and formulated a number of regularities to accompany this process, their reasons and consequences. The Russian – English case is certain to be not a unique one, though every interaction between cultures and literatures is characterized by specific regularities. These regularities can make a valuable contribution to the history of objective evaluation of a particular national literature and to literary/cultural contacts theory.

<sup>1</sup> Translated from Russian by the authors of the article.

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