

## Luiza Gasparyan

# Specifics of Cultural Transfer in Psychological Stories

The research outlines the theoretical and practical framework of the cultural transfer of Charles Dickens's psychological story in comparison with Russian and the only early Armenian translations (published twice in Tiflis 1885/1886). One cannot fail to observe that Dickens's short-story illustrated a piece of psycho-pathological creativity and carried some educational moral message behind the lines. The article focuses on the art of translation and the situation of cultural transfer which sheds light towards the translation philosophy of Russian and Armenian philologists. The comprehensive analysis of translations revealed that Armenian translation of Dickens' "Drunkard's Death" has undergone a process of linguo-cultural transformation due to the Russian and Armenian socio-cultural value system and requirements. Both translations modify or alter certain contextual fragments due to the cultural areal. Both translations preserve the genre of psychological realism, along with the intertwinement of psychopathological descriptions. Obviously, such creativity will bridge the interdisciplinary connections of literature with psychology, psycholinguistics or neurolinguistics.

**Key words:** Dickens, Eastern Armenian translation, cultural transfer, psychological realism, Bildungsroman, Russian translation, comparison.

**For citation:** Gasparyan, L. A. (2025) Specifics of Cultural Transfer in Psychological Stories. *Art Logos – The Art of Word*. No. 1. Pp. 144-152. DOI: 10.35231/25419803\_2025\_1\_144. EDN: MIKWDH

No other Victorian writer fundamentally referred to the issues of childhood and child psychology except Dickens. Children in his novels passed life odyssey in the quest of a happy life, like *Oliver Twist*, *David Copperfield*, *Tim Cratchit* and others innocent and pure characters. However, Dickens touched upon the question of adults social-psychological traumas though short, but comprehensive stories with a tragic ending. Almost all novels revolving around the dual reality of the Victorian era: the high moral qualities of the heroes (usually children) or the protagonists

with psychological trauma of the dark quarters of the capital – the “eastern side”. Of special interest towards Dickens's piece of verbal creativity is the story of "Drunkard's Death" which was translated in Russian and in Armenian during the author's lifetime.

### **Material and Methods**

The story "Drunkard's Death" – «Արբեցողի մահը» was translated twice in Eastern Armenian and, after passing certain process of censorship, printed in different publication houses in Tiflis (1885 and 1886). Charles Dickens first published this story in the second collection of "Sketches by Boz" in 1836, where the author vividly depicted the somatic and mental consequences of alcohol abuse, depression and psychological trauma of the heroes.

The Russian translation was done by Tatyana M. Litvinova (1918–2011) – writer, translator, artist, – she was the close friend of K. I. Chukovsky and translated English and American literature: Jack London, Mark Twain, Daniel Defoe et al.

The purpose of the research is to identify the situation of cultural transfer through the prism of Armenian and Russian translations of Charles Dickens' story «Drunkard's Death». The problem of literary translation is carried out within the literary-historical framework by taking into consideration textual and extra-textual factors.

The methodological approach of the study is multifaceted, as it comprises; 1) the methodological approach of cultural transfer and the analysis of Russian and Armenian realia transfer in micro-macro-contextual level; 2) comparative analysis and interpretation of the textual and extra-textual factors that influence on the translation results; 3) linguo-stylistic and linguo-poetic analysis of the translations through the prism of the original.

### **Results**

One cannot fail to observe that to create a genuine hero with a realistic physical, mental and moral image – "an inveterate and irreparable person (a drunkard) with psychological trauma", Dickens examined many scientific books and consulted with many professionals in the field of psychopathology. Leonard Manheim similarly argued that Dickens was more familiar with the psychopathology and psychiatry rather than other writers of the time and could be best qualified as a "descriptive psychopathologist".

In addition, he visited British and American psychiatric hospitals in order to reveal the society with the peculiarities of psycho-pathological problems, as well as their dramatic consequences. Dickens even wrote down some of his observations in a special manual. According to scientific studies probably three-quarters of all the causes of insanity were due to excessive drinking, which could have initiated through depression or social-psychological trauma. It is obvious that Dickens wanted to draw an attention to the problem with such stories [6, pp. 69–97].

Though the term *Bildungsroman* has positivistic qualification, a close inspection of the tragic story may lead to the assumption that it is a special type of life-educational *Bildungsroman*: by Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911) specification the story is like – *Bildungsroman*, *Erziehungsroman* – an "educational" novel, whereas due to M. Bakhtin [1] distinction it can be evaluated as didactic-pedagogical novel. In classic *Bildungsroman*, the reader perceives the text through the eyes of the protagonist, which is logical, since the hero goes through the experience of formation, thereby encouraging the reader to develop and form his character constructively [7]. The translation of "Drunkard's Death" with *Bildungsroman* peculiarities aimed at illustrating the picture of psycho-pathology in certain socio-cultural domain.

The story was translated twice in Tiflis: the first version was translated by O. Yusufyan in 1885<sup>1</sup>, the second translation was published in 1886 (the translation was anonymous). On the cover page of both translations the phrase in Russian "censorship is allowed, Tiflis" (Дозволено цензурою. Тифлис, 15 января 1886 г.) is evident. Based on the memoirs, correspondence and essays of Eastern Armenian writers of the 19<sup>th</sup> – early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the vast majority of Western literary classics entered into Armenian areal mostly through the Russian translations or with comparison of Russian translation texts. The reception of Western literature and its literary – cultural transfer in Armenia (in the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the 20<sup>th</sup> century) passed the following procedure: a) British classics (in general Western classics) were translated due to the Russian canon of literary-cultural transfer, b) based on Russian (Russian as a mediated language) translations the Armenian translations were done [4].

<sup>1</sup> Դիքենս Չարլզ, Արթուրյան օտեր, Թիֆլիս, թարգմանություն Հովհ. Նուստֆեան, տպարան Մ. Ռոտինյանց, 1885 / Dickens Charles. Drunkard's Death. Translation by Ov. Yusufyan. Tiflis: M. Rotinyants Publishing House, 1885.

Dwelling upon further observations of the analysis of "Drunkard's Death", it is important to interpret the Armenian translations through the prism of both the original and the Russian translation (the Russian translation version was by T. Litvinova). By comparing the Armenian translation, it has been revealed that the method of addition was used for bringing the context closer to the Armenian linguo-cultural domain. From time to time in the Armenian translation, by using the method of addition, the unit Ամենակարողը – *Всемогущий* – *Almighty* was added, due to cultural and spiritual tradition (in original and Russian translation there is no addition). Or other word units which lead to some spiritual-moral education of the readers, let's discuss the example:

But it was not towards her that the was face turned; it was not **her** hand that the cold and trembling fingers clasped; they pressed the husband's arm; the eyes so soon to be closed in death rested on his face, and the man shook beneath their gaze. His dress was slovenly and disordered, his face inflamed, his eyes bloodshot and heavy. He had been summoned from **some wild debauch to the bed of sorrow and death**<sup>1</sup>.

Но не к ней, не к матери, обращено было **изможденное лицо**; не материнскую руку судорожно сжимали дрожащие, холодеющие пальцы – они сжимали руку мужа; глаза, которым суждено было вот-вот угаснуть, были устремлены на его лицо, и он трепетал под этим взглядом. Одежда на нем была измята и неопрятна, лицо опухшее, глаза воспалены и мутны. Верно, среди какой-нибудь **дикой оргии его вызвали к печальному одру смерти**<sup>2</sup>.

Սակայն ոչ թէ դեպի այդ ծերունի կիկն էր դարձրած այդ մարտիրոսուհու դալկացած դէմքը, ոչ թէ նրա ձեռքն էին սեղմում սառած և դողդուջուն մատերը, այլ սեղմում էին իւր ամուսնու ձեռքը, նրա վերայ յառած մեանողի մարդկային հայեացքը և ամուսինն էլ դողդուջուն էր նայալուստի տակ: Նրա շարք սնմամուր էր և աղտոտ, երեսը այրվում էր, աչքերը լցուել էին արիւնով և ուռել: Նրան դուրս էին կանչել այդ մարտիրոսական մահուան օրհասի մօտ մի խառնափնրոր կերպիւսումից [5, p. 3–4].

The context describes the episode of the death of the drunkard's wife. The comparison of the original with the translations

<sup>1</sup> Sketches of Boz. Chapter XII. The Drunkard's Death // Index of the Project Gutenberg Works of. Charles Dickens. Compiled by David Widger. Available at: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/58157/58157-h/58157-h.htm#link2HCH0059> (accessed 29 November 2024).

<sup>2</sup> «Смерть пьяницы» / перевод Т.Литвиновой. Электронный ресурс. URL: <http://charles-dickens.ru/books/item/f00/s00/z00000002/st058.shtml> (дата обращения: 10.12.2023).

revealed identical reception of psycho-pathological symptoms that are typical for the depressive, socially unaccepted individual.

One cannot fail to observe that there is a clear tendency to reverberate the words and expressions so as to make them more accessible to target readers. From time to time for maintaining the reader friendly context the translator used nuanced additions for the juxtaposition of wisdom, morality, simplicity and creativity the original and inserting influential unites of religious-spiritual origin. It may have the purpose of adding specific evaluative overtones to the context of the dying wife of a drunkard as a story of *Bildungsroman* – the story of “education”. The analysis of Armenian translation revealed translational asymmetry not because of objective linguo-stylistic inconsistency, but intentional modification with the aim of psychological-educational impact. The pronoun *her* and the expression *the bed of sorrow and death* were translated into Armenian was transferred as այդ մարտիրոսուհի (Russian – мученица, страдальница, English – martyr) and մարտիրոսական մահուան օրհաս, for reinforcing the role of women in the family who devoted all her life and love towards its members. The Russian version as well has evaluative modifications with the note of suffering wife, like *измощенное лицо* and *к печальному одру смерти* – expression which stable phraseological valency in Russian.

In the Russian translation, special attention should be paid to the use of the phrase *какой-нибудь дикой оргии* – *wild debauch* which can be perceived ambiguously by the modern reader. In the Armenian translation by the usage of the method of addition the expression *wild debauch* is translated as մի խառնափնրոր կերուխում (the word -to- word translation – *a hectic feast* – *суматошная пирюшка*).

Though the title of the tragic story is *Drunkard's Death*, the story initiates with the death of his wife which announced first the fall of the drunkard's hearth and only refuge in his life. The title can have dual interpretation: with the death of his wife the last chance to overcome the psychological situation disappeared and the physical death.

Needless to say, that Dicken's verbal creativity is not so simple as they seem, there is a complexity of psycho-pathological descriptions which transferred with subtle modification. Like:

They leant over her; they called upon her name, softly at first, and then in the loud and piercing tones of desperation. But there was no reply. They listened for her breath, but no sound came. **They felt for the palpitation of the heart, but no faint throb responded to the touch. That heart was broken, and she was dead!**

Все склонились над нею, стали звать ее, сперва вполголоса, а потом громким, пронзительным воплем отчаяния. Ответа не было. Стали прислушиваться к дыханию – ни вздоха. Пытались нащупать сердце – оно не билось. **Сердце это было разбито, а та, кому оно принадлежало, – мертва!**

Երեխաները խոնարհուեցան նրա վերայ և կանչեցին նրա անունով սկզբում խնդարոս, յետոյ աւելի բարձրածայն, վերջապէս դառն յուսահատութեան սրտապատառ աղաղակներով, բայց պատասխան չկար: Ականջ դրեցին շնչառութեան-դադարած էր... ախանջ դրեցին սրտի բաբախման – այլևս չէր զարկում: Այդ սիրտը կոտորած էր և հաւատակը մեռած էր [5, p. 4].

If in the case of Russian translation there is a syntactically-oriented impact – *Сердце это было разбито, а та, кому оно принадлежало, – мертва!* – which triggers the readers' attention of drunkard's wife struggles and desperate expectations of husband's metamorphosis, then this evaluative effect in the Armenian translation is created through the prism of expressive unit, like Այդ սիրտը կոտորած էր և հաւատակը մեռած էր (*That heart was broken and the martyr or victim was dead*). It is evident that, in the Armenian translations the image of drunkard's wife is characterized with the units as մարտիրոսուհի or հաւատակ (*martyr or victim*), thus conveying the Armenian readers the contextual dichotomy of wife as *martyr/victim vs. prodigal / immoral husband*.

In the work «Психология смысла» – “Psychology of Meaning”, D. Leontiev noted that changes in the motivational sphere and towards the meaning of life become the main pathological factor in every type of depression, including alcoholism – the apathy and insignificance towards life may not be determined with gender, age, level of education, IQ, religion and income [2]. Addicted person (including alcohol addict) becomes self-centered and has a deformation of the picture of the life and worldview. In fact, Dickens was well aware of all the symptoms that characterize any type of addiction, and the climax of the story is revealed, especially when the drunkard sacrificed his children for a glass of alcohol.

The description of cognitive-psychological pathologies in the verbal creativity has, probably, the notion of *Bildungsroman*, where a novel of "education", "formation", "upbringing" aimed at revealing the ontological essence of life through the prism of human experience. In the excerpts analyzed below, the main attention will be paid to the expression – *He (drunkard) had reeled from the tavern to her bed-side in time to see her die*. Thus:

The time had been when many a friend would have crowded round him in his affliction, and many a heartfelt condolence would have met him in his grief. Where were they now? One by one, friends, relations, the commonest acquaintance even, had fallen off from and deserted the drunkard. His wife alone had clung to him in good and evil, in sickness and poverty, and how had he rewarded her? **He had reeled from the tavern to her bed-side in time to see her die.**

А было время, когда толпа друзей окружила бы его в беде, когда непритворное участие их смягчило бы его горе. Куда же они делись теперь? Друзья, родные, просто знакомые – все они бросили его, все отступились от пьяницы. Одна жена оставалась ему преданной – в радости и в горе, несмотря на недуги и нищету. А он? Как вознаградил он ее? **Припеллся из кабака к ее смертному одру, еле успел принять ее последний вздох.**

Կար ժամանակ, երբ բազմաթիւ բարեկամներ նրա մօտ կը շտապէին նրա վշտին մասնակցելու և կարտայայտէին նրան իւրեանց անկեղծ ցաւակցութիւնը: Ու՞ր են գնացել նրանք այժմ: Մինը միւսի ետևից-ազգականներ՝ բարեկամներ, մինչև անգամ հասարակ ծանօթներ, երեսները շուտ են տուել նրանից և բարձի թողի արել արբեցողին: Միայն իւր կիներն էր իրեն անփոփոխելի կերպով նուիրուած թէ լաւ, թէ վատ ժամանակներուն, թէ պակասութեան, թէ հիւանդութեան մէջ և ինչպէս շնորհակալ եղաւ նրա երախտեաց համար: Անտառիլը գինեկոյից դուրս սկիսց և գնաց նրա մօտ, որ տեսնէ միայն՝ թէ ինչպէս նա պիտի մեռն [5, p. 5].

The context reveals the internal conflict of a drunken man with family, friends and relatives, because of his alcoholic abuse. The death of his wife affected him greatly, and Dickens intentionally quoted an oath that the spouses made to each other during the wedding ceremony (*in good and evil, in sickness and poverty – в радости и в горе, несмотря на недуги и нищету*; Միայն իւր կիներն էր իրեն անփոփոխելի կերպով նուիրուած թէ լաւ, թէ վատ ժամանակներուն, թէ պակասութեան, թէ հիւանդութեան մէջ) – the oath that was fulfilled only unilaterally.

If the Russian version of the expression *He had reeled from the tavern to her bed-side in time to see her die* – *Припнулся из кабака к ее смертному одру, еле успел принять ее последний вздох* is transferred due to Russian idiomatic combinability and natural flow of linguo-cultural factors, then in both Armenian translations the expression is totally colloquial, flavored with folk and national phraseology, like *անառակը գինեկոխի դուրս սկսեց* (word for word translation – the prodigal slipped out of from tavern).

### Discussions and Conclusions

Hence, the microanalysis of the translations led to the following conclusion: The accumulation of theoretical-practical databases in the field of *Bildungsroman* and its translation gives an opportunity to conclude that it can be based on the principle of spatial-temporal domain and cultural perception of the target reader. The translation of Dicken's psycho-pathological short-stories subtly met the target culture modification requirements (with special reference to *Bildungsroman*) which is noticeable in the Armenian version of interpretation.

Both the Russian and Armenian translations modify or alter certain contextual fragments due to the cultural areal.

In the Armenian translations (1885/1886) certain evaluative connotations or expressions were added, possibly for reinforcing the moral and educational perception of the reader, and for introducing the concept of *Bildungsroman*, which occupies a central place in the pedagogical – philosophical studies of verbal creativity.

Both translations preserve the genre and style of psychological realism of the epoch, along with the intertwinement of objective psychopathological descriptions. Obviously, such creativity will bridge the interdisciplinary connections of literature with cognitive psychology, psycholinguistics or neurolinguistics etc.

### References

1. Bakhtin, M. M. (1979) *Aesthetics of Verbal Creativity*. Comp. S. G. Bocharov; Text prepared by G. S. Bernstein and L. V. Deriugina; Notes by S. S. Averintsev and S. G. Bocharov. Moscow: Art Publ. (In Russian).
2. Bediryan, P. (2011) *Extensive explanatory dictionary of Armenian idioms*. Yerevan: Yerevan State University Publishing House. (In Armenian).
3. Dickens, Charles (1886) *The Drunkard's Death*. Tiflis: A. A. Mikhelson Printing House. (In Armenian).
4. Leontiev, D. (2003) *Psychology of meaning*. Moscow: Smysl Publ. (In Russian).

5. Manheim L. (1972) Dickens's Fools and Madmen. *Dickens Studies Annual*. Vol. 2. Pp. 69–97.
6. Moretti, F. (1987) *The Way of The World, The Bildungsroman in European Culture*. London: Verso Publ.
7. Safrazbekyan, I. (1976) *Hovhannes Tumanyan and World Literature*. Yerevan: Publishing House of the Academy of Sciences of the Armenian SSR (In Armenian).
8. Sukiasyan. A., Galstyan, S. (1975) *Phraseological dictionary of the Armenian language*. Yerevan: Yerevan State University Publishing House. (In Armenian).

Л. А. Гаспарян

## Специфика культурного трансфера в психологической прозе

В статье предпринимается попытка проанализировать особенности культурного трансфера в психологическом рассказе Чарльза Диккенса «Смерть пьяницы» в сравнении с русским и ранними армянскими переводами (дважды опубликованными в Тифлисе в 1885–1886 гг.). Рассказ Диккенса иллюстрирует образец психопатологического нарратива и несет в себе некоторый воспитательный моральный посыл. В рассказе присутствуют элементы психологического реализма, которые достаточно красочно отразились в двух армянских и в русском переводах. Рассказ Диккенса обладает чертами Bildungsroman(a), в котором рассказывается о воспитании или становлении героя. Проблема художественного перевода рассматривается в историко-литературном русле с учетом текстовых и внетекстовых факторов. Подход культурного трансфера предполагает анализ перевода русских и армянских реалий на микро- и макроконтекстуальном уровнях. Сравнительный анализ переводов произведения Диккенса на русский и армянский языки выявил случаи лингвокультурных трансформаций, а также видоизменения, произведенные в соответствии с целевой социокультурной системой ценностей.

**Ключевые слова:** Диккенс, восточно-армянский перевод, культурный трансфер, психологический реализм, Bildungsroman, русский перевод, сравнение.

**Для цитирования:** Гаспарян Л. А. Специфика культурного трансфера в психологической прозе // Art Logos (искусство слова). – 2025. – № 1. – С. 144–152. DOI: 10.35231/25419803\_2025\_1\_144. EDN: MIKWDH

### Об авторе

**Гаспарян Луиза Ареговна**, научный сотрудник, Институт литературы им. М. Абегяна Национальной Академии наук, кандидат филологических наук (Ереван, Армения); e-mail: luisa.gasparyan83@gmail.com; ORCID ID: 0000-0002-6023-2861

### About the Author

**Luiza Gasparyan**, Research Associate, Institute of Literature named after M. Abeghyan of the National Academy of Sciences, PhD in Philology (Yerevan, Armenia); e-mail: luisa.gasparyan83@gmail.com; ORCID ID: 0000-0002-6023-2861

дата получения: 07.11.2024 г.  
дата принятия: 30.12.2024 г.  
дата публикации: 27.03.2025 г.

date of receiving: 07 November 2024  
date of acceptance: 30 December 2024  
date of publication: 27 March 2025