Gerhard Oberhammer's Philosophical Works: Linguistic Analysis*

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Abstract—**The article deals with a challenge a translator of Gerhard Oberhammer's philosophical texts may face. The authors highlight the peculiarities that can be singled out in the process of the analysis of Oberhammer's vision of the fundamental principles of Vishishta-Advita philosophy and dwell upon Oberhammer's style and the grammatical peculiarities of the German language that manifest themselves in Oberhammer's text making it quite a challenge for a translator to render it into Russian. A reference to the translation tradition (often faulty) of rendering I. Kant's texts as well as a brief review of the main translation transformations which one can try to apply to philosophical texts poses a question of the length to which a translator can go in his/her attempt to render G. Oberhammer's text.**

Keywords—translation; translation transformation; author's style; philosophical discourse

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the most popular definitions of translation is based on the taking that it is a certain type of the linguistic intermediation services. The result of such an intermediation is a transferring of content of an original text into another language through creation of a text which will be an equal to the original one in informational and communicative sense. Anyway a historian of philosophy who studies the original philosophical texts has as a rule his or her own view of translation. In other words, he solves the problems of translatability, adequacy and equivalency of a translated text. Or he/she chooses a certain strategy of translation, which will take into consideration the specific features of a translated text. Every historian of philosophy will agree that some features of any philosophical text can be expressed in its more intensive form in the texts which belong to the period of the German Philosophy of 18-19 centuries. I. Kant's works are such an example. We hold that Gerhard Oberhammer's works can be regarded as the same type of the philosophical texts from the linguistic point of view. To illustrate that we can take his philosophical article "The Place, where God is accomplishing" (Der Ort, an dem sich Gott ereignet).

II. OBERHAMMER'S STANCE ON HUMAN SUBJECTIVITY, RELIGION AND IN THE FOCUS OF VISHISHTA-ADVITA PHILOSOPHY

The History of Indian culture in Vienna dates back to the activity of "Ancient Indian philology and Indian antiquities" faculty which was originally created for a comparative research of Sanskrit grammar and other languages. Among the most prominent scholars of the faculty one can single out Fredrich Max Muller (1823-1900), George Buller (1837-1898), author of a famous textbook in Sanskrit and a founder of the Vienna Journal of Eastern Studies («Wiener Zeitschrift für die Kunde des Morgenlandes»). One can also name a conspicuous Indologist Erich Frauvallner (1898-1974), Oberhammer's teacher. It is of importance to point out that Oberhammer was Frauvallner's follower not only in applying a certain research method to the studies of Indian philosophy (with philological method being prioritized as the foundation for further philosophical research, the applied method of historical and comparative study). Oberhammer also took over the chair of Indology in 1964. He apparently extended the amount of methodology work. Thus he used hermeneutic ideas of religious and philosophical tradition studies of India, as well as the principles of carrying out a comparative analysis of Hinduism, Christianity, etc. [1].

Oberhammer's article "The Place Where God is Accomplishing" ("Der Ort, andemsich Gottereignet") will be of interest not only for philosophers but also for those whose

particular interest lies in the studies of religious experience, Indian philosophy historians can also benefit from it as it focuses on the role of a person in the context of religious hermeneutic and the main thesis is proved by the data from Indian philosophy research namely Vishishta-Advaita – Vedanta. Oberhammer postulates that the very structure of human subjectivity (his inner self being open to the new) gives him a chance to consciously do what should be termed and understood as religion [2]. This "open state" inherent in an agent can refer to some reality which by itself does not exist as some material object which makes it impossible for it to be concealed from a definite essence of subjective existence of the mind which yet "reveals itself". This "open state" cannot be a priori regarded as the basis for the psychological act of consciousness existence and the so-called ("in- existence") can encounter with a person exactly in the same way as he tells about himself. In short, "the place where God is" is literally "the inner world" of the person.

Turning to the analysis of the most essential problems of Vishishta-Advita philosophy and that is to the question of levels of reality in this system, Oberhammer notes that Ramanuja (XI-XII), the founder of the school sees the relative unity of holly Atmana with some ontological relativity which being some kind of personal relation a non-spiritual creature is also not devoid of. This mainly manifests itself in what Ramnuja defines as corporeity, according to which the body is understood as a substance which is "what is left" of any spiritual creature which agrees with its spiritual nature. But since Ramanuja saw individual and Holly Atman as equally existing matter (each in its own way) so he puts them in an asymmetrical hierarchy as being spiritual matter. Due to that both atmans remain everlasting matter without ever meeting each other.

III. THE CHALLENGES OF OBERHAMMER'S STYLE AND TERMINOLOGY

The content-factual analysis of the cited article require a separate study that can be a point of interest by itself, so in the introduction to this article we would like to underline some "technical difficulties" that may arise while working with it.

Among the vices of German text one can point out those that refer to Oberhammer's author's style and those that are caused by the grammatical peculiarities of the German language.

The peculiarities of Oberhammer's style are mainly the usage of syntactical structures with "two or sometimes three-level subordinate clauses. Constructions of this type can be similarly translated into Russian, where it is allowed (especially in case of philosophical texts) to form such complex, which are caused by the complexity of the object in question. Another peculiarity is his terminology. Thus, he uses a number of philosophical terms he uses are coined through derivation (for instance, an adjective and a suffix with some abstract meaning), terms resulting from word-for word translation, word composition. Some are results of the translation of a number of Sanskrit terms such as *Relationalität (correlation), Innerlichkeit (inner world),*

Selbstgelichtetheit (self-explanation), Gegenständlichkeit (objectivity), Partikularität (singularity), Offenheit (openness), Objektivierung (objectivity), Gelichtetheit (clarity), Weltbezogenheit (reference to the world), Befindlichkeit (location), Verfasstheit (order), Andersheit (Alterität) (otherness), Selbst-reflexion (self-reflection), Nicht-Wissen (unawareness).

Many terms were a legacy of the History of Philosophy and they possess a cultural and historical connotation:

Ich-Erfahrug (I-experience), Existenzvollzug (existence realisation), Geist-Sein (spiritual existence), Dasein (here-existence), Vorhandensein ("presence"), zu-sich-Kommens (finding yourself), Bei-sich-Sein (at-yourself existence), Geistmonade (spiritual monad), Daseinvollzug ("creating here-existence"), sinnlichgeprägte Innerlichkeit (susceptible inner-life), Jenseitsdes Seienden (external existence)), PrinzipderRelationalität (principle of correlation), Relationalitätdes Subjekts (subject correlation), einreales Prinzipdes Existenzvollzugesdes Menschen (real principle of personal existence realisation), vermitteltes Subjekt (self-explanatory subject), sichselbstmitteilende Offenheit (self-giving openness), Horizontdes Ausgriffes (the horizon for inspiring), Hypostasierte Kräfte (sakti) (hypostatic energy), das Nicht-Wissen (unawareness), Falsches Wissen (avidya) (unawareness).

If we turn to the classical German philosophical tradition one can observe that much of what is initially considered to be the peculiarities of Oberhammer's style is virtually characteristic of the representatives of German classical philosophy in general.

Oberhammer's works in German are still waiting for their translators to be rendered into Russian and there is still no clear-cut solid tradition of his philosophy language evaluation in Russia. Only one of his articles in Indology was translated from English into Russian [3]. Since there is no tradition of translation his works in Russian philosophical environment it is worth turning to the works of I. Kant (1724-1804), which started to be translated as early as late in the 18th century, that is when the author was still living, these works will help us to showcase possible analogies a translator of Oberhammer faces up with.

IV. THE ORIGINAL VS TRANSLATION. A PROBLEM OF PRECISION

As N. V. Motroshilova rightfully points out translation of a philosophical text is full of difficulties, which in many cases could be put down to the inner barriers of this or that language while trying to convey "the slightest philosophical conceptual and terminological differences", what is more Russian seems to be an exception as his flexibility is equal to the philosophical potencies of the German language [4].

Kant's original texts (just like Oberhammer's texts) are characterized by quite cumbersome sentences, which Kant enriches with shades of meaning. So Kant's translators (just as those of Oberhammer) face a difficult choice: whether to preserve the author's cumbersome style in translation or to put it to syntactical restructuring. In general, as N.V.

Motroshilova observes one can accept that, it is necessary to try and keep close to the original and that is to convey all the stylistic peculiarities with maximum precision. To tell the truth this is what we try to recommend doing when translating Oberhammer's texts.

As we know, first translators of Kant's texts were facing a problem of fixing his category mechanism of philosophical system which could guarantee an adequate translation of his thought [5]. Thus ObersteIntelligenz in early translations of "Critique of Pure Reason" a German philosophical term was translated as "a higher reasoning creature" which was similar to what was defined as simply "a reasoning creature" in other contexts.

As N.V. Motroshilova rightfully observes the differences that exist between the Russian and the German languages hamper the process of fully conveying both the sense and the sound forms of this or that German term. For example Kant's notion Glückseligkeit (Glück - happiness, Seligkeit - bliss) is translated into Russian either as "happiness" or as "bliss". Buy Kant himself sees this term as one that expresses the state of "happiness", the bliss of the spirit.

The translation of words and notions which the philosopher uses to fix a number of meanings pose a particular challenge.

A number of such terms go back to ancient philosophical systems, but some of them acquire a new meaning in Kant's theory. Other notions are composed of common words of a living tongue Sein - existence, Dasein – actual being, Bewusstsein – conscious existence). Finally there are terms coined by Kant himself ("transcendental unity of apperception"). When being translated some Kant's terms were rethought, as was the term Dingansichselbst which started to be translated not as "a thing in itself" but as "a thing by itself".

The same is true of the term Willkür, which is often translated as "arbitrariness" in order to remove the negative connotation present in Russian translators started to render it as "free will expression". We face similar difficulties when translating Oberhammer's texts, for instance the above-mentioned terms Sein, Dasein were rendered as "existence" and as "consciousness" (Bewusstsein). That was down to the fact that the terms were rethought by Oberhammer and acquired new shades of meaning.

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And though as B.B. Bibikhin, citing A.V. Mikhailov, pointed out in his introduction of a translator to Heidegger's "Being and Time" "the strictness" of philosophical texts can get a translator into a habit of the exact rendering of terms, but these texts, apart from terms, are rich in modality, which

helps the text "to live" and "breathe", yet there another approach used when translating Kant's texts, which we had taken into consideration when translating Oberhammer's text. We tried to use consecutive translation that is avoidance of "terms varying in stable context". Heideggger's translator presents a whole range of terms which in this way or another lose their cultural and logical connotations when translated into Russian. For more see [6].

V. THE PROBLEM OF EFFECTIVENESS OF TRANSLATION TRANSFORMATIONS IN RENDERING PHILOSOPHICAL DISCOURSE

When working on the strategy of translation of the best-known classifications of translation transformations, suggested by a number of Russian linguists (Y.I. Retzker, A.D. Shveytzer, L. S. Barkhudarov, V.N. Komissarov) we focused on the definition of L.S. Barkhudarov who defined translation as a certain type of transformation, namely an interlingual transformation, when a text in one language is transformed in its equivalent in another language [7]. It was Barkhudarov's set of translation techniques that seem to be the best suiting for the given text analysis, as they helped to embrace the entire text and were also instrumental in helping us to interpret and explain it. As we know, Barkhudarov singled out four principles, so- called, elementary types of translation transformations which could in their turn be subdivided into types, such as: replacement, substitutions/changes, adding, and omissions.

The carried-out pre-translation research of Oberhammer's philosophical text showed that the most frequently used transformations were replacement and substitutions. They were those modifications that concern syntax and vocabulary (mostly terms) of the original text. One can be fairly sure to suppose that these transformations are mostly employed to translate German philosophical texts in general, as Oberhammer's text is characterized by similar features typical of German philosophical tradition and that is syntactical complexity, nominativeness, special author's terminology which is marked by a certain historical tradition (Dasein, Gegenständlichkeit, etc.). And since German philosophical text is characterized by a high degree of nominativeness, complex syntactical structures and special terminology it may explain the fact that certain translation transformation which could be applied to the text were hardly used.

The reduced number of transformations used in translation was down to the fact that it is impossible to paraphrase philosophical discourse, which brings it closer to religious discourse.

That in its turn explains the tendency that was registered in many Russian translations of outstanding German philosophical texts to create a Russian equivalent which is as close as possible to the unit used in the original text.

VI. CONCLUSION

Regardless of the fact that texts relating to the religious and philosophical tradition of medieval India or a mystical

philosophy of Arab East are characterized by features more akin to belles-lettres texts (we speak mainly of some typical features of belles-lettres style such as pun, author's neologisms, syntactical peculiarities of the original text), or what is more likely typical of religious texts, the communicative purpose of which is " to render specific religious emotions and ideas, quite subjective, as they may seem objective solely to the followers of this faith, as well as to render a certain teaching based on it. Yet, despite its religious bias, Oberhammer's text cannot be considered either belonging to belles-lettres texts or to a religious one. They are a typical example of German philosophical prose, characterized by its own features which differs it from scientific style (though they have much in common). Care should be taken in choosing the translation techniques to try to render it into Russian (or possibly any other language) as to preserve the unique character of both the syntactical arrangement and lexical diversity.

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