TRANSLATION ASSESSMENT

ELENA YUSCHENKO*

Summary

This article is devoted to the translation quality assessment of the novel ‘Master and Margarita’. This book can be called unique in the Russian literature. It is Mikhail Bulgakov’s ‘swan song’; the writer had been working on it up to his death. For many years Bulgakov’s works have been forbidden for publications in Russia and the author knew pretty well how it felt to be devoid of the possibility to write what he wanted. This novel has become a reflection of his own destiny. Up to now, ‘Master and Margarita’ evokes great interest in the readers, researchers. The more we know about the author, the better we understand the novel. Many specialists translated ‘Master and Margarita’ in XX century. Up to now, there is no one universal version translation of the book, as the readers give preferences to the version, which they like most of all or they have been recommended. Many disputes arise out of the translation comparison. Some of the translations can be too loose. Some of them follow the rules of the source language to reflect the author’s style. The main task is to find the balance to reflect the fiction. This solution in controversial points of the translations help to keep high quality of the work. When we have a thorough approach to the translation, we understand that each translator comprehends the book in his own way. If there is a mistake in a target text, only a native speaker of the source language will note it, because he has read the original book and know what is written there. Comparing translations from native speakers and non-native speakers will help to see the differences between the texts and select the translation, which is closer to the original. This is why assessment of the quality of the translations is so important. They will help to solve the problem of translation adequacy.

Key Words: Master and Margarita’, Mikhail Bulgakov, Russian literature, Soviet literature, Russian literature translation, fiction translation, translation mistakes, new translations,

“Writers make national literature, while translators make universal literature.”
José Saramago

Sometimes you can dislike the book. It is not obligatory that it should be translation or someone’s recommendation. You can dislike any book you read. You can dislike translation. You can also like the book and its translation separately. What does it depend upon? Does it mean that sometimes translations can surpass or lose in comparison to the original book? Who evaluates the quality of the translation? The reader? Does it mean the writer or a translator should find a way to your heart? In fact, yes. The book should be of an adequate quality to impress the reader.

Everybody knows that the translator is responsible for an adequate fiction translation. However, nobody assesses if the translation IS adequate in quality. It goes without saying. The problem is no one ever assesses fiction translation for the purpose of adequacy (except for the students of the linguistic department, who work upon their diploma projects).

Each translator has his own perception of the book. First, a translator takes the role of a co-writer and should solve one main problem: how would the author write his novel, if he knew the target language? Fiction translation is a presentation of the author, his style, and his views upon the novel and some general notions upon life. Each translator uses the words, which, in his opinion, will produce the necessary effect upon the reader and ‘grab’ his attention. Words can give different characterizations to the situation in the book. No doubt, that any translation is unique in its own way. By comparing two translations, the differences will be obvious.

I offer to compare three most famous translations of ‘The Master and Margarita’ by Michael Glenny, Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky, Diana Burgin and Katherine Tiernan O’Connor, and my own alternative translation No. 4. All previous translations were performed in XX century and up to now, readers can not give preferences to one universal translation. Each of them chooses the text, which is closer and understandable due to some personal reasons.

I will evaluate these translations in accordance to the main categories of translation assessment.
   a - Cultural adequacy
   b - Situational adequacy
   c) Speech acts
   d - Meaning of words / terms
   e - ‘language errors’
   f - Discrepancies of the source text

Evaluating any translation requires correct understanding and interpretation. M.Glenny, R.Pevear, D.Burgin, K.Tiernan O’Connor are foreign language speakers. No matter how well the speakers of the target language know the source language, the difference of mentality can be seen in the text in different aspects. Any foreign language is another reality, another idiomaticity, which should be shown in the target language. I offer to see how foreign language speakers find the way to keep the images in the novel.

Translation of such a complicated novel like ‘The Master and Margarita’ is a significant challenge for any translator, because a lot of research works have been done since its publication, and translation involves a lot of background knowledge, which should coincide with the author’s
intentions. The better the translator knows the source language, the better he will translate the novel.

First of all, I would like to draw attention to the novel name. Everybody translated it like ‘The Master and Margarita’. I think that analysis of the book will help to translate the name of the novel correctly. How does the main character refer to it (Chapter 13 ‘The Hero Appears’)?

«– Дело в том, что год тому назад я написал о Пилате роман.
Гость потемнел лицом и погрозил Ивану кулаком, потом сказал:
– Я – мастер»
M.Glenny: ‘The fact is that a year ago I wrote a novel about Pilate.’

'Are you a writer?' asked the poet with interest. The visitor frowned, threatened Ivan with his fist and said:
‘I am a master.’
R.Pevear, L.Volokhonsky: ‘The thing is that a year ago I wrote a novel about Pilate.’
‘You’re a writer?’ the poet asked with interest.
The guest’s face darkened and he threatened Ivan with his fist, then said:
‘I am a master.’
D. Burgin, K. Tiernan O’Connor: ‘The fact is that a year ago I wrote a novel about Pilate’
‘You’re the writer?’ asked the poet with interest.
The guest’s face darkened, and he shook his fist at Ivan and then said, ‘I am the Master’.
Alternative version No.4 ‘Are you a writer?’ asked the poet with interest. The visitor frowned, threatened Ivan with his fist and said:
‘I am Master’.

It is interesting to note that in Russian ‘master’ is written with a small letter. It is possible to think that the character refers to his art occupation. However, the question about his occupation causes contempt. The same situation goes with the surname.

«У меня нет больше фамилии, – с мрачным презрением ответил странный гость, – я отказался от нее, как и вообще от всего в жизни. Забудем о ней.»
M.Glenny: ‘I no longer have a name,’ replied the curious visitor with grim contempt. 'I have renounced it, as I have renounced life itself. Let us forget it.'
R.Pevear, L.Volokhonsky: ‘I no longer have a name,’ the strange guest answered with gloomy disdain. ‘I renounced it, as I generally did everything in life. Let’s forget it.’
D. Burgin, K. Tiernan O’Connor: ‘I no longer have a name’, the stranger guest replied with gloomy disdain. ‘I gave it up, just as I’ve given up everything else in life. Let’s drop the subject.’
Alternative version No.4 ‘I don’t have a name any longer’ replied the weird guest with grim contempt. ‘I threw it to the winds like life itself. Let’s forget it.’

It is obvious that the main character abandoned his life. He is frustrated, destroyed. He detests his work.

«Я вспомнить не могу без дрожи мой роман. »
M.Glenny: ‘I can’t think about my novel without shuddering.’
R.Pevear, L.Volokhonsky: ‘I cannot recall my novel without trembling.’
D. Burgin, K. Tiernan O’Connor: ‘I can’t think of my novel without a shudder.’
Alternative version No.4 ‘My novel gives me so much pain to shudder to recollect it.’

Master has given up everything: his name, his work and keeps only the name, which Margarita gave him.

The explanation for this perplexity lies in the chapter 24 ‘Master’s Exoneration’ Woland asks

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"That is an excusable weakness. She has too high an opinion of a novel I wrote."

Alternative version No. 4 ‘Tell me, why does Margarita call you Master?’ asked Woland.

He laughed and said:

‘It’s a strange passion of hers. She thinks too high of my novel.’

Doubtfully Margarita could pay attention only to his work. Meeting Master, she found the essence of her life – to inspire, to be the Muse for him.

«Она сулила славу, она подгоняла его и вот тут-то она начала называть мастером. Она дожидалась этих обещанных уже последних слов о пятом прокураторе Иудеи, нараспев и громко повторяла отдельные фразы, которые ей нравились, и говорила, что в этом романе ее жизнь.»

M.Glenny: ‘Sensing fame, she drove him on and started to call him ' the master '. She waited impatiently for the promised final words about the fifth Procurator of Judaea, reading out in a loud sing-song random sentences that pleased her and saying that the novel was her life.’

R.Pevear, L.Volokhonsky: ‘She foretold fame, she urged him on, and it was then that she began to call him a master. She waited impatiently for the already promised last words about the fifth procurator of Judea, repeated aloud in a sing-song voice certain phrases she liked, and said that her life was in this novel.’

D. Burgin, K. Tiernan O’Connor: ‘She predicted fame, urged him on, and started calling him Master. She waited eagerly for the promised final words about the fifth procurator of Judea, recited the parts she especially liked in a loud sing-song voice, and said that the novel was her life.’

Alternative translation No.4 ‘She smelled fame, drove him on and started to call him "Master". She was longing for the final words about the fifth procurator of Judea, in a singing loud voice repeated the phrases she liked most of all and said that she put her life into the novel.’

Calling him Master, Margarita meant it to be the name. Master was the great man for her, who could create something extraordinary, phenomenal in the ordinary life. All the translations offer us ‘the Master’ – as a demonstration of his art occupation. Bulgakov shows us, that his character pursues spirituality, passion, enlightenment in life. He is beyond routine. He is a symbol of freedom, creation, and art. In general, he is beyond life itself. He devoted his life to writing the novel, and it became the meaning of his life. When Master faced hostility of the external world, he found no powers to fight, as he had put his soul into the novel about Pilate and Jeshua. He was not ready for the struggle with the world to protect himself and his novel. Bulgakov shows, when Master makes up his mind to betray his interests, his faith, he is starting to lose his individuality. He surrenders to the confrontation with the critics. He has no name, no home. He has nothing to prove his greatness. This is why in Russian ‘master’ is written with a small letter. Anyway, he has some self-respect and
admits that he is Master, even in the asylum. This is the only name left for him after all the events in his life. I like that D. Burgin, K. Tiernan O’Connor put Master in the novel with the capital letter, while others put it in the small letters. These situations from the novel have a crucial meaning for the understanding of the book and for an adequate translation of the name of the book. It is more appropriate to unite main character occupation and name and call him ‘Master’ without article.

Translation of the names always create certain difficulty. Names give us understanding of the country, where the events take place, the epoch, the time, when the novel was created. Besides, the main specific feature of the fiction translation is a characterization of cultural and temporal differences. The fiction translation reflects the cultural authenticity, the time, the language and style of the author, his conditions of life. The writer uses cultural phenomena, which create a special atmosphere and characterize the time in the book.

In the first chapter (‘Don’t You Ever Talk to the Strangers’), there is the phrase: «шляпу пирожком нes в руке», which is translated like ‘pork-pie hat by the brim’ by Glenny and ‘fedora hat in his hand’ by R.Pevear, L.Volokhonsky, Burgin O’Connor. In the first translation, we see a significant mistake. Pork pie hats appeared only in 1940, while middle class (интеллигенция) wore «шляпа пирожком» (fedora hat) in Soviet Union in 1920s. Interesting to pay attention, that initially, fedora was a hat for women, but in 1924, Eduard VIII started to use it for men too. When Bulgakov was writing his novel, this hat was all the rage. In general, the translation is correct, though typically Russian image is lost. I prefer to write ‘summer hat in his hand’. It is a generalization action and helps us to avoid problems in misunderstanding and confusing with the type of the hat.

The same way analysis of the translation of the phrase «товарищи» (‘comrades’) is performed. This phrase appears quite frequently throughout the novel. It is known, that translator should ‘adapt’ the reality of the source culture in an understandable way of the target language. Translating it like ‘comrades’ will make the translator comment its meaning and the reader will have to look for our explanation, which is not very comfortable for him. The same problem with «граждане» (citizens). Unfortunately, the replacement of the word is not possible, it is particularly strong within the history of the country. On the other hand, change of these words for ‘sirs’, ‘gentlemen’ will lose description of the tense atmosphere of the time, when all the people used this word to show their community without sexual identity. For example in chapter 4 ‘At Griboedov’s’ («Дело было в Грибоедове»):

«Радость загорелась в маленьких глазках Штурман Жоржа, и она сказала, смягчая свое контратто:
– Не надо, товарищи, завидовать. Дач всего двадцать две, и строятся еще только семь, а нас в МАССОЛИТе три тысячи.»

M.Glenny: ‘Bos’un George’s little eyes lit up, and softening her contralto rasp she said:
‘We mustn’t be jealous, comrades. There are only twenty-two dachas, only seven more are being built, and there are three thousand of us in MASSOLIT.’

R.Pevear, L.Volokhonsky: ‘Bos’n George’s little eyes lit up with glee, and she said, softening her contralto:
We mustn’t be envious, comrades. There’s twenty-two dachas 4 in all, and only seven more are being built, and there’s three thousand of us in Massolit.’

D. Burgin, K. Tiernan O’Connor: ‘Joy blazed in Bosun George’s little eyes, and softening her heavy contralto she said, ‘No need for envy, comrades. There are twenty-two dachas in all, and only seven more are being built, and there are 3,000 of us in MASSOLIT.’

Alternative version No.4: Pilot George eyes lit up delightfully and she said softening her contralto:
‘We shouldn’t envy, gentlemen. There are only twenty-two houses and seven are being built
while MASSOLIT consists of three thousand members.’

« Товарищ Бездомный, — заговорило это лицо юбилейным голосом, — успокойтесь!»

M.Glenny: 'Comrade Bezdomny,' said the face solemnly, 'calm down!'

R.Pevear, L.Volokhonsky: ‘Comrade Homeless,’ the face began in a guest speaker’s voice, ‘calm down!’

D. Burgin, K. Tiernan O’Connor: ‘Comrade Bezdomny’ said the face in a voice suited to anniversary celebrations, ‘Calm down!’

Alternative version No.4 ‘Dear comrade Bezdomny,’ spoke the face in an unctuous voice, ‘calm down.’

Here it is possible to use ‘comrades’, because these situations reflect people community and solidarity. They are all writers and the author emphasizes it.

Anyway, in some descriptive situations, where there is no appeal or call to some actions, the word ‘citizens’ can be easily replaced with situational phrases like ‘men’, ‘fellow’, etc.

Chapter 9 ‘Koroviev’s Tricks’ (« Коровьевские штуки »)

« И в эту минуту в столовую вошли двое граждан »

M.Glenny: ‘At that moment three men came into the dining-room’.

R.Pevear, L.Volokhonsky: ‘And at that moment two citizens entered the dining room’.

D. Burgin, K. Tiernan O’Connor: ‘At that moment two men walked in the dining room’.

Alternative version No.4: ‘At that moment two men entered the room’.

The word ‘citizens’ can be replaced with the word of general meaning, it does not distort the understanding of the phrase or the novel. Thus, another problem can be solved — we make the translation universal and understandable. Our translation will not break the writer’s idea.

Sometimes there are the situations, when a translator makes mistakes due to some lack of the background information, like in the chapter 1 ‘Don’t You Ever Talk to the Strangers’ (« Никогда не разговаривайте с неизвестными »). « Дайте нарzanу ».

M. Glenny translates it ‘a glass of lemonade’, that is his big mistake. « Нарzan » is not a lemonade, it is a mineral water.

R.Pevear, L.Volokhonsky write ‘Give us seltzer’ — it is better, but again, we are in Moscow of 20s, not in Europe or USA.

D. Burgin, K. Tiernan O’Connor offer ‘Give me some Narzan water’. Specification in this case will do.

I have a very good opportunity to present the version, which unites all the characteristics: ‘Narzan mineral water’. This translation reflects all the particularities of the beverage. It is carbonated, it is mineral, and it is Russian. The same case with « Абрикосовая » goes like ‘apricot juice’ in Glenny translation. R.Pevear, L.Volokhonsky give us a better version ‘Apricot soda’.

The similar situation goes with the confusion of the beverages in the chapters 23 (‘Satan’s Great Ball’), 27 (‘The Flat No.50 Meets Its End’) and 30 (‘Time to go! Time to go!’):

« Дамы с визгом и воплем: 
- КОНЬЯК! »

« А это нас арестовать идут, — ответил Азазелло и выпил стопочку коньку »

« Маргарита налила Азазелло коньяк… ».

In translations we see the following:

Michael Glenny: ‘Shrieking with delight the women screamed: ’Brandy!’

‘They’re coming to arrest us,’ replied Azazello and drained a glass of brandy’

‘Margarita poured Azazello a brandy.’

R.Pevear, L.Volokhonsky: ‘The ladies — shrieking and screaming “Cognac!”'
'That’s them coming to arrest us,” Azazello replied and drank off a glass of cognac.’

‘Margarita poured Azazello some cognac.’

D. Burgin, K. Tiernan O’Connor: ‘The ladies shrieked and squealed, ‘Brandy!’

‘Oh, that’s them coming to arrest us,’ replied Azazello as he downed a shot of brandy’

‘Margarita poured Azazello some cognac.’

In this episode such a trifle like cognac, plays a significant role. Perhaps cognac of 1920s was lower in quality, and its quality resembled rather brandy, but it is really doubtfullly to have ‘brandy’ in Moscow of 1920s. It is rather strange to explain why D. Burgin, K. Tiernan O’Connor use ‘brandy’ and ‘cognac’ in different situations. There is no clarification of this replacement in the comments.

This is the main translator’s function to comprehend the text of another culture, evaluate comprehensibility the way it is expressed with the means of another language. The translator should be able to express the ideas of the source language with the understandable and correct means of the target language. Analysis of the speech acts in the target text will help to understand the situational adequacy of the translation.

In general, analysis of the speech act stand for the quality of translation:

a) how translator understands the text
b) his knowledge of cross-cultural differences.

In Chapter 13 (‘The Hero Appears’) there are famous lines:

«Любовь выскочила перед нами, как из-под земли выскакивает убийца в переулке, и поразила нас сразу обоих! Так поражает молния, так поражает финский нож!»

Comparison of the translations look the following way:

M.Glenny: ‘Love leaped up out at us like a murderer jumping out of a dark alley. It shocked us both--the shock of a stroke of lightning, the shock of a flick-knife.’

R.Pevear, L.Volokhonsky: ‘Love leaped out in front of us like a murderer in an alley leaping out of nowhere, and struck us both at once. As lightning strikes, as a Finnish knife strikes!’

D. Burgin, K. Tiernan O’Connor: ‘Just like a murderer jumps out of nowhere in an alley, love jumped out in front of us and struck us both at once! The way lightning strikes, or a Finnish knife!’

Alternative version No. 4: “Love leaped up out at us like it was a murderer in a dark alley. It struck both of us at once! It struck like a lightning, like a rapid Finnish stab knife!’

Look it up in the dictionary: «финка, нож с толстым коротким лезвием» (knife with a big short blade). ‘Finnish knife’ is a phenomenon of 1920-30s and can be easily encountered in the works of other Soviet writers and poets. In R.Pevear, L.Volokhonsky and D. Burgin, K. Tiernan O’Connor translation of this phrase is left without changes ‘a Finnish knife’. Unfortunately the phrase loses its image – a knife, it is not quite understandable for an English-speaking reader, why the author uses this type of a knife in the phrase. In M.Glenny translation there is a ‘flick-knife’, and in the dictionary there is an explanation: ‘a knife with a blade inside the handle that springs into the position when a button is pressed. Flick knives are connected in people’s minds with violent criminals, esp, young men who enjoy fighting’. Finnish knife was flat and never had a button in its construction. It is a text mistake. For example a reader does not want to look in the dictionary. He wants a good book, which makes him impressed. In the context there is a phrase ‘As lightning strikes’. Perhaps in this situation ‘flick-knife’ reflects the idiomatic expression and matches author’s metaphor to show a quick stroke. What about Finnish knife? I offer the following: ‘It struck like a lightning, like a rapid Finnish stab knife’. ‘Stab knife’ resembles our ‘finnish knife’ in form and the phrase shows that the action was so quick, that it resembles precise deathbrow. Descriptive translation amplifies a narrow notion and makes the phrase understandable for an English-speaking reader.
Correct text understanding is closely connected with the author’s style and comprehension of the writer’s metaphors and idiomatic expressions.

One of the main metaphors in the novel are metaphors of the sun with its reflection and broken pieces. Metaphor of the sun has a crucial effect throughout the novel. Bulgakov shows the sun as a symbol of life. Symbol of God in general. On the one hand the sun gives hope, love, like in the meeting of Master and Margarita. On the other hand it is unbearable, it destroys, burns everything, like during Jeshua’s execution. There is another metaphor in the novel: reflected broken sun. Reflecting in the windows, it breaks in many pieces. This sun does not warm, does not give any light. Broken sun symbolizes wreckage of dreams, hopes. When the author writes about ‘broken sun’ it means there is no hope left, life is practically over.

Chapter 1(‘Don’t You Ever Talk to the Strangers’)

«Он остановил взгляд на верхних этажах, ослепительно отражающих в стеклах изломанное и навсегда уходящее от Михаила Александровича солнце».

We can compare the image in a general context:

M.Glenny: ‘His gaze halted on the upper storeys, whose panes threw back a blinding, fragmented reflection of the sun which was setting on Mikhail Alexandrovich for ever’.

R.Pevear, L.Volokhonsky: ‘He rested his glance on the upper floors, where the glass dazzlingly reflected the broken-up sun which was for ever departing Mikhail Alexandrovich’.

D. Burgin, K. Tiernan O’Connor: ‘He rested his gaze on the upper stories of the buildings and on the windowpanes’ blinding reflection of the broken sun that was departing from Mikhail Alexandrovich forever’.

Alternative version No. 4: ‘Dazzling reflections of the broken sunrays in the high stories caught his eye. Unfortunately, Michael Alexandrovich would have never seen it again’.

Translator found different words for «ослепительно отражающих в стеклах изломанное солнце»; ‘blinding, fragmented reflection of the sun’, ‘dazzlingly reflected the broken-up sun’, ‘blinding reflection of the broken sun’, ‘dazzling reflections of the broken sunrays’. In two versions, the sun blinds the characters, the readers, in two others – it impresses with the brightness. I decided to substitute ‘sun’ with ‘sunrays’ to show its fragmentary and broken image in the novel.

Three translations are practically the same in construction, structure of the sentence. In the source text there is some intrigue, which is lost in translation. I break the long sentence into two sentences and let the reader imagine what would happen to the character with the usage a complex grammar tense.

The image of the broken sun appears also in the end of the novel (Chapter 32 ‘Absolution and Eternal Refuge’).

«… указал назад, туда, где ссоткался в тылу недавно покинутый город с монастырскими пряничными башнями, с разбитым вдребезги солнцем в стекле».

«Тут потухло сломанное солнце».

M.Glenny: ‘pointing back to where rose the city they had just left, with its onion-domed monasteries, fragmented sunlight reflected in its windows’.

‘The reflected sun faded from the windows’.

R.Pevear, L.Volokhonsky: ‘pointing back, where the recently abandoned city with the gingerbread towers of its convent, with the sun broken to smithereens in its windows, now wove itself behind them’.

‘Here the sun broken up in the glass went out’.

D. Burgin, K. Tiernan O’Connor: ‘pointed back to where the city they had just left displayed itself with its gingerbread monastery towers and its sun broken to smithereens in the glass’.
‘The fragmented sun dimmed in the glass’.
Alternative version No. 4: ‘pointed back where he saw the image of an abandoned city with the gabled gingerbread monastery towers, with the broken pieces of the sunrays in its windows’.
‘broken sunrays in the window burnt out’.
Again – broken sun and the window. This metaphor shows a reproduction of the sun reflection and gives us some intensification of the picturesqueness. ‘Broken to smithereens’ is a highly literary metaphor. It can produce a startling effect upon the reader, if not the construction of the sentence. In Glenny translation we see the picture at once. R.Pevear, L.Volokhonsky show the fragmentary pictures of the city. D. Burgin, K. Tiernan O’Connor do not clarify where the glass is. In Russian, the city appears gradually and like in zoom, the image of the window is getting bigger. This is why I construct the English sentence in such a way to unite the meaning, create the image of the city, its growth, and detail description.

I offer to look through some more Bulgakov’s metaphors. It would be better if the reader can refer to the original text.

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<td>immortality, the thought of which aroused a sense of unbearable grief</td>
<td>immortality for some reason provoked unendurable anguish</td>
<td>immortality evoked a sense of unbearable anguish</td>
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<tr>
<td>«всесилен» (chapter 24. ‘Master’s Exoneration’)</td>
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<td>All-powerful</td>
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<td>Allmighty!</td>
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<td>like the entrance to the bottomless well of all darkness and shadow</td>
<td>like an entrance to a bottomless well of darkness and shadow</td>
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<tr>
<td>«добрый человек» (chapter 2. ‘Pontius Pilate’)</td>
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<td>Good man</td>
<td>good man</td>
<td>good man</td>
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<td>a golden age</td>
<td>a golden age</td>
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<td>the needle of anxiety</td>
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<td>a needle of anxiety</td>
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<tr>
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<td>needled memory</td>
<td>needle-prickled memory</td>
<td>anxious, pricked memory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>«кожу… сжег загар» (chapter 22. ‘In Candlelight’)</td>
<td>The skin of his face seemed burned by timeless sunshine.</td>
<td>The skin of Woland’s face was as if burned for all eternity by the sun</td>
<td>An eternal suntan seemed to have been burnt into face</td>
<td>His skin was forever burnt with the eternal hell sun.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>«кровавый подбой» (chapter 2. ‘Pontius Pilate’)</td>
<td>lined with blood-red</td>
<td>with blood-red lining</td>
<td>with a blood-red lining</td>
<td>scarlet blood lining</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>«кровь давно ушла в землю. И там, где она пролилась, уже растут виноградные гроздья» (chapter 23. ‘Satan’s Great Ball’)</td>
<td>The blood has long since drained away into the earth and grapes have grown on the spot.</td>
<td>The blood has long since gone into the earth. And where it was spilled, grapevines are already growing.</td>
<td>The blood has already seeped down into the earth. And there where it spilled, clusters of grapes are growing on the earth, which engulfed the earth</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Russian Text</td>
<td>English Translation</td>
<td>English Translation</td>
<td>English Translation</td>
<td>English Translation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
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<td>---------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>«луна… развалившаяся на куски» (chapter 1. ‘Don’t You Ever Talk to the Strangers’)</td>
<td>the moon flashed before his eyes but it split into fragments</td>
<td>the moon flashed, but now breaking to pieces</td>
<td>the moon flashed, but it was already breaking into splinters</td>
<td>for the last time the moon flashed, loosing and splitting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>«лунная дорога» (chapter 32. ‘Absolution and Eternal Refuge’)</td>
<td>path of moonlight</td>
<td>path of moonlight</td>
<td>a path of moonlight</td>
<td>moonlight path</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>«лунная лента» (chapter 26. ‘The Burial’)</td>
<td>a long ribbon of moonlight</td>
<td>a ribbon of moonlight</td>
<td>a ribbon of moonlight</td>
<td>a long way of moonlight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>«лунное наводнение» (Epilogue)</td>
<td>a moonlight flood</td>
<td>a flood of moonlight</td>
<td>a moonlight flood</td>
<td>flood of moonlight</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>«мертвенно-синеватый» (chapter 21. ‘The Flight’)</td>
<td>deathly grey-blue</td>
<td>deathly blue</td>
<td>deathly blue</td>
<td>cadaverous-dirty-blue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>«наиболее талантливые генералы» (chapter 5. ‘At Griboedov’s’)</td>
<td>with the most talent…”</td>
<td>the most talented of us that got the dachas…”</td>
<td>the most talented got dachas…”</td>
<td>the most talented people in power</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>«пустой и черный глаз» (chapter 22. ‘In Candlelight’)</td>
<td>empty and black</td>
<td>empty and black</td>
<td>Vacant and black</td>
<td>blank black eye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>«скаред» (chapter 18. ‘Unwelcome Visitors’)</td>
<td>old miser</td>
<td>skinflint</td>
<td>old skinflint</td>
<td>skinflint</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>«словесная пачкотня» (chapter 22. ‘In Candlelight’)</td>
<td>all this hot air</td>
<td>this verbal muck</td>
<td>talking drivel</td>
<td>verbal incontinence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>--------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>«солныца плавили стекло за рекой» (chapter 32. ‘Absolution and Eternal Refuge’)</td>
<td>glass suns glittered beyond the river</td>
<td>suns melted the glass beyond the river</td>
<td>suns were smelting the glass</td>
<td>the windows, melting in the countless sunrays, behind the river</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>«столбом загорелась пыль» (chapter 2. ‘Pontius Pilate’)</td>
<td>a column of dust had swirled up beside him.</td>
<td>dust blaze up in a pillar around him</td>
<td>a column of dust swirling up</td>
<td>firing swirling cloud of the dust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>«уцепившись … за проклятую небом безводную землю» (chapter 16. ‘Execution’)</td>
<td>on that arid soil by rooting itself in a crevice</td>
<td>In a crevice, clutching at the heaven-cursed waterless soil</td>
<td>clinging to the heaven-cursed waterless soil</td>
<td>to be alive on that arid soil</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>«человек без сюрприза внутри, в своем ящике» (chapter 13. ‘The Hero Appears’)</td>
<td>...............</td>
<td>.............</td>
<td>had no surprises inside, up his sleeve</td>
<td>a person without a mystery inside isn’t attractive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>«чистую реку воды жизни» (chapter 26. ‘The Burial’)</td>
<td>a pure river of the water of life</td>
<td>the pure river of the water of life</td>
<td>the pure stream of the water of life</td>
<td>a pure stream of life water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>« - Это простительная слабость.» (chapter 24. ‘Master’s Exoneration’)</td>
<td>An understandable weakness of hers</td>
<td>That is an excusable weakness</td>
<td>A pardonable weakness on her part</td>
<td>It’s a strange passion of hers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

No doubt, that reading a metaphor out of the context of the novel shows that each translator has put his own emphasis into the phrase. A person, who has already read the novel, can take
interest in comparing these metaphors to understand which of them is closer in description and which of them characterizes the novel better.

The first part of the article is connected with the analysis of cultural, situational adequacy and speech acts in the novel. This analysis helps to understand the impression they produce upon the reader and evaluate adequacy of these aspects in the novel.

**Art of failure**

It is generally known, that translation blunders can completely mutilate the original text meaning. Some of them have been mentioned above, during comparison of some cultural notions and speech acts. Any translator should pick up the words stylistically correctly to produce the necessary effect upon the reader.

However, sometimes some awkward situations can appear in the translation. For example in translations of Michael Glenny in 1967 and Richard Pevear, Larissa Volokhonsky in 1997 there is no episode about Aloiziy Mogarych in Chapter 13 (chapter 13 ‘The Hero Appears’), that is why in the chapter 24 (‘Master’s Exoneration’) readers have all the reasons to ask – who is Aloiziy and what role he plays in Master’s life? The translator should be able to reflect author’s intentions, which show the atmosphere in the book.

In chapter 28 ‘Koroviev and Behemoth’s Final Adventures’ in Glenny translation there is a serious blunder. We read in the original the following:

«Почему вы знаете, какие замыслы роятся у меня в голове? Или в этой голове? – и он указал на голову Бегемота, с которой тот тотчас снял кепку, как бы для того, чтобы граждanka могла лучше осмотреть её».

‘How do you know what bright ideas may not be swarming in my head? Or in his head?’ And he pointed at Behemoth's head. The cat removed its cap to give the woman a better look at its head.’

In this chapter of Glenny translation, Behemoth is described like a cat, though in the original he appeared in a man look.

One of the difficulties in the translations is a strange replacement of «штурман» ("navigator") with «боцманом» ("boatsman") in the name of «Штурман Жорж» in chapter 4 ‘At Griboedov’s’ («Дело было в Грибоедове»):

«– Хлопец, наверно, на Клязьме застрял, – густым голосом отзывалась Настасья Лукинишина».

alternatively: 

M.Glenny: 'I suppose the lad's got stuck out at Klyazma,' said Nastasya Lukinishna Nepremenova, orphaned daughter of a Moscow business man, who had turned writer and wrote naval war stories under the pseudonym of 'Bo'sun George'.

R.Pevear, L.Volokhonsky: ‘The laddie must’ve got stuck on the Klyazma,’ came the thick-voiced response of Nastasya Lukinishna Nepremenova, orphan of a Moscow merchant, who had become a writer and wrote stories about sea battles under the pen-name of Bos’n George.’

D.Burgin, K.Tiernan O’Connor: ‘The lad must have gotten help up on the Klyazma’ said the thick-voiced Nastasya Lukinishna Nepremenova, an orphan from a Moscow merchant family, who had become a writer and turned out naval battle stories under the pen name ‘Bosun George’.

Alternative version No.4: “Our pal’s got stuck at Klyazma” said Nastasia Lukinishna Nepremenova, an orphan of a famous Moscow merchant’s family, turning out to be a writer and writing naval war stories under the pen-name “Pilot George”.

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‘Bosun’ is the seniormost rate of the deck department and is responsible for the components of a ship. Word translation for «штурман» is “navigator”. This noun was not known in Bulgakov’s period, this is why one should seek for the definition to choose the proper word for translation. It is a person, who is responsible for a vehicle to move on, course of the journey, the destination, the time of the trip. While the boatsman deals with the vehicle. Taking into consideration Bulgakov’s attitude to writers’ ‘constellation’, which he described in his novel, this name is certainly used satirically. If a navigator drives on the vehicle, this name can be easily replaced as a ‘pilot’. Pilot can be both in air and ground transport.

In chapter 32 ‘Absolution and Eternal Refuge’ of M.Glenny translation, there is a rather crucial eye-catching semantic mistake, which lowers the translation quality.

«-Ваш роман прочитали, - заговорил Волод, поворачиваясь к мастеру, - и сказали только одно, что он, к сожалению, не окончен».

‘We have read your novel,’ said Woland, turning to the master,’ and we can only say that unfortunately it is not finished.’

Notwithstanding Woland ‘read’ the novel in chapter 24, he did not take decision upon Master’s destiny himself. In the chapter 29 ‘Master and Margarita’s Fate is Determined’ Jeshua has sent Levi Matvei to Woland to ask him to give them peace. In the Russian language impersonal sentence with omissions produce a confusing effect for the target language speaker.

R.Pevear, L.Volokhonsky: ‘Your novel has been read,’ Woland began, turning to the master, ‘and the only thing said about it was that, unfortunately, it is not finished.’

In chapter 30 ‘Time to go! Time to go’ in R.Pevear, L.Volokhonsky translation we see a blunder, significantly distorting the novel.

«Вы о нем продолжение напишите!»

In all three translations there is the same phrase:

‘… You’ll write a sequel about him / to it’.

The word ‘sequel’ stands out of the context. In Bulgakov’s time this word was not known for an audience. Now it is a usual familiar word. This word reflects the meaning of the phrase, however from the stylistic analysis, the novel continuum is broken. The translator should use the contemporaneous means of the language to show that human values are acute in any time and place. Still, the context plays a very important role and the way the word corresponds to the situation in the novel.

In Alternative version No.4 I offer the following translation:

‘You write of him something more.’

Ambiguity of the phrase of the source text is preserved and reflected in the target text. Earlier Ivan tells Master that he wants to write other things and in the end of the novel he becomes the professor of History and Philosophy Institute. That’s why it is not clear, if he is going to write a fiction about Pilate, or it will be a research work. Generalization in translation helps to combine these two ideas and keep the original meaning of the phrase.

When a translator does not have enough figurative means to translate the source text, he explains some notions or realia in the notes and comments. Sometimes the comments have additional special information, though more frequently they sound like ‘annotations’ or ‘manuals to read the novel’. Explanation does not always mean adaptation. If a translator tries to find the analogous phrase, idiomatic expression in the context of the target language, the translation will be closer to author’s intentions. A vivid example in the chapter 28:

«Горько мне! Горько! Горько! — завыл Коровьев, как шафер на старинной свадьбе.»

D.Burgin, K.Tiernan O’Connor: ‘This makes me bitter! Bitter! Bitter!’ wailed Korovyov like
the best man at an old-fashioned wedding’

And they add a comment ‘Bitter! Bitter! – this is said at Russian weddings to force the bride and groom to kiss, to take away the supposedly bitter taste of the food.’

R.Pevear, L.Volokhonsky: ‘I’m bitter! Bitter, bitter!’ Koroviev wailed, like the best man at an old-fashioned wedding.’

They also add a comment: ‘There is an Old Russian custom of shouting ‘Bitter!’ every now and then during the banquet after a wedding. The newly-weds are then expected to kiss so as to make it sweet’. In English, there is a full analogue of the phrase – ‘Now a kiss!’ Word by word translation only puzzles the reader. Analysis of the phrase will help to make a correct translation into the target language. Previously Koroviev sobbed loudly to distract attention from the mess they created with Behemoth in the Torgsin and make people feel compassion to an ordinary Russian citizen, who does not have any currency. So, the phrase “Горько мне! Горько! Горько!” mainly refer to the miserable working man. Such a word-based translation should be better replaced with the situational translation, like in M. Glenny translation:

‘What about him, I ask you?’ wailed Koroviev, completely overcome by his own oratory.’

Absence of the ‘best man’ makes the translation more understandable. The meaning of the phrase is translated correctly, even with the generalization. A translator should pay more attention to the context, than to the usage of the words. Word by word translation makes the text awkward and hard to understand.

All the translations wanted to preserve and show the author’s style, with the help of the long sentences and particular Russian sentence word order. Unfortunately, it produced a reverse effect, it made the English text clumsy. Notwithstanding, that everything in written is understood by the reader, the reader ‘feels’ the text is not native. Word by word translation makes such a difficult novel even more complicated to find beginning or the end of our phrase.

Taking into account, that the novel is Russian, and the names are Russian too, it is absolutely impossible to show the personal names with the necessary expressive effect, like in the source text. Nevertheless, L.Volokhonsky, R.Pevear translated «Бездомный» like «Homeless», «Богохульский» like «Blasphemsky». Nomen est omen. Still, they keep Бескудников (Beskudnikov), Варенуха (Varenukha), Двубратский (Dvubratsky) without any translation. Evidently, they wanted to emphasize the surname of the main character (Bezdomny) in order not to explain the meaning of his surname. Why not do the same with all the surnames in the novel? There is a rule, that names should never be translated, because in this case translation loses its unique features of the original literature. I think name translation can be classified as a serious mistake of the translation.

Needless to say about discrepancies of the source text. The novel was hardly finished and some elements in the novel are disconnected.

For instance, in the chapters 13 (‘The Hero Appears’) and 19 (‘Margarita’):

«Она несла в руках отвратительные, тревожные желтые цветы. Черт их знает, как их зовут, но они первые почему-то появляются в Москве. И эти цветы очень отчетливо выделялись на черном ее весеннем пальто.»

M.Glenny: ‘She was carrying some of those repulsive yellow flowers. God knows what they’re called, but they are somehow always the first to come out in spring. They stood out very sharply against her black dress.’

R.Pevear, L.Volokhonsky: ‘She was carrying repulsive, alarming yellow flowers in her hand. Devil knows what they’re called, but for some reason they’re the first to appear in Moscow. And these flowers stood out clearly against her black spring coat.’
D.Burgin, K.Tiernan O’Connor: ‘She was carrying some hideous, disturbing yellow flowers. The devil only knows what they’re called, but for some reasons they’re the first ones to bloom in Moscow. And those flowers stood out distinctly against her black spring coat.’

Alternative version No.4: ‘She was carrying repulsively annoying yellow flowers. Damn them, how they’re called, but they are the first to appear in Moscow. They showed up sharply on her spring black coat.’

«Что нужно было этой женщине, в глазах которой всегда горел какой-то непонятный огонечек, что нужно было этой чуть косящей на один глаз ведьме, украсившей себя тогда весною мимозами?»

M.Glenny: ‘What more did the woman need? Why did her eyes always glow with a strange fire? What else did she want, that witch with a very slight squint in one eye, who always decked herself with mimosa every spring?’

R.Pevear, L.Volokhonsky: ‘What did this woman need, in whose eyes there always burned some enigmatic little fire? What did she need, this witch with a slight cast in one eye, who had adorned herself with mimosa that time in the spring?’

D.Burgin, K.Tiernan O’Connor: ‘What did this woman want, whose eyes always burned with an incomprehensible fire? This witch with a slight squint in one eye, who adorned herself with mimosa in springtime – what did she want?’

Alternative version No.4: ‘What did that woman need, whose eyes were glowing with a strange fire? What did that witch of a woman with a squint in one eye want? Why did she adorn herself with mimosas that spring?’

In the chapter 19, the author gives some explanation - the meeting of Master and Margarita was in spring, particularly it was in May as he said in chapter 13. Mentioning mimosas makes the readers confused, as mimosas appear in the early spring of March. While others translators keep the description close to the original text, M.Glenny tries to ‘smooth’ the text and takes away this discrepancy. He shows that Margarita was in a black dress, and she brings mimosas every spring. He shows her desolation and despair. Atmosphere of loss and illustration of Master’s scattered memories is lost; the peculiarity of the fragmented novel in the translation is broken. It is a very simple and beautiful description of a desperate woman.

In chapter 13 Ivan sees, that Master is shaven, while in chapter 30 it is written, that in the clinic they have cut beard.

«С балкона осторожно заглядывал в комнату бритый, темноволосый, с острым носом, встревоженными глазами и со свешивающимся на лоб коком волос человек примерно лет тридцати восьми.»

M.Glenny: ‘He was aged about thirty-eight, clean-shaven and dark, with a sharp nose, restless eyes and a lock of hair that tumbled over his forehead.’

R.Pevear, L.Volokhonsky: ‘Cautiously looking into the room from the balcony was a clean-shaven, dark-haired man of approximately thirty-eight, with a sharp nose, anxious eyes, and a wisp of hair hanging down on his forehead.’

D.Burgin, K.Tiernan O’Connor: ‘Peering cautiously into the room from the balcony was a clean-shaven, dark-haired man of about thirty-eight; he had anxious eyes, a sharp nose and a shock of hair hanging over his forehead.’

Alternative version No.4: ‘He saw a dark-haired, shaven man peering cautiously from the balcony into the room. He was at about thirty-eight with a sharp nose, anxious eyes, and hair hanging on his forehead.’

«Правда, он был выбрит впервые, считая с той осенней ночи (в клинике бородку ему
M.Glenny: ‘He had, however, had his first proper shave since that autumn night, because the hospital staff had done no more than trim his beard with electric clippers.’

R.Pevear, L.Volokhonsky: ‘True, he was clean-shaven for the first time since that autumn night (in the clinic his beard had been cut with clippers).’

D.Burgin, K.Tiernan O’Connor: ‘True, he was clean-shaven for the first time since that autumn night (his beard had been trimmed with clippers at the clinic).’

Alternative version No.4: ‘He was shaven for the first time since that last autumn night (his beard was cut with the electric clippers in the clinic).’

Here translators keep all the discrepancies of the original text.

One more very complicated situation in the novel. At the ball Margarita let her maid Natasha stay a witch. In chapter 30 Azazello killed Master and Margarita. In the epilogue the following situation is described:

«Это он и его шайка заставили исчезнуть из Москвы Маргариту Николаевну и ее домработницу Наташу. Кстати: этим делом следствие занималось особенно внимательно. Требовалось выяснить, были ли похищены эти женщины шайкой убийц и поджигателей или же бежали вместе с преступной компанией добровольно? Основываясь на нелепых и путанных показаниях Николая Ивановича я приняв во внимание странную и безумную записку Маргариты Николаевны, оставленную мужу, записку, в которой она пишет, что уходит в ведьмы, учтя то обстоятельство, что Наташа исчезла, оставив все свои носильные вещи на месте, – следствие пришло к заключению, что и хозяйка и ее домработница были загипнотизированы, подобно многим другим, и в таком виде похищены бандой. Возникла и, вероятно, совершенно правильная мысль, что преступников привлекла красота обеих женщин.

Но вот что осталось совершенно неясным для следствия – это побуждение, заставившее шайку похитить душевнобольного, именующего себя мастером, из психиатрической клиники. Этого установить не удалось, как не удалось добыть и фамилию похищенного больного. Так и стигнул он навсегда под мертвой кличкой: «Номер сто восемнадцатый из первого корпуса».

M.Glenny: ‘The police, incidentally, paid special attention to this aspect of the case, trying to discover whether these women had been kidnapped by this gang of murderers and arsonists or whether they had voluntarily run away with the criminals. Basing their findings on the ridiculous and confused evidence provided by Nikolai Ivanovich, taking into account the insane note that Margarita Nikolayevna had left for her husband to say that she was becoming a witch, and considering the fact that Natasha had vanished leaving all her movables at home, the investigators came to the conclusion that both maid and mistress had been hypnotised like so many others and then kidnapped by the gang. There was always, of course, the likely consideration that the crooks had been attracted by two such pretty women.

However, one thing baffled the police completely--what could have been the gang's motive for abducting a mental patient, who called himself the master, from a psychiatric clinic? This completely eluded them, as did the abducted patient's real name. He was therefore filed away for ever under the pseudonym of 'No. 118, Block i.'

R.Pevear, L.Volokhonsky: ‘Incidentally, the investigation considered this matter with special attention. It had to find out if the two women had been abducted by the gang of murderers and arsonists or had fled voluntarily with the criminal company. On the basis of the absurd and incoherent evidence of Nikolai Ivanovich, and considering the strange and insane note Margarita
Nikolaevna had left for her husband, the note in which she wrote that she had gone off to become a witch, as well as the circumstance that Natasha had disappeared leaving all her clothes behind, the investigation concluded that both mistress and housekeeper, like many others, had been hypnotized, and had thus been abducted by the band. There also emerged the probably quite correct thought that the criminals had been attracted by the beauty of the two women.

Yet what remained completely unclear to the investigation was the gang’s motive in abducting the mental patient who called himself the master from the psychiatric clinic. This they never succeeded in establishing, nor did they succeed in obtaining the abducted man’s last name. Thus he vanished for ever under the dead alias of number one-eighteen from the first building.

D.Burgin, K.Tiernan O’Connor: ‘Incidently, the investigstors had given that matter special attention. They had to determine whether the women had been abducted by the gang of the murdered and arsonists or whether they had run off with the criminal band of their own free will. Based on the absurd and muddled testimony of Nikolai Ivanovich and taking into account the bizarre and insane note Margarita Nikolaevna had left her husband, in which she said she had gone off to be a witch, and considering the fact that Natasha had disappeared without taking any of her things, the investigators concluded that mistress and maid had been both hypnotized, along with so many others, and abducted by the gang while in that state. The quite likely possibility also arose that the criminals had been attracted by the women’s beauty.

However, the motive behind the gang’s abduction of a mental patient called himself the Master from a psychiatric clinic still remained a mystery for the investigators. They could not find an explanation for that, nor could they learn the name of the abducted patient. Thus he vanished into the files under the lifeless tag ‘No.118 from Block One’.

Alternative version No.4: ‘That thing caused grand attention of the investigation. It was not depicted, whether they were forced to leave the city or they consciously disappeared with the gang. They gathered all the evidence: Nikolay Ivanovich’s confused proof, Margarita Nikolaeva’s insane note of her being witch, quitted things by Natasha. All that made the investigation come to the conclusion, that both the mistress and the maid were hypnotized, like many others, and were kidnapped by the gang. Another smart idea appeared, that the criminals were attracted with the beauty of both women.

Absolute mystery was in abducting a mental case Master out of the clinic. His name was undiscovered. He had begone under the dead words ‘Number one-eighteen. I Building’.

This disordered description is certainly caused by the author’s desease. The last lines of the novel were written from the death sick person dictation. Elena Sergeevna did not want to change her husband’s idea and she kept the novel exactly as Bulgakov wrote it. This is why even up to now the readers have more questions, than answers, while reading the novel. ‘Master and Margarita’ is like a chasm, without bottom, without beginning and ending. Every action has a consequence. Each blessed by faith his. It is like a raging energy, boiling constantly, giving and taking life, doing good and bad at the same time. The writer mixes all the humans values and mistakes and let everybody understand them the way it is likely to understand for every reader. Choice and despair, life and death, friendship and betrayal, love and creation – a reader can choose himself what the novel is about.

The more difficult the novel for understanding in the original language, the more complicated it is for translation. This is why it is so important to analyze word meaning, some ‘language errors’, which can appear when a translator works in another century and evaluates the words he is using. Especially when there are some discrepancies of the source text it goes without saying, that they should be shown in the translation.
M. Glenny translation has some very good situational findings throughout the novel. He makes the translation universally understandable. His language is simple to read. However, sometimes the text loses some Russian specific features to understand not only the written text, but the text ‘between the lines’. Thus, the translator shows only one side of the translation. If M. Bulgakov is a Russian writer, it means that the novel should be translated like a reflection of a historic reality. The text should be ‘adapted’ for an English-speaking reader. The translator also tries to smooth the text to make it completed. Some significant distortions of the text appear throughout the novel, this is why the quality of translation loses, as it produces the wrong effect upon the reader.

R. Pevear, L. Volokhonsky emphasize the author’s reality, influence upon his life and the way it is described in the novel. The translators pay attention to every detail, though sometimes the translation sounds too verbal, as if there should be more expressive and implicit meanings there. Sometimes the context is hard to understand. If Glenny creates a ‘universal’ translation, R. Pevear, L. Volokhonsky show Russian culture, they emphasize the difference and explain everything in comments. The translators try to preserve the text the same, but at the same time, they add even more ambiguity into the text, which is getting even more complicated for the English-speaking reader. Though all the historic and cultural facts are explained in the comments, some extra information is still missing. Some phrases can be easily replaced with the phrases of more general meaning.

D. Burgin, K. Tiernan O’Connor give us an interesting text from the linguistic point of view. Some findings are precise to the text. However, sometimes there are cases of word-to-word translation. From their Translator’s Note: “[We] have tried, as far as possible without sacrificing clarity, not to break up Bulgakov’s long sentences and to adhere to his word order.” Some words stand out of the text, as if they appear there occasionally. Such usage makes the translation fragmentary, as there is no stylistical harmony in the text. Sometimes they use too colloquial or too magniloquent style (e.g. omnipotent, smithereens, everlasting). The author creates characters with a certain manner of speech, behavior, which determine his position in the novel. In this way, a translator should follow the writer’s traditions of writing.

Comparison of some translations allows to make conclusion, that any translation, no matter how good it is, may contain some mistakes of different types. This is why I offer an alternative version of the translation ‘No.4’, considering all the points for an adequate translation, in order to preserve the source text meaning and reflect it in the target text. In this translation, a lot of information was analyzed to create an adequate text in English. In some awkward and difficult situations for a translator, this version provides descriptive translation and generalization, which help to reflect the atmosphere of the novel. If some phrases are not clearly understood in the source language, this ambiguity is preserved in the target text with the possible means of the English language. The majority of the words in Russian is used in a figurative sense, this is why it is more preferable to use descriptive translation to avoid comments. I have selected the words very thoroughly to let the reader understand the text correctly. The novel text is rather difficult to understand even in the source language. This is why each situation should be estimated individually in the context of the whole novel. Understanding of the source text will help to pick up the necessary expressive means. Such translation actions help to create the universal image, which the author has wanted to show. I have done my best to keep the balance between universal and Russian notions to keep the text understandable for an English-speaking reader, but to keep it Russian and show the time Bulgakov has lived. I used a lot of transpositions, especially in the word order. I changed it into traditional English word order. My main purpose was to make the target text, which is not perceived as a TRANSLATION of a foreign fiction, but as a Russian fiction in the English language. I have
made the text simpler, by breaking the sentences, and substituting some original forms. Russian stylistics is very difficult to reproduce in another language without any mistake. If we follow the principles of the Russian language, we can run a risk to make a word-to-word translation, which lowers the quality of the translation. This is why the changes in the target text are justified.

Any translation is a responsibility, because a translator creates his own novel in the eye of a target-language reader. In the first place, the translator should show the way the writer understands the novel and the way the writer treats his characters. This is why a translator should make some preliminary analysis to ‘feel’ the text. The text should be equally understandable and equally vague and complicated as the writer planned it to be. A translator should not ‘brush’ the text and make its roughness smooth, if he or his culture requires something else. This is the principal task of a translator – to choose exact words and stylistic means in the target text to show all the beauty of the source text.

Analysis allows to come up to some conclusions. The main task of the translation is to reflect peculiarities of the source language with the possible ‘techniques’ of the target language. In my article, I pay a lot of attention to lexical and stylistical analysis of the translation, because in combination they help to create the adequate translation. If each translator uses some special sources of the target language, even if it does not coincide with the structure of the source text, it can solve or even avoid some translation problems. When a translator takes into account the whole context of the novel he is translating and evaluates his translation from the point of the source text, he will create an adequate translation. Besides, in my article I also touch the problem of the source language understanding. If English-speaking translators make some mistakes in translation, it means there should be new translations of the source language translators whose source language is native. The better the translator understands the author, the easier for him to create a universal translation, which could be the adequate version of the original book.

Each translator has his own understanding and views upon the novel. In all translations, there are different discrepancies with the source text in cultural, situational aspects. It is possible to evaluate translations on the base of the general principles of the translation adequacy, starting with the cross-cultural concepts up to differences in stylistics. These are two main issues which form the entire piece of work. To put emphasis upon the original text structure and following the author’s style will make the target text resemble the original. This is why it is so important to assess fiction translation for its adequacy. In this case, quality should stand for ‘adequacy’. Translation adequacy requires precise and accurate transfer of the meaning from the source language into the target one. I also offer adequacy and quality assessment to be performed by the native speakers of the source language in order to evaluate the text up to the tiniest details.

All the translations are by the author.

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‘Elena Yuschenko - Translator email: eyuschenko1185@gmail.com