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TRANSLATING THE SYMBOLS OF TRIDUUM¹

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*Dedicated to the Ukrainian Soldiers
Whose lives are fitted to the sizes of trenches.
We will never excuse our nation's tears,
We will never forget this pain.*

Abstract: The aim of this paper is to apply tools of cognitive poetics to explore poetics of religious hymns in the mentality of contemporary Polish, Ukrainian and English speakers. The texts under study are hymns from Triduum, a very special time within Roman Catholic Passiontide. The Latin originals as well as Polish, Ukrainian and English translations are used to show how conceptual imagery transforms in the perceptive process, in particular how it has evolved between the ancient text and today's views. The process is even more complicated when these texts are interpreted by Orthodox and Greek Catholic believers. Although the biblical prototexts remain the same, the rites have elaborated their own theological hermeneutics which mostly coincide with the primary sacred language, i.e. Latin. It is also interesting to determine whether a language whose nation has mostly belonged to a different Christian – liturgical and theological – tradition, can recode all semantic features and values.

Keywords: liturgical translation, cognitive poetics, imagery, Triduum, Western Christianity, Catholicism

1. Introduction

The Easter Triduum joins Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday and composes the central part of the liturgical year. This period summarizes the dogmatic essence of Jesus Christ's life: divine sufferings unlock human salvation. Thoroughly

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embedded within the texts of the Triduum are the veneration of Christ's Passion, the glorification of His gift to humankind and the remembrance of His acts and deeds.

The liturgical reform after the Second Vatican Council necessitated new translations in vernaculars. Some languages (like English) quickly prepared new translations of the entire praying cycles (Triduum hymns are recited in the Roman Missal and the Liturgy of Hours); some were slower, requiring up to two decades to translate everything (like Polish); some are still in progress, as Roman Catholicism is not the main religion of its speakers (like Ukrainian). Nevertheless, translation multiplicity offers more successful variants for further retranslations, and the process of translating even Triduum hymns will never cease. The objective of this paper is to assess the possibilities of translation interpretation and choices by applying terms and tools of Cognitive Poetics.

2. Methodological Prerequisites

The cornerstone of this paper lies in the apparatus, principles and implications of Cognitive Poetics which can be applied for in-depth literary interpretations: "It is necessary to know the principles of Cognitive Linguistics, for example, and have a systematic notion of how language and communication works, in order to be able to provide a proper, rational account of literary meanings and effects" [Harrison, Stockwell 2014:219]. Cognitive Studies can always offer a promising and flexible analytical scheme for describing textual connections, cultural associations, and semantic values, which are so important for any translator.

Iconicity is often explored through the prism of sound symbolism, as lexical concepts may not seem very problematic, and source-text grammatical structures have to be overwhelmingly ignored for producing a target text (e.g. Cohen 2015). Lexical means of expression, however, have so many pitfalls that it is important to examine them in a broad cultural and historical context (which sometimes deploys even etymological insights).

The figure-ground relations disclose the depth of interpreting the gestalt, which is visibly asymmetric in the intercultural communication. The textual image and the prototypical image of the same object are usually asymmetric, as well. This is why it is necessary to remember that "the operations of selective attention [are] fundamental to higher mental processes, which are dynamically structured by a distinction between the foreground (focus of attention) and the background" (Sinha 2007: 1279). The focus of attention is decisive in the correct interpretation of a text (or a sign in the text).

3. Texts as Memory

The Liturgy is a sample of ecclesiastical history-making: the events of Christ's life are remembered in connection with moral teachings. Actually, this approach is the reiteration of the ancient attitude to a text, summarized by Horace: "He has won every vote who has blended profit and pleasure, at once delighting and instructing the reader"

(Horace 1942: 479). Delighting and instructing performed really well in aural cultures, and, since most medieval societies were predominantly illiterate, listening and easily remembering determined the success of rendering a proper message and evangelizing.

Symbolically, the first hymn of the Triduum contains the quintessential term 'memory' ("O memoriale mortis Domini"). All the hymns, venerating the Triduum in Latin (Liturgia 1977), are unified by the idea of Christ's death, which generates life, atonement via empathic sufferings, and pain, which brings glory and the gift of salvation. Death is regarded as the end of earthly life, but it is the gateway to a blessed eternal life ("O memoriale mortis Domini" (Thursday, Vespers)). Death is even presented as a price – or debt – payment ("Salva Redemptor, plasma tuum nobile" (Friday / Saturday, Terce)) that turns our attention from the present calamity to a future life which will be full of benevolence and benediction.

Passions are depicted not like detrimental emotional states, but with due respect ("En acetum, fel, arundo" (Friday, Matins)), which can generate more hope connected with the grandeur of Christ's Deed and Sacrifice instead of creating just a gloomy mood of fatality. In the time of mourning, lament is also substituted by the feeling of triumph: believers' salvation is reached in contradiction to astute seductions, and it is treated as a victory. This message may be underestimated in usual everyday contexts ("Pange, lingua, gloriosi proelium certaminis" (Friday, Office of Readings)). The Cross, where Christ was crucified, turns into a sign of benediction and a cause of our gratitude ("Crux, mundi benedicto" (Friday / Saturday, Sext); "Per cruce, Christe, quaesumus" (Friday / Saturday, Nones)): the awareness of remembering our thankfulness to God inspires an emotional equilibrium for believers who are to connect faith and despair in the narration of the Passio.

Although a sacrifice, Jesus Christ is never a victim: He is our Lord ("Christe, caelorum Domine" (Saturday, Office of Readings)), and He is our triumphant King ("Vexilla regis prodeunt" (Friday, Vespers); "Auctor salutis unice" (Saturday, Vespers)). This vision is a motivation for sharing joy and anticipated perfection among believers. The King's triumph lies in His justice, as well ("Tibi, Redemptor omnium" (Saturday, Matins)), and we appeal to Him for our gifts because of His fairness and our wish to be salvaged.

In the Latin Liturgy of Hours (Liturgia 1977), we see how this consistency of images shapes a general picture of suffering and salvation, and the emotional perception ranges from the fear of one's own death and suffering to the joyful hope of eternal life, salvation. The consistency is more or less rendered in the Polish official translations (Liturgia 1984: vol. 2; cf. Małaczyński 1985: 328), to the extent the translation of religious poetry makes it possible. The Ukrainian translations, which are in the process of preparation by Anatoliy Olikh [manuscripts shared by the translator (2022)] or in the separate existing translations (Liturhiya 2007; Velyky 2019), render approximate consistency as well. In the Anglophone world, "Liturgia horarum" exists in two English-language variants: the three-volume "Divine Office" for use in the UK and Australia (Divine 1974) and the four-volume "Liturgy of Hours" for use in the US and Canada (Liturgy 1976: vol. 2). Still, the collection of English-language Triduum hymns is different in both translations. The reason for such a discrepancy is that the Holy See does not require all of the hymns from the Liturgy of Hours be translated into

vernaculars (Małaczyński 1985: 328). As they were permitted to use original hymns, Anglophone translators and compilers incorporated a number of texts from the very rich English tradition of religious hymns. So, the consistency of Latin images is different in the Latin, Polish, Ukrainian texts on the one hand and in the English-language translations on the other hand.

4. Iconicity

The phenomenon of iconicity was described in the writings by Charles Peirce who defined the ‘icon’ as the closest concrete experience of our senses, the ‘index’ is one step further to abstraction, and the ‘symbol’ is the most abstract one. Thus, “the skull iconically signifies the living person, it points to the fact of human mortality, and it symbolizes Death” (Freeman 2009: 170-171). Iconicity is a foundation for masterful religious intention and interpretation in texts. It is enough to select some key words in order to understand how one word is important for ruling out the rest of intended message.

| Word | Icon | Index | Symbol |
|----------------------|---------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Lingua (tongue) | Human beings | Speech | Glorification |
| Vexillum (banner) | Army or authority tool | Service | Victory; foundation of a colony |
| Pellicanus (pelican) | Caring being | Mercy at one’s own expanse | Inclination to sacrifice |

In the Bible, the tongue often stands for a language or an utterance. The tongue is also a bearer of God’s message (in a prophet’s speech) or of a message to God (in a believer’s speech). Tongues may mean not only many speakers of one language, but also a speaker of many languages or the languages themselves. In the phrase “Pange lingua gloriosi,” the translators opted for a variant between the interpretation of collectiveness (many nations speak) and that of individuality (an individual believer speak). While the Polish, some Ukrainian and the 1974 English translations do not interfere in further cognitive space, being sufficient for correct interpretation, the 2018 Ukrainian and 1975 English translations followed the contrary paths: the phrase “язик людський” denotes the whole human race, and the expression “I shall praise” concentrates the reader’s attention on the speaker’s personality. The Latin verb ‘pango’ does not reveal glorifying associations, but is limited to the process of composing poems which can be of various orientations. The glorification, thus, is encoded in the key word “lingua,” but overtly manifested in the following adjective ‘gloriosus.’ The presence of particular words clearly indicating a glorifying song (Eng. ‘praise glory,’ Pol. ‘sławić,’ Ukr. ‘славити,’ ‘оспівувати’) pulls the associations of glorification from ‘tongue’ to themselves, and its cognitive symbolism is not as effective in the translations.

Banners have always been symbols of highest authority, even to the possession of territory (inserting a banner in the territory meant passing the territory to the possession of the owner of the banner). Jesus’s victory is tightly associated with the final

possession of good Christians' souls (possession is loosely connected with salvation, but God's possession and the Devil's possession differ). The very banners may also designate the Triumphant Church (in Heaven). In the translations, all the variants (End. 'banner,' Pol. 'sztandar,' Ukr. 'хоругва' and 'знамено') successfully render the formal image of a battle flag, and its symbolic aim is closely tied to victory, though it may also mean divine assistance, personal strength and authoritative dictum.

In Catholic symbolism, the pelican is viewed as a bird that feeds its young with her own blood, thus symbolizing Christ sacrificing himself for Man. The original story was of Egyptian origin and mentioned another bird, but in Catholicism, this image of sacrificing mercy was well-known and venerated, partially due to the direct connection with blood in the context of the Last Supper and the Holy Communion. This image is well-known in English literature, so the expression "pelican of heaven" is easily interpreted as a metaphor for Jesus. In Polish literature and folk culture, this image is not so popular, and the Polish translator decided to avoid it (the choice was followed by the Ukrainian translator Kostiantyn Smal). This image is less known in Ukrainian sacral art, but Olikh made a decision to preserve it due to his personal experience of observing it in Ukraine's Roman Catholic churches. His experience is shared by some Catholics, but most Ukrainians will have trouble identifying the intended iconicity.

By the way, 'klepsydra' (hourglass) also signifies an obituary in the Polish culture. Perhaps, we can speak about the circle of iconicity: at first, the hourglass was an icon of time, which turned out to be the index of flowing / flying time and the symbol of death or the end of life. Finally, it reappeared as a new icon of an obituary. This starts a new circle of indexing and symbolization.

5. Figure-Ground

The classical criteria for describing gestalt – area, proximity, closedness, symmetry, good continuation, – which were suggested by Julian Hochberg and describe how "the mind organizes perception into Figure and Ground" (Tsur 2009: 239-240), can be very informative for revealing the asymmetry of interlingual and intercultural communication. They can help reveal zones of confusion where a translator's choice of speaking/writing and a receiver's choice of hearing/reading may not overlap.

Area can help a translator add amplifying words (often adjectives) in cases where they need extra syllables for correcting the rhythm. The Cross is typically tied to suffering and pain (and as a pre-Christian variant: torture and punishment), but the Church wants to see it or make us see it as a sign of hope. This is why the lexeme 'Cross' is surrounded by inspiring metaphorical descriptions 'spes unica' (unique hope), 'mysterium' (mystery, mystic essence), 'mundi benedictio' (the blessing of the world). All of them shape a positive macro image of the Cross. Instead of hurting and making wounds, the Cross is seen as hope, but as hope is usually associated with light, the Cross shines, too (Lat. 'fulgeo,' Eng. 'shine,' Pol. 'jaśnić,' Ukr. 'ясніти'). Meantime, amplifying epithets appear: Pol. 'chwalebny' (worth praising), Ukr. 'любий' (beloved). These epithets do not render the idea of the verse, but they do not

contradict the usual environment of the lexemes, either. Thus, they can be considered successful additions.

Proximity is important to remember, because in interlingual and intercultural communication speakers of different languages rarely deal with the same objects: even stereotypes and prototypes can vary in material depictions. There has been much debate about whether Jesus Christ was nailed or tied to the cross, or what kind of nails were used for crucifixion. Nails evoke absolutely different images in believers' perceptions, and these images are all caused by modern experience. The search for pitfalls helps a translator and analyst find discrepancies in the perception of a source-text and target-text word. 'Acetum' is a drink produced from a number of fruits. Thus, a contemporary believer, who knows only vinegar produced from apple cider, claims the correctness of translating 'acetum' as 'sour wine.' This translation is never questioned by a member of a highly developed viticulture. Besides, water and vinegar (a drink offered to Christ in traditional stories) was a traditional Roman drink, called 'posca,' which was considered good food along with salted port and cheese. It was posca which Romans drank and shared as their usual drink but not as an act of insult (Alcock 2006: 91). In Greek, where it was initially unfamiliar (Dalby 2003: 270), it was mistranslated as 'ὄξος' (lit.: acetum; vinegar). Thus, in the biblical context, vinegar unjustly became a symbol of suffering.

Closedness is generated by typical experience when a context really matters. The context lays ground for supportive cognitive operations, which can be sporadically misleading. Returning to vinegar, it was considered something unpleasant and painful, because the neighbouring action word was 'to mock.' Yet, in the same fragment of Christ's sufferings, retold by the Apostles Matthew (27:34) and Mark (15:23), the drink is described as wine mingled with gall (Matthew) or myrrh (Mark). The mixture of wine and myrrh is a powerful medicinal drink, which stupefied condemned criminals before their execution and alleviated their pain. This was a custom of pious women of Jerusalem, which was unknown to the editor of the Greek text of St Matthew's Gospel who logically replaced myrrh by gall in order to make the offering bitter and distasteful to Jesus (Dummelow 1978: 717). This is how gall appeared in Catholic symbolism, though the very drink was an act of mercy towards Jesus. So, in the hymn "En acetum, fel, arundo, sputa, clavi, lancea..." two out of six symbols of abuse and humiliation are not historical, but in the source and target texts they are reiterated effectively in order to preserve the Catholic symbolism.

Symmetry is an operative cognitive mechanism, which helps perceive the unknown via tertium comparationis and generates innovative conceptual blends for metaphorical speech and multi-faceted interpretation. The absence of symmetry causes such chaos that it blocks any possibility to compare and joint. The identification of symmetrical objects usually lies in juxtaposing virtually similar things, but symmetry could also cover neighboring entities. In the hymn "Pange lingua gloriosi proelium certaminis" by St. Venantius Fortunatus, the close positioning of the phrases "parentis protoplasti fraus" and "pomum noxiale" makes them a textual symmetry, but they can also overlap in mind.

| | | |
|--------------|----------------------------|-------------------|
| Latin | Parentis protoplasti fraus | Pomum noxiale |
| Literal | Primal progenitor deceived | Fruit corrupting |
| English 1974 | Man's rebellion | Fruit's deceiving |
| Polish | Praojciec zbuntowany | Owoc zgubny |
| Ukr. 2007 | Предок збунтувавшись | Плід гріховний |
| Ukr. 2022 | Прабатько піддався обману | Плід отруйний |

In verse translation, the reiterated ideas influence a translator's mind in such a way that describing features can change their referred object and shift to a neighbouring object. This is what explains the English translation of the pair where the descriptive features change their objects (with the necessary correction): the parent becomes corrupting, and the fruit, deceiving.

The Hymn speaks about Adam and his eating the forbidden fruit. Collecting all the descriptions of Adam from the translations reveals a sample of an asymmetrical line of vertical relationship. The line seems tripartite:

man (1st generation; Eng.) ←
 ← progenitor (2nd or even earlier generation) ←
 ← forefather / ancestor (a very early generation; Lat.,
 Pol. and Ukr.).

The ruined symmetry between these texts generated different images and averted the original message of seeing the whole humankind as Adam's children, though the same person is named in all these texts. In the Slavonic translations, Adam is a far ancestor: this vision eliminates familial associations, but brings more pious veneration, which is shown to ancestors.

Good continuation in translation is the expected and justified extension of an original semantic entity: an additional component makes the idea complete, or it does not distort the intended sense. Otherwise, the successful abridgment of an original semantic series can also be viewed as a successful way out when the intended sense is preserved a smaller number of words. Amplification is cited very often, and abridgment is not so popular, though it can also be quite helpful.

Religious poetry is knotty at times, as it is the following stanza:

Genitori, Genitoque
 Laus et jubilatio,
 Salus, honor, virtus quoque
 Sit et benedictio:
 Procedenti ab utroque
 Compar sit laudatio.

It is no surprise that analysts, who compare source and target texts, question whether it is a true source for those translations. The divine triad is deciphered in much clearer and more typical formulae ("the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit") than the original witty metaphors ("Genitor, Genitus, Procedens"). The additional code 'Trinity' immediately determines the limits of what a receiver should comprehend.

The synonymic cluster ‘laus,’ ‘jubilatio,’ ‘salus,’ ‘honor,’ ‘virtus,’ ‘laudatio,’ ‘benedictio,’ quoted in the whole stanza, renders the two-fold idea of praise and greeting to God. It makes certain sense to compress this range to two words, like ‘cześć’ and ‘chwała’ (Pol.) or ‘похвала’ and ‘слава’ (Ukr. 2022). The 2007 Ukrainian translation deploys the same word ‘слава’ twice. The 1975 English translation installs four textual equivalents: ‘honour,’ ‘glory,’ ‘might’ and ‘merit.’ This variant reshapes all flamboyant synonyms into four key words which render the original amalgamation more accurately. ‘Virtus’ does not sound appropriate in the line of greetings, but the English translation still manages to preserve it. Thus, the original concept remains oblique in the translation, but this is the problem of the original.

6. Conclusion

Cognitive tools offer a rich collection of means, which can be used by translation analysts for interpreting texts and assessing translation quality. More importantly, they can provide methodological support and practical means for dealing with a group of texts which function as a whole but whose contents may be different in various conditions (languages, books, cultures). The play of smaller real texts within an imagined macro text secures the multiplicity and diversity of interpretations, which are the way of how believers reach Divine Wisdom via meditation.

The cultural background of translations depends heavily both on the source text intentions and believers’ conceptual blending of directions and limits. Believers’ mentality may interact with different original informational components, and the blended interpretation is eased by a longer and logical context, but complicated by the lack of factual religious and historical knowledge. In the outcome, historicism may fail and give a venture to new myths, ruining the original catechetical purpose.

Cognitive Poetics has defined many key terms for its description of lexical semantics. Two sets of terms connected with iconicity (icon, index and symbol) and with the figure-ground relations (area, proximity, closedness, symmetry and good continuation) are sets of promising criteria for assessing how the religious macro vision can be rendered in translation with or without the exact naming of source text phenomena. From this perspective, it is also significant for circles of poetic texts in other macro contexts.

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