

THE ROLE OF TRANSLATION IN THE SYSTEM OF UKRAINIAN CULTURE XIX – XX CENTURY

Al'oshyna M.D. (Kyiv)

From the epoch of ancient Kyiv foreign literature in translation plays a great role in our cultural life as mean of education and as mean of self-expression and language enrichment. The majority of notable Ukrainian translators of the past were devotees of translation. They chose it as the instrument that was an effective mean to improve their skills. Ukrainian translation had quite difficult way of its establishment. Ukrainian translators tried to overcome restrictions of language with the help of translation. Thus translation had not only educative but also nation building functions. The choice of texts for translation was stipulated by the cultural needs of readers of that time and changed with the time. As S.Pavlychko asserted, between XIX – XX centuries this choice was stipulated by modernizing needs, an attempt to make up for certain lag of Ukrainian literature from leading European literatures, that was caused by difficult circumstances of its development.

In XIX cen. translation activity in Ukraine was extended. The majority of writers of that time were translators. Among them there were: I.Franko, L.Ukrainka, P.Kulish, L.Borovykovskyi, P.Nishchynskyi, S.Rudanskyi, M.Starytskyi, P.Hrabovskyi, V.Samiylenko. Translations executed in XIX – XX cen. were fit into the cultural context of Ukraine, having enriched it with the creative work of leading figures of world literature. At the same time they contributed to the development of Ukrainian language and literature that were officially forbidden by the governmental decrees 1863 and 1876. The appearance of expressive means and literary genres, that hadn't existed in Ukrainian discourse before (such as sonnet, classic tragedy), was greatly stipulated by translations.

As M.Strikha asserts in his monograph “Ukrainian Literary Translation: Between Literature and Nation-Making”, Ukrainian translators tried to fight the right to existence of Ukrainian language, to move Ukrainian writing away from Russian with its

“academic” accuracy, to affirm the full status of Ukrainian language, place it on the same level with other European languages.

First Ukrainian translators started to translate the creative works of notable Russians and Poles. There are two main traditions in Ukrainian translations: classic one that was started by L.Borovykovskyi with his translation of Mitskevich’s sonnet and baroque that was started by P.Kulich. Both these traditions were formed in the 70-s of the XIX cen., when there was an intensive search for the model of the building of modern Ukrainian nation.

In the very difficult conditions, when the government of Petersburg banned Ukrainian translation unconditionally; when it was possible to print these translations legally in Halychyna only, these translations had not only informative but also nation building function. The number of translated poetical works, prose and scientific books increased greatly at the end of XIX. Besides, translation goes beyond merely fiction. Scientific texts are also translated here. Ukrainian language sounds from the stage not only in dramatic but also in opera plays. With the abolition of the greatest bans on Ukrainian language in 1905 translation is being affirmed in all Ukrainian editions and in Ukrainian theatre of Naddipryanshchyna.

In April 1906 in Kyiv on the initiative of I.Steshenko the non-periodic publishing house “Vsesvitnya biblioteka” (World Library) was established. It had an intention to include only Ukrainian translations of the works of belles-lettres and also scientific and publicistic texts. Translations were published in periodicals and anthologies (besides that, they were calculated for mass readers), they also sounded from the stage of the first stationary Ukrainian theatre of M.Sadovskyi in Kyiv.

So, Ukrainian translation influenced greatly on the development of original Ukrainian writing, enriching its stylistic, genre and thematic horizons, going beyond the frames of peasant’s life. Ukrainian translators tried to overcome the stereotype on “household language”, they were aimed to affirm full status of Ukrainian language and culture, place it on the same level with other European languages. Moreover, the

appearance of Ukrainian translations of the notable works of world literature showed fitness of Ukrainian language for translation and usage.