

Rethinking the Model of Translation of the Literary Text as Creative Interpretation and Examining the Translation of the Literary Title as a Problem of “Hidden Meanings”



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Abstract

This paper argues against the inclusion of the translation of works of literature in the commonly theorized model of semantic transfer from the source text to the target text and for the role of the title in the complex structure of the literary work of art. Works of literature – including their titles – are by their nature polysemic. One of the terminological deficiencies of English literary scholarship is the lack of a term for the “hidden meanings” of a literary text. Unfortunately, the use of the word “sense” by Frank Kermode has not become accepted, nor has the key role of the title and also the ending of a work been sufficiently recognized in English literary scholarship. The function of the title in creating “hidden meanings” resists generalization, yet the issue of translating the title has not received deserved attention, although it is central to the work of analysis of the text that the translator must undertake.

Key words: meaning; sense; title; ending; translation; interpretation

Introduction

A perusal of Anglo-American theoretical writings on translation leaves the reader with a sense of disquiet at the inclusion of the translation of the literary text under the general heading of translating as a burden to be carried across a gap – in this case between two different idioms. Such a conceptual model lies at the heart of those linguistic-based translation studies that seek to theorize and categorize the practice of translation¹. There is no doubt a place for that model in many situations where the meaning of a text is unequivocal and simple replication of that meaning in another language is the objective. This model excludes by default aesthetic considerations and ambiguity, needing only a simple identification of the register of the source language

¹ See, for example, the definition in Colina 2015, 3.

and the choice of an equivalent in the target language. Theories, however, tend to generalize and to be prescriptive, whereas literature is subjective and polysemic and abhors generalization. Defending the theoretical model, Peter Newmark writes: “From a translator’s point of view [connotations are] the only theoretical distinction between a non-literary and a literary text”. He then lists such “connotations”: “polysemy, word-play, sound-effect, metre, rhyme” (1988, 16-17). This list only scratches the surface of the possible features of a literary work.

Instead of Newmark’s and Colina’s translation model I would argue that the work of the translator of the literary text is analogous to the work of an actor *interpreting* a role, essentially mimicking the voice of the narrator, but in a different idiom. Moreover, there can be different “performances” of the same text by the same interpreter, as they reflect on the text, perceive different nuances of meaning, and adjust the discourse in their own idiom. It is not banal to say that the interpretation of a poem, a short story, or other literary text is an art, just as an actor’s interpretation of a role is an art. The actor’s work of presenting onstage the *image* of a character in a play-text grows out of their interpretation of the entire work. Similarly, the translation of a poem, novel, or other work of literary art requires a careful study of the original text, including the title, and the production of its perceived *image* in the interpreter’s idiom. French translator and poet André Markowicz has been adamant in his unabashed insistence on translating the effect of the words in the source text into its, sometimes, shocking equivalent in the target language, refusing to reshape the text to suit French “tastes”². He has been consistent in this from the very start with his translation of the works of Dostoevsky. He recently stated: “In essence my translations [are] an interpretation. All one can ask of a translator is, not to say the truth of a text, but to say his or her truth of it, and to share this reading”³. In the same spirit, in his translations of poetry, he makes the form – meter, rhyme – as close to the original as possible, since the form of a literary text is part of its meaning. He has not long ago completed, together with his partner Françoise Morvan, for the first time in history, the translation into French of all of Shakespeare’s sonnets *in the meter of the original*.

Complicating the matter is the fact that each work of literature brings what has been called in English “hidden meanings”⁴. The word “meaning” in this context demands explanation, since English terminology is frustratingly imprecise. Those who read Russian know that in that language there are two words for meaning. The first – *znachenie* – refers to “meaning” in the ordinary sense of an unambiguous

² Contrast this practice with Gideon Toury’s statement: “Literary translation would involve the imposition of conformity positions [...] namely to *models and norms which are deemed literary at the target end*” (1999, 50; my italics – JDC).

³ My translation – JDC. « Mes traductions [sont] par essence une interprétation. Tout ce qu’on peut demander d’un traducteur n’est pas de dire la vérité d’un texte, mais de dire *sa* vérité du texte et de partager sa lecture ».

⁴ Toury speaks of the “web of relationships” in a literary text. This seems hardly an appropriate description of the exhaustive interpretive possibilities of a literary artwork.

correspondence between a sign and the fact denoted. Another word, *smysl*, is used to mean those underlying complexes of signification that exist in all literary texts, and which cannot be easily construed. In English there is no such word in general use among literary scholars for this type of signification. In Frank Kermode's classical study titled *The Sense of an Ending*, his usage of the word "sense" corresponds exactly to the word *smysl*. Moreover, Kermode is right in asserting that the ending is almost always meaningful. It is where the story stops. It has a *smysl*, a sense. For example, Alice Munroe's *Runaway prima facie* seems to be a disjointed set of stories with no coherence. But if one inquires what is the last word of the book, it is in fact "dust", referring to the cremated remains of a character. This last word defines the *sense* of the whole. It invokes the words of the Christian burial rite "ashes to ashes, dust to dust", and points to a general "hidden" meaning in the stories – the "sense" running through them of the decline of religion in Canada, and the problem of how to solemnize (or not) the disposal of a deceased person's remains – the dust. So, it is definitely worth looking at how a text ends. This is not, of course, always true, although the absence of a meaning-full ending may also be meaningful. Unfortunately, the word "sense", as Kermode uses it, has not caught on in general use among literary scholars working in English.

The Title as an indispensable part of a literary text

After the ending, the most important and meaningful element of any work of literature is usually its title⁵. The title of a work presents especial difficulties for a translator⁶. The most obvious function is the title as the name of the text, identifying it and enabling it to be documented and catalogued. A literary text cannot lack a title. By default, if a poem is untitled, its first line becomes its title. Naming is, however, only its most basic function. Its role in creating meaning within the text is just as important. Natalia Veselova demonstrates that the title has a key role in the overall aesthetic system of the literary text. It is outside the text, but has a profound relation to it. She describes this paradoxical position – the ontology of the title – thus:

One of the most important characteristics of the title is the fact that it is located on the external boundary of the text: between the text and the reality beyond it. Of course, apart from the title there are other "boundary" positions that mark the limits of the textual space: the first and the last line. But unlike these, the title both separates off the text and is itself separated from it. [...] Thus, the title does not belong to the text inseparably. On one side it touches the world lying beyond the limits of the texts, and

⁵ For a survey of the history and evolution of the literary title, and how the style of titling has evolved over the centuries in the Western tradition, see Levin 1977.

⁶ Peter Newmark, in the very brief subsection "Titles" of his textbook (1988, 56-57) is alarmingly brief in the attention given to titles, and does not distinguish between literary and other texts.

on the other the text, marking its beginning. Thanks to its boundary position, the title serves as a connective link between the text and reality beyond it, and correlates first itself, and then, through its agency, the actual text, with certain phenomena external to the text. As a result, the semantic structure of the text is made significantly more complex because of those meanings that the title imports “from outside”. It is through the title that the reader’s understanding of the given concrete text is oriented and the conditions governing its reading are set out. (1998, 86. My translation – JDC)

Ilaria Remonato further defines the role of the title as (potentially) the voice of the author:

At a general level, the relevance of titles as integral parts of literary works needs to be underlined: since the whole headline is unmediated by a narrative voice, it may be, in concrete terms, as close as we come within that text to an authorial voice. This is the reason why [...] we talk of “poetics” of titles [...], because in many cases they convey and condense in a few words meaningful thematic instances connected to the poetics of the author. (2022, 39)

There are various types of titles, some of which are documented by Steven Kellman (1975, 154-156). It may simply be the name of the main character, or it may be a word or phrase in the text that is highlighted. It may be a quotation or reported speech. It may be a metaphor. Titles can be full of meaning, full of “senses”. They are an example of what one should call sense-creating, or perhaps “meaning-full” elements. Consequently, the translation of the title should be the last thing to be finalized after careful reflection and analysis of the text. It is this process of analysis and how to translate the title that is the object of what follows.

The danger of mistranslating the title

I have always thought there was something strange about the English title of Dostoevsky’s novel *The Brothers Karamazov*. It is ungrammatical. In English we put the proper name before the noun, not after it. For example, we say the “Brontë sisters”, not “the sisters Bronte”, and the “Kennedy brothers”, not “the brothers Kennedy”. Yet, more than 100 years after the first English translations appeared of this novel, *The Brothers Karamazov* is still the generally accepted translation of the book’s title in English. I would argue that it has changed in a subtle way the reception of the book by English speakers. The mistranslation of the title suggests something strange and foreign and mysterious to the intended reader, and indeed this is the image of the Russian writer in the English-speaking world. A hidden meaning perhaps? No, just the fact that this “Russian accent” is now engrained in the reception of Dostoyevsky’s novel. I assume that the origin of the mistake was a literal translation of the French *Les Frères Karamazoff*, which is the correct order in French, since Dostoyevsky’s

novels were originally translated into that language before English, and British translators' knowledge of Russian in the Victorian period was limited, to say the least. As far as I have been able to discover, the first translator of the book into English was Isabel Florence Hapgood (1905), shortly followed by Constance Garnett (1912). For those who were translating directly from the Russian original, as they were, the simple grammatical error is unforgivable. This is a good example of how translators imitate one another's mistakes. Even the most recent translation, by Michael R. Katz, copies this mistranslation of the title, although two of his recent predecessors – Julius Katzer (1980) and Ignat Avsey (1994) did finally translate it correctly as *The Karamazov Brothers*. Out of curiosity I wrote to Katz to ask him why he used the incorrect title. He replied: "Reasons of tradition. [...] I felt that the *Brothers Karamazov* was more euphonic and *slightly mysterious*. So I kept it"⁷. So, the Russian accent in the title was "slightly mysterious". In fact, this is a problem. The reader was supposed to be enticed by this mysteriousness, which had nothing to do with Dostoevsky or his book, the title of which in Russian is normal with no "mysteriousness". The justification, apparently, was to make the book more intriguing and therefore sales-worthy. The title corresponded to clichés in the English-speaking world about Russia and Russians. This little anecdote about the title of Dostoyevsky's book illustrates the importance of the title in conditioning the reader's reception of the work. It also suggests something equally important, namely that the translator should be careful not to repeat others' mistakes, since the product of their labour may leave a long-lasting misunderstanding of the work in the target language.

Titles and Epigraphs

Even after analyzing the source text in its totality, including the title and its relation to the text, when giving the translated text its title in the target language, the translator may feel their translation is incomplete. It is especially the "hidden meanings" or senses that are the most difficult part. Often, they cannot be captured in the target language for a variety of reasons. And even after giving the title a lot of thought, the translator will have to deal with a formidable opponent – the publisher, whose interests are often very different from theirs – and who may veto the title, however well chosen. Moreover, in addition to the title proper, as Genette points out (1997, 117-160), there are often subtitles, dedications, epigraphs and other matter placed after the title proper, but before the beginning of the text, so that together with these other components the title can be part of an entire prefatory complex. Here again a work by Dostoevsky provides an instructive example. His novel, titled in Russian *Besy*, is now generally referred to in English as *Demons*. It took a long time

⁷ Email to the author from Michael Katz. (My italics – JDC).

for it to get its rightful name. The novel has two epigraphs: the first epigraph is a fragment from Pushkin’s poem “Demons”, in which a nobleman and his coachman get lost in a swirling snowstorm. The superstitious coachman blames a swarm of demons for them losing their way, and this theme is taken up by the nobleman: “...various demons have begun to swirl”.

The second epigraph, from the Gospel according to St. Luke, 9: 32-36 is the parable of the Gadarene swine. The novel first appeared in English with Constance Garnet’s 1913 translation under the title *The Possessed*, clearly influenced by Victor Derély’s French translation of 1886 titled *Les Possédés*. Surprisingly, there is even a recent translation into English with this title. In 1953 David Magarshack published a new translation with the title *The Devils*, thus recognizing the link between the title and the fragment from Pushkin’s poem. The two titles thus reference the two separate epigraphs in the novel. Magarshack’s title refers to the first epigraph, the fragment from Pushkin’s poem “Demons”, and Garnett’s title *The Possessed* references the second epigraph, the Gospel parable of the Gadarene swine. The most recent title, and the one that corresponds most tightly to the Russian, is Michael R. Katz’s choice: simply *Demons*. Katz thoughtfully chooses to omit the definite article, recognizing that the title is in fact a quotation from the words of the lyrical persona of Pushkin’s poem: “various demons”. Whether one chooses *Demons* or *The Possessed*, is perhaps not so important as the metaphorical function they both serve to describe the author’s view of the revolutionaries who try to stage a coup in their little town. The demons they are possessed by are actually, we learn in the novel, the microbes of rationalistic Western culture. An interesting effect created by Dostoevsky’s choice of Pushkin’s poem for an epigraph is that one can no longer think about the poem in the same way, especially when it is juxtaposed with the parable from the Bible. The later writer makes explicit in his novel what was only implicit in the poem before.

“Hidden Meanings” and the translation of titles

A function of the title is the creation of hidden meanings (senses) that resonate with the text to enrich and render more complex the total sense of the work. The naming of a book after one or several of the characters in it may seem to be simply a question of a random choice on the author’s part, but in fact they may be the result of choosing “speaking names”. In the case of *The Karamazov Brothers*, the first element of the surname *kara* clearly relates to the Russian verb *karat’* meaning to punish, and indeed punishment is a theme in the novel. Interestingly enough, the title of Tolstoy’s novel *Anna Karenina* also contains that root, and indeed that message in the title is reflected in the epigraph to the novel: “Vengeance is mine, and I shall repay”. We should further notice that the surname Karenin is not Anna’s, but that of her husband, a high-level member of the civil service. She has not married him for love,

but because of his status. She is his prize, a trophy wife. To drive home the point, one of the rewards given to those in service was that of the Order of St. Anna. Thus, the entire story of Anna is encapsulated in her name which is the title of the book. She has been bought by her husband, an older man whom she does not love. If she is unfaithful to him, she will be punished: crushed by the weight of social opinion, and driven to throw herself under a locomotive. It might be legitimate, then, to think of the two great novels *Anna Karenina* and *The Karamazov Brothers* in relation to each other – and perhaps to a third novel without the *kara* root in its title, but the explicit mention of punishment itself. I am referring, of course, to another novel by Dostoevsky – *Crime and Punishment*, which in fact came chronologically first in the sequence, so that a “dialogue of titles” can emerge around a common theme.

The Title as Parody

Written some twenty years after *Anna Karenina*, Anton Chekhov’s story “Anna Round the Neck” is, as Stephen Baehr has pointed out (1995, 34), a parodic inversion of Tolstoy’s novel. Anya, the heroine in the story, is only eighteen when she marries (hence the condescending diminutive form of her formal name “Anna”). Though initially intimidated by her husband, who is 52, she soon learns how to manipulate him, spend his money, and flirt with the wealthy businessman Artynov. Modest Alekseich, her husband, quotes his superior’s comment to another colleague whose wife was also called Anna, upon his receiving the order of St. Anna Second Class: “you now have three Annas: one in your buttonhole and two around your neck”. (Civil servants wore the medal of the order on a chain around their neck on ceremonial occasions, and a badge in their lapel at other times). Modest Alekseich fears the same fate – and indeed he does receive the St. Anna Second Class and his Anya does turn into a millstone around his neck. The title of the story is significant. The fact that it begins with “Anna” makes the comparison with Tolstoy’s novel inevitable and clearly intended. The name of Anya’s husband is Modest Alekseich. Since Karenin’s name is Aleksey, the husband’s patronymic makes him “son of Aleksey” – suggesting that Karenin is his literary forebear. He is a more “modest” version of Karenin, grovelling before superiors in the small provincial town and hoping for the paltry reward of the Order of St Anna and the extra 70 roubles per year of stipend that goes with it. (For comparison, Anya, his young wife, spends 100 roubles on a single dress). The title of the story is difficult to translate. The pun is possible in Russian because the medal was simply called “Anna” in familiar circles. One translator renders it word for word as “Anna on the Neck”. The other translation I have found – “Anna Round the Neck” – works better because it realizes the metaphor of a woman dependant on her husband, although their relationship quickly becomes totally inverted. By the end of the story Anya has all the power, and treats her husband with contempt, so that there is a deep irony in this inversion of the plot of Tolstoy’s novel. The French title is “Anne

au cou” and German “Anna am Halse”. Neither of these languages is able to come close to the deep ironies immediately apparent to the Russian reader when it was published. (The orders in question were abolished after the Bolshevik revolution). It is a case where the translator might be tempted to have recourse to a paraphrase or a footnote.

Title as quotation

Sometimes the title is a quotation from some other work of literature to which the author might, or might not, draw attention. We then have to consider what is the link between the quotation chosen by the author and the content of the work. In short, what is its “hidden meaning” or sense? In Cormac McCarthy’s novel *No Country for Old Men* the title is a quotation from “Sailing to Byzantium”, a poem by William Butler Yeats, of which the first two stanzas seem particularly pertinent – the “swan song” of an old man who feels out of place in his now liberated homeland: “That is no country for old men. The young / In one another's arms, birds in the trees, / Those dying generations at their song [...]” (Yeats 1966, 95). What has “Sailing to Byzantium” to do with a novel full of bloodshed that takes place on the Mexican borderlands of Texas? The clue is in the author’s first name – in his youth he changed it from Charles to Cormac in honour of his Irish ancestry. The Irish poet wrote his poem in 1927, when he was 62; McCarthy’s book was written when the author was 72, an “aged man”. Towards the end of the novel there is a long rumination in italics by Sheriff Bell, who had tried in vain to avert the inevitable bloodshed to come. It is not difficult to see Sheriff Bell, who complains about the decline of mores in America and who desparingly retires at the end, as the projection of the author himself. It is as if, shocked by the violence of the plot he has written, he has left the novel open-ended, unable to finish it, or perhaps suggesting that the bloodshed in America is unending, and he is giving up in disgust. The *sub rosa* identification of the author as a disillusioned old man like Yeats, himself disillusioned with the way an independent Ireland was going in the 1930s, suggests that the figure of Sheriff Bell is indeed a projection of the author.

Armed with these observations, let us then see how the title has been translated into various languages:

No Country for Old Men
Non, ce pays n'est pas pour le vieil homme
To nie jest kraj dla starych ludzi
No es país para viejos
Kein Land für alte Männer

We do not know if the translators were aware that they were translating a fragment from Yeats, but one would have expected them to catch on to the poetic tone and rhythm of the original. The French translation is a wordy, “literal” retelling of the English title, concerned only with the semantics of the original, but serenely indifferent to its structure and sound. Nothing remains of the clipped concise four-word verbless and article-free original, which is reflective of Sheriff Bell’s terse Texan dialect. The Polish translator is forced to be more wordy. Nevertheless, the Polish title reads like a line of poetry with a caesura between *kraj* and *dla*. The German reflects very closely the English syntax – unsurprisingly. Perhaps the best translation is the Spanish, which is simple, terse, and sounds like something one of the Mexican characters in the novel might have said.

The Problem of the Article

Not all languages have definite and indefinite articles – for example, most of the Slavic languages – Polish, Russian, etc.. This fact places the translator into English before a choice when the title is a noun: “the”, “a(n)” or zero?⁸ In general the definite article in English serves the naming function of the title. It reflects an external perspective on the content of the poem or novel it names. An indefinite article in the singular tends to reflect an authorial comment on the matter of the work. A zero article is usually a quoted opinion from one of the characters, as in the title of McCarthy’s novel discussed above. Vladimir Mayakovsky’s play titled in Russian *Klop*, in English “bedbug” was titled by its translators *The Bedbug*. In other words, they translated quite “literally”⁹ the semantics of the word *klop* rather than its form and function in the play. The definite article distances the reader’s perspective, announcing a play called “The Bedbug”. However, the play contains a bitter, self-ironic portrayal of the poet himself as being out of step with the new Soviet reality. (Shortly after writing it, he committed suicide). The main character Prisyppkin is frozen by accident and only wakes up fifty years later when he is defrosted and is relegated to a zoo for the edification of the masses. He finds companionship in a bedbug that has also been defrosted in the aseptic, parasite-free future. The metaphor of an unwanted member of society as an insect was part of the Zeitgeist in the early years of the twentieth century: for example, Kafka’s Gregor Samsa, who wakes up and finds he has been transformed into a monstrous insect. What is striking about the Russian title is its concision and the shock effect of the monosyllable: the author is self-dramatizing, calling attention to his position as vermin in a futuristic Soviet society. Which article should one use: definite, indefinite, or none? The title is

⁸ Hoek’s list is rather different because he is referencing French (164); in other words, article usage will vary according to the language.

⁹ On the use of this term in translation studies see Bobadilla-Perez 2007, 119.

best with simply one monosyllabic word with no article: “*Bug*”. In contemporary playbills the title stood out as the painful cry of an author *in extremis*.

The Importance of Context

Works of literature, especially poetry, are by their nature polysemic. Any attempt at literary translation needs to take into consideration the *context* in which the source text appeared. Recently I translated a short poem by Pushkin into English. I began by researching the time, place and circumstances in which it was written. I also sought to reproduce the *form* chosen by the poet, since the formal characteristics were intrinsic to the meaning. In Russian the title of the poem is simply “Uzник”, which means “prisoner”. Pushkin wrote the poem in Kishinev, Bessarabia in March 1822, the year in which the Russian government tightened control over the potential revolutionaries among the army officers. On February 6th one officer, a friend of Pushkin’s, Vladimir Raevsky, was arrested and imprisoned in Tiraspol fortress with no visitors allowed. Shortly thereafter, Pushkin himself was placed under house arrest by the governor of the province, General Inzov, who had been mandated by the Emperor Alexander to keep an eye on this young, unruly poet. In exile in Kishinev Pushkin had got into frequent scrapes – duels and scandals, and more than once had been placed under house arrest. This time it was for quarreling with a local nobleman. Inzov was actually fond of Pushkin and so the punishment chosen was again house arrest, which meant confiscating the poet’s boots. A month or so later Pushkin absolved himself by attending the Easter service. Outside the building where Pushkin was “incarcerated” there was an eagle that had had its flight feathers removed.

Pushkin’s poem was prompted by Byron’s *The Prisoner of Chillon*, which he read in a prose translation in French, since it was only in the Autumn of 1822 that Zhukovsky published his Russian translation of Byron’s poem (Pushkin 2016, 735). Interestingly, Pushkin wrote the poem in amphibrachs, not the four-foot iambs of Zhukovsky’s elegies or Byron’s poem. Moreover, it is brief compared to Byron’s wordy poem. It consists of three quatrains and has only masculine rhymes (rather than the usual alternating masculine-feminine lines common in Pushkin’s time). Other features that one must take into consideration in reproducing the overall “shape” of the original are the three anaphoras in the last quatrain, and the fact that the last word is *ia* (“I”) – in the strongest position in the poem after the title. Since the first word of the poem, *sizhu* (“I sit”) is marked by its grammatical form as being in the first-person singular, but without the pronoun, the appearance of the first-person *ya* in the strongest position at the end is very striking indeed. This is the internal drama of the poem – the passage to expressing the missing pronoun of the first line in the final, assertive position as the last word of the poem. In Russian there is a certain reluctance to use the first-person nominative pronoun, which probably explains the

abundance of impersonal structures in the language. Its use at the end of the poem could therefore be thought a powerful assertion of the speaker's humanity, although the word is attributed to the eagle, as an unspoken thought. This deep meaning of the poem is muted in English, since the English verb "sit" needs an explicit subject, expressed in Russian by the verb ending.

One problem is the title. In his recent collection of unrhymed translations of Pushkin's poetry Antony Wood rendered it as "The Prisoner" – following Byron's example, reproducing its distanced contemplative perspective – like the title of a painting (Pushkin 2020, 17). But the translator into English has other options. My choice to omit any article was motivated by the perception that the title is actually a rueful, ironic thought addressed by the lyrical persona to himself: "you have landed under house arrest for foolish behaviour, but others are real prisoners in harsh conditions with little hope of freedom". Thus, the "hidden meaning" of the poem is the assertion of the lyrical persona's humanity, but also a humble and ironic realization that a friend and fellow poet is seriously imprisoned, whereas the poet's "imprisonment" is only a benign corrective imposed by his well-meaning superior. (Raevsky spent four years in solitary confinement in Tiraspol, was eventually exiled to Siberia, and is today remembered as the "first Decembrist"). Here is my translation of the poem, with the Russian original below.

Prisoner

I sit behind bars in a dank dungeon cell.
A young eagle, raised in captivity's hell,
My gloomy companion, waves wings as in flight,
And pecks bloody food near the window's dim light.

He pecks, turns away, through the window sees me,
As if I am thinking the same thought as he.
Through glances and cries he implores me to see,
And seems to be saying: "My friend let us flee!

We two are free creatures. 'Tis time, friend, 'tis time!
Let us soar o'er the clouds where the white mountains climb,
Where only the blue ocean's wave meets the eye,
Where only the wind freely wanders ... and I!"

[Узник //Сижу за решеткой в темнице сырой. / Вскормленный
в неволе орел молодой, / Мой грустный товарищ, махая крылом, /
Кровавую пищу клюет под окном, // Клюет, и бросает, и смотрит
в окно, / Как будто со мною задумал одно. / Зовёт меня взглядом и
криком своим / И вымолвить хочет: «Давай улетим! // Мы вольные
птицы; пора, брат, пора! / Туда, где за тучей белеет гора, / Туда, где
синее море, / Туда, где гуляем лишь ветер... да я!...»]

I do not claim, nor do I expect, that this version will be widely acclaimed. My objective was to give the reader a sensation of the shape of the poem, and to try to emulate the effect of the original on the reader. Russian-speakers to whom I have read it were surprised to recognize the poem, even if they did not understand English. I felt that the general intention was realized – to create an *image* of the poem in English – blurry, to be sure, but still recognizable.

Concluding remarks

The above discussion is informed by the belief that in literature the title – text relationship is sacrosanct, and that both deserve equal respect in the process of interpreting. Moreover, I would argue that the arid theorizing of translation studies documented by Anthony Pym has nothing to tell us about the process of translating a literary work. That process is akin to that of the literary scholar, a process of research and creative interpretation that respects the verbal and formal aspects of the source text, seeks to understand the culture that produced it, and strives, always incompletely, to recreate the totality of its image in the target idiom.

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