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## GETTING AROUND OBSTACLES IN TRANSLATION: D. THOMAS “THE HAND”

The article is devoted to the analysis of the reproduction of the D. Thomas' poetic world in the translation interpretation. During the work, artistic images are singled out, which play a key role in the perception of the Welsh poet's work. In some places, complex metaphors, non-standard associative images and deep philosophical content open and expand the author's artistic world to the reader.

In addition, the main problem is highlighted: a clear emotional reflection of the original content. Is it possible to adequately translate a poetic work? Usually, the four categories of translation adequacy assessment are helping out, namely the interpretation is considered on the basis of equirymicity, equirhythmicity, equilinearity and equivalence. The latter is the most demanding and important in the reproduction of original images, because, thus, it conveys the content and context to the reader. The main keys to successful translation are revealed.

D. Thomas is a Welsh poet and writer who has been and is studied by many linguists, literary critics and translators. Each of them sees special features in the author's work. G. Ionkis reveals mythological images, eternal themes of life and death, the identification of nature with consciousness as a rapprochement with English romanticism. However, at the same time, Thomas offers a radically new figurative perception. Thus, there is a combination of classic lines of romanticism and modernist innovation. In the opinion of M. Virozub, there are many complex allusions and rhythmic constructions in the work of the researched author, which complicates the possibility of adequate reproduction of interpretation. The translator believes that the unique melody and the sounds of the work can be fully felt only by the native speaker.

However, when studying the work of D. Thomas, it seemed doubtful that this alone was enough. The author's works are sometimes overintense with Welsh folklore and an incomprehensible associative series, which complicates the possibility of perception of the work even by the natives. After all, English and Welsh are completely different languages, so in order to feel the whole layer of metaphors you need to know the language and understand the cultural features of Wales.

The article explores linguistic content of D. Thomas' poem – “The Hand...”. Its uniqueness lies in the fact that it is the only military lyrics of the author. Thus, a lot of linguistic features such as metonymy, metaphors, personification are added to the symbolic layer. What exactly they symbolize is revealed at the research stage. The analysis of the translation itself proved that one hundred percent adequate reproduction is impossible, but the translator managed to reflect the desired mood and spirit of the selected poem. The analysis really helped in an attempt of own translation version. In future, it is planned to translate the same piece of work in native Ukrainian language.

Thus, the relevance of the poem remains very popular, because during the study it was possible to find only one interpretation of the poem in Ukrainian. This means that the author of the article should try to translate the work into her native language as soon as possible. Accordingly, more research is needed, because the world of D. Thomas is the infinite depth of the poetic universe and Ukrainian language is really full of melody itself!

**Key words:** poetics, stylistic originality, association, metaphorical image, linguistic features, Welsh poet, Dylan Thomas, adequacy of translation.

**Introduction.** If we describe the characteristic features of the poetry of D. Thomas in general, we can say with certainty that in each of the works prevails associative series. And these associations are probably not related to the personal life of the poet. Each work, each poem is a separate work of art, which is very often devoid of syntactic norms, and which at first glance may seem incomprehensible.

It is known that there are two levels of understanding of verses – wordless (subtextual) and verbal. At the second level, Thomas' poems

are usually very difficult to understand. To do this, you need to read them aloud several times and even better – listen. These seem to be isolated phrases that are unrelated. The impression creates darkness around most of his works. However, at the wordless level of understanding D. Thomas' poems are understood by most readers. They convey the strong feelings and emotions experienced by the poet during the process of creation.

Thomas published not many of his works – only about 93 poems. The other 130 remained only

in his drafts [Tomas : 190]. Some of them have clear structure and statement, plus they are classic in form. In the majority though it will be noticed the advantage of free verse.

Familiarity with the biography of Thomas makes you wonder where he gained some ideas to create such deep poems that leave almost no one indifferent. The legend of Thomas' existence represented him as a carefree spendthrift of life, who wrote works very easily and effortlessly as it should be. However, only a few knew that behind the curtains his life was often mixed with difficulties including the private life of the couple. Only later were Thomas' letters and notes published, which allowed researchers to spy on the author's literary work. It turned out that he worked on every word to achieve his own ideal of expression.

An outstanding researcher of English poetry G. Ionkis dedicated an honorary section of the work of D. Thomas in the publication "English poetry of the XX century" [Ionkis]. "Thomas from the very beginning showed independence in the development of eternal themes of birth, life, love and death, proposed a radically new image of them" [Ionkis : 175]. Welsh poet changed T. S. Eliot pessimistic conception of human existence and in the collection "18 Poems" proclaimed the victory of life over death and glorified it. He believed that man is the creator of everything that exists around. Man merges with nature, he is one with it, but he has an advantage over it.

New mythological images, mysticism, the pantheistic identification of nature with individual consciousness, the cosmic scale of Thomas' inspirations – all this brings him closer to the traditions of English Romanticism. "I follow Blake's path," he admitted in 1933, "but he is still so far that I can only make out the spurs on his boots" [Selected Letters : 23].

Thomas saw life as a struggle between two opposites. He liked things that were difficult to express in lexical units. However, it is important to note that the origins of Thomas' work are not books, but life itself. This is the Celtic folklore, and the mythology of the Druids, and the characters of the people of his native Wales. "In Thomas' poetry the Celtic basis is very much felt, it is in some imaginary irrationality of associations, often based on mystical images of Celtic culture, and in "Portrait of an Artist as a Young Dog" this Celtic basis is especially felt" [Tomas : 176].

D. Thomas' poems are very difficult to understand. The reason for this is the overintensity with metaphors and sometimes incomprehensible associative images:

"Flower, **flower the people's fusion**,  
O light in zenith, **the coupled bud**,  
And the flame in the flesh's vision.  
Out of the sea, **the drive of oil**,  
**Socket and grave, the brassy blood**,

Flower, flower, all all and all" [Thomas All]. 1934

In general, Thomas himself was aware that his poetry was complex and special. Here are some of his thoughts due to this fact: "My skewed, incomprehensible, clubfoot things are not the result of theorizing, but the result of a complete inability to explain one's opinion otherwise." "Every line of mine is meant to be understood, it is assumed that the reader will understand each verse thinking about it or experiencing it, but not absorbing it fully..." [Ionkis : 180].

His images are based on unexpected associations, the convergence of the most distant semantic series. He does not use clear, understandable metaphors. He is looking for those in whom the resemblance is barely perceptible, which would be based on contradictions. Apparently, none of the modern poets can match him in the richness of vocabulary and poetic ingenuity. For example, in one of his poems "A Saint About to Fall" (1939) he uses a number of similar comparisons: "*Wind – heeled foot in the hole of the fireball*", "*Sang heaven hungry and the quick*", "*skull of the earth is barbed with a war of burning brains and hair*". [Thomas A Saint].

Leslie Norris, who published a volume of D. Thomas' prose, concludes his preface with the following words: "One of my acquaintances told me that his mother did not want to read Thomas because he was such a terrible person. When she was persuaded, she changed her mind and is now convinced that he is a wonderful person. I agree with her." [Thomas 2000].

M. Virozub analyzes the fragments of some of Thomas' poems, comparing the original source with various translations. This might seem spectacular, because the translation of poetry is very ambiguous. According to the researcher, some translators missed many details, some made the translation too literal, thus losing the main meaning and emphasis of the poem. For instance, in

the poem **“Where Once the Waters of your Face”** the author of the review compares the translations of the last lines:

“There shall be corrals in your bed,  
There shall be serpents in your tides,  
Till all our sea-faiths die”.

S. Zolottsev’s translation is the first to fall into the critics:

«На ложе у тебе цвести кораллы станут,  
А змеи – в гривах волн... пока не канут  
Моря надежды нашей, став золой».

M. Virozub criticizes and accuses the translator of not being very attentive to the analysis of the text and the translation of simple words. “What does the translator get? And nonsense comes out, some crazy picture: corals on a bed with snakes, some seas of hope! And the word bed is just the bottom of the sea, where corals bloom. In addition, instead of the author’s energetic rhythm the translator made a sluggish elegy, which is stylistically incorrect. As well as brought unnecessary, diluting the text, details. And, finally, the seas that will become ash – how is it?” [Virozub].

G. Kruzhkov’s translation is a completely different matter. The researcher believes that he coped with the text of Thomas and was able to accurately convey the mood of poetry and not lose the necessary details of the work:

«И будут вновь светиться жемчуга  
На дне, и змей всплывать у маяка,  
Пока морская вера не умрёт.

That’s where the picture is made, everything is clear and everything is embodied absolutely correctly, but there it is – in the appendix, among the wrong and stubborn works” [Virozub]. Indeed, from the point of view of the reader-philologist, it can be seen that almost all the allusions were conveyed correctly, according to the realities of the English language that time.

Another of Thomas’ translators A. Shtypel once found a recording of the poet’s radio performances on the Internet and could now hear a Welshman. The impressions were unsurpassed. It becomes clear why there was an opinion that Thomas owed much of his popularity to his ingenious reading of works. And this despite the fact that “... special, a kind of “flashing” imagery and gloomy metaphysics of his poems are not so easy to perceive” [Shtypel]. The translator tried to convey in Russian the Thomas intensity of the sound of the poems,

and, if possible, to avoid the inevitable – meaningful losses and translation competition with the author.

So, what makes an adequate translation? After all, many translators try to recreate the motives of the original work, to convey as accurately as possible all the characteristics and details, and most importantly – the content. However, not everyone succeeds. Apparently, for a successful translation it is necessary not only to analyze the work, to reveal its linguistic and stylistic richness, structure, design, but also to have a rare talent. Therefore, the components for successful translation might be:

1. The desire to explore and fulfil the passion for the work and / or author.
2. Patience for the upcoming comprehensive analysis of a particular work.
3. The ability to connect all the facts received and implement your own version of the translation, using the data of the analysis.
4. Inspiration.

**The main body.** “**The Hand**” is not so well known and widespread among linguists who studied Welsh poet. However, it drew attention to the fact that it is the only poem by D. Thomas, which can be attributed to the political. In many sources, this work which is part of the collection “Twenty-Five Poems” (1936), belongs to the military lyrics.

The hand that signed the paper felled a city;  
Five sovereign fingers taxed the breath,  
Doubled the globe of dead and halved a country;  
These five kings did a king to death.  
The mighty hand leads to a sloping shoulder,  
The fingers’ joints are cramped with chalk;  
A goose’s quill has put an end to murder  
That put an end to talk.  
The hand that signed the treaty bred a fever,  
And famine grew, and locusts came;  
Great is the hand that holds dominion over  
Man by a scribbled name.  
The five kings count the dead but do not soften  
The crusted wound nor stroke the brow;  
A hand rules pity as a hand rules heaven;  
Hands have no tears to flow.

The 1930s were indeed harbingers of World War II. The first signs of fascism were born, which did not seem dangerous to many. And some even saw in it the future of the nation. In the life of D. Thomas, it is difficult to see the insight into his political revolutionary spirit. The poet’s protest

was expressed, perhaps, only in the creation of literary texts, thus, he never followed the “right form”. This also applied to the philosophical and symbolic meaning embodied in a specific structure and syntax.

One reading is not enough to understand the deep essence of this verse, but even with repeated treatment, there are still many questions, the answers to which everyone finds for themselves. “*These five kings did a king to death*” – is it a threat to the life of another king, or the king signed the death sentence himself? “... *Felled a city*” – was it his home country and city and why did he decide to destroy everything? “*A goose’s quill has put an end to murder*” – what kind of murder? Perhaps he ordered an end to hostilities. Then between whom was the war? When looking for answers to these and other questions, keep in mind that the poet creates his poems from associations that might differ to everyone.

There are many interpretations of this verse. In some respects (including the interpretation of the associative series) researchers disagree. For example, G. Ionkis believes that Thomas “has an intolerable thought of violent death; he does not show the murderer, but only his hand – weak, crouched, but having terrible power” [Ionkis : 185]. And according to O. Kassel, “This poem brands any dictatorship from modern dictators to God himself” [Tomas : 223]. The author of *20th Century Poetry and War* explains: “he uses the stark tale to say something about the power and the ruthlessness of kings and rulers” [20<sup>th</sup> century]. However, in this poem there is a main leading idea, which is found in almost all poetic works of Thomas. We are talking about universal concepts – “power”, “life”, “non-freedom”. The work being analyzed is not about a specific event. It aims to awaken in people an understanding of how devalued our lives can be in other hands. It is not even about the life of one person, but about the lives of entire nations and peoples.

With regard to stylistic content, one can see the presence of various stylistic means among which **metonymy** is markedly prevalent. After all, it is through the metonymic images – “*The hand*”, “*Five sovereign fingers*”, “*These five kings*”, “*A mighty hand*”, “*A goose’s quill*” that lies the association with power and any dictatorship. In most phrases (“*The hand that signed the paper*”,

“*The hand that signed the treaty*”, “*Great is the hand that holds dominion over*”, “*A hand rules pity*”) the link “The hand – The power” is seemed. Nevertheless, why is such an identification emphasized by the author? After all, “Chairman – Power” is more common for such an association. It is in the head that thoughts are born and therefore the next steps, such as signing an agreement, starting or ending a war, come from these first newsletters. In my opinion, what Thomas chooses reveals the deep philosophy of the poem, because “Hand” symbolizes power that has no soul, does not intend to care about the fate of ordinary people, has no thoughtfulness and foresight for the future of the state and, consequently, for the future of the whole nation. It is noticeable in all of Thomas’ poetry that the poet, as a rule, does not use “simple” and “direct” comparisons. He wants us to re-read his works and feel the meaning at the textual level.

**Epithets**, although not many, reinforce the existential meaning of the poem. We can even say that they “hyperbolize” its meaning. Words like “*mighty*”, “*sovereign*”, “*sloping*”, “*scribbled*”, “*crusted*” glorify the meaning of such simple words as “*hand*”, “*fingers*”, “*shoulder*”, “*name*”, “*wound*”. There is a connection of words from different layers of language. In this case a combination of the formula “literary words + common vocabulary”. The above-mentioned stylistic devices help to trace the creation of the same associative series and observe the transformation of an ordinary dictionary into an artistically colored one with multifunctionality and a lot of content. Due to this, the poem is characterized by sublime vocabulary and aims to make a greater impression on the reader.

One of the expressive methods of embodying the philosophical idea of the poem is **hyperbole**. “*Five sovereign fingers... doubled the globe of dead*”. Authorities in the form of this “hand” doubled the crowds of the dead. “*The hand... felled a city*”. The hand ruined the city. “...*fingers taxed the breath*” – the fingers taxed the breath literally so no one can even breathe in without paying for this.

In addition to these, there are other stylistic devices in the work, such as: **polysyndeton** – “*And famine grew, and locusts came*”, **personification** – “*The five kings count the dead, but do not soften*”, **comparison** – “*A hand rules pity as a hand rules heaven*” and even a combination of stylistic features

(**personification and metonymy**) – “*Hands have no tears to flow*”. Repeated use of the conjunction “and” helps to enhance the impression with the help of gradation – “*And famine grew, and locusts came*”. The personification of the “five kings”, who are in fact the fingers of the hand, symbolizes the inability to empathize. They counted the dead; they did not soften. However, we know that the fingers cannot feel what is inherent to man. Thus, the author uses this technique in order to be able to give an emotional description of any government through the sensory characteristics of man. The last line quite clearly and unequivocally reveals to us the reasons for the brutality and impenetrability of the authorities. “*Hands have no tears*” – this truth is relevant today. The government first and foremost thinks of its own benefit, it is willing to make sacrifices even in the form of human life in order to achieve its goal.

The special melody of the poem is created by arranging consonants and vowels in words. This is facilitated by phonetic techniques such as **alliteration** and **assonance**. There are a lot of consonant selections and this is due to the fact that the author wanted to create a slender and clear rhythm. For example, the alliteration “t” emphasizes the irreversibility of the sentence: “*That put an end to talk*”. In other phrases it is as if a legato is played (a technique that is characterized by fluency and combines previous musical elements with subsequent ones). However, “smoothness” in this case does not mean “calm”. On the contrary, these “waves” prepare us for something terrible – “*The hand that signed the treaty bred a fever / And famine grew, and locusts came*”. It’s like breathing air before the next portion of the storm: “*A mighty hand leads to a sloping shoulder*”. The last alliteration, expressed by the letter “r”, sounds like a sentence. This line reveals the apogee of cruelty and steadfastness of the government of any power: “*The crusted wound nor stroke the brow*”. Unlike consonants, vowels were given less attention. And this is logical, because otherwise, the “melody of the poem” would not be so affirmative and confident. D. Thomas did not try to reproduce this effect, so from the assonances we see only two examples: “*stroke the brow*” and “*kings did a king*”. It is probable that the author singled them out exactly in those places where we need to stop and comprehend what we have read.

The most interesting in this work is the phenomenon of **inversion**. It is known that D. Thomas in his works did not follow the rules of syntax. It is very rare to find a sentence that is “correct” from this point of view. This effect contributed to the lack of a clear established form, which was characteristic of most poets of the time, such as E. Pound, T. S. Eliot. However, it was in this one exception that the poem acquired the characteristic of clarity mentioned earlier. Accuracy was achieved not only by stylistic means, but also by constructing the sentences in the work. Almost everywhere there is a direct order of words: “*The hand... felled a city*”, “*Five fingers taxed the breath*”, “*The hand leads to...*”, “*The joints are cramped with...*” etc. However, there is one place where we see the “real” D. Thomas: “*Great is the hand that holds dominion over man by a scribbled name.*” This inversion leads to another sign – irony. “Great” in this case has a condemning and contemptuous connotation. After all, in order to rule over a people oppressed and broken by a higher power, it is necessary to have only money (wealth) and a high position in society (status).

Note that the adjectives in the poem are almost absent. This makes the poet’s language dry, callous, which correlates with the emotional assessment of what is being said. Almost everything is occupied only by actions, for the description of which nouns and verbs are used. As mentioned above, this makes the structure clear, dimensional, reminiscent of the rhythm of the march. Power is only a mechanism, a machine. It has no compassion or pity. It has no soul.

From the various lexical components of language in D. Thomas poetry it can be found almost everything, but in its special combination and artistic function. I tried to find out what the ratio of different vocabulary is in the basis of this verse. It is noticed a clear exaggeration of the neutral vocabulary over other layers of English, but its combination with literary and poetic lexical elements creates the sublimity of the whole style and enhances the emotional perception of the reader. For example, poetic words such as “sovereign”, “globe”, “mighty”, “sloping”, used with some words from the “**Common English Vocabulary**”, create strong and accurate images, give a new color to ordinary things: “*sovereign fingers*”, “*globe of dead*”, “*mighty hand*”, “*sloping shoulder*”.

Other examples of poetic words are: “*cramped with chalk*”, “*crusted wound*”.

**Conclusion and results.** Thus, the poem by D. Thomas is filled with all the lexical means to convey the main idea of the work as clearly as possible. The average reader will not dwell on the analysis of the dictionary used by the author. However, he will feel it at the subtext level. This is the goal the poet has achieved. He used all the words in the ratio he needed, skillfully combining different layers of English vocabulary to enhance the effect.

The process of studying the poetic work of D. Thomas proved, first, that today the author is gaining popularity again. Even in domestic literary criticism where the poetry of the Welsh author was mentioned only sporadically, now interest in his work grows not only in the scientific circles of modern literary critics, but also linguists, researchers of foreign literature. A large number of translation attempts of selected works of Thomas, which are available both on the Internet and in various publishers, confirm the relevance of his work in the modern world. Hopefully, this work will help to spread the creative achievements of the poet and writer among our readers: students, youth, the older generation and other social and age groups. Unfortunately, there are not enough

translations into Ukrainian today. However, it might change with time. Already now on various forums it can be found attempts of young poets and writers who are appreciated by modern Internet users and readers.

Finally, I present to your discretion own translation version of “The Hand...”. Hopefully, this work will also be included in the classification of “adequate translations” and will become a good helper in perceiving the work of such an original and unique Welsh poet and writer D. Thomas!

#### «Рука»

Рука, послав последний росчерк, город погубила.  
Квнтет перстов высокородных песню задушил.  
Удвоив толпы мёртвых, длань страну разбила.  
Бумажек вихрь и Короля сразил.  
Рука Всевластия на плахе рубит шею,  
И судорогой уж сведены суставы пальцев.  
Спасут ли гуси нас в худое время?  
Надежда молчалива у страдальцев.  
Рука выводит вензеля, бросая лихорадки снасти,  
Творя всемирный голод, саранчи набег.  
Да только в чём же «мёд» от этой власти  
Над тем, чьё имя похоронено навек?  
При счёте мёртвых хладнокровном Высших пальцев  
Точны движенья, устрашает тень безликих.  
Скверна власть длани над толпою агнцев,  
Не носит бремя слёз рука Великих.

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### ОБІЙТИ ПЕРЕШКОДИ В ПЕРЕКЛАДІ: Д. ТОМАС «РУКА»

Стаття присвячена аналізу відтворення поетичного світу Д. Томаса в перекладацькій інтерпретації. Під час твору виокремлюються художні образи, які відіграють ключову роль у сприйнятті творчості валлійського поета. Подекуди складні метафори, нестандартні асоціативні образи та глибокий філософський зміст відкривають і розширюють читачеві художній світ автора.

Крім того, виділяється основна проблема: чітке емоційне відображення оригінального змісту. Чи можна адекватно перекласти поетичний твір? Зазвичай допомагають чотири категорії оцінки адекватності перекладу, а саме переклад розглядається на основі еквірими́чності, еквіритмічності, еквілінійності та еквівалентності. Остання є найбільш вибагливішою і найважливішою у відтворенні оригінальних образів, оскільки, таким чином, доносить до читача зміст і контекст. Розкрито основні ключі до успішного перекладу.

Д. Томас – валлійський поет і письменник, якого вивчали і вивчають багато лінгвістів, літературознавців і перекладачів. Кожен з них бачить особливі риси в творчості автора. Г. Іонкіс розкриває міфологічні образи, вічні теми життя і смерті, ототожнення природи зі свідомістю як зближення з англійським романтизмом. Проте в той же час Томас пропонує кардинально нове образне сприйняття. Таким чином, відбувається поєднання класичних ліній романтизму і модерністського новаторства. На думку М. Вірозуба, у творчості досліджуваного автора є багато складних алюзій та ритмічних конструкцій, що ускладнює можливість адекватного відтворення інтерпретації. Перекладач вважає, що неповторну мелодію та звуки твору в повній мірі може відчути лише носій мови.

Проте, вивчаючи творчість Д. Томаса, здавалося сумнівним, що лише цього буде достатньо. Твори автора інколи перенасичені валлійським фольклором та незрозумілим асоціативним рядом, що ускладнює можливість сприйняття твору навіть британцями. Адже англійська та валлійська – це абсолютно різні мови, тому, щоб відчутися весь пласт метафор, потрібно знати мову та розуміти особливості культури Уельсу.

У статті досліджується лінгвістичний зміст вірша Д. Томаса – «Рука...». Його унікальність полягає в тому, що це єдина військова лірика автора. Таким чином, до символічного шару додається багато мовних ознак, таких як метонімія, метафори, персоніфікація. Що саме вони символізують, розкривається на етапі дослідження. Аналіз самого перекладу показав, що стовідсотково адекватне відтворення неможливо, але перекладачеві вдалося відобразити бажаний настрій і дух обраного вірша. Аналіз дійсно допоміг у спробі власного перекладу. У майбутньому планується перекласти цей же твір рідною українською мовою.

Таким чином, актуальність вірша залишається дуже популярною, оскільки під час дослідження вдалося знайти лише одну інтерпретацію вірша українською мовою. Це означає, що автор статті намагатиметься якомога швидше перекласти твір рідною мовою. Відповідно, потрібні додаткові дослідження, адже світ Д. Томаса – це безмежна глибина поетичного всесвіту, а українська мова насправді дуже мелодійна!

**Ключові слова:** поетика, стилістична оригінальність, асоціація, метафоричний образ, мовні особливості, валлійський поет, Ділан Томас, адекватність перекладу.