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THE POETRY OF SARAH TEASDALE: STYLISTIC AND TRANSLATION ASPECTS

Abstract. The paper considers the lexical and stylistic devices in the poetry of the outstanding American writer Sarah Teasdale and the techniques of their translation. The major topics of her poetry are singled out which include nature and love. It is stressed that among the main lexical units of the semantic field “Nature” such words as star, moon, spring, birds predominate. Nature is described with the help of anthropomorphic metaphors and similes, in particular extended metaphors. Such tropes are a distinctive feature of Teasdale’s style. On the one hand, the poetess reveals her spiritual connection with the moon and the star which can be explained by mutual loneliness. On the other hand, Teasdale demonstrates her admiration with the beauty of the nature and the beauty of the night sky. The second important theme of her poetry and, in particular, her imagery, is love. Her emotions are described in paradoxical phrases, like *Only the lonely are free*. The poetess expresses the joy of love and, at the same time, looks for solitude. The article proves that Teasdale is unique in the American literature of the twentieth century by her appeal to nature, by the abundant use of the names of natural objects as components of her images. The reverse type of metaphors, i.e. biomorphic and zoomorphic metaphors, are used by the writer to compare herself with a bird or a flower. An interesting example of extended metaphor based on reverse parallelism can be seen in the poem “The Rose and the Bee” where the lovers imagine themselves the rose and the bee. This image can be interpreted as the striving to find and keep the love, “to protect the love with petals”. The poem includes metaphors combined with parallel constructions and anaphora which create stylistic convergence, a very foregrounded stylistic device for achieving aesthetic and musical effect. The translations of Teasdale’s poems were done by Yuliya Yakymchuk and Yuliya Vintonyak, the graduates of our department. The young translators skillfully reproduced the author’s original metaphors and retained the imagery. One of the



translation techniques used was modulation, the aim of which was retaining the rhyme and reducing the length of the lines. Lexical transformations, in particular synonymic substitution and specification, were also applied to reproduce the rhyme. The conclusion is made that stylistic convergence and the use of extended metaphors as a distinctive feature of Teasdale's individual style help to reveal the emotional state of the poetess, her conceptual vision of nature and love.

Keywords: individual style, stylistic device, extended metaphor, stylistic convergence, alliteration, translation technique, modulation.

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ПОЕЗІЯ САРИ ТІЗДЕЙЛ: СТИЛІСТИЧНІ ТА ПЕРЕКЛАДАЦЬКІ АСПЕКТИ

Анотація. У статті розглядаються лексичні та стилістичні засоби індивідуального стилю видатної американської поетеси Сари Тіздейл та характеризуються прийоми їх перекладу. Основні теми її поезії визначаються як захоплення красою природи та кохання. Підкреслено, що серед лексичних одиниць семантичного поля “Природа” найчастіше вживаються такі слова, як *star, moon, spring, birds*. Природа описується за допомогою антропоморфних метафор і порівнянь. Такі семантичні типи тропів є відмінною рисою стилю Тіздейл. З одного боку, поетеса виявляє свій духовний зв’язок зі світом природи, з місяцем і зіркою, що можна пояснити взаємною самотністю. З іншого боку, Тіздейл виражає своє захоплення красою природи і нічного неба. Друга важлива тема її поезії, зокрема образності, – це кохання. Свої емоції вона описує парадоксальними фразами: *Only the lonely are free*. Поете са виражає радість кохання і водночас шукає самотності. У статті висловлено думку, що Тіздейл є унікальною письменницею в американській літературі двадцятого століття завдяки своєму зверненню до природи, завдяки широкому використанню назв природних об’єктів як компонентів своєї образності. Зворотні типи метафор, тобто біоморфні та зооморфні, використовуються письменницею для порівняння себе з птахом або квіткою. Цікавим прикладом розгорнутої метафори, що базується на зворотному паралелізмі, є вірш “*The Rose and the Bee*”, в якому закохані уявляють себе трояндою та бджолою. Цей образ можна

інтерпретувати як бажання знайти і зберегти кохання, “захистити кохання пелюстками”. Вірш містить метафори у сполученні з паралельними конструкціями і анафорою, що створює стилістичну конвергенцію, дуже помітний стилістичний засіб для досягнення естетичного і музичного ефекту. Переклади віршів Тіздейл виконано випускницями нашої кафедри Юлією Якимчук та Юлією Вінтоняк. Молоді перекладачки майстерно відтворили оригінальні метафори і зберегли авторську образність. Одним з використаних перекладацьких прийомів була модуляція, мета якої збереження рими і зменшення довжини рядків.

Лексичні трансформації, зокрема синонімічні заміни і конкретизація, також застосовано для збереження рими. Зроблено висновок, що стилістична конвергенція та розгорнуті метафори як характерна риса індивідуального стилю Сари Тіздейл допомагають виявити емоційний стан поетеси, її концептуальне бачення природи і кохання.

Ключові слова: індивідуальний стиль, стилістичний засіб, розгорнута метафора, стилістична конвергенція, алітерація, перекладацький прийом, модуляція.

Formulation of the problem. The American women’s poetry of the 19-20th centuries is one of the greatest achievements is one of the world literature. The emotional, metaphoric and philosophical poems by Emily Dickinson are well known in Ukraine. Her poetry was translated by Hrygoriy Kochur, Valeriy Kykot, Marta Tarnavska. However, the poems by Sarah Teasdale and Edna Millay who belong to the first half of the 20th century are not so popular. In particular, Sarah Teasdale (1884-1933) whose poetry is distinguished by the original and rich imagery, by its emotional character, received very little attention in the Ukrainian literary science and linguistics. Therefore, the novelty of this article lies in the detailed analysis of the main themes of Teasdale’s poems, the tropes used and the devices of their translation.

Analysis of the recent researches. The analysis of poetry belongs to the sphere of the poetics. Poetry is known to be a specific genre of literature. The function of poetry is to produce emotional or intellectual effect on the reader. As Francis Jones justly states, in poetry sense is transferred by means of imagery, sound symbolism, implicit meanings [6, p. 127]. In its turn, poetics, in particular cognitive poetics, is closely connected with stylistics.

Among the most detailed investigations of the role of stylistics and stylistic analysis in poetry translation we can mention the articles by Jean



Boase-Beier [5]. She emphasizes that stylistics can help translators to understand the major problematic aspects of the source and target texts, their difference and the devices of retaining the main lexical and stylistic features of the original [5, p. 6]. Another contribution to this field has been done by Kirsten Malmkjaer [2004] who introduced the term “translational stylistics”. She emphasizes the cognitive context of the source and target texts [7, p. 6]. Considers how the key images, the main stylistic devices are retained in the target text.

The stylistic aspect of Sarah Teasdale’s poetry is represented by metaphors and similes and by the repetitions of lexical units from the semantic field “Nature”. Among the first translators of her poetry in the independent Ukraine was the graduate of our department Yuliya Yakymchuk. Her translations were published in the Vsesvit literary magazine in 2012. The author of this article analyzed stylistic convergence in three poems by Teasdale and the devices of its translation [8, p. 57-58]. A more detailed study of Sarah Teasdale’s works was done by Yuliya Lazutkina, the Master student of Sumy State University [2]. In her thesis she analyzes implicit images (symbols) in Teasdale’s poems and the translation of these images by professional and amateur translators. Yuliya Lazutkina investigates poetry from the viewpoint of literary science, and not so much from stylistic point of view.

The objective of this article is to characterize the major themes in Teasdale’s poems, the key tropes and lexical as well as stylistic devices of their translation by Yuliya Yakymchuk and Yuliya Vintonyak. The methods used in our research include the method of linguopoetic analysis of the key concepts in the poetry by Teasdale, the method of stylistic analysis for determining the types of tropes and their semantics, and the method of comparative analysis for defining the main translation transformations in rendering key tropes and lexical units.

Statement of the basic material. Our acquaintance with Teasdale’s poetry began with her poem “There will come soft rains”. The poem was included in the collection of stories by Ray Bradbury “The Martian Chronicles”. The poem begins with the description of peaceful nature where everything will be as usual:

There will come soft rains and the smell of the ground,
And swallows circling with their shimmering sound,
And frogs in the pools singing at night,
And wild plum trees in tremulous white [...]

This abundance of nature emphasized by enumeration and polysyndeton is contrasted to the future life without people:



And not one will know of the war, not one
Will care at last when it is done.
Not one would mind, neither bird nor tree
If mankind perished utterly. [4, p. 285]

This apocalyptic poem is very topical today, in the light of the tragic events in our country. The poetess foregrounds the immortality of nature and insanity of people who waged a war which resulted in the disappearance of mankind. The stylistic device of antithesis is one of the most common in Teasdale's lyrics. It should be noted that a well-known Ukrainian translator Dmytro Palamarchuk rendered the initial lines of the poem in the present tense instead of future which contradicts to the idea of the text that nature will outlive the people:

Дощі випадають, над гладдю ріки
Зі співом кружляють прудкі ластівки [...]

Therefore we consider the translation by our graduate Yuliya Yakymchuk published in the "Vsesvit" literary magazine in 2012 more exact and adequate:

Там ласкаві випадуть дощі
І пахощами сповниться земля,
І ластівки кружлятимуть тоді,
Іскристим співом полонять поля. [3, p. 51].

In this translation Yuliya Yakymchuk made insignificant transformations which do not distort the sense of the poem, e.g. lexical replacement (soft – ласкаві), partitioning, and she chose a very nice equivalent for the synaesthetic epithet *shimmering* – іскристим.

We can single out three main topics in her art: the description of nature, the relationship and connection of the author with nature, the joy and sadness of love.

If we study the lexical units from the semantic field "Nature" in the poems we can see that the most widely used words are: *star, moon, spring, water, bird*. The word *star* functions in 6 out of the 20 analyzed poems: *My sun and stars are you* ("Song"); *The virginal white evening star* ("Twilight"). One poem is completely devoted to the description of the star which is depicted not only as a celestial body, but also as an object with some spiritual value:

I saw a star slide down the sky,
Binding the north as it went by,
Too burning and too quick to hold,
Too lovely to be bought or sold,
Good only to make wishes on
And then forever to be gone. [1, p. 73-74]



Especially this spiritual connection of the writer with a star is foregrounded in the poem “February Twilight”. The text produces an impression of the silent dialog with the star. It is interesting to note that the poetess uses the word combination *a single star*. On the one hand, the idea of loneliness is emphasized – the star is single and the woman is alone. This idea is realized in other texts which will be shown later. On the other hand, Teasdale demonstrates her unity with the nature, their mutual understanding, mutual sympathy. This connection is foregrounded by means of reverse parallelism in the second stanza – *I watched the star – the star watched me*.

I stood beside a hill
Smooth with new-laid snow,
A single star looked out
From the cold evening glow.
There was no other creature
That saw what I could see -
I stood and watched the evening star
As long as it watched me. [1, p. 57]

Yuliya Yakymchuck skillfully rendered this type of syntactical repetition: *І дивилась на мене зоря, / Доки я дивилась на неї*. One of the typical features of Teasdale's poetry is also a wide use of alliterations which can be seen in this verse. The sounds [s] and [l] are repeated in the semantically important words which describe the winter nature – 8 and 7 times correspondingly – which are partially reproduced in the target text but with lesser frequency. The translator applied the device of metaphorization in two lines which corresponds to the text semantics: *new – laid snow – сніг пригорнув в обійми; I could see – мій погляд торкався до неї*.

Стояла я біля гори,
Яку сніг пригорнув в обійми.
Ясна зірка світила мені
І дивилась крізь холод вечірній.
Там не було нікого – лиш я,
Лиш мій погляд торкався до неї.
І дивилась на мене зоря,
Доки я дивилась на неї. [3, p.50]

The stylistic transformations introduced by Yuliya Yakymchuk are in accordance with the style of Teasdale's poems, i.e. the use of anthropomorphic metaphors and similes in the description of the nature. Only I would suggest translating the word *single* literally – *самотня*. In such way the semantic and phonetic aspects of the original are better retained. It is necessary to note that anthropomorphic imagery, i.e. ascribing human



features to inanimate or animate objects was quite typical in the poetry of the early twentieth century. We can find the associations of this Tisdale's poem with a well-known verse by Lesya Ukrainka in which she seems to talk with spring as if it were a human being:

Стояла я і слухала весну,
Весна мені багато говорила,
Співала пісню дзвінку, голосну,
То знов таємно-тихо шепотіла.

The use of anthropomorphic metaphors and similes can be considered one of the main features of Teasdale's style. The comparison of leaves and trees with people in the poem "May Day" is based on the similarity, more imaginary than real, of the objects:

Red small leaves of the maple
Are clenched like a hand,
Like girls at their first communion
The pear trees stand. [1, p. 61]

The whole poem is optimistic, the poetess marks different signs of spring which arouse joy and admiration in her; *bird song, raindrops, the world shining with rain*. Translating this stanza, Yuliya Vintonyak made use of such syntactical transformation as permutation, i.e. change in the structure of the second sentence, and addition of the epithet *тендітні* for rhyming. Also, the translator applied sense development as a type of modulation in order to interpret the image *the pear trees stand like girls*:

Кленові листочки – як
долоньки тендітні.
Фруктові дерева стоять в рядочок,
ніби у церкві діти. [1, p. 61]

One of the symbolic words for the poetess is *the moon*. It is an object which possesses certain aesthetic value for her as she compares it with a flower: *The moon is a curving flower of gold* ("Tonight"). In this case we can see a biomorphic metaphor uniting the objects of the same conceptual sphere "Nature". Such imagery is less frequent in her individual style. In general, Teasdale prefers to compare the objects which belong to different conceptual spheres. At the same time, the author finds something similar in the moon with herself, because she considers the moon is as important for the sky as she for her beloved person:

The moon is a curving flower of gold,
The sky is still and blue;
The moon is made for the sky to hold,
And I for you. [1, p. 55]



The star, the moon and other objects of nature reflect the author's mood, her psychological state, her loneliness. In "Morning Song" Teasdale explicitly states her spiritual unity with the moon:

O white moon, you are lonely,
It is the same with me,
But we have the world to roam over,
Only the lonely are free.

The last line of the poem deserves special attention as its aphoristic form reveals the sense of the poetess's imagery and her explicitly expressed unity with the unique objects – the moon, the star, the sun. Paradoxically enough, she dreams of love and at the same time seeks for loneliness.

In our opinion, Teasdale's poetry is unique in the American literature of the twentieth century by the author's appeal to nature, by her use of the objects of nature as components of her imagery. The reverse types of metaphors, zoomorphic and biomorphic, are based on ascribing the features of birds, inanimate objects of nature to human beings: *But I am like a stricken bird / That cannot reach the south* ("The Kiss"); *Our love is dying like the grass* ("November").

By means of these extended metaphors the poetess reveals how her emotional state is close to the processes in the nature. One of the brilliant manifestations of this similarity is the poem "The Rose and the Bee". The poem is a peculiar dialog with a beloved person about how to keep love. The composition of the poem is based on the stylistic syntactical device of reversed parallelism: *If I were a bee and you were a rose – If you were a rose and I were a bee*. Only in the first stanza the extended zoomorphic metaphor is used *a man – a bee*, in the second stanza we can see a biomorphic metaphor *a woman – a rose*. Especially touching and tender is the description of the flight of the bee to find the heart of the rose which will close the leaves to keep the beloved one. The combination of the extended metaphors with parallel constructions and anaphora create stylistic convergence, a very significant stylistic device and a very strong aesthetic and musical effect:

"If I were a bee and you were a rose,
Would you let me in when the gray wind blows?
Would you hold your petals wide apart,
Would you let me in to find your heart,
If you were a rose?"
"If I were a rose and you were a bee,
You should go when you came to me,
I should hold my love on my heart at last,

I should close my leaves and keep you fast,
If you were a bee.” [1, p. 76]

Yuliya Vintonyak skillfully reproduced the melody, the structure and tenderness of the feelings in the poem. She retained the parallel structures and frame repetitions including conditional sentences. As for extended metaphors, the translator applied modulation in the third and fourth lines: *Would you hold your petals wide apart? – Чи відкрив би свої пелюстки чарівні? Would you let me in to find your heart? – Чи до серця свого дав торкнутись мені?* These lexical transformations in translation are intended to retain the rhyme and to foreground the idea of closeness, tenderness. In particular, it concerns the addition of the epithet *чарівні* and the logical substitution of the verb *find* by a more specific verb *торкнутись*.

“Якби я була бджілкою, а трояндою ти,
Чи впустив ти б мене, коли дують вітри?
Чи відкрив би свої пелюстки чарівні,
Чи до серця свого дав торкнутись мені?
Якби був трояндою ти?”

“Якби я був трояндою, а бджілкою ти,
То зі мною зостатись ти могла б назавжди,
Мав би в серці своєму я кохання тримати,
Закрити пелюстки і тебе не відпускати,
Якби була бджілкою ти.” [1, p. 77]

The third aspect of Teasdale's poetry involves revealing the contradictory feelings of love and pain. The poetess writes that she is in love but not happy: *My heart will be a lovely cup / Altho' it holds but pain* (“Alchemy”). Similar to this poem, the inner conflict and contradiction in the author's emotions is expressed by antithesis: *Though love be heaven or love be hell* (“Child, Child”). Especially bitter this confession is realized in the poem «I am alone» where the writer expresses her emotions by two semantically and pragmatically opposite words – *alone and love*:

I am alone, in spite of love,
In spite of all I take and give –
In spite of all your tenderness,
Sometimes I am not glad to live.

Probably this inner conflict became the reason of the tragic death of Teasdale in the prime of her life.

Conclusions. The uniqueness of the poetess's style lies in her wide use of biomorphic tropes, mainly metaphors and similes. The author finds similarity between herself and the star, the moon, because they are lonely and bright. Of course, such imagery corresponds to the traditional associations



with these objects of nature, but Teasdale is especially deep and touching in these associations. Another feature of the author's style involves the use of extended metaphors and similes like the moon-human being, trees- girls, a woman- a bee. Such tropes make the poetry more emotional and create some visual images. In describing her relations and feelings with a beloved person Teasdale makes use of antithesis which foregrounds the contradictory or even tragic character of these relations. Both anthropomorphic and biomorphic metaphors interact with syntactic repetitions such as syntactic anaphora, reverse parallelism. These syntactic devices emphasize the main idea of the poem, make the poetry more rhythmical, melodic and even paradoxical (reverse parallelism).

The translation aspect of our investigation involved the analysis of techniques of retaining the imagery, pragmatics and emotional component in the target texts. The translation of nearly 20 poems into Ukrainian was done for the first time by our graduates Yuliya Yakymchuk (2012) and Yuliya Vintonyak (2021). While rendering metaphors, they retained in most cases the imagery. Among the translation techniques used was sense development the aim of which was retaining the rhyme and reducing the number of words in the poetic line. Lexical replacement and specifications were used in the translation of two poems but they do not distort the semantics of the texts, while such syntactic transformations as partitioning and permutation helped to reproduce the rhyme. Our young translators managed to adequately and rather skillfully recreate the emotional, paradoxical and bitter voice of the wonderful poetess.

The prospects of further research lie in the comparative analysis of Teasdale's poetic style with the style of other great poetesses of the twentieth century such as Edna Millay and Sylvia Platt.

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