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The Reception of Lesia Ukrainka's Works in German: The Significance of the Concept of "Struggle"

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Abstract

The article examines individual German translations of works by Lesia Ukrainka in various genres, which activate the concept of "struggle." To establish the linguistic and stylistic analogues, coincidences, and differences of the translated works, their typological comparison with the original Ukrainian sources was carried out. It was found that key motifs in the works of Lesia Ukrainka, such as affection, resilience, courage, confrontation, and great strength of will and spirit are factors that form the concept of "struggle." The conceptual meanings and axiological values of the concept of "struggle" created by the poetess are: internal strength and independence; free choice, freedom, and liberty; the desire to have freedom and longing for it as the beginning or continuation of the struggle, a sign of insubordination, the spirit of disobedience; the word as a future weapon for the native language and Ukraine; the desire to prevail; the antithesis of death, sad thoughts, obedience, and others. The analysis revealed that there are some linguistic and stylistic differences in the analyzed German translations that are related to the peculiarities of German grammar and word formation. The selection of German equivalents sometimes further reinforces the emphasis of the original text. The concept of "struggle" in Lesia Ukrainka's works in the analyzed translations into German by well-known translators fully reveals the conceptual picture of the author's works and expands the possibilities of the reception of Ukrainian linguistic culture for German-speaking readers.

Key Words: The concept of "struggle," Lesia Ukrainka, linguistic culture, German translations, translation, axiology, intellectuality.



Introduction

The work of Lesia Ukrainka has always been at the center of attention of Ukrainian linguists and literary critics. The artistic heritage of our famous compatriot is also interesting to the Western European scholarly community.¹ A fundamental and profound study of German-Ukrainian cultural and literary relations are the works of noted Ukrainian literary critic and historian Dmytro Doroshenko.² However, national literary masterpieces become known to foreign readers primarily through translators, who act as intermediaries in relations between countries. It is through translations

1 *Lesja Ukrainka und die europäische Literatur*, hrsg. Jurij Bojko-Blochyn, Hans Rothe, Friedrich Scholz (Köln; Weimar; Wien: Böhlau, 1994).

2 Dmytro Doroshenko, *Die Ukraine und Deutschland. Neun Jahrhunderte Deutsch-Ukrainischer Beziehungen* (München: Ukrainische Freie Universität, 1994), 309.

that the works of the outstanding Ukrainian writer entered the treasury of world literature, thus bringing high Ukrainian spiritual culture to a foreign reader.

Numerous researchers were engaged in the question of studying the history of Ukrainian-German literary translation of the late 19th – early 21st centuries.³ The main directions of Ukrainian-German literary relations of this period are set out in the scholarly works of Nataliia Kryvets.⁴ Ukrainian-German literary translation from the second half of the 19th century to the beginning of the 21st centuries is presented in a monograph by Mariia Ivanytska.⁵ In her work, the scholar emphasizes the role of the translator's personality as a transmitter of interliterary relations, and the combination of his socio-cultural bases with the history and sociology of translation. German-language interpretations of Lesia Ukrainka's works with regard to adequacy of translation, ideological and artistic skills, lexical and stylistic features, rhythmic and intonational structure, and their reception were made by Ukrainian Germanists, in particular Liliia Svysch, Inna Tarasynska, Nadiia Polishchuk, and others.⁶ However, the peculiarities of the functioning of the concepts of translated works in the comparative aspect with the original work have not yet been properly reflected in scholarly literature.

The purpose of the study is to consider the concept of “struggle” and its correlations in the works of Lesia Ukrainka, and also to consider the artistic reception of the concept's meanings, as reflected in both the original texts of the writer and in their German translations. Selected German translations of Lesia Ukrainka's works constitute the subject of the search. To achieve the above goals, the following tasks are

-
- 3 A review of the history of translations of Lesia Ukrainka's works into European languages and Esperanto has been made: *Lesia Ukrainka u sviti perekladu (vybrani pereklady yevropeiskymy movamy)* [*Lesia Ukrainka in the World of Translation (Selected Translations into European Languages)*], eds. Nina Danyliuk et al. (Kyiv: Kondor, 2019), 270; Mykola Zymomria, “Bohdan Lepkyi v otsinkakh Anny-Sharlotty Vutski: ‘Dyskurs interpretatsii’ [Bohdan Lepkyi in Anna-Charlotte Wutski's Assessment: Discourse of Interpretation],” *Kyivski polonistychni studii* 24 (2014): 492–500.
 - 4 Nataliia Kryvets, “Z istorii ukrainsko-nimetskykh literaturnykh zviazkiv u XIX – na pochatku XX st. [On the History of Ukrainian-German Literary Relations from the End of the 19th to the Beginning of the 20th Centuries],” *Mizhnarodni zviazky Ukrainy: naukovi poshuky i znakhidky* 25 (2016): 122–43, accessed December 5, 2021, http://nbuv.gov.ua/UJRN/Mzu_2016_25_8.
 - 5 Mariia Ivanytska, *Osobystist perekladacha v ukrainsko-nimetskykh literaturnykh vzaemynakh* [*Personality of a Translator in Ukrainian-German Literary Relations*] (Chernivtsi: Knyhy-XXI, 2015), 7–12, accessed December 5, 2021, <https://img.yakaboo.ua/media/mediagallery/pdf/i/v/ivanytska.pdf>.
 - 6 Liliia Svysch, “Nimetskomovni interpretatsii tvorhosti Lesi Ukrainky [German-Language Interpretations of Lesia Ukrainka's Works],” *Mova i kultura* 17 (2014): 270–74, accessed December 5, 2021, http://nbuv.gov.ua/UJRN/Mik_2014_17_6_38; Inna Tarasynska and Nadiia Polishchuk, “Zi sposterezhen nad nimetskyym perekladamy tvoriv Lesi Ukrainky [From Observations on German Translations of Lesia Ukrainka's Works],” in *Lesia Ukrainka i suchasnist* 4.2 (2008): 62–72.

envisaged: 1) to conduct a typological comparison of selected works by Lesia Ukrainka in various genres and their German translations, where the concept of "struggle" is activated; 2) to establish linguistic and stylistic analogues, coincidences, and differences; and 3) to determine the semantic load of the concept of "struggle" and the content of its components.

Lesia Ukrainka's works became known to the German-speaking reader during the poetess's lifetime, at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. Lesia had a gift for languages. She spoke various languages fluently and wrote her works in Ukrainian, Russian, French, and German. She also translated from ancient Greek, German, English, French, Italian, and Polish. The study of the works of the Ukrainian writer in the German-speaking world became possible by virtue of their translations into German by Ukrainian Germanists and German Slavists.⁷

The talented Lesia became seriously ill as a child. A disease, incurable at the time, distressed the writer throughout her short life. However, physical illness did not break her, but on the contrary – hardened her even more and helped form her strong temperament and spiritual strength. Educated in the traditions of being nationally conscious and exhausted by physical pain, she developed the character of a strong person who did not submit to the suffering of an exhausted body. This "spirit of disobedience" became the central idea of her works and is intertwined with the general concept of "struggle."

According to Yurii Stepanov, concepts are at the core of culture in the mental world of a person; a "handful" of ideas, notions, knowledge, associations, and experiences.⁸ This represents a culturological, sociolinguistic, spiritual, and psychological phenomenon, which provides a conceptual understanding of the categories of culture in a system of images, which in essence is a place of the cumulation of a person's worldview.⁹ The phenomenon provides an opportunity to study the moral and ethical values of a people, to reveal cultural worldview, and helps to understand the essence of people's aspirations in certain dimensions of time. The epoch of Lesia Ukrainka's life and work was characterized by great changes and challenges. The poetess, using the strength of her thoughts and words, revealed in her works the original aspirations and hopes of the Ukrainian people and a sincere love for the native language, thereby contributing to the national revival of Ukrainian culture, spirituality, and language, and engraving it in the

7 The article contains information about translators and their translations of Lesia Ukrainka's works into German: Nataliia Lysetska, "Pereklady tvoriv Lesi Ukrainky nimetskoiu movoiu [German Translations of Lesia Ukrainka's Works]," *Naukovyi visnyk Shchidnoievropeiskoho natsionalnoho universytetu imeni Lesi Ukrainky: Movoznavstvo* 3 (2017): 370–76.

8 Yurii Stepanov, *Konstanty: slovar russkoi kultury* [Constants: A Dictionary of Russian Culture], 3rd ed. (Moscow: Akademicheskii proekt, 2004), 43.

9 Ronald Wayne Langacker, *Concept, Image and Symbol: The Cognitive Basis of Grammar* (Berlin; New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1991); Vitalii Kononenko, *Kontsepty ukrainskoho dyskursu* [Concepts of Ukrainian Discourse] (Kyiv; Ivano-Frankivsk: Plai, 2004), 5.

memory of her people forever. The transmittance of the literary translations to a foreign language environment, from the point of view of conceptualism, represents the spirit of the epoch and ideas embedded in the original sources.

The writer's mastery of the artistic word is manifested in multidimensional conceptual notions, and is filled with different semantic loads functioning in her works. The key concepts of Lesia Ukrainka's works evoke associations of the Christian worldview, along with antiquity and an indestructible spirit, which transports the recipient into the dimension of the author's multifaceted personal image-evaluation world.

The weapons in her struggle were the word and great artistic talent. The master of the pen possessed an irreconcilable attitude to indifference and inaction, and considered her poetic gift as a sparkling weapon. The word is a powerful weapon that turns into a sword in skilled hands. Her artistic credo and a kind of manifesto of creativity can be seen in the poem "Slovo, chomu ty ne tverdaia krytsia..." (1896; Why, My Words, Aren't You Cold Steel, Tempered Metal...) (translation by Jona Gruber).¹⁰ The translator understood the ideological content and emotional depth of the poem. Both Ukrainian and German versions are rich in stylistic figures, lexical means, and intonation rhythm, which testifies to the maximum preservation of the poetic features of the original work. However, peculiarities of syntactic structures and lexical selection of German equivalents, which sometimes further strengthens the emphasis of the determination, can be traced.

The text is based on personification: the word is a living being, which is compared to a sharp sword. The word *krytsia*, meaning *zahartovana stal* (hardened steel), is translated as *mech* (*Schwerte*), and the title itself is conveyed in a conditional way ("Könnte mein Wort doch werden zum Schwerte" / "Yakby moie slovo mohlo staty mechem").¹¹

A number of epithets indicate that the "enemy" is not simple, and the struggle is not easy, and are often conveyed by noun phrases and interpreted according to the poetic rhyme of a German poetic work: *tverdaia krytsia* – *Schwert*; *hostryi, bezzhalisnyi mech* – *Schwerte Siege erringen, bezwingen mit Härte* ("mechi dopomozhut zhorstoko zdobuty peremohu"); *vrazhi holovy* – *das gehässige feindliche Haupt* ("nepryiazni vorozhi"); *hartovana mova* – *meine Sprache, gestählte in Leiden* ("moia mova, zatverdila v strazhdanniakh"); *zbroia iskrysta* – *Waffe wie Blitze* ("zbroia mov blyskavka"); *nevidomykh brativ* – *Kommenden* ("ti, shcho pryidut pislia nas"); *mesnyky duzhi* – *Rächer ergreifen einst fest meine Waffen* ("mesnyky vizmutsia kolys mitsno za moiu zbroiu"); *khvori ruky* – *schwache Hände* ("slabki ruky").¹²

Metaphors such as *slovo iskrystaia zbroia* (*Waffe wie Blitze*), *mech na kativ* (*den Feind vernichten*), *shchyra, hartovana mova* (*meine Sprache, gestählte in Leiden*)¹³ in both statements convey images that became symbols in Lesia Ukrainka's poetry. The poetess

10 Lesja Ukrainka, *Hoffnung. Ausgewählte Gedichte* (Kyiv: Dnipro, 1971), 78–79.

11 Ukrainka, *Hoffnung*, 78–79.

12 Ukrainka, *Hoffnung*, 78–79.

13 Ukrainka, *Hoffnung*, 78–79.

is convinced that her word can be a "sword for executioners" not only in her hands. When she passes away, future avengers will take up arms and bravely rush into battle.

The poem "Napys v ruini" (1904; Inscription in the Ruin) is an example of intellectual drama at the turn of the 19th–20th centuries. It embodies the idea of the greatness of the common people, people who are creators of their fate and who must not submit, but fight for their freedom. The poem conveys the historical situation of the "first Babylonian captivity" (translated into German by Jona Gruber).¹⁴ The action takes place on the ruins of Jerusalem, the holy city of the Jews. A picture of the suffering of an enslaved people comes into view, as does the revelry and arbitrariness of the kings, images conveyed in the poem by stylistic means of lexical and grammatical opposition. In the original text the oppressor is referred to as *tsar tsariv, bezimennyi vladar, kaminnyi vladar, tyran*, and in the translation, correspondingly, as *König der Könige, namenloser König, ein Götze, hart und kalt wie Stein, der grausame Tyranne*. To describe the oppressed, lexical periphrases such as *piddani, liud, and rab* are present, appearing as *Untertanen, Völker, and der Knecht* in translation. Passivity, obedience, and ignorance of the need to take fate into one's own hands culminate on the basis of syntactic enumeration and accumulation (climax): "I rab kopaie zemliu, teshe kamin, Prynosyt mul z riky i robyt tsehlu, Vyvodyt mury, statui velyki, Zaprihshys, vozyt samotuzhky y stavyt..." / "Der Sklave gräbt, er klopft und bricht die Steine, Er schleppt den Schlamm aus Flüssen, Ziegel brennt er, Führt Mauern auf, errichtet Pyramiden, Er schleppt aus allen Kräften Statuen..."¹⁵

Few people will remember the pharaohs, however their architectural masterpieces – the pyramids – will remind future generations about their builders. Lesia Ukrainka asserts the immortality of the people and the greatness of their legacy. It is the people who create all values and wealth – this being the main idea of the poem. The poetess contrasts the power of the tyrant with the power of the people and proclaims the king's death: "Spivtsi! ne marte, vcheni! ne shukaite, Khoto buv toi tsar i yak yomu naimennia: Z yoho mohyly utvoryla dolia Narodu pamiatnyk, – khai hyne tsar!"¹⁶ Jona Gruber translates this appeal as "the damnation of the king!": "Ihr, Sänger, preist ihn nicht, Gelehrte, forscht nicht Nach jenes Königs unbekanntem Namen. Das Schicksal schuf aus seinem Grabe für Das Volk ein Denkmal – Fluch dem Könige!"¹⁷

One of Lesia Ukrainka's best-known lyrical works is the poem "Contra spem spero" (1890). The impetus for its writing was provided by Lesia's disease. Immense desire to overcome weakness turned into incredibly powerful internal resistance against physical pain, falsehood, and injustice. The poem is based on such antitheses as *khmary osinni – vesna zolota, vbohim sumnim perelozhi – siiat barvysti kvitky, sered lykha spivaty pisni, bez nadii spodivatys*¹⁸, and others. Let us compare its individual passages with the German translation by Hans Koch and Jona Gruber:

14 Ukrainka, *Hoffnung*, 122–25.

15 Ukrainka, *Hoffnung*, 124–25.

16 Ukrainka, *Hoffnung*, 124.

17 Ukrainka, *Hoffnung*, 125.

18 Ukrainka, *Hoffnung*, 28–29.

CONTRA SPEM SPERO!

Ni, ya khochu kriz slozy smiiatys,
 Sered lykha spivaty pisni,
 Bez nadii taky spodivatys,
 Zhyty khochu! Het dumy sumni!

CONTRA SPEM SPERO!

Lächeln will ich trotz bitterer Tränen,
 und ein Liedlein singen trotz Leid.
 Hoffen will ich und hoffend mich sehnen,
 Auch wenn hoffnungslos bitter die Zeit.¹⁹

CONTRA SPEM SPERO!

Ich will aber Frohsinn, nicht Beben,
 Mein Lied soll im Unglück ertönen,
 Auch hoffnungslos hoff ich im Leben, –
 O fort mit euch, Ächzen und Stöhnen!²⁰

In our opinion, the objection *Ni!* at the beginning of the strophe has the reader better feel the spirit of opposition to all troubles, rejects sorrow, and categorically forbids sad thoughts and sad moods.

In order to preserve the authentic emotional mood of the original work, Hans Koch in his translation uses the stylistic technique of inversion “Lächeln will ich trotz bitterer Tränen... Hoffen will ich und hoffend mich sehnen...” (“Smiiatysia ya khochu nezvazhaiuchy na hirki slozy... Spodivatysia ya khochu i spodivaiuchys tuzhyty...”). The positive semantics of the verbs *lächeln* and *hoffen* at the beginning of the lines constitute a strong implicit denial of inconsolable premonitions and worries.

In Jona Gruber’s translation, this is expressed in a somewhat softened form (literally: “I want a cheerful mood, and not an earthquake, Let my song sound in the midst of a disaster...” (“Ya khochu veseloho nastroi, a ne zemletrusu, Moia pisnia nekhai zvuchyt sered lykha...”).

Particularly strong artistic opposition, based on confirmation, is observed in the last strophe:

CONTRA SPEM SPERO!

Tak! ya budu kriz slozy smiiatys,
 Sered lykha spivaty pisni,
 Bez nadii taky spodivatys,
 Budu zhyty! Het dumy sumni

19 *Die ukrainische Lyrik 1840–1940*, Ausgewählt und übertragen von Hans Koch (Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 1955), 44.

20 *Ukrainka, Hoffnung*, 28–29.

CONTRA SPEM SPERO!

Ja, so lächl' ich trotz Tränen;
Ja, so sing' ich ein Liedlein trotz Leid:
Und so hoff' ich in ewigem Sehnen,
Auch wenn hoffnungslos bitter die Zeit.²¹

CONTRA SPEM SPERO!

Darum will ich stets Frohsinn, nicht Beben
Mein Lied soll im Unglück ertönen,
Auch hoffnungslos hoff ich im Leben, –
O fort mit euch, Ächzen und Stöhnen!²²

The strong statement *Tak!* in the last strophe denies a categorical *Ni!* at the beginning of the verse, which we interpret as an affirmation of the indestructability of the human spirit, its willingness to make every effort in combatting social injustice in the broadest sense of this word.

Hans Koch not only preserves the specified lexical form, but also strengthens it, using the stylistic technique of anaphora in the first and second lines and intensifying it by means of the particle *so* in the first three lines: *Ja, so lächl' ich..; Ja, so sing' ich...; Und so hoff' ich...*

In the German version by Jona Gruber, this opinion is expressed in an explicit and argumentative form ("That is why I want ..."). Gruber describes in detail particular key meanings: *Zhyty khochu!, Zhyty budu! / im Leben; Het dumy sumni! / O fort mit euch, Ächzen und Stöhnen!* (literally: "O, het z vamy, okhannia i stohin!").

In addition, we can observe new semantic content of the studied concept in "hope in the struggle against hopelessness," and "a courageous challenge to unhappy fate." The inner strength of Lesia Ukrainka's female character is unbreakable, hope playing one of the most important roles in the struggle, by virtue of which the strength of will and spirit are born, becoming axiological values of the concept. The key meaning "Bez nadii taky spodivatys" / "Auch hoffnungslos hoff ich im Leben"²³ is preserved word for word. Despite the lexical and stylistic variations of the compared translations, the key meaning of the considered concept is preserved accurately ("Bez nadii taky spodivatys" (L. Ukrainka)²⁴ / "Auch hoffnungslos hoff ich im Leben" (Jona Gruber)²⁵ / "Und so hoff' ich in ewigem Sehnen" (Hans Koch)²⁶).

The collection "Na krylakh pisen" (On the Wings of Songs) belongs to those lyrical works of the poetess, where one of the key concepts is the concept of "struggle"

21 *Die ukrainische Lyrik 1840–1940*, 44.

22 Ukrainka, *Hoffnung*, 28–29.

23 Ukrainka, *Hoffnung*, 28–29.

24 Ukrainka, *Hoffnung*, 28–29.

25 Ukrainka, *Hoffnung*, 28–99.

26 *Die ukrainische Lyrik 1840–1940*, 44.

with the semantic content of “existential dimensions of the existence of the personality.” The poetic series of this collection, “Sim strun” / “Seven Strings,” is composed on the basis of a musical principle. In the poem “Mi (Kolyskova. Arpeggio)” (Mi (Lullaby. Arpeggio)) Lesia Ukrainka calls for not obeying fate (translated into German by Jona Gruber):

MI (Kolyskova. Arpeggio)

Sorom khylytysia,
Doli korytysia!
Chas tvii pryide
Z doleiu bytysia, –
Son propade...

MI (Wiegenlied. Arpeggio)

Beuge vor niemand das Haupt,
Wer sich da beugt, beraubt
Sein Geschick.
Könnte man je im Staub
Finden Glück?²⁷

The translation preserves the emotional and evaluative elements of human existence and advice on decent active behavior. The translator replaces Lesia’s aposiopesis with a rhetorical question, *son propade* with *finden Glück?* (literally – *znaity shchastia*). We can extrapolate “lost sleep” to the realm of “not finding happiness.” In the German translation, literally, “he who bends, steals his happiness.”

In the poem “Khto vam skazav...” (1911; Who Told You...) the reader in every word and rhythm feels a spirit of disobedience, contempt for obstacles, and an ambitious desire to never be weak and desperate. Jona Gruber’s²⁸ translation accurately reproduces the ideological content of the original, despite some lexical deviations: “Khto vam skazav, shcho ya slabka, shcho ya koriusia doli?” / “Wer sagt, dass meine Kraft schon schwand (‘Khto kazhe, shcho moia syla vycherpana’) Und dass mein Herz verzage? (‘I shcho moie sertse znevirene’),” “Khiba tremtyt moia ruka chy pisnia y dumka kvoli?” / “Sah jemand zittern meine Hand (‘Khtos bachyv, yak tremtyt moia ruka’), Ward je mein Lied zur Klage? (‘Koly-nebud bula moia pisnia plachem?’).”²⁹

The mourning of unfortunate Ukraine, longing and pain, passive contemplation, human helplessness, and awareness of the struggle for a better fate are combined in the poems of the series “Slozy-perly” (1891; Tears of Pearls) motifs that are so skillfully reproduced by Jona Gruber in the German translation.³⁰ Lamenting over the fate of

27 Ukrainka, *Hoffnung*, 34–35.

28 Ukrainka, *Hoffnung*, 150–51.

29 Ukrainka, *Hoffnung*, 150–51.

30 Ukrainka, *Hoffnung*, 48–53.

storononky ridnoi, passive and submissive people, *zakuti v kaidanakh*, cannot heal the incurable wounds of Ukraine: "Storononko ridna! kokhanyi mii kraiu! Choho vse zamovklo v tobi, zanimilo?" / "O teure Heimat, du niedergedrückte, ('O doroha batkivshchyno, ty pryhnychena') Warum sag, verstummte doch alles im Lande? ('Skazhy, chomu vse v kraini zamovklo?')." ³¹ The poetess condemns human obedience: "Prokliattia rukam, shcho spadaiut bez syly!" / "Die Hände, die sinken, sie mögen verdorren! ('Ruky, shcho opuskaiutsia, nekhai zovianut!')." ³² However, tears and longing have great power: they will ignite people's hearts and awaken their minds. Only then will people understand that there are only two possibilities for them – either to die or to prevail: "Navishcho rodytys i zhyty v mohyli?" / "Im Grabe zu leben, wenn man dort geboren?" "Yak maiemo zhyty v hanebnii nevoli, Khai smertna temnota nam ochi zastele! Oi lele!" / "Ist's möglich zu leben in Ketten und Banden? Der Tod schließ' die Augen, die gar nichts mehr schauen! O Grauen!" ³³

The struggle for the native land and its loss, extrapolated to a biblical theme bypassed by censorship, is realized in the first two poems of the series "Yevreiski melodii" (Jewish Melodies) ("Yak Izrail dostavs voroham u polon ..." (How Israel was Captured by Enemies...), "Yeremiie, zlovisnyi proroche v zaliznim yarmi" (1899; Jeremiah, the Ominous Prophet in an Iron Yoke), translated into German by Nadiia Medvedovska). ³⁴ Here the poetess, referring to a biblical theme, expresses her thoughts and feelings for one's native land, compatriots, and language. By extrapolation, these thoughts and feelings can be understood as referring to similarities in her native land. In images of the defeated fighters: "I, skhylyvshy cholo, podolani bortsy" / "Und Besiegte, die sich kaum hielten aufrecht"; of the harp that was hung on the willow: "tilko arfu spivets pochepyv na verbi" ³⁵ / "Nur die Harfe verstummte aus bitterer Not," of the iron yoke: "Yeremiie, zlovisnyi proroche v zaliznim yarmi!" / "Jeremia, gewalt'ger Prophet in dem eisernen Joch!," of the heart made from hard crystal: "Pevne, sertse hospod tobi dav iz tverdoho kryshtaliu" / "Hat der Herr dir ein Herz aus festem Kristall wohl gegeben," of the fierce sorrow: "yak zhe sertse tvoie ne rozbylos vid liutoho zhaliu?" ³⁶ / "Brach dein Herz nicht vor Kummer, es konnte das Schlimmste erleben." ³⁷ Among others, Lesia Ukrainka managed to share with readers the painful issue of losing independence and the native Ukrainian language, and to show that internal misunderstandings between different strata of intellectuals cause great damage to the

31 Ukrainka, *Hoffnung*, 48–49.

32 Ukrainka, *Hoffnung*, 48–49.

33 Ukrainka, *Hoffnung*, 48–49.

34 Lesia Ukrainka, *Judaika. Babylonische Gefangenschaft und andere Gedichte*, aus dem Ukrainischen übersetzt und kommentiert von Nadiya Medvedovska, hrsg. Erhard Roy Wiehn (Konstanz: Hartung – Gorre Verlag, 2005), 23–24.

35 Lesia Ukrainka, *Povne akademichne zibrannia tvoriv u 14 tomakh* [Complete Academic Collection of Works in 14 Volumes], ed. Oleksandra Visych et al., vol. 5 (Lutsk: Volynskyy natsionalnyi universytet imeni Lesi Ukrainky, 2021), 213

36 Ukrainka, *Povne akademichne zibrannia tvoriv*, vol. 5, 213.

37 Ukrainka, *Judaika*, 23–24.

matter of the national liberation movement.³⁸ Nadiia Medvedovska managed to preserve in her translation (2005) the very spirit of the poetry, the idea of independence and love for the mother tongue, and to convey all this to the German reader.

A fighter for unknown young liberty is “Toi, shcho hrebli rve” / “Der die Dämme sprengt”³⁹ / “He Who Rends the Dikes,” a character in “Lisova pisnia” (The Forest Song, translated into German in 2006 by Iryna Kachaniuk-Spiekh):

“Toi, shcho hrebli rve”

Mostochky zbyvaiu,
vsi hrebelky zryvaiu,
vsi hatky, vsi zaprudy,
shcho zahatyly liudy, –
bo vesniana voda
yak volia moloda!

“Der die Dämme sprengt”

Die Brücklein zerspringen,
die Deichlein entschwinden,
der Damm wird vernichtet,
den Menschen errichtet, –
denn die Wasser im Mai
sind grenzenlos frei!⁴⁰

In the original work, actions of the “I” are directed at objects created by people (*zbyvaiu, zryvaiu...* (I knock down, I break...): actions are expressed by the active state). The stylistic method of the personification of water, thus vesting human qualities in it, emphasizes the power of natural destruction, which can destroy what man has created with his mind and hands. Iryna Kachaniuk-Spiech authentically conveys the force and power of the spring water, which can lead to individual human creations finding themselves in a situation of self-destruction (*Die Brücklein zerspringen, die Deichlein entschwinden*).

We see a longing for liberty in Mavka’s dialogue with the Field Mermaid:

Mavka

Rada b ya voliu vvolyty,
Tilky sama ya ne maiu vzhe voli.

38 Ukrainka, *Judaika*, 90.

39 Lessja Ukrajinka, *Das Waldlied: Drama-Feerie in 3 Akten*, deutsche Übersetzung von Irena Kachaniuk-Spiech (Lviv: Verlagszentrum der Nationalen-Iwan-Franko-Universität Lwiw, 2006), 20–21.

40 Ukrajinka, *Das Waldlied*, 20–21.

Mavka

Gern würde ich deine Bitte erfüllen,
doch ich kann nicht, seit ich meine Freiheit verlor.⁴¹

The translation of the semantic content of the lexemes *voliu vvolyty*, *volia* (firm intention, liberty) is carried out through the German equivalents *Bitte erfüllen* (to fulfill a request), *Freiheit* (freedom).

The semantic quintessence of the concepts "struggle" and "liberty" has the shade "to make a choice freely," "to have one's own freedom and will." In a conversation with Mavka, who claims that Lukash "came of his own free will,"⁴² the latter replies:

Lukash

Po voli zh i pidu, yak tilky skhochu,
Nikhto nichym mene tut ne pryviazhe!

Lukasch

Freiwillig gehe ich auch, wenn ich es möchte,
niemand wird mich an etwas binden können!⁴³

The translator translated the phrase *Po voli zh i pidu* by the German version *Freiwillig gehe ich auch*. As we can see, the key concept of Ukrainian linguistic culture – *volia* / "liberty" – is translated by the German equivalent "Freiheit," which means "freedom." "Volia" / "Liberty" in the Ukrainian version contains the same "firm intention, determination." The modal verb *möchte* (I would like to) in the German version softens the probability of the realization of what is said.

"Toi, shcho v skali sydyt" / "Der im Felsen sitzt" / "He Who Dwells in Rock" beckons Mavka and speaks of "unattainable liberty": "i ne zanosyt viter zhadnykh spiviv pro nedosiazhnu voliu" / "der Wind singt keine Lieder von der Freiheit, die unerreichbar ist."⁴⁴ Mavka does not want to go to him and to obey fate, and fights for her liberty. As an example of the need to obey fate, "Toi, shcho v skali sydyt" mentions the endless struggle between lightning and rock: "hostri blyskavytsi lamaiutsia ob skeli i ne mozhut probytytsia v tverdnyiu tmy y spokoiiu" / "die scharfen Blitze zerbrechen an den Felsen, noch bevor sie die Burg der Finsternis und Stille je erreichen."⁴⁵ The metaphorical nature of Lesia Ukrainka's language in the context of the struggle for one's own liberty and freedom is aptly conveyed by Kachaniuk-Spiekh with appropriate German metaphors. The synesthesia *zhadni spivy* is conveyed by the negation *keine*

41 Ukrajinka, *Das Waldlied*, 130–31.

42 Ukrajinka, *Das Waldlied*, 142.

43 Ukrajinka, *Das Waldlied*, 142–43.

44 Ukrajinka, *Das Waldlied*, 160–61.

45 Ukrajinka, *Das Waldlied*, 160–61.

*Lieder / viter ne spivaie pisen, and the oxymoron tverdynia tmy – by the epithet and metaphor die Burg der Finsternis / zamok (tsytadel) tmy.*⁴⁶

Through Mavka's words Lesia Ukrainka glorifies the indestructible Ukrainian soul in the hard struggle for its freedom, liberty, independence, and tireless desire to live:

Mavka

Ni! Ya zhyva! Ya budu vichno zhyty!
Ya v sertsii maiu te, shcho ne vmyraie.

Mavka

Nein! Ich bin nicht tot! Ich werde ewig leben!
Im Herzen trag ich etwas, das nie stirbt.⁴⁷

Among other works by Lesia Ukrainka brought to the German reader, it is worth mentioning the dramatic poem "Oderzhyma" (1901; *A Woman Possessed*), translated by Josef Hahn.⁴⁸ The poetess wrote this dramatic poem in Minsk during one January night at the bedside of her mortally ill friend, Serhii Merzhynskyi. The writer expressed her pain in poetic words, which gave her strength to rise from a deep ruin of mental suffering. According to scholars, "A Woman Possessed" is Lesia Ukrainka's most tragic work, "the apotheosis of powerful love and hate,"⁴⁹ a work that still arouses the keen interest of scholars. Lina Kostenko (1989) rightly remarks: "If you read the vast majority of these works, there appears a terrible picture of some theoretical chaos – ranging from 'a poem of excessive individualism' to 'a poem of revolutionary romanticism.'"⁵⁰ We consider this "revolutionism" or this "revolutionary romanticism" to be an integral part of the concept of "struggle" under study.

The drama is based on a biblical story – Jesus Christ's being on the Earth among the laity, his crucifixion and resurrection. The work focuses on the two main figures,

46 Ukrainka, *Das Waldlied*, 160–61.

47 Ukrainka, *Das Waldlied*, 162–63.

48 *Lesja Ukrainka und die europäische Literatur*, 231–46.

49 Abram Hozenpud, *Poetychnyi teatr [Poetical Theater]* (Kyiv: Mystetstvo, 1947), 302; Inna Baranova, "Dramatychna poema 'Oderzhyma': novyi etap stanovlennia dialohu u tvorchosti Lesi Ukrainky [The Dramatic Poem 'A Woman Possessed': A New Stage in Dialogue Development in Lesia Ukrainka's Works]," *Literaturoznavchi obrii. Pratsi molodykh uchenykh* 17 (2010): 171, accessed December 5, 2021, <http://dspace.nbuv.gov.ua/bitstream/handle/123456789/38379/36-Baranova.pdf?sequence=1>.

50 Lina Kostenko, "Poet, shcho ishov skhodamy hihantiv [A Poet who Followed in the Paths of Giants]," in *Lesia Ukrainka, Dramatychni tvory* (Kyiv: Dnipro, 1989), 17; Roman Mnich, "Kontsept mens sana u tvorchosti Lesi Ukrainky (Dramatychna poema 'Oderzhyma') [The Mens Sana Concept in Lesia Ukrainka's Works (The Dramatic Poem 'A Woman Possessed')]," *Roczniki Humanistyczne* 66.7 (2018): 15–31. <https://dx.doi.org/10.18290/rh.2018.66.7-2>. ("Yakshcho prochytyaty perevazhnu bilshist tsykh prats, to vynykaie motoroshna kartyna yakohos teoretynoho khaosu – v diapazoni vid 'poemy nadmirnoho indyvidualizmu' do 'poemy revoliutsiinoho romantyzmu.'")

the Messiah and Miriam, a spirit-obsessed woman. Josef Hahn has literally conveyed Miriam's inner dialogue, which shows the inner anxiety of the main character, the state of her soul, and tension. Syntactic structures, punctuation marks, intonation background, which reflect the intense internal struggle inherent in the original, are completely preserved:

Choho zh se ya slidom za nym blukaiu? Choho? Sama ne znaiu. Pevne, dukh mene siudy zaviv na pevnu zghubu. Nu, shcho zh! nekhai! ... Ne podyvyvsia i ne obernuvsia... Znadto vzhe buina bula nadiia! Choho zh ya spodivalas?... Ya ne znaiu!⁵¹

Warum irre ich stets seinen Spuren nach? Warum? Ich weiß es selber nicht. Der Geist wohl hat mich hergeführt zum sicheren Verderben hier. Nun, was denn! Meinetwegen! ... Er hat nicht hergesehen, hat sich nicht umgedreht... Zu übermütig war wohl meine Hoffnung! Was habe ich erwartet? ... Ach, ich weiß es nicht!⁵²

In the drama, the writer offers two models of behavior at the discretion of the reader. For the Messiah, love is a state of mind that embodies Christian values (a Christian model of love, trust in God). For Miriam, love means an act of will, an active action, a struggle for happiness to achieve reciprocity (a god-fighting model),⁵³ which, for example, is clearly demonstrated in the following passage of the text:

Messiah: Zhertvy ya ne khochu, liubovy tilko.

Miriam: Mushu vsikh liubyty?

Messiah: Tak, vsikh.

Miriam: Vsikh, okrim tebe, – se mozhlyvo. Ale tebe i vsikh – se ponad sylu. Ta za shcho zh, za shcho zh maiu yikh liubyty? ...

Messiah: A ta liubov, shcho ya vid tebe khochu, povynna buty yak sontse – vsim svityty. Miriam: O, shcho meni robyt? Nemaie sontsia v moii dushi. Nich, nich, ponura nich. ... (with sudden hope) Uchyteliu! chy ty meni pozvolysh prolyty krov moiu?

Messiah: Za koho? Za liudei?

Miriam: Ni, ne za yikh!⁵⁴

51 Lesia Ukrainka, *Povne akademichne zibrannia tvoriv u 14 tomakh* [Complete Academic Collection of Works in 14 Volumes], ed. Tereza Levchuk et al., vol. 1 (Lutsk: Volynskyi natsionalnyi universytet imeni Lesi Ukrainky, 2021), 124.

52 *Lesja Ukrainka und die europäische Literatur*, 232.

53 Baranova, "Dramatychna poema 'Oderzhyma,'" 174.

54 Ukrainka, *Povne akademichne zibrannia tvoriv*, vol. 1, 131.

In Hahn's German translation, both characters' different understanding of love is reproduced adequately to the Ukrainian text. The struggle of feelings in the German text can be traced due to compliance with the original rhythms based on the style of syntactic means – short elliptical sentences, antitheses, emphases, etc.:

Messiah: *Ein Opfer will ich nicht, nur Liebe, Weib.*

Miriam: *So muß ich wirklich alle lieben?*

Messiah: *Ja.*

Miriam: *O, alle außer dir – das ist unmöglich. Doch dich und alle – dazu reicht die Kraft nicht. Weshalb, weshalb nur muß ich alle lieben?...*

Messiah: *Doch diese Liebe, die ich von dir will, muss so sein wie die Sonne – allen scheinen.*

Miriam: *Was soll ich tun? Ich habe keine Sonne in meiner Seele. Nacht nur, düstere Nacht.*

Miriam (with sudden hope): *Mein Lehrer, hör! Erlaubst du mir, daß ich mein Blut vergieße?*

Messiah: *Und für wen? Die Menschen?*

Miriam: *Nein, nicht für die!*⁵⁵

In the German version, the antagonism of views is enhanced by the additional use of the noun *Weib* (woman), which is used in colloquial speech and contains a touch of contempt.

In "Oderzhyma," the writer depicts two antagonistic figures, united by the bonds of "hostility-love,"⁵⁶ which in Miriam grows into hatred for everyone and everything that hinders her happiness. She is ready to fight: "V moikh ochakh ya chuiu zbroi polysk, v moikh rechakh ya chuiu zbroi briazkit, tak ya uzbriena v svoiu nenavyst, yak vartovyi kolo tsarskoi bramy, shcho radyi vykhopyt na kozhnoho svii mech, khto tilko zle zamyslyt na vladaria."⁵⁷ / "In meinen Augen spür ich Waffenglanz, In meinen Reden spür ich Waffenklirren. So stehe ich in meinen Haß gepanzert, dem Wächter gleich am königlichen Tor. Bereit, das Schwert zu schwingen gegen alle, die auch nur Böses wider seinen Herrn zu denken wagen."⁵⁸

In Hahn's translation, the expression *in meinen Haß gepanzert* ("armored in hatred") has the semantic meaning of Miriam's even greater determination and readiness to fight for her love. However, she becomes a victim herself, at the end of the dramatic poem she is stoned for her love.⁵⁹

55 *Lesja Ukrainka und die europäische Literatur*, 237–38.

56 For comparison: Mnich, "Kontsept mens sana," 20; Baranova, "Dramatychna poema 'Oderzhyma,'" 170–75.

57 *Ukrainka, Povne akademichne zibrannia tvoriv*, vol. 1, 130.

58 *Lesja Ukrainka und die europäische Literatur*, 236–37.

59 Mnich, "Kontsept mens sana," 29.

Conclusion

The motifs of affection, resilience, courage, and confrontation are foremost apparent in the works of Lesia Ukrainka. The studied concept is an umbrella concept (*Regenschirmkonzept*), which is revealed through the concepts of "liberty," "faith," "hope," "life," "disobedience," "determination," "independence," and "choice."

The concept of struggle created by the poetess has the following conceptual meanings and axiological values: 1) inner strength and independence; 2) free choice, freedom, and liberty; 3) the desire to have the will and longing for it represents the beginning or continuation of the struggle, a sign of insubordination, the spirit of disobedience; 4) hope, achievement of the result, and an incredible desire to live, which becomes possible due to hope, the inception of hope-faith; 5) unknown young liberty; 6) life, a ubiquitous feast; 7) the right to happiness; 8) the word as a future weapon for the native language and Ukraine; 9) the desire to prevail; 10) invincibility and subdual, variability; 11) the antithesis of death, sad thoughts, and obedience.

By virtue of multi-vectored research on the analysis of the functioning of concepts in the works of Lesia Ukrainka, it is possible to comprehend the multi-dimensionality of the key concepts of her works and to avoid reaching a certain permanency in conclusions. Struggle is a way of expressing the existential positions of the author and the ideological load of the inner strength of Lesia's works. The concept of "struggle" in the writer's texts of various genres is multifunctional, provides an associative connection with ancient, mythological, religious, philosophical and literary contexts and offers opportunities for a comprehensive analysis of her works. The popularization of Lesia Ukrainka's works in German by well-known translators fully reveals the conceptual picture of the author's works and expands the possibilities of the reception of Ukrainian linguistic culture for German-speaking readers.

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