

Vera Rich as a Translator of Taras Shevchenko: Working Towards Greater Semantic and Rhythmic Accurateness

Dążeniu do większej semantycznej i rytmicznej dokładności: Vera Rich jako tłumaczka Tarasa Szewczenko

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Słowa kluczowe

Taras Szewczenko, Vera Rich, wierszowe tłumaczenie, ponownie tłumaczenie, autokorekta, rytm wiersza, trafność semantyczna, hermeneutyczny ruch, interanimacja

Abstract

This article considers particular nodal points in the translational career of British journalist and poet-translator Faith Elizabeth Joan Rich, better known by her pen name Vera, and the pivotal aspects of her translation strategy oriented at attaining greater semantic accuracy, which often turns out to be “an impossible ideal” (in her own words). Rich had been translating and retranslating the works of Ukrainian Romantic poet and artist Taras Shevchenko (1814-1861) in the endeavour to give the English readers a complete version of Shevchenko’s poetry collection “Кобзар” (“The Kobzar”). The discussion in this article analyzes self-editing as an integral and never-ending stage of the translation process, viewed through the prism of George Steiner’s theory of hermeneutic motion. In particular, it focuses on the Taras Shevchenko Memorial in Washington, D.C., inscribed with 8 lines from Shevchenko’s anti-imperialist poem “The Caucasus” in the translation by Vera Rich. It also compares translation strategies of Ethel

Lilian Voynich and Vera Rich – two congenial interpretators of Shevchenko's poem "Testament" in their striving to reflect the Ukrainian poet's soul, mirror his recognizable identity, and animate in English the ST dynamic fusion of meaning and sound, verse and style.

Abstrakt

Niniejszy artykuł odnosi się do kluczowych momentów w karierze brytyjskiej dziennikarki, poetki i tłumaczki Faith Elizabeth Joan Rich, znanej pod pseudonimem Vera. Przede wszystkim skupia się na istotnych aspektach jej strategii tłumaczeniowej, ukierunkowanej na osiągnięcie jak największej dokładności semantycznej, co według jej własnych słów, często okazuje się być „niemożliwym ideałem”. Rich tłumaczyła i wielokrotnie poprawiała swoje tłumaczenia ukraińskiego poety romantycznego i artysty Tarasa Szewczenki (1814-1861), nie ustając w swoich wysiłkach aby dać angielskim czytelnikom pełną wersję jego wierszy zgromadzonych w tomie „Кобзар” („The Kobzar”). Artykuł podejmuje temat autokorekty, postrzeganej poprzez pryzmat teorii hermeneutycznej ruchu George'a Steinera, jako integralnego i niekończącego się etapu w procesie tłumaczenia. Szczególnej analizie została tutaj poddana ośmiowersowa inskrypcja, która znajduje się na pomniku Tarasa Szewczenki w Waszyngtonie. Jest to fragment jego antyimperialistycznego poematu „Kaukaz” w tłumaczeniu Very Rich. Artykuł porównuje również strategie tłumaczeniowe Ethel Lilian Voynich i Very Rich – dwóch kongenialnych interpretatorek wiersza Szewczenki „Testament”, które dążyły do tego aby odzwierciedlić ducha ukraińskiego poety, jego rozpoznawalną tożsamość i ożywić w języku angielskim dynamiczną fuzję znaczenia i dźwięku, wiersza i stylu oryginału.

Vera Rich as a Translator of Taras Shevchenko: Working Towards Greater Semantic and Rhythmic Accurateness

1. The importance of self-editing

British journalist and poet-translator Faith Elizabeth Joan Rich (24 April 1936 – 20 December 2009), also known as human rights activist and advocate of Ukrainian and Belorussian cultures (her pen name Vera is the direct Ukrainian translation of Faith), had been translating the works of Ukrainian Romantic poet Taras Shevchenko for more than fifty years. Her untimely death from cancer on 29 December 2009 broke off Rich's plans to finish the complete translation of his poetic legacy, collected under the title "Кобзар" ("The Kobzar"). Yet her credentials as an accomplished translator of Shevchenko and other acknowledged Ukrainian poets were confirmed by a special award from the President of Ukraine in 2007.

Always remaining faithful to the source text's vocal harmony, Rich was trying equally hard to recreate its semantic integrity and conciseness. As a telling example of Rich's scrupulous self-editing work towards greater semantic accurateness and lexico-syntactic correspondence to the source text, I will quote an excerpt from Shevchenko's poem "Чигрине, Чигрине..." ("Chyhyryn, O Chyhyryn!"), published in her translation in the 1961 collection and then in the 2007 edition. The autograph of the poem, written in Moscow, is dated 19 February 1844. It is composed as the speaking person's apostrophe to the city of Chyhyryn, the former residency of Ukrainian Hetmans, the administrative and political centre of Ukraine during 1648-1660, as a symbol of Cossack glory in bygone times.

The poet addresses Ukraine from a distant foreign land from where his voice would probably not be heard by his fellow countrymen. Perhaps, they had already forgotten him, just as they had forgotten their heroic grandfathers and the truth about themselves as the descendants of Cossack glory. The poem's persona dreams of restoring this truth, reviving it again. Bitterly lamenting the fate of post-Cossack Ukraine, he opposes himself to his oblivious contemporaries:

А я, юродивий, на твоїх руїнах
Марно сльози трачу; заснула Україна,
Бур'яном укрилась, цвіллю зацвіла,
В калюжі, в болоті серце прогноїла

І в дупло холодне гадюк напустила,
А дітям надію в степу оддала.
А надію...
Вітер по полю розвіяв,
Хвиля морем рознесла¹.

The 1961 version of this excerpt by Rich is as follows:

And I, on thy ruins, demented, remain
And uselessly pour out my tears. But Ukraine
Has fallen asleep, mould-grown, covered in weeds,
Set her heart there to rot in the mud, in a puddle,
Let in poisonous snakes to a tree-trunk's cold hollow,
To her children a hope in the steppe she bequeathed,
But that hope...
The wind scattered over the plain,
The waves swept it over the seas².

In the 2007 version, only the last three lines of this verse remained non-edited:

And I, on thy ruins, demented, stand weeping –
My tears are all vain. Ukraina is sleeping,
Now wild weeds cover her, mould has grown over,
She has rotted her heart in a pool in the marshes,
Into cold hollow tree let a snake pass in,
To her children a hope in the steppe she bequeathed,
But that hope...
The wind scattered over the plain,
The waves swept it over the seas³.

The translator's carving of images has undergone significant changes in the newer edition towards greater similarity with the ST condensed wording (as show the changes in the phrase "uselessly pour out my tears" to "my tears are all vain"), as well as towards the clarity of expression. Take for instance such epithets as "mould-grown, covered in weeds", each one unfolds in the newer version into a clause of the asyndetic compound sentence: "Now wild weeds cover her, mould has grown over". And the verbal ornamentation appears essentially simplified to correspond better with the clear-cut expres-

¹ Т. Шевченко, *Чигрине, Чигрине...* [in:] *Зібрання творів: У 6 т. Т. 1: Поезія 1837-1847*, Київ 2003, pp. 254-255.

² T. Shevchenko, *Song out of Darkness*, London 1961, p.23.

³ T. Shevchenko, *The Rusalka (translation) by Vera Rich – Allpoetry*, [in:] <http://www.allpoetry.com/.../3462574-Taras-Shevchenko--translation--THE-RUSAL...> [5 Jan 2016].

sive reliefs of the ST imagery so that the otiose prolixity should go away. Just compare the lines: “Set her heart there to rot in the mud, in a puddle” (version 1) and “She has rotted her heart in a pool in the marshes” (version 2), “Let in poisonous snakes to a tree-trunk’s cold hollow” (version 1) and “Into cold hollow tree let a snake pass in” (version 2). In fact, the author’s metaphoric expression “дупло холодне” has become a catchphrase in contemporary Ukrainian symbolizing an indifferent, unconcerned heart with vanished senses. But only the newer version for it, “cold hollow tree”, would fully meet the criteria for becoming a catchphrase, while in the previous version the image had been overly fleshed (“a tree-trunk’s cold hollow”) losing the quality of symbol, i.e. its ability to conventionally express the quintessence of the experience of apathy in the human heart.

2. Translation engraved in stone

One particular poem by Shevchenko, “Кавказ” (“The Caucasus”), translated by Rich, has gone down in the history of the USA Capital, Washington, D.C., as an inscription on the granite stela adorned with a relief of Prometheus, at the Taras Shevchenko Memorial, dedicated to the 150th anniversary of Shevchenko’s birth.

Written in the town of Pereyaslav, “The Caucasus” is dated 18 November 1845. This Romantic masterpiece has been of paramount importance for the advancement of Ukrainian Romanticism on the world literary map and has made a far-reaching impact on Ukrainian literary, cultural, and political life. In a narrow sense, the poem was dedicated to Shevchenko’s personal friend Yakiv de Balmen (1813–1845), who was killed during a Russian military mission to the Caucasus, and in a broader sense, to those freedom-loving people of the Caucasus who had been evincing an indomitable spirit and moral ascendancy over the invaders in their longstanding resistance to Russian occupation. And more broadly, Shevchenko was appealing to all his fellow countrymen, as he did in the poem “І мертвим, і живим, і ненарожденим землякам моїм...” (“To My Fellow-Countrymen, in Ukraine and Not in Ukraine, Living, Dead and as yet Unborn My Friendly Epistle”), written shortly after “The Caucasus”.

In “The Caucasus”, Shevchenko glorifies the “great-hearted heroes” of freedom and their sacrificial struggle for human dignity, symbolized by the image of tortured Prometheus at the beginning of the poem, as well as the virtues associated with personal and communal opposition to slavery. His apostrophe to the fighters for freedom of their Motherland has found its ad-

dressees across countries and continents, just as it has across the years of humiliation and repression in present-day Ukraine.

The bronze statue of Shevchenko, sculpted by Leo Mol, a noted Ukrainian Canadian artist, was placed on its pedestal on the 2200 block of P Street NW in Washington, D.C., on 3 June 1964, and the ceremony of unveiling took place on 27 June. The Memorial is maintained by the U.S. Federal Government. On its stela, eight lines from “The Caucasus” in Rich’s translation have been engraved:

...Our soul shall never perish,
Freedom knows no dying,
And the greedy cannot harvest
Fields where seas are lying;
Cannot bind the living spirit,
Nor the living word,
Cannot smirch the sacred glory
Of th’almighty Lord.

The picture of the inscription⁴ on the Shevchenko Memorial in Washington, D.C., is given below in **Figure 1**:

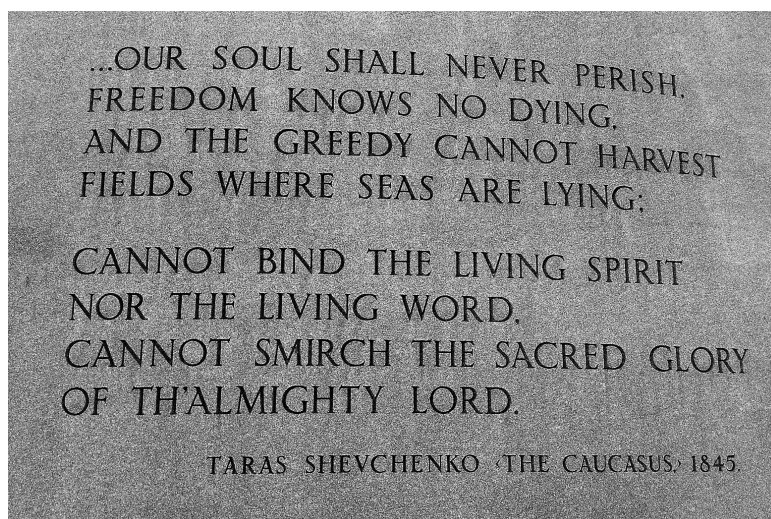


Figure 1. The quotation from “The Caucasus” engraved on the Shevchenko Memorial in Washington, D.C.

The Ukrainian source text of the 8-line quotation from “The Caucasus” engraved on the stela reads:

⁴ Tim, Memorial Monday: *Taras Shevchenko*. *The 42 Bus Blog*. Feb 13, 2012, [in:] the42bus.blogspot.com/2012/02/memorial-monday-taras-shevchenko.html [17 Jan 2017].

Не вмирає душа наша,
Не вмирає воля.
І неситий не виоре
На дні моря поле.
Не скує душі живої
І слова живого.
Не понесе слави Бога,
Великого Бога⁵.

The above English quotation, engraved on the stela, is actually a slightly corrected, internationalized version of the 1961 edition, which in line 3 reads “And the Glutton cannot harvest” (“the Glutton” would be changed into “the greedy” in the stela) and in line 8 speaks “Of almighty God”, replaced in the engraving by “th’almighty Lord”⁶. In fact, Rich’s translation of “The Caucasus” was first published in the 1959 spring issue of the quarterly magazine “The Ukrainian Review”, together with the translator’s analytical essay about the problematics and composition of this poem. This translation was reprinted almost without change both in the 1961 and 2007 collections, indicating Rich’s satisfaction with its initial quality, namely, the 2007 version differs from the 1961 edition only in three places (in lines 61, 162 and 164). As an example of Rich’s self-editorial work, I will consider changes in line 61 from the perspective of the surrounding context. Prior to this place, the speaking persona sarcastically “glorifies” autocratic Russian Tsars and their countless lickspittles willing to shed the innocent blood of their peasant bondslaves, as well as that of the entire conquered and enslaved nations because of mere boredom, envy, or spite. And immediately after such a bitter “glorification”, the persona shifts to a contrary addressee in a totally different semantic context, in which he juxtaposes the “great-hearted heroes” to the satirized tsars:

І вам слава, сині гори,
Кригою окуті.
І вам, лицарі великі,
Богом не забуті.
Борітеся — поборете,
Вам Бог помагає!
За вас правда, за вас слава
І воля святая!⁷

⁵ Т. Шевченко, *Кавказ*, [in:] *Зібрання творів: У 6 т. Т. 1: Поезія 1837–1847*, Київ 2003, р. 343.

⁶ T. Shevchenko, *Song out of Darkness*, London 1961, p. 69.

⁷ Т. Шевченко, *Кавказ*, [in:] *Зібрання творів: У 6 т. Т. 1: Поезія 1837–1847*, Київ 2003, р. 344.

Rich's latest translation of this excerpt is as follows:

And glory to you, dark-blue mountains,
Frost and snow protect you;
And to you, great-hearted heroes,
God does not forget you.
Battle on – and win your battle!
God Himself will aid you;
At your side fight truth and glory,
Right and holy freedom⁸.

In comparison with this version, the line “Battle on – and win your battle!” sounded as “Struggle on – and be triumphant!” in the previous, 1961 edition⁹. It is obvious that Shevchenko's aphoristic, inspiring apostrophe to the fighters for freedom “Борітеся – поборете” is better rendered in the later version, where it fully preserves the ST aphoristic style and balanced form.

A funny episode, connected with the erection of the monument to Shevchenko in Washington, D.C. and an excerpt from “The Caucasus” in Rich's translation, engraved on the Memorial stela, is well described by the translator herself in a narrative poem “Accident of Birth”. The poem humorously dwells on hasty pre-arrangements of the Memorial unveiling ceremony, the governmental-level bureaucracy and the officials' apprehension concerning the translator's non-US citizenship and her “improper” birthplace in this respect.

To give the reader a glimpse of the real historic events and a flavour of Rich's ironic “autobiographical” style and her sense of humour clothed in verse, I'll quote below a substantial part of the poem, which tells a real story: when the statue of Shevchenko was to be erected in Washington, D.C., the US officials addressed Rich with “a courteous request” to permit the engraving there of a quotation from her translation of “The Caucasus”, and of course she gave her permission, and a check for a hundred dollars was immediately sent to her (big royalties in those days), but suddenly – when the statue was in place and soon would be unveiled by ex-President Eisenhower – “a doubt assailed some well-meaning Congressman”:

...the statue was to stand
There in the US Capital, set upon public land,
So was it right a foreign poet should translate the verse
For such a monument especially as (which made it worse)
“The Caucasus” had been translated too by Clarence Manning,
A US academic? Well, it was too late for banning

⁸ T. Shevchenko, *Selected Poems. Paintings. Graphic Works*, Kyiv, 2007, pp. 289, 291.

⁹ *Ibidem*, p. 70.

The use of my translation, for the statue was erected
Already. So some way the protest had to be deflected¹⁰.

In this ironic manner, Rich further tells that somebody phoned her from Congress and asked if there was any way she could claim some connection with the States, “to set the record right”; giving him the address of the London hospital, where she had been born, she added, “just to ease the man’s distress”:

...But you know, because I arrived prematurely,
The ward where Mother should have gone had no bed free, so surely
You can tell the Congressman the ward where I was born
Was named after your founding President, George Washington,
Maintained moreover by (and this might well prove the solution)
A US ladies’ guild: “The Daughters of the Revolution”¹¹.

Thus, formally, Rich was “US-born”. And so the Congressman didn’t need to worry; relieved, he “gushed his happy thanks”. This story must be apocryphal. And the option whether to believe it or not, is playfully and merrily vested by Rich in the reader:

This story is, without deception, absolutely true.
Do I come from America? The answer’s up to you!¹²

3. Voynich and Rich: two congenial interpretators of Shevchenko’s “Testament”

Rich stands out among the translators of Shevchenko, both as a woman and herself a poet-translator. A distant parallel could only be drawn with Ethel Lilian Voynich (1864-1960), a noted Anglo-Irish musician, novelist (best known for her novel “The Gadfly”), and translator, whose charismatic personality was genuinely attracted to “the haunting music” of the Ukrainian language (“Ruthenian tongue”) and the freedom-loving spirit of Shevchenko’s verses, according to her own words, in the preface to her book of selections from Shevchenko¹³. After becoming close to the pro-revolutionary movement of Russian Narodniks, Voynich showed interest in Slavic literature in the Russian Empire. In particular, she learnt Ukrainian and rendered several

¹⁰ V. Rich, *Vera Rich – poet at allpoetry. Poems by Vera Rich. All poetry of Vera Rich*, [in:] http://www.allpoetry.com/Vera_Rich (14 Jan 2016).

¹¹ Ibidem.

¹² Ibidem.

¹³ E. L. Voynich, *Six lyrics from the Ruthenian of Taras Shevchenko, also The Song of the Merchant Kalashnikov from the Russian of Mikhail Lermontov*, London 1911, p. 5.

poems of Shevchenko into English verse, which were issued by an authoritative British publisher and bookseller Charles Elkin Mathews in London in 1911, together with the Preface and a biographical sketch about Shevchenko, written by Voynich, and a historical poem in folk style by Mikhail Lermontov, under the title “Six lyrics from the Ruthenian of Taras Shevchenko, also The Song of the Merchant Kalashnikov from the Russian of Mikhail Lermontov”. Voynich had selected for the collection those short and powerful poems that she considered worthy to represent a noted poet, namely, in the order of appearance in the book: “Минають дні, минають ночі...” (“From day to day, from night to night...”), a lyrical introduction to the poem “Княжна” (“The Princess”) – “Зоре моя вечірняя...” (“Only friend, clear evening twilight...”), “Косар” [“Понад полем іде...”] (“The Reaper” [“Through the field the reaper goes...”]), “Заповіт” (“Dig my grave and raise my barrow...”), “Мені однаково, чи буду...” (“I care not, shall I see my dear...”), “Минули літа молодії” (“Winter” [“Thy youth is over...”]).

In fact, Voynich sounded overly self-critical in the assessment of her own translation work, as it is often the case with highly gifted and sensitive poets-translators: “No reader can feel more acutely than myself how far they lag behind the originals”, she wrote in the Preface. “Especially do I feel it with regard to the six lyrics from Shevchenko ...”¹⁴. She even admitted, “had Shevchenko written in a language as accessible to most English readers as French or German, this volume would perhaps not have been published”¹⁵. The sense of duty had been the main reason for her translation work, and it should have justified, in her view, the imperfection of her translation endeavour, since “it seems hard that he [Shevchenko] should go untranslated while waiting for the perfect rendering which may never come”¹⁶. It is noteworthy that Voynich happened to be too humble and mistaken when she underestimated the results of her translation work having called them “inadequate” in the Preface, – but only because she was clairvoyantly aware of Shevchenko’s enduring greatness through the ages: “Inadequate as are these few specimens, they show some dim shadow of the mind of a poet who has done for the Dnieper country what Burns did for Scotland”¹⁷.

Voynich began translating Shevchenko’s poetry back in the 1890s, though she ventured to release a collection of his works only twenty years later – on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of the poet’s death. Not only was she among the first promoters of Shevchenko in the English-speaking world, but thanks to her poetic genius the English readers also discovered the musical-

¹⁴ Ibidem.

¹⁵ Ibidem.

¹⁶ Ibidem, p. 6

¹⁷ Ibidem.

ity and powerful beauty of Shevchenko's verses. A lot of people still highly appreciate her artistic interpretations of Shevchenko in comparison with newer versions. And even more so, people continue to discover this Romantic Ukrainian poet through the auspices of Voynich's creative reception.

It would be worthwhile to compare, for instance, the translation of Shevchenko's most popular poem, "Заповіт" ("The Testament"), by two women-poets: Voynich, who effectively launched British Shevchenkiana in the early 20th century, and Rich, who boosted it in the early 21st century.

Today translations of Shevchenko by Voynich are digitized and can be found on the Internet. Of all the six poems published in the afore-mentioned collection, the easiest to find and the most popular among Internet readers is her translation of "The Testament" ("Dig my grave and raise my barrow..."), which is commonly considered by the public at large as quite adequate and emotionally appealing, though experts generally find it somewhat inadequate for present-day requirements for poetry translation, in addition, at minimum, too free. Moreover, it is often recommended to the general public as the best rendering of this poem, or at least as the one that definitely has not lost all of its relevance and value.

The source text is dated 25 December 1845, which is close to the date when "The Caucasus" was written, and the place was still the same: the Ukrainian town of Pereyaslav. I will cite this poem-testament below:

Як умру, то поховайте
Мене на могилі
Серед степу широкого
На Україні милій,
Щоб лани широкополі,
І Дніпро, і кручі
Було видно, було чути,
Як реве ревучий.

Як понесе з України
У синєє море
Кров ворожу... отойді я
І лани і гори –
Все покину, і полину
До самого Бога
Молитися... а до того
Я не знаю Бога.

Поховайте та вставайте,
Кайдани порвіте
І вражою злою кров'ю
Волю окропіте.
І мене в сем'ї великій,

В сем'ї вольній, новій,
Не забудьте пом'янути
Незлим тихим словом¹⁸.

The translation by Voynich, first published in 1911, is as follows:

Dig my grave and raise my barrow
By the Dnieper-side
In Ukraina, my own land,
A fair land and wide.
I will lie and watch the cornfields,
Listen through the years
To the river voices roaring,
Roaring in my ears.

When I hear the call
Of the racing flood,
Loud with hated blood,
I will leave them all,
Fields and hills; and force my way
Right up to the Throne
Where God sits alone;
Clasp His feet and pray...
But till that day
What is God to me?

Bury me, be done with me,
Rise and break your chain,
Water your new liberty
With blood for rain.
Then, in the mighty family
Of all men that are free
Maybe, sometimes, very softly
You will speak of me?¹⁹

Rich entitled her translation “Testament” in the 1961 volume, but in the 2007 book edition she didn’t give it a separate title at all; instead she placed the poem in the table of contents by the first line “When I die, then make my grave...” though in Ukrainian it is commonly known as “Заповіт” (“Zapovit” [“Testament”]). Further follows the text of her translation, which in the later collection remained identical with the first book print in 1961:

¹⁸ Т. Шевченко, *Як умру, то поховайте ... (Заповіт)*, [in:] *Зібрання творів: У 6 т. Т. 1: Поезія 1837–1847*, Київ 2003, p. 371.

¹⁹ E.L.Voynich, *Six lyrics from the Ruthenian of Taras Shevchenko, also The Song of the Merchant Kalashnikov from the Russian of Mikhail Lermontov*, London 1911, pp. 31-32.

When I die, then make my grave
High on an ancient mound,
In my own beloved Ukraine,
In steppeland without bound:
Whence one may see wide-skirted wheatland,
Dnipro's steep-cliffed shore,
There whence one may hear the blustering
River wildly roar.

Till from Ukraine to the blue sea
It bears in fierce endeavour
The blood of foemen – then I'll leave
Wheatland and hills forever:
Leave all behind, soar up until
Before the throne of God
I'll make my prayer. For till that hour
I shall know naught of God.

Make my grave there – and arise,
Sundering your chains,
Bless your freedom with the blood
Of foemen's evil veins!
Then in that great family,
A family new and free,
Do not forget, with good intent
Speak quietly of me²⁰.

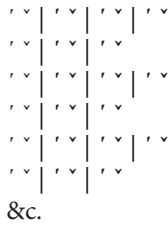
The fact that no changes have been introduced to the newer edition of this poem testifies to the translator's satisfaction with her previous work, which is well-balanced in terms of fidelity to meaning, verse, and style. The three-dimensional faithfulness of Rich's translations was earlier illustrated in this article by the verses "Roaring and Groaning Rolls the Dnipro..." and "O my thoughts, my heartfelt thoughts, I am troubled for you..."

In the above versions of Shevchenko's "Testament" by Voynich and Rich, one can trace the differences between the early 20th and early 21st century approaches to fidelity in translation. In the version by Voynich, the fidelity to melodic line, its pace and phonics, prevails over the fidelity to semantic detail. In the version by Rich, whose translation work was governed by the ideal of reproducing the form of the ST as closely as possible together with making the reproduction line-for-line accurate, the fidelity to cadence rhythm and tonality pattern aims to balance with the fidelity to poetic detail.

The scansion of "Заповіт" fits naturally into the metrical pattern of trochaic tetrameter alternating with trochaic trimeter. With each trochaic foot

²⁰ T. Shevchenko, *Song out of Darkness*, London 1961, p. 85; T. Shevchenko, *Selected Poems. Paintings. Graphic Works*, Kyiv 2007, p. 321.

having the rhythmic pattern of stressed (´) – unstressed (˘) syllable, here is how this verse cadence schematically looks in general:



In Shevchenko, the lexical stress, or acoustic stress, of a syllable in a word, does not always coincide with the metrical stress based both on mono- and multisyllabic words, that which is normal for versification. Moreover, artfully placed, deliberate mismatches between the abstract metrical stress and the word or phrasal accent create an impression of conversational style of intonation – this unrepeatable feature of Shevchenko’s versificatory manner. The latter also excels in sporadic replacement of a regular trochaic or iambic foot at the beginning of poetic line with a pyrrhic metrical unit consisting of two unstressed syllables, which imparts a conversational tone to the verse.

In “Заповіт”, as elsewhere in Shevchenko’s verses, not all the lines are necessarily read uniformly, within the preset prosodic boundaries, or should be read so – to a monotonous regular beat. On the contrary, the meter could be read alternatively in separate lines. Depending on the word accent and intonation pattern, the alternative scansion that I suggest, in particular, for line 2 reads the meter as amphibrachic dimeter (a metrical line composed of two feet, each consisting of unstressed-stressed-unstressed syllables) with a caesura between the feet:



The caesura at an unexpected point (where it actually detaches the preposition from the noun in spite of the presupposed phrasal unity of the prepositional phrase “на могилі”), allows the poem’s speaker to distinguish the noun itself and put the intonational emphasis on it. The caesura implies here a natural pause in the poetic diction needed to zoom in on a very important object, visualized in the speaker’s imagination as his burial place:

Як умру, то поховайте
Мене на || могилі

“Могила” in Shevchenko means an ancient burial mound heaped of earth and stones and erected high over the steppeland, a sacred grave where

the tombs of the Cossack forefathers and later the Cossacks themselves had found their eternal rest. Shevchenko bequeathed to his friends that he should be buried in his beloved Ukraine, on top of a mound. This will was executed in almost two months after the poet's death in St. Petersburg on 10 March 1861. And on 8 May, that same year, his remains were re-buried with great honor on *Chernecha Hora* (now *Tarasova Hora*) by the Dnieper River, near the town of Kaniv, and a tall mound was raised over his burial chamber.

Shevchenko's verses for the most part are based on iambic metrical patterns and, above all, on a ballad meter, alternating between iambic tetrameter with an extra unstressed syllable of the feminine ending and iambic tetrameter without such a truncated foot (as in the cited earlier lyrics "*Рече та стогне Дніпр широкий...*" from the "Introduction" to the ballad "Bewitched"), or between iambic tetrameter with an extra unstressed syllable and iambic trimeter with or without it (as in the quoted earlier excerpt from "The Caucasus").

Yet in his melancholic lyrical poems, such as the afore-mentioned "*Думи мої, думи мої, лихо мені з вами...*" ("O my thoughts, my heartfelt thoughts, I am troubled for you...") and "*Думи мої, думи мої, ви мої єдині...*" ("O my thoughts, my heartfelt thoughts, all I have, mine only!"), as well as "*Заповіт*" ("When I die, then make my grave..."), Shevchenko resorts to the trochaic meter – for the reason that its downward beat (' ^) indicates the speaking person's pensive and melancholic mood. In fact, in all the three of those poems, the poet turns to the same metrical pattern, i.e. trochaic tetrameter alternating with trochaic trimeter, which I schematically showed above. Shevchenko's trochaic prosody alternating 4-beat and 3-beat verse lines varies the folklore ballad form. Introduced by Shevchenko, this verse pattern mirrors in rhythms the moments when his heart was grieved and spirit embittered.

Both Voynich and Rich observed this stratagem of "*Заповіт*" and preserved its trochaic cadence, together with the alternation of 4-beat and 3-beat verse lines, though Voynich departed from the strategy of alternating lines in the entire second stanza (the middle part of the poem) – in favor of a shorter line with 3 ictus (beats) solely. And she once substituted iambic dimeter for the ST trochaic trimeter in line 4 of the third stanza, preceded in her translation by a two-beat line with the second pyrrhic foot, which ends with the extra unstressed syllable ("Water your new liberty // With blood for rain"):

^ ^ | ^ ^ | ^ ^ | ^ ^ | ^
 ^ ^ | ^ ^

If compared with the rendering by Voynich, the second pyrrhic foot is also noticeable in line 3 of this stanza in the ST. Moreover, it appears in the next line as well. Besides, an inversion of the first foot in line 3 from trochaic to iambic meter imparts conversational intonation to the scansion (“І вражою злою кров’ю // Волю окропіте”):



Frequent occurrence of meter inversions in Shevchenko is a feature and finesse of his verses, in which many a line could be scanned in one of several ways – depending on intonational and logical emphasis.

Apart from the ease of Shevchenko’s poetic diction, perfectly rendered by Voynich in “The Testament”, her interpretation in places oversimplified the ST semantic content, as it does in the above-cited lines, where the poem’s persona alludes to “the blood of foemen’s evil veins” (in Rich’s translation). Shevchenko employs the epithet “foemen’s” of the noun “blood” twice in the poem: “кров ворожу” and “вражою злою кров’ю”. These two allusive references echo each other, and so do they in the translation by Rich: “the blood of foemen” and “the blood of foemen’s evil veins”. However, the implied meaning of the epithet “ворожа” (кров) is diverted in Voynich inasmuch as she first shifts the meaning of “ворожа” (кров) to the adjective “hated” (blood) and then omits the epithet in front of the noun “blood” altogether. Meanwhile throughout the entire “Kobzar” and in various juxtaposed contexts, Shevchenko symbolically opposes the biblical concept of “the innocent blood” to the concept of “evil”, “rotten”, and “poisoned blood”, as he does for instance in “The Caucasus” and particularly in his earlier poem “Chyhyryn, O Chyhyryn!”, where he confronts each with the other – “the poisoned blood” of his contemporaries, the Cossacks’ offspring, who had become the corrupted landlords, and the incorruptible and, thus, healing and valorous “Cossack blood”. Shevchenko’s Romantic ideal of transfusion of the “living Cossack blood” into a “sickly heart” of depressed Ukraine associates the former with the biblical concept of the “holy, clean and pure” blood, which, in the poet’s view, symbolizes a return to the gospel truth for his fellow-countrymen and a revival for Ukraine. And here is a quote from “Chyhyryn, O Chyhyryn!” where the poem’s persona confides a dream that his bitter tears would

.....grow
 Into two-edged blades
 That will cleave the evil, rotten
 Sickly heart, will drain
 From it all the poisoned blood,

And in its place will pour
Into it living Cossack blood,
Holy, clean and pure!²¹

In the Ukrainian source text:

.....і виростуть
Ножі обоюдні,
Розпанахають погане,
Гниле серце, трудне...
І вицдіять сукровату,
І наллють живої
Козацької тії крові,
Чистої, святої!!!²²

Having translated almost the entire “Kobzar”, Rich was well aware of the cyclical symbolic opposition of the “holy blood” to the “evil blood” in Shevchenko. And in this particular poem, “The Testament” (“When I die, then make my grave...”) she rendered the lines “І вражою злою кров’ю // Волю окропите” as “Bless your freedom with the blood // Of foemen’s evil veins!” Possessive noun “foemen’s” stands here for the adjective “вражою”, which functions as a standing epithet in the Ukrainian folklore in the meaning “evil”, “wicked”, “blackhearted”, though its broader literary meaning is “foemen’s”, and the translator had opted for the latter meaning. Whereas, in my view, Shevchenko’s semantics of the adjective “вражою” in this poem was closer to its folklore provenance, in any case, the choice by Rich did not shift the source meaning too far, – it only moved its level of abstraction from evangelical symbolism down a notch to exhortations to socio-national liberation.

When Rich alludes to the concept of “freedom” that is *sanctified* through draining “the blood of foemen’s evil veins”, Voynich in her rendering of the respective lines (“Water your new liberty // With blood for rain”) refers to the concept of “liberty...of all men that are free” as being *washed* with (“hated”) blood.

Another biasing reference in Voynich, worth mentioning, is the beginning lines of the poem “Як умру, то поховайте // Мене на могилі” rendered as “Dig my grave and raise my barrow // By the Dnieper-side”. As I explained earlier, “могила” in Shevchenko is a symbolic and sacred place, a hill built high over the land or a plain. It has a meaning of “elevation”, “eminence”, “highness”, and points to spiritual *ascendance*. The poem’s persona asks his

²¹ Т. Шевченко, *Song out of Darkness*, London 1961, p. 24; Т. Шевченко, *Selected Poems. Paintings. Graphic Works*, Kyiv 2007, p. 171.

²² Т. Шевченко, *Чигрине, Чигрине...* [in:] *Зібрання творів: У 6 т. Т. 1: поезія 1837–1847*, Київ 2003, p. 255.

friends to bury him “on the mound”, that is, on the summit, or topmost point, of the hill. In Rich these lines read: “When I die, then make my grave // High on an ancient mound”. They sound in unison with the ST landscape picture, seen from the persona’s perspective of looking over a vast area of land from above. Meanwhile, Voynich begins the poem with a powerful (metrically stressed) imperative verb “dig”, which indicates the downward movement and – counter to the ST symbolism – evokes the image of descending.

To sum up my brief comparative analysis of Shevchenko’s key poem in the interpretation of two outstanding women-poets, distanced from each other by almost a hundred years, I’d like to pinpoint that the classical, iconic rendering by Voynich prioritizes the brevity and pithiness of Shevchenko’s poetic line, and because of that it admits a sweeping generalization of poetic detail. It perfectly falls into a generic pattern of *rendering*, which puts an emphasis on the musicality and eurhythmy of a poem and is not as tightly bound to its semantic detail as a translation proper should be. Rich, for her part, has never prioritized sound orchestration over verbal accurateness but intended to re-create them both. Her interpretation of this particular poem, as well as of any other poetic work of Shevchenko, enjoys the full right of being called a three-dimensional translation, which remains faithful to the ST meaning, verse, and style.

“When I die, then make my grave // High on an ancient mound...” – whose words are those? Whose testament is this? No less Rich’s than Shevchenko’s have become. Research shows that Shevchenko’s mastery of versification and his poetic imagery, based on the Romantic ideas of national history and folk culture, as well as the fundamental Christian values of truth and freedom, have greatly influenced the mind and muse of Vera Rich. The Ukrainian poet’s visualization of the beauty of his homeland and his ethnic culture had eventually conduced to her decision to be buried in Ukraine, near Taras Shevchenko, on a picturesque and age-old mound glorified by Shevchenko.

4. Translation strategy of Vera Rich recapitulated: pursuing “an impossible ideal”

In the groove of the Western translation ideal of perfect fidelity to the form and content of the original, Rich contributed not so much to the development of any theory of translation, as to the life-long practicing of translation as an innermost experience of mirroring “the other”. As George Steiner has aptly remarked in his seminal monograph *After Babel*, “no contingent form can be defined as perfect. [...]. But if ‘perfect’ translation is no more than a formal ideal, and if great translation is rare, there are, none the less, ex-

amples which seem to approach the limits of empirical possibility”²³. Rather than follow the common “rewrite rules”, that is, the prevailing practice of the last half century of substituting the ST lexical material with (dictionary) equivalent TT lexical material, Rich remained *a poet* reflecting another poet’s soul, *a mirror* of the other’s recognizable identity, *an animator* of the ST dynamic fusion of meaning and sound, verse and style. And in this sense, following the track of Rich’s idea of the translator’s transparency, the TT author’s existence in the poem *shouldn’t* be visible, or their identity recognizable. Otherwise, the claim to preserved identity would become a screen, or obstacle, for reciprocity in translation. For that very reason, I think, Rich distanced herself from what she called “imitation”, as versificatory ignorant and technically superficial rendering of the ST content, or “spirit”, something ingenuine, and far from the ideal of a translator’s authenticity, found in tripartite fidelity to meaning, verse, and style.

Steiner’s theory of translation as hermeneutic motion with its fourth and final move, or stage, of reciprocity, suggests a pertinent conceptual framework for Rich-style translation works. Under the heading of reciprocity, the highest stage of hermeneutic motion, Steiner subsumed exegetic translations, or faithful analytical reconstructions of the ST, – understanding, explanatory, and restitutive: “The translator, the exegetist, the reader, is *faithful* to his text, makes his response responsible, only when he endeavours to restore the balance of forces, of integral presence, which his appropriative comprehension has disrupted”²⁴. Further in his already classic book, Steiner expands on the nature of exegetic translations: “There are translations which are supreme acts of critical exegesis, in which analytic understanding, historical imagination, linguistic expertness articulate a critical valuation which is at the same time, a piece of totally lucid, responsible exposition”²⁵. Rich’s translation works fall into the scope of reciprocity, or restitution of the ST’s “balance of forces” and its “integral presence”, in the Steinerian meaning of this term. They faithfully “represent the integral life of the original”²⁶. In this respect, the translator’s lucidity in Rich’s experience can be paralleled to that poise of the translator that Steiner viewed as “interanimation”. This is an ideal view of translation as a reciprocal act of two souls’ – the ST and the TT authors’ – mutual inspiration and (inter)animation of each other. A view of the translator’s balance between the source and target culture gravity forces, between the diverse and often contrastive influences and attractions of the ST and TT socio-cultural, literary and other contexts. From Steiner’s perspective, interanimation

²³ G.Steiner, *After Babel: Aspects of Language and Translation*, Oxford–New York 1992, p. 428.

²⁴ Ibidem, p. 318.

²⁵ Ibidem, p. 429.

²⁶ Ibidem.

...tells of a dialectic of fusion in which identity survives altered but also strengthened and redefined by virtue of reciprocity. There is annihilation of self in the other consciousness and recognition of self in a mirroring motion. Principally, there results a multiplication of resource, of affirmed being. ‘Inter-animated’, two presences, two formal structures, two bodies of utterance assume a dimension, an energy of meaning far beyond that which either could generate in isolation or in mere sequence. The operation is, literally, one of raising to a higher power²⁷.

The readers’ numerous favourable and applausive comments on Rich’s translations, posted on the “Allpoetry” site, turn out to be the best proof of live interanimation. Consider, for instance, a couple of them: “Beautiful poem, Vera! Mr. Shevchenko would be eternally grateful to you for this beautiful rendering (from the reader’s comment with nickname “Anonymuncule”)²⁸. “...If anything in this contest was going to be “seeded” then it would have to be the combination of Vera Rich and Taras Shevchenko!” (from the reader’s comment with nickname “Mairi bheag”)²⁹.

And in lieu of a finishing remark, I will refer to the readers’ response to Rich’s last intravivam publication of Shevchenko – her translation of “The Poplar” on “Allpoetry”: “This is brilliant dear poetess and I feel honored to read it” (from the reader’s comment with nickname “Amera”)³⁰. “Thanks to the poet for bringing this to our English eyes and ears!” (from the reader’s comment with nickname “Peripatetic”)³¹. “I honour the life of the smart, terse cookie I ran into” (from the reader’s comment with nickname “just mercedes”)³². “Bravo Vera Rich, a true poet who will be truly missed here at Allpoetry. Her work here in translation is awesome, such a great lady doing what she loved” (from the reader’s comment with nickname “spideracer”)³³.

Abbreviations:

ST – source text

TT – target text

²⁷ Ibidem, p. 476.

²⁸ T. Shevchenko, *The Rusalka (translation) by Vera Rich – Allpoetry*, [in:] <http://www.allpoetry.com/.../3462574-Taras-Shevchenko--translation--THE-RUSAL...> [5 Jan 2016]

²⁹ T. Shevchenko, *The Poplar (translation) by Vera Rich – Allpoetry*, [in:] <http://www.allpoetry.com/.../5922891-Taras-Shevchenko-The-Poplar--translation--b...> (12 Jan 2016)

³⁰ Ibidem.

³¹ Ibidem.

³² Ibidem.

³³ Ibidem.