

*Wolodymyr T. ZYLA*

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## **Tarnaws'ky's Translation Merits Careful Study (Shakespeare's *Sonnets* in Ukrainian Translation)**

A very special and important place in literature belongs to William Shakespeare's sonnets. They are treasured because they promote sincere friendship and tender love and depict perseverance, intelligence and purity of natural relations among people. These qualities made Shakespeare famous, respected, and loved.

Shakespeare's sonnets are thus worthy to reappear in a new form in the languages of various cultures. The pioneer in translating the sonnets was the German literary scholar Karl Lachmann in 1820.

The first poet who introduced them into Ukrainian literature was Ivan Franko in 1882. He translated sonnets XIV, LXXVI, XCVI, CXXX, CXXXI, CXLIII, then sonnets XXVIII, XXIX, XXX, XXXI, and LXVI. Two of Franko's contemporaries Pavlo Hrabovs'ky and Maksym Slavins'ky were also interested in Shakespeare's sonnets. Hrabovs'ky published his first translated sonnet XXIX in 1900, and Slavins'ky at about the same time published sonnet XVIII, under the title *Vichne lito (The Eternal Summer)*, and sonnet CVI, entitled *Khronika zavmerloho chasu (The Chronicle of Deathlike Time)*. Their dates of publication are unknown. Here should be mentioned also Volodymyr Svidzins'ky who translated sonnets XVI and XVIII.

It was not until the second half of the 20th century that interest in Shakespeare's sonnets was revived among Ukrainian poets. In 1953 three

Ukrainian émigré poets published their translations of Shakespeare's sonnets: Vasyl' Onufriyenko, sonnets V, VII, XV, and XVII (*Porohy*, Buenos Aires), Yar Slavutych, sonnets XVIII and LXXI (*Novi dni*, Toronto), Oleh Zuyevs'ky, sonnets LIX, LX, LXXI, LXXXI, CII, CXXX, and CXXXV (*Kyiv*, Philadelphia). In 1954 Onufriyenko published three additional sonnets, II, VIII, and X (*Porohy*), and Zuyevs'ky published sonnets XCVIII and CXXXVI (*Ukrayina i svit*, Hannover). In 1955 Slavutych published sonnet XLVI (*Moloda Ukrayina*, Toronto), and in 1956 Ihor Kostets'ky published about ten sonnets (*Ukrayina i svit*). It was in 1957 that one sonnet appeared also in the Soviet Ukraine, in a collection of poetry by T. Savych, *Z vichnykh dzherel* (*From the Eternal Fonts*, Kyiv). In the meantime, in 1958, Ihor Kostets'ky translated the complete collection of the sonnets, *Shekspirovi sonety* (*Na hori*, Munich). But this translation was such a maze of cumbersome technicalities that the content and ideas of the translated sonnets could be hardly grasped.

In 1960 Ostap Tarnaws'ky appeared on the stage with his four translated sonnets XVIII, CIV, CXVI, and CXXX, which were published in his collection of poetry *Samotnye derevo* (*The Lonely Tree*, New York). In 1961 Svyatoslav Hordyns'ky included eight sonnets XLVI, XLVII, LV, LXVI, LX, CVI, CVII, and CXXXI in his collection of translations *Poety zakhodu* (*Poets of the West*, New York).

In the meantime the sonnets became more popular in the Soviet Ukraine, and Svyatoslav Karavans'ky translated thirteen of them: II, V, VII, IX, XIV, XVI, XVII, XVIII, XXI, XXIII, XIX, XXV, and LXVI. They were published in various publications in Ukraine and in Paris in the documentary *Lykho z rozumu* (*The Misfortune of Intellect*).

Following a debut in a number of Ukrainian journals in Soviet Ukraine, Dmytro Palamarchuk published in 1966 a complete Ukrainian collection of sonnets *Vil'yam Shekspir, Sonety*.<sup>1</sup> But they do not offer the clear meaning of the original, and the style and manner of writing are not of the same character as Shakespeare's. But they are marked by an exceptional beauty of verse – melodiousness and aphoristic precision. It is worth mentioning that about the same time another outstanding contemporary Ukrainian translator, the late Mykola Lukash, also rendered several of Shakespeare's sonnets.

In 1997 appeared a third complete translation of Shakespeare's sonnets by the late Ostap Tarnaws'ky, entitled *Vil'yam Shekspir, Sonety*.<sup>2</sup> This publication marks the 80th anniversary of the author's birth.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> V. Shekspir (W. Shakespeare), *Sonety (Sonnets)*, trans. D. Palamarchuk, Publishing House of Literature "Dnipro", Kyiv 1966.

<sup>2</sup> V. Shekspir (William Shakespeare), *Sonety*, trans. O. Tarnawsky, "Mosty", Philadelphia 1997.

<sup>3</sup> Ostap Tarnawsky was born May 3, 1917 in L'viv.

Ostap Tarnaws'ky – a poet writer and essayist – was very much interested in Shakespeare's works for many years. In the 1950s, living in America, he attempted to translate the first four sonnets as mentioned above. His translation is evaluated by Orysia Prokopiv:<sup>4</sup> Tarnawsky's sonnets

... appear in the quatraine division, the translator adheres strictly to the main logical, syntactical and formal design of the original sonnets. The Shakespearean rhetorical figures, imagery, and image schemes are incorporated accurately and successfully. Tarnawsky's translations show an ease of composition and language which is marked by clarity. His renderings of sonnets CIV and CXVI are particularly excellent accomplishments of metempsychosis and are unsurpassed not only in their stylistic and contextual accuracy but in their aesthetic impact as well.<sup>5</sup>

In 1992 Tarnaws'ky did not feel well. But he set to work feverishly translating Shakespeare's sonnets. He felt that he had to finish them. His death came just a month after he finished translating Shakespeare's 154 sonnets.

On August 18, 1992, having finished the translation of sonnets, he wrote an interesting letter to his friend in Ukraine, Oleh Mykytenko, editor of the journal of foreign literature in translation *Vsesvit (The Universe)* in Kyiv, informing him, "I have finished the complete translation of Shakespeare's sonnets..." He wrote:

It is true that this is not a first translation, since there are already two translations: one by Palamarchuk and another by Kostets'ky. Yet Shakespeare is such a peculiar writer, and after all the Palamarchuk translation is done with a great poetic license whereas – in my opinion – Shakespeare's speech is closer to everyday life. Kostets'ky again created so many neologisms, so that monosyllabic words would be available for use. In the English language there is a large quantity of monosyllabic words... Then to translate from English to Ukrainian in such an elaborate rhyme scheme as the sonnet is a complicated matter. I wanted to render predominantly Shakespearean thought in such a way as the thought is represented in his speech. I don't know whether I was capable to do it.<sup>6</sup>

Tarnaws'ky's last sentence is very indicative of how seriously he approached the process of translating Shakespearean sonnets. It appears that he worked hard, being quite knowledgeable in Elizabethan English as well as in the problems of translation. He was well aware that no two sonnets are exactly alike in their structural design. The ever-constant variation of design establishes the dramatic nature of the sonnets, their constant state of flux, their freshness, and vitality.

<sup>4</sup> O. Prokopiv, *The Ukrainian Translations of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, University of Ottawa Press & Gateway Publishers Ltd., Ottawa-Edmonton 1976. The author wishes to acknowledge his indebtedness to Orysia Prokopiv for the material from her work used in making this article possible.

<sup>5</sup> O. Prokopiv, *The Ukrainian...*, p. 30.

<sup>6</sup> *Sonety*, trans. O. Tarnaws'ky, pp. 8–9.

For clarity in translation, Tarnaws'ky divides sonnets strophically into three separate quatrains and a couplet. This method helps the translator to emphasize Shakespeare's inherent structure and to forfeit the ostensible unity of earlier translations. He uses consistently the invariable Shakespearean rhyme scheme.

Perusing carefully the Shakespearean sonnets one will find that they are constructed on the iambic pentameter line except sonnet CXLV that is iambic tetrameter.<sup>7</sup> Observing the sonnets it is evident that their logical structure receives only minor deviations. Tarnawsky's translations in some cases are free of deviations. The Shakespearean quatrain-type sonnets pose the least difficulties in translation and receive little or no deviations because of their relatively simple design of logic, syntax, and form.

Most interpolations in the translations are in the syntactic structure.<sup>8</sup> The major syntactical problem which faces the modern translator of the sonnets is the problem of Shakespeare's rhetorical Renaissance punctuation, particularly, the usage of the colon which very often appears at the end of a formal unit to effectuate only a potential break. Tarnaws'ky, however, simplified Shakespeare's structural design not because of the difference in Renaissance and modern punctuation, but as a matter of choice.

The rhetorical figure apostrophe is contained in 134 sonnets. In 122 of these, the poet appeals to a definite person, probably the poet's friend (I–CXXVI), while the second cycle (CXXVII–CLIV) concerns the lady.<sup>9</sup> Although Tarnaws'ky's apostrophe in XVIII is sexually indefinite, sonnet CIV, of the "friend" cycle, is addressed to a male.

Both works contain "thou" even though the latter contains "you" in the original.

Do litn'oyi tebe rivnyaty dnyny?  
V tobi ye bil'she lahidnykh prykras.  
(p. 47)  
Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate...

(Sonnet XVIII, p. 46)

Tarnaws'ky's sonnets CXVI and CXXX, like the originals, lack the apostrophe.

Since Shakespeare's personal apostrophe cannot be proven as to sex, it is advantageous for translators to make minor grammatical modifications in order that the sexual identity of the objects addressed is concealed. Tarnaws'ky's translation of sonnet XVIII is an excellent example of such modification.

<sup>7</sup> O. Prokopiv, *The Ukrainian...*, p. 30.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 70.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 73.

Ostap Tarnaws'ky does not deviate at all from the Shakespearean apostrophic types. In comparison to the other translations of sonnet CIV, for example, his introductory address is most commendable. He attains accuracy, the original simplicity of the casual address, the negative statement, and the required direct turn that effectuates, also, the original mid-line break:

Ne budesh v mene, druzhe, ty starym;  
Tvoya krasa vse zh ta, shcho ya zustriv...

(p. 219)

To me, fair friend, you never can be old,  
For as you were when first your eye I ey'd...

(Sonnet CIV, p. 218)

Tarnaws'ky is more reluctant to use *traductio* than other Ukrainian translators. There are some cases of a relatively simple form of *traductio* used for emphasis theme. In the final line of sonnet XVIII, for example, the theme of eternity is succinctly underscored:

So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

(Sonnet XVIII, p. 46)

Tak dovho zhyt' tobi tsey virsh dast' pochyn.  
(p. 47)

Tarnaws'ky extended this chain into the next quatrain, underscoring, therefore, the beauty motif of this sonnet.

Tarnaws'ky's sound patterns are relatively sparse, and, therefore, less striking. A few scatterings of assonantial and alliterative units link or divide line halves, as in the three lines of sonnet XVIII:

3. Brun'ky travnevi viter buynny skyne,  
9. Tvoye zh ne znaye vichne lito tlini,  
13. Yak dovho lyudy dyshut', bachat' ochi ...<sup>10</sup>

Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
But thy eternal summer shall not fade,  
So long as man can breathe, or eyes can see...

(Sonnet XVIII, p. 46)

Tarnaws'ky's rhetorical emphasis is attained mainly by *traductio* or by quatorzain word repetition. But special impetus is gained homophonically in sonnet CXVI:

O, ni! Lyubov – tse toy postiyyny znak,  
Shcho buri zustrichaye nepokhytno,

<sup>10</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 224.

Tse providna zorya, nemov mayak,  
Dlya chovna, shcho, vitryla vypne.<sup>11</sup>  
(p. 243)

O, no! it is an ever-fixed mark,  
That looks on tempests and is never shaken;  
It is the star to every wandering bark,  
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.

(Sonnet CXVI, p. 242)

The phonetic elements are well blended and aid in transmitting the meaning. Primarily the constant n-link, as well as the reverberating assonantial and alliterative units, convey the constancy of true love.

Here apparently another translator, Yar Slavutych and O. Tarnaw's'ky establish phonetic unity and division through the intermingling of assonance and alliteration; a continuous play on sounds, for example, marks Slavutych's passages, whereas a modest interspersal of repetitive sound patterns distinguishes Tarnaw's'ky's.

Sonnet XVIII, in my opinion, is particularly illustrative of Shakespeare's images derived from nature's scenery:

Do litn'oyi tebe rivnyaty dnyny?  
V tobi ye bil'she lahidnykh prykras.  
Brun'ky travnevi viter buynyy skyne,  
Ta y lito – vynaym na korotkyy chas.

Nebesne oko chasom prypikaye,  
To v khmarakh topyt' zoloto svoye.  
Ta vid krasyy krasa shchoraz vtikaye  
U zminakh, shcho pryroda zaznaye.

Tvoye zh ne znaye vichne lito tlini,  
Ne vtratysh ty krasyy svoeyi tezh  
I smert' ne vtishysh, shcho y yiyi ydesh tini,  
Bo v vichnykh strofakh ponad chas rostesh.  
Yak dovho lyudy dyshut', bachat' ochi,  
Tak dovho zhyt' tobi tsey virsh dast' pochyn.  
(p. 47)

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day?  
Thou art more lovely and more temperate:  
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May,  
And summer's lease hath all too short a date:

Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines,  
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd;  
And every fair from fair sometime declines,  
By chance, or nature's changing course untrimm'd;

<sup>11</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 224.

But thy eternal summer shall not fade,  
 Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st,  
 Nor shall death brag thou wander'st in his shade,  
 When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st;

So long as man can breathe, or eyes can see,  
 So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.

(Sonnet XVIII, p. 48)

This translation by Tarnaws'ky is the closest to the original because it regards imagery and the transference of content. Most of Tarnaws'ky's deviations from Shakespeare are in the alterations of metaphorical verbal elements. Since the majority of these alterations occur in the end-line positions, they can be easily attributed to rhyme. Still other deviations are caused by rhythmic and spacial limitations. In the third quatrain we notice that the translator departs somewhat from the spirit of the original verse. This occurs because of the shift in tense. Shakespeare's future tense gives a stronger quality of determination than does Tarnaws'ky's present tense.

In sonnet CXXX Tarnaws'ky in general adheres very closely to the original imagery, but sometimes his renderings are unsuccessful. He also retains the sound of the mistress' walk. His modifications, however, include the omission of the color "black" in the reference to her hair. Tarnaws'ky's finale makes a complete departure from Shakespeare inasmuch as his rendering of "my love" is interpreted sooner as an abstraction than a reference to the mistress, resulting in a couplet which is a mere appendage. Furthermore, Tarnaws'ky misinterprets the message of the original verse.

Some of Shakespeare's sonnets, especially sonnet LX, contain metaphorical language that evokes various images at the same time. The images move from one relationship to another, each relationship expresses the same main idea, and are held together by association. This is a very complex sonnet. Tarnaws'ky's first quatrain incorporates the basic imagery of the original verse. The nativity scene in its abstract and concrete notions is beautifully depicted. In the third quatrain Tarnaws'ky merges the idea of the beginning of life with that of the gardening context. The statement in the couplet is brief and to the point. Despite all simplifications that took place in this sonnet, the translator is successful in retaining the spirit of the original verse.

Ta os' Chasovi vstoyit'sya miy virsh,  
 Slavytyme tvoyu krasu y piznish.

(p. 131)

And yet to times in hope my verse shall stand,  
 Praising thy worth, despite his cruel hand.

(Sonnet LX, p. 130)

Tarnaws'ky's complete translation of all Shakespeare's sonnets is an enrichment of Ukrainian literature. Maybe not all of his sonnets are a great poetical achievement, but they are accurate and sound Shakespearean and give an exact picture of the reality and ideas of Shakespeare. Tarnaws'ky did not want his translations to be of exceptional beauty of verse, or of extraordinary melodiousness, but exceptionally clear as far as ideas and contents are concerned and easy to understand.

Ostap Tarnaws'ky's interesting translation has laid the foundation in Ukrainian Diaspora for the further development of the translations of Shakespeare's sonnets in hope that the next generation of translators will produce still better translations and show a better understanding of the Word Master – William Shakespeare.