EXISTENTIAL IMAGES AND NARRATIVES IN RILKE’S POETRY (Bogdan Kravtsiv’s translation experience)

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In 1947, in the German city of Nuremberg, Bohdan Kravtsiv’s book of translations from Rainer Maria Rilke’s “Things and Images” was published, which became a significant contribution to Ukrainian Rilkeanism. B. Kravtsiv’s translations were highly appreciated by critics and literary experts. The purpose of the article is the study of Rilke images and narratives in Bohdan Kravtsiv’s translations, the analysis of the main concepts related to the ideological and thematic layers of the lyrics that B. Kravtsiv chose for translation, and the highlighting of the existential discourse as a translation phenomenon that enabled him to introduce Rainer Maria Rilke’s poems in the Ukrainian artistic context. To achieve this goal, a number of methods were used: biographical (aimed at tracing Rilke’s spiritual and cultural ties with Ukraine during his journey through its territory), cultural-historical, philological, and intertextual. The phenomenological and hermeneutic analysis enables the study of existential discourse in Rilke’s lyrics and immanent interpretation in Kravtsiv’s translations of Rilke’s idiostyle and artistic-philosophical concepts. The elements of conceptual analysis make it possible to consider Rilke’s poetry in translations by Bohdan Kravtsiv, highlighting the main concepts that determine its cultural-artistic and existential-philosophical content.

B. Kravtsiv paid particular attention to Rilke’s poems related to biblical and evangelical subjects: “Departure of the Prodigal Son”, “David Sings to Saul”, “Pieta”, “Resurrected”, “The Supper”. B. Kravtsiv translated a number of poems from ancient themes (“Sibyl”, “Orpheus. Eurydice. Hermes”, “Leda”, “Esther”, “Cretan Artemis”, “Alcestis”, “Islands of the Sirens” since ancient mythology had an important place in Rilke’s artistic outlook. It’s a part of his artistic and metaphysical world, the heart of his existence. The metaphysical concept of the finitude of life evolved through all the lyrical-philosophical cycles of the Austrian poet, in which the lexical-semantic field of the concept of “death” is creatively implemented through ideas and motifs. Bohdan Kravtsiv translated several of Rilke’s poems “Experience with Death”, “Death of a Beloved”, and “The End”, in which the philosophical idea that the Italian existentialist philosopher Nicola Abbagianan defined as coexistence can be clearly traced. During the analysis of the artistic concept sphere and leitmotifs in Bohdan Kravtsiv’s translations, it is worth highlighting the nostalgia of the poetry “This is where the extreme huts are already”, the suggestiveness of “The Archaic Torso of Apollo”, the phantasmagoric nature of “The Sorcerer”, the existential elegiacism of “Evening”, the mysticism of “Alien”, the belief in the immortality of “Autumn”, the artistic plasticity of “Panthers”, the carnival enchantment of “Carousel”, the exquisite, subtle eroticism of “Ladies”, the magical fatalism of “Courtesy”, the metaphysics of life and death in “Experience with Death”, autobiography and delving into the subconscious in the poems “At the piano”, “From childhood”, the secret of art in “The Poet”, the young chivalrous romance of “The Boy”, the wild grace of “Cretan Artemis”.

Conclusion. In the selected translations, Bohdan Kravtsiv managed to artistically recreate Rilke images, especially from ancient (Alquesta, Orpheus) and biblical (Jesus Christ, Mary Magdalene) themes, which appeared in the Austrian poet’s lyrics as archetypal images-symbols and images-ideas, defining the spiritual, philosophical and axiological basis of his creativity. Among the multifaceted conceptual sphere, Rilke chose Kravtsiv for the translation of poetry in which he substantiates the concept of “death” from an existential-philosophical point of view as a phenomenon of coexistence that changes one dimension of existence to another, which can also be traced in the narrative of the Austrian poet: death as “invisible and unenlightened we are the side of life” – immanent in life itself. In the poems selected for translation, Kravtsiv managed to trace the path of the Austrian artist through catharsis to spiritual insight, self-awareness, and the search for authentic values of being. To introduce Rilke’s existential discourse into the Ukrainian artistic context, to give a number of translated poems a special national sound and philosophical content allowed the writer to work with the Ukrainian word, search and restore authentic books, archaic and dialect lexemes, occasionalism, which received a new sound in the translator’s artistic style, supplementing Rilke texts poetics.

The translation activity of B. Kravtsiv became a significant contribution to the development of Ukrainian literature and culture in general, enriching it with ideas, concepts, artistic motifs, and the poetic word of one of the most brilliant modern poets – Rainer Maria Rilke. The analysis of Ukrainian writer’s poetic translations in the book “Things and Images” has the perspective of both literary and linguistic research and involves the creation of a thorough scientific work. While working on translations of Rilke’s poems, B. Kravtsiv, in his characteristic artistic and poetic style, uses a significant amount of book, archaic
and dialect vocabulary, and occasionalism, which appear to him not only as artistic and aesthetic means of poetic expression, but are also filled with deep-rooted national meaning, contain the genetic code of an authentic Ukrainian word. Bohdan Kravtsov managed to do Rilke translations so Ukrainian, because he felt the spiritual kinship of the Austrian poet with Ukraine and its people, that as an artist, philosopher-metaphysician, and pantheist, having visited Ukrainian lands, he felt, understood, and realized the true spiritual and genetic roots of the European community.

References


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