

Modernist Obscenity in Translation: Ukrainian and Russian Translations of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* by D. H. Lawrence in the late USSR

Andrij Saweneć

The John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin

sawenec@kul.pl

ABSTRACT | The paper focuses on Ukrainian and Russian translations of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* by D.H. Lawrence published in 1989 and 1990. The framework for the analysis is provided by Loren Glass's idea of a significant role of obscene vocabulary in the aesthetics of the twentieth-century Anglo-American literary modernism. The comparison of the two translations shows significant differences in the translators' approaches to rendering Lawrence's sexual-based language.

KEYWORDS | D. H. Lawrence, modernism, obscenity, taboo, translation.

Introduction: *Lady Chatterley's Lover* as an object of translation

In the waning days of the USSR, within a span of several months, two Soviet foreign literature magazines, the Kyiv-based *Vsesvit* and the Moscow-based *Inostrannaya Literatura* published translations of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* by David Herbert Lawrence into Ukrainian (translated by Solomiia Pavlychko)¹ and Russian (translated by Marina Litvinova and Igor Bagrov)². These translations are among the most noticeable attempts at acquiring the legacy of English-language modernism by Ukrainian and Russian literatures at the end of the Soviet era, in the period that witnessed political, economic and moral liberalization, as well as the decline of censorship. Being part of a wider process of filling gaps in the reception of the twentieth-century literary modernism in Soviet territories, these publications fed into the trend of breaking moral and language taboos³ that became visible in the press and popular literature market in the closing years of the USSR. It would be logical then to assume that about 60 years after its release and almost 30

¹ D. G. Lourens, 1989–1990: *Kohanec' ledi Čatterlej*, S. Pavličko, trans. “Vsesvit” 1989, no 12, pp. 2–46; 1990, no 1, pp. 56–129; 1990, no 1, pp. 72–121.

² D. G. Lourens, 1990: *Lubovnik ledi Čatterli*. I. Bagrov, M. Litvinova, trans. “Inostrannaâ literatura”, no 9, pp. 5–72; no 10, pp. 58–125; no 11, pp. 128–185. .

³ According to a definition by A. Skudrzykova and K. Urban, language taboo is described as “words and expressions that one is not allowed or expected to use in a given community, as using them would break cultural rules in force within this community”. When it comes to *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (hereafter referred to as *LCL*), this is the case of a taboo “for reasons of decency, modesty and shame”, encompassing names of bodily parts and those referring to the sphere of erotica, see A. Skudrzykova, K. Urban, 2000: *Mały słownik terminów z zakresu socjolingwistyki i pragmatyki językowej*, Kraków–Warszawa, p. 142 (hereafter translations of quotes from non-English sources mine).

years after its first uncensored publication in the UK, under quite different social and political conditions, the novel by D. H. Lawrence fostered the change of common beliefs about the boundaries of freedom in literature, both in terms of its contents and language.

Looking now, after thirty more years, at the publications familiarizing the two biggest groups of readers in the USSR (in terms of native speakers number) with one of the central oeuvres of English modernism raises a number of questions. When dealing with translations of the work whose aesthetic charge is so subversive from the viewpoint of norms that function in the target literary polisystem, it is worth raising the issue of how far holistic and uncompromising were the approaches of different translators set in the context of a several-decade-long tradition of the ‘Soviet school of translation’. The issues of translators’ individual aesthetic sensitivities and their habitus is not insignificant too, although one cannot forget that a translator is just a link in the publishing process that has a limited decision-making power.

This paper attempts to focus on just one language aspect being a peculiar feature of *LCL*, that is breaking language taboos, and to find how it has been rendered in the first widely accessible translations of the novel into Ukrainian and Russian. In order to set the results of the comparative analysis in a wider context, their presentation will be preceded by a discussion of the novel’s ‘obscenity’ against the backdrop of modernist aesthetics, as well as by some general remarks on the reception of modernist literature in the USSR and the traditions of translation functioning in the target cultures.

Lawrence’s ‘obscenity’ in the context of modernist aesthetics

Taking the essential affiliation of Lawrence’s oeuvre with the modernist paradigm for granted⁴, no matter how different definitions and determinants might be applied to this set of aesthetic practices⁵, one should agree with the statement that the issues of body and carnality played a remarkable role in modernist literature. The American scholar Loren Glass even noticed a range of similarities between modernism and pornography from Gustave Flaubert to William S. Burroughs, with both approaches “focusing on subversive representations of carnality and deviance—particularly female sexuality and sexual autonomy—that challenged bourgeois moral protocols”⁶. According to Glass, a remarkable role in the aesthetics of the twentieth-century modernism was played by obscene vocabulary:

⁴ See, e.g., M. Bell, 2001: *Lawrence and modernism*. In: *The Cambridge Companion to D. H. Lawrence*, A. Ferninogh, ed. Cambridge University Press, pp. 179–196.

⁵ See, e.g., E. Możejko: 1994: *Modernizm literacki : niejasność terminu i dychotomia kierunku*. “Teksty Drugie”, no 5–6, pp. 26–45.

⁶ L. D. Glass, 2006: *Redeeming Value: Obscenity and Anglo-American Modernism*. “Critical Inquiry”, vol. 32, no 2, pp. 348.

many mostly male Anglophone writers of the mid-twentieth century, from James Joyce to William Burroughs, were deeply invested in the significance of a mere handful of words that they insisted were integral to their literary projects. In the many trials and controversies that resulted from this insistence, these words in turn came to play a central role in public debates over the nature and significance of literary modernism in the Anglo-American world.⁷

It is true that the issue of obscenity in literature has been largely informed by a series of moral scandals inspired by particular literary pieces, and frequently also by court cases that for centuries have contributed to shaping beliefs about the boundaries of what is allowed in public discourse, but it has become most visible in the context of works belonging to the modernist paradigm⁸. Breaking language and moral taboos by authors representing this paradigm is in sync with the notion of shock mentioned in literature as one of the features characterizing modernist artistic practices; Shefali Mehta asserts that all the modernist 'ism' movements reveal "the desire to *shock* the reader or observer"⁹. The aesthetic valorization of shock, as William Solomon claims, "is one of a constellation of twentieth-century, predominantly modernist attempts to conceptualize art as an affectively charged, intensely forceful cultural practice"¹⁰. As far as regards the modernist practice of employing obscene language, its overall aim might be formulated as challenging worn-out clichés governing the society's morality. Resorting to obscenities was a gesture whose purpose was to shock, to make "a slap in the face of public taste", to use the title of the almanac and manifesto of the Russian avant-garde group Hylaea¹¹.

It would be a simplification to reduce the aesthetic gesture made by D.H. Lawrence in *LCL* to this objective alone. The justification for employing words classified as obscene was formulated in his essay "Apropos of Lady Chatterley's Lover". As the point of the novel was to make men and women "to be able to think sex, fully, completely, honestly and cleanly"¹², one of the author's intentions was a kind of 'cleansing' sex-related words from overtones established by social convention. In Lawrence's opinion, the expressive power of words regarded as obscene

must have been very dangerous to the dim-minded obscure, violent natures of the Middle Ages, and perhaps are still too strong for slow-minded, half-evoked lower natures today. But real culture makes

⁷ L.D. Glass, 2007: #!?: *Modernism and Dirty Words*. "Modernism/Modernity", vol. 14, no 2, p. 210.

⁸ For further exploration of these issues, see e.g. E. De Grazia, 1992: *Girls Lean Back Everywhere*. New York, Random House; A. Parkes, 1996: *Modernism and the Theatre of Censorship*. Oxford University Press; A. Pease, 2000: *Modernism, Mass Culture, and the Aesthetics of Obscenity*. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

⁹ S. Mehta, 2016: *Literary Modes of Modernism: Aesthetic Styles as Reflection of Philosophical Worldview*. "Spring Magazine on English Literature", vol. 2, no 1, p. 7.

¹⁰ W. Solomon, 2017: *On Shock Therapy: Modernist Aesthetics and American Underground Film*. "Screen Bodies", vol. 2, no 1, pp. 75.

¹¹ Interestingly, quite similar was the impression of the first translator of *LCL* into Russian Tatiana Leshchenko, who regarded the novel as "a slap in the face of Anglo-Saxons' hypocrisy and bigotry", see T. Lešenko, 1991: *Dolgoe buduše: Vospominaniâ*. Moskva, Sovetskij pisatel', p. 8.

¹² D.H. Lawrence, 1981: "Apropos of Lady Chatterley's Lover". In: D.H. Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. London, Heinemann, p. 5.

us give to a word only those mental and imaginative reactions which belong to the mind, and saves us from violent and indiscriminate physical reactions which may wreck social decency. In the past, man was too weak-minded, or crude-minded, to contemplate his own physical body and physical functions, without getting all messed up with physical reactions that overpowered him. It is no longer so. Culture and civilization have taught us to separate the reactions.¹³

This is precisely the way Lawrence's intention was understood by the literary scholar and sociologist Richard Hoggart, who was an expert witness at the 1960 obscenity trial over D.H. Lawrence's novel. According to Hoggart, as one read further on, the words regarded as shocking "were being progressively purified as they were used"¹⁴. Introducing four-letter words in Lawrence's novel as part of his program of liberating and civilizing the mind¹⁵, no matter how noble were his intentions, was, however, likely to produce a shocking effect, taking into account who utters them. In the context of the clarification concerning speakers' gender in Glass's statement quoted above ("mostly male"), it is worth paying attention to the shocking potential of the situation presented in Chapter XII, where Constance inquires Mellors about the meaning of the word *cunt*, wrongly identifying it with the word *fuck*.

According to a traditional belief, it is more acceptable in the British society for men to use taboo words than it is for women¹⁶, and that is likely to be true about many other societies, as they "seem to expect a higher level of adherence to social norms (...) from women than they do from men"¹⁷. Ronald Wardhaugh claims that women "are also said not to employ the profanities and obscenities men use, or, if they do, use them in different circumstances or are judged differently for using them"¹⁸. It seems justified to link this asymmetry in language behaviour to the 'power' of taboo words used as invectives¹⁹, the power being described as a 'masculine' one²⁰. The author, editor and critic Malcolm Cowley cited by the lawyer Charles Rembar in *The End of Obscenity* (1968) went as far as to compare a set of "short Anglo-Saxon words for bodily functions that were regarded until World War I as being wholly part of a secret language of men" to the secret language of men in the South Pacific tribes described by anthropologists:

These words were used in the smoking room, in the bar room, in the barbershop, but no woman was supposed to know them unless she was an utterly degraded woman. After World War I, women in-

¹³ D.H. Lawrence, 1981: "Apropos of Lady...", p. 5.

¹⁴ C.H. Rolph (ed.), 1961: *The Trial of Lady Chatterley*. London, Penguin Books, pp. 98–99

¹⁵ Cf. D.H. Lawrence, D.H. Lawrence, 1981: "Apropos of Lady...", p. 6.

¹⁶ See P. Trudgill, 2000: *Sociolinguistics: an introduction to language and society*, 4th ed. London, Penguin Books, p. 69.

¹⁷ See P. Trudgill, 2000: *Sociolinguistics...*, p. 73.

¹⁸ R. Wardhaugh, 2006: *An introduction to sociolinguistics*, 5th ed. Blackwell Publishing, p. 322.

¹⁹ See. P. Trudgill, *Sociolinguistics...*, p. 19.

²⁰ See L.D. Glass, 2007: *#\$%^&*!?!?...*, p. 212.

creasingly demanded admission to what had been the sacred places of men, the smoking room, the barroom, the barbershop even, and demanded knowledge of the secret language of men.²¹

Thus, appropriation of the language considered to be a male one becomes a natural element of women's social and cultural emancipation. According to an observation made by Bernard de Voto (cited by Glass), toleration of obscene monosyllables and even habitual use of them has become a mark of "frankness, sophistication, liberalism, companionability, and even smartness" among many educated and prosperous women²². Hence, as Karen Stapleton remarks, the use of abuse language by women in certain contexts and for certain purposes, when set against the background of dominating sociocultural norms and expectations, becomes a powerful means of expressing their identity, which is testified by research studies she cites (at the same time, as Stapleton admits, much sociolinguistic writing has relied on traditional belief on the subject)²³.

This topic, which is rather marginal in the context of Lawrence's novel, gains prominence in the situation where it is a female translator who bears responsibility for transferring the novel into another cultural milieu.

The background of publishing the translations of *LCL*

In the totally ideologized discourse of literary studies in the USSR, the Western, 'bourgeois' modernist literature has been shaped into a sui generis anticanon opposing the canon of socialist realist literature²⁴. "Modernism" was regarded as the total of late nineteenth- and twentieth-century literary and artistic movements "expressing the crisis of bourgeois culture and characterized by rupture with the traditions of realism"²⁵ and identified with decadence²⁶. It was D.H. Lawrence whom Dmitry Mirsky, one of leading Soviet critics, called "the main artistic exponent of that part of bourgeois decadence which is 'attached to the primitive'", while *LCL* was labelled as "intellectual pornography"²⁷. It is unsurprising, then, that starting from about the mid-1930s, several years after the first translations of Lawrence's writing appeared in a relatively pluralist situation in the field of

²¹ Cited in L.D. Glass, 2007: #\$\$^&*!?, p. 211.

²² Cited in L.D. Glass, 2007: #\$\$^&*!?, p. 213.

²³ See K. Stapleton, 2003: *Gender and Swearing: A Community Practice*. "Women and Language", vol. 26, no 2, pp. 22, 23. A remarkable example of a context where an apparent vulgarization of women's language in public sphere has become to function as a tool of overcoming the male discourse was the wave of the late 2020 public protests in Poland organized by the Women's Strike movement to object to the Constitutional Tribunal's decision concerning tightening of abortion rules.

²⁴ See A. Volynskaâ, 2017: *Modernizm kak sovetskij antikanon: literaturnye debaty 1960–1970-h godov*. "Logos", vol. 27, no 6, p. 173.

²⁵ A.M. Prohorov (ed.), 1979: *Sovetskij ènciklopedičeskij slovar'*. Moskva, Sovetskaâ ènciklopediâ, p. 830.

²⁶ L.I. Timofeev, S.V. Turaev (eds), 1974: *Slovar' literaturovedčeskikh terminov*. Moskva, Prosvešenie, 1974, p. 233.

²⁷ D. Mirskij, 1934: *Intellidžentsia*. Moskva, Sovetskaâ literatura, p. 70–71.

literature, his works ceased to be translated and published, and the very name of the English writer was excluded from the Soviet literary culture for several decades²⁸.

It was in that period, in the early 1930s, when the foundations of the state's total control over all the spheres of research, scholarly and creative activities were laid in the USSR. The Marxist-Leninist ideology became the basis for the 'Soviet school of translation', that is a set of norms regulating the practice of translation and translation studies where the paramount status was ascribed, among others, to the notions of 'creative translation' and realistic translation'. In practical terms, such understanding of translation as opposed to various 'literal' and 'formalist' approaches often came down to 'correcting' those elements of the original works being translated that did not fit into the communist doctrine²⁹. A translator a literary scholar armed with the tools of the Marxist-Leninist ideology was meant to know better what kind of message the authors of translated or analysed works were going to convey to their readers: for example, in his afterword to the Russian translation of Arthur C. Clarke's *2001: A Space Odyssey* published in 1970, the Russian sci-fi writer Ivan Yefremov informed the readers about the removal from the text of the novel its final chapters as "incompatible with Clarke's own, quite scientific worldview"³⁰. In the same year of 1970, however, the name of D.H. Lawrence was brought back to the officially sanctioned literary circuit in the USSR, as some of his poems and short stories in new Russian translations were published in literary periodicals³¹ (it took no less than 13 more years for Ukrainian translations to appear in print)³².

The wide-ranging social and economic reforms of the late 1980s in the USSR known as Perestroika led to a growing liberalization of the publishing field, finally resulting in doing away with the institution of censorship. This period witnessed a new peak of popularity of the so-called 'thick journals' – literary monthlies whose circulation sometimes exceeded a million copies. Not only did they play an paramount role in shaping a lively literary process, but also were filling the gaps, familiarizing their readers with the works of the once ignored and banned authors, whose names had been erased from history of literature. When it comes to translations from world literature, the *Inostrannaya Literatura* magazine published in Moscow and the Kyiv-based *Vsesvit*

²⁸ At the same time, the first translation of *LCL* into Russian was published in 1932 by Petropolis, a Russian émigré publishing house based in Berlin. For the translator Tatiana Leshchenko it was the first experience of translating fiction. Some copies of this edition were smuggled to the USSR.

²⁹ For further exploration of these issues, see S. Witt, 2013: *Arts of Accommodation: The First All-Union Conference of Translators, Moscow, 1936, and the Ideologization of Norms*. In: L. Burnett, E. Lego (eds), *The Art of Accommodation. Literary Translation in Russia*. Bern: Peter Lang AG, p. 141–184; G. Dmitrienko, 2019: *Redefining Translation Spaces in the Soviet Union: From Revisionist Policies to a Conformist Translation Theory*, "Traduction, terminologie, rédaction", vol. 32, no 1, p. 205–229.

³⁰ Cited in: T. Gorãeva, 2009: *Politiãeskaã cenzura v SSSR. 1917–1991 gg*. Moskva, Rossijskaã politiãeskaã ênciklopediã, p. 363.

³¹ See N. Reinhold, 2007: *Russian Culture and the Work of D.H. Lawrence: An Eighty-year Long Appropriation*. In: Ch. Jansohn, D. Mehl (eds), *The Reception of D. H. Lawrence in Europe*. London, Continuum, pp. 190–191.

³² O. Mikitenko, G. Gamalij (eds), 2004: *Žurnal inozemnoï literaturi "Vsesvit" u XX storiããi (1925–2000): Bibliografiãnij pokažãik zmistu*. Kiïv, Vidavniãij ðim "Vsesvit", p. 30.

magazine were among the most widely-read titles. It is against this background that the first attempts at breaking language taboos were made in the publishing field as well. The Russian writer Mikhail Veller claims responsibility for the first ever usage of explicit words in mainstream print media while being a member of editorial staff at the Tallinn-based Raduga literary magazine in charge of publishing excerpts of Vasily Aksyonov's novel *The Island of Crimea* in winter of 1988/33 (actually, the fragments of the novel were published in issues 8 to 10, 1989): "The [Soviet] Union was collapsing; Estonia was drifting into independence; the chief [editor] was one of the leaders of the Popular Front; no one was then afraid of anything, being half a year ahead of Russian events (...): swear words were our freedom, our revenge, our fig sign"³⁴. Indeed, in terms of beliefs about what authors and translators are allowed to say the peripheries were even more than half a year ahead of the centre: in *Inostrannaya Literatura*, ellipses were used for expletives as late as in summer 1990, when it published the translation of Henry Miller's *Tropic of Cancer* made in 1962 by the Russian emigrant Georgi Yegorov.

Thus, during the period when the underground publishing scene was flooded with erotic publications of dubious quality, while the institution of censorship was slowly collapsing, the widely read literary magazines, first the one edited in Kyiv and then the Moscow-based one, published the scandalous novel by D.H. Lawrence, evoking both understandable excitement and disapproving responses. To cite an instance, in his 1992 review, the renowned translator and literary critic Viktor Toporov did not show much enthusiasm about Lawrence's novel itself, the quality of its translation and even the very fact of commissioning a new Russian translation and publishing it in the magazine (which was perceived by him as a 'marketing ploy' which was not quite justified, particularly in view of the pre-war translation by T. Leshchenko being released anew by private publishers)³⁵. Apart from that, one of the drawbacks of *LCL*'s publication was, in Toporov's opinion, the lack of necessary paratextual framework. If truth be told, the editorial offices of both magazines in various ways prepared grounds for the novel's reception: in the August 1989 issue, *Vsesvit* featured a translation of a deeply complimentary essay "Lady Chatterley's Lover" by Alejo Carpentier, with an announcement on the adjoining page informing that the magazine would start publishing the novel itself in the December issue (which was evidently meant to raise the number of subscribers for the next year). One sentence from this 1932 text should have been particularly meaningful in the then reception: "We know well now that such things are hated by officials, who took it as their duty to guard our morality!"³⁶. Some more contributions about Lawrence aiming to properly channel the reception of *LCL* were also published in the magazine issues featuring the

³³ M. Veller, 2007: *NE Nožik NE Sereži NE Dovlatova*. Moskva, Izdatel'stvo "AST", p. 13.

³⁴ M. Veller, 2007: *NE Nožik...*, p. 14.

³⁵ V. Toporov, 2020: *Zapretnyj plod slaše*. In: V. Toporov, *O zapadnoj literature*. S.l., "Izdatel'stvo K. Tublina", p. 112.

³⁶ A. Karpent'er, 1989: "*Kohanec' ledi Čatterlej*", translator not stated. "*Vsesvit*", no 8, p. 102.

translation of the novel³⁷. Inostrannaya Literatura, in its turn, published three essays under the rubric “Topic for discussion: erotica and literature” including Lawrence’s “Pornography and Obscenity” in issue 5, 1989³⁸.

An overview of the context for publishing both translations would not be complete without notes, even though very brief ones, about the translators. The author of the Ukrainian translation of *LCL* Solomiia Pavlychko (1958–1999) graduated in English Studies and was a literary scholar, translator from English and commentator. She became a forefront figure of the whole generation of Ukrainian intellectuals, i.a. due to her breakthrough monograph *The Discourse of Modernism in Ukrainian Literature* (1997) and other pioneering works in literary theory and history of feminism opening new methodological prospects for Ukrainian literary studies. She was a daughter of the renowned poet and translator Dmytro Pavlychko, one of the brightest representatives of the Sixtiers generation, who later served as politician and diplomat (while in the years of 1971–1978, he was editor-in-chief at *Vsesvit*). When it comes to the Russian translators, Marina Litvinova (1929–2020) was a scholar of English language and literature, who spent her whole career affiliated with the Maurice Thorez Moscow State Pedagogical Institute of Foreign Languages (to later become the Moscow State Linguistic University). Among other things, she earned fame as the author of the so called Rutland-Baconian theory of Shakespeare authorship and translator of numerous works of English and American literature. Her co-translator of *LCL* Igor Bagrov (1946–2016), also an English Studies graduate, translated fiction from English since 1975 and ran a seminar for translators affiliated with Inostrannaya Literatura before his emigration to the United States. As we can see, both Russian translators, although belonging to different generations, were significantly older than the Ukrainian translator and had a much broader experience in translation.

In the subsequent years, scores of different editions of Lawrence’s novel were published in post-Soviet countries. The version by I. Bagrov and M. Litvinova was republished as a book several dozen times (!) in the years of 1991–2020³⁹, and T. Leshchenko’s translation was also released anew more than once. Two newer Russian translations were also made by Irina Gul (1991) and by Valery Chukhno (2000). In Ukraine, along with three book editions of Solomiia Pavlychko’s translation, the one by Dariia Radiyenko was published (2017). These were the discussed here journal translations, however (even without taking account of their book editions), that introduced Lawrence’s novel to wide audiences (at the period of *LCL*’s publication, the circulation of *Vsesvit* was more than 70 thousand copies, while that of Inostrannaya Literatura was close to 330 thousand

³⁷ Ī. Boānovs’ka, 1989: *Pošuk pervinnoī suti žittā*. “Vsesvit”, no 12, pp. 4–5; B.-Ī., Antoniĉ, 1990: *Mistec’ pristrasti*. “Vsesvit”, no 2, p. 133.

³⁸ D. G. Lourens, 1989: *Pornografiā i nepristoynosti*, Ū. Komov, trans. “Inostrannaā literatura”, no 5, pp. 232–236.

³⁹ The result of a search in the electronic catalogue of the Russian State Library at <https://www.rsl.ru/> showed 43 different editions of I. Bagrov and M. Litvinova’s translation as of November 29, 2020.

copies) and they function as the most widely accepted translations of the novel in the relevant target cultures.

Obscenity in the Ukrainian and Russian translations of *LCL*: a comparative study

Some observations and conclusions presented below that are drawn from a comparative text analysis refer to just one linguistic aspect of *LCL*, that is the presence of sex-related words including words regarded as obscene ones (in view of the length limitations of this paper the discussion is limited to three lexical units). The comparison of the ways translators into different languages treat these words and, more generally, the fragments and situations where they are used allows to observe significant differences in solving this translation problem.

The examples are grouped based on particular selected lexical units. The source material gathered during the comparative study contains more words (i.a. *cock, balls, arse, shit, piss, bitch*), but due to the paper length limitations only the sets of examples featuring the words with the highest frequency in *LCL* are presented below. In order to give a broader context to the usage of the words discussed, at least whole sentences or groups of sentences are cited. Every set of examples features a fragment of the original novel (marked by letter a), its Ukrainian translation by S. Pavlychko (marked by letter b), and its Russian version by I. Bagrov and M. Litvinova (marked by letter c)⁴⁰. The translation by T. Leshchenko is cited in individual cases as well.

1. PENIS

In the above quoted review, V. Toporov paid attention to the fact that sex-related vocabulary in Russian is developed only at the levels of medical terminology and slang, while any intermediate layer is missing, which results in translators' repeated failures⁴¹. The example of the word *penis*, which does not fit into the category of obscene words, shows that with regard to denotative and cognitive aspects, problems in the Russian translation arise at the level of neutral, 'medical' vocabulary. In the original text, the word is mentioned 22 times, of which the first six mentions are uttered by one of the characters, Tommy Dukes, while the remaining 16 mentions show up in the narrator's speech. The Ukrainian translation preserves almost every single mention of penis (in single cases, the relevant word has been replaced by a metaphorical reference or by a personal pronoun). Much more serious changes were noted in the Russian translation. After Dukes's statements in the first chapters being translated adequately in terms of style, a word denoting penis

⁴⁰ The texts are cited according to the following editions: D.H. Lawrence, 1981: *Lady Chatterley's Lover...*, D.G. Lourens, 1989–1990: *Kohanec' ledi Čatterlej...*, D.G. Lourens, 1990: *Ljubovnik ledi Čatterli...*, with page numbers on brackets, and the corresponding year and issue for journal publications.

⁴¹ V. Toporov, 2020: *Zapretnyj plod slase...*, p. 111.

is used only once. In the rest of the cases, translators adhere to the techniques of euphemization, paraphrase or zero translation, as is shown in the examples below.

The first two set of examples demonstrate using the technique of euphemization in the Russian translation:

(1.1 a) The desire rose again, his penis began to stir like a live bird (125).

(1.1 b) Знову ожило жадання, його пеніс зашарпався, немов жива пташина (1990, 1, 76).

(1.1 c) Снова всколыхнулась страсть, птицей вострепелось его естество (1990, 10, 65).

(1.2 a) She felt his penis risen against her with silent amazing force and assertion and she let herself go to him (170).

(1.2 b) Тілом відчула, як його пеніс піднявся з тихою надзвичайною силою й твердістю (1990, 1, 106).

(1.2 c) Мужская его плоть напряглась сильно, уверенно (1990, 10, 99).

As one can see, in the cited fragments of the Russian translation, the words and expressions meaning ‘nature, essence’ (1.1 c) and ‘male body’ (1.2 c) are used to denote penis. Besides, the translation into Russian features some other euphemistic expressions for penis, such as *мышца* ‘muscle’ (1990, 10, 123; 1990, 11, 137) and *таинственный гость* ‘mysterious guest’ (1990, 10, 99).

The next set of quotes shows examples of using the technique of paraphrase in the Russian translation: in contrast to euphemization, where the signifier is changed while the signified remains the same, in these paraphrased sentences the signified itself is changed being replaced by *body* (1.3 c) or *underbelly* (1.4 c).

(1.3 a) He loved the darkness and folded himself into it. It fitted the turgidity of his desire which, in spite of all, was like a riches; the stirring restlessness of his penis, the stirring fire in his loins! (125)

(1.3 b) Він любив темряву і радо поринув у неї. Вона тамувала його жадання, яке, попри все, було немов скарб; хвилюючий неспокій пеніса, хвилюючий вогонь у стегнах! (1990, 1, 76)

(1.3 c) Так приятно укрываться в ночи, прятать переполняющую его страсть, прятать, точно сокровище. И тело его чутко внимало чувству, в паху вновь занимался огонь! (1990, 10, 65)

(1.4 a) She threaded two pink campions in the bush of red-gold hair above his penis (215).

(1.4 b) Вона поклала два рожеві пуп'янки в кущик червоно-золотистого волосся над його пенісом (1990, 2, 79).

(1.4 c) И Конни воткнула две розовые смолевки в облако золотистых волос внизу его живота (1990, 11, 137).

The next group of examples shows more radical changes in the Russian translation of *LCL* (against the backdrop of adequate Ukrainian translations) via zero translation, that is omission of particular elements of the original text. For comparison purposes, both sets of quotes feature a corresponding fragment of the earlier émigré translation by T. Leshchenko (marked by letter d).

(1.5 a) ‘And now he’s tiny, and soft like a little bud of life!’ she said, taking the soft small penis in her hand. ‘Isn’t he somehow lovely! so on his own, so strange! And so innocent! And he comes so far into me! You must never insult him, you know. He’s mine too. He’s not only yours. He’s mine! And so lovely and innocent!’ And she held the penis soft in her hand (200–201).

(1.5 b) – А тепер він крихітний і м’який, як маленький пуп’янок життя! – сказала вона, беручи його в руку. – Хіба не красивий! Такий самостійний! Такий дивний! Такий невинний! І так глибоко в мене заходить! Ніколи не ображай його, знаєш. Він і мій так само. Він не тільки твій. Він – мій! Такий милий і невинний! – вона не випускала його з рук (1990, 1, 128).

(1.5 c) – Смотри, какой он маленький и мягкий, Маленький, нераспустившийся бутон жизни. И все равно он красив. Такой независимый, такой странный! И такой невинный. А ведь он был так глубоко во мне. Ты не должен обижать его, ни в коем случае. Он ведь и мой тоже. Не только твой. Он мой, да! Такой невинный, такой красивый, – шептала Конни (1990, 10, 123).

(1.5 d) «Теперь он крошечный и мягкий как маленький бутон жизни!» сказала она, беря мягкий маленький пенис в руки. «И какой он прелестный! Такой непонятный и сам по себе! И такой невинный. И он входит так далеко в меня! Ты никогда не должен обижать его – ты знаешь это? Он мой тоже. Он не только твой. Он мой! И такой прелестный и чистый!» И она нежно держала пенис в своей руке⁴².

(1.6 a) ‘That’s John Thomas’s hair, not mine!’ he said.

‘John Thomas! John Thomas!’ and she quickly kissed the soft penis, that was beginning to stir again. ‘Ау!’ said the man, stretching his body almost painfully (201).

(1.6 b) – Це не моє волосся, а Джона Томаса, – сказав він.

– Джон Томас! Джон Томас! – і вона швидко поцілувала м’який пенис, який знову починав надиматися.

– Ай, – сказав чоловік і майже болісно вигнув тіло (1990, 1, 128).

(1.6 c) – Это шевелюра Джона Томаса, не моя. Эге! – воскликнул мужчина, потянувшись чуть не до боли во всем теле (1990, 10, 123).

(1.6 d) «Это волосы Джона Томаса, не не мои», сказал он.

«Джон Томас! Джон Томас!» и она прикоснулась поцелуем к мягкому пенису, который начал подниматься опять.

«Ах!» сказал мужчина вытягиваясь⁴³.

The two sets of examples presented above aptly show the translators' interference with the situation outlined by D.H. Lawrence: the reader of I. Bagrov and M. Litvinova's version does not learn that Constance takes Mellors's penis in her hand or that she kisses it afterwards. The edit of the text must have been made for reasons of prudery, although it is not possible to state at which stage of the editing process the change was made and whether the person behind it was the translator herself⁴⁴, a copy editor or a censor. The truth, however, is that none of the subsequent editions of the translation showed any change compared to its first publication.

To sum up, for as many as about one third of the instances of using the word *penis* in *LCL*, there are direct references to the signified in the Russian translation (*пенис, половой член*). Somewhat different is the case of the word *phallos/phallus*: although the Russian translation still features examples of using the techniques of zero translation or euphemization, the ratio is different: in most cases, the direct equivalent *фаллос* is used in translation.

2. CUNT

The text of the novel features also words for male genitalia treated as vulgar (*cock, balls*), being uttered, among others, in intimate situations and thus deprived of vulgar potential. A much more bright and at the same time subversive is the case of a highly obscene noun *cunt* denoting female genitalia. The word is mentioned about a dozen times in characters's speech and is most evocative in the intimate dialogue between Mellors and Constance playing a central role in Lawrence's programme of 'rehabilitation' of words treated as obscene:

(2.1 a) 'Th'art good cunt, though, aren't ter? Best bit o' cunt left on earth. When ter likes! When tha'rt willin'!

'What is cunt?' she said.

'An' doesn't ter know? Cunt! It's thee down thee; an' what I get when I'm i'side thee, and what tha gets when I'm i'side thee; it's a' as it is, all on't.' (173)

(2.1 b) – Ти маєш гарну поцьку, правда! Найкращу на світі. Коли любиш! Коли хочеш!

– Що таке поцька? – запитала вона.

⁴³ D. Lorens, 1932: *Lûbovnik...*, p. 263.

⁴⁴ The translators' responsibility for translating particular chapters is not specified in the *Inostrannaya Literatura* publication, but one of the later book editions contains information that I. Bagrov translated chapters I–X while M. Litvinova translated chapters XI–XIX, see D.G. Lourens, 2011: *Lûbovnik ledi Catterli*. Moskva, Èksmo.

– А ти не знаєш? Це – ти там унизу; те, куди я входжу, куди ти мене пускаєш. Та сама штука (1990, 1, 109).

(2.1 с) – Кралечка моя. Лучшей кралечки на всем свете нет.

– Что такое кралечка?

– Не знаешь разве? Кралечка – значит любимая баба (1990, 10, 101).

In this fragment, translators are faced with a challenging task to find an equivalent which would sound authentic in an intimate situation. Solomiia Pavlychko used the word *поцька*, which is a Ukrainian vernacular term for female genitalia noted, among others, in Borys Hrinchenko's early twentieth-century dictionary of Ukrainian⁴⁵, while a semantic shift can be observed in the Russian translation. Mellors's statement is dramatically changed: the word *кралечка*, which is the affectionate form of the vernacular word for a beautiful or beloved woman⁴⁶, refers in this situation to Constance herself, and not her intimate part. The signified, which is omitted in this context, is referred to in the translation of other Mellors's statements, where M. Litvinova used the diminutive word *ласонька*, e.g.:

(2.2 a) 'Cunt, that's what tha're after. Tell lady Jane tha wants cunt. John Thomas, an' th' cunt O' lady Jane!—' (200)

(2.2 b) Поцьки – ось чого ти хочеш! Скажи леді Джейн, що ти хочеш її, Джоне Томасе, що ти хочеш поцьки леді Джейн! (1990, 1, 127)

(2.2 с) Ласоньку он захотел. Ну, скажи леди Джейн: хочу твою ласоньку. Джон Томас и леди Джейн – чем не пара! (1990, 10, 123)

It is only the whole context of the situation that allows for the adequate understanding of the word *ласонька* by the reader of the Russian translation, as the word itself is not noted in most comprehensive dictionaries of the Russian language⁴⁷.

3. FUCK

This four-letter word being one of the most recognizable English profanities and functioning as a strong swear word occurs about 30 times in the text of LCL and is charged with different overtones depending on the context. Similar to the majority of vulgarisms in English, this word, along with its direct meaning, is used in a variety of meanings to express aggression or disapproval;

⁴⁵ B. D. Grinchenko, 1925: *Slovar' ukrainskogo âzyka*. Kiïv, Deržavne vidavnictvo Ukraïni, p. 1499. In the Soviet period, this dictionary was not part of the lexicographical canon.

⁴⁶ Cf. S. A. Kuznecov, 2000: *Bol'shoj tolkovyj slovar' russkogo âzyka*. Sankt-Peterburg, "Norint", p. 465.

⁴⁷ The comprehensive nineteenth-century dictionary by Vladimir Dal explains the word *ласонька* as 'lover of dainties, while one of the meanings of the cognate word *ласица* is 'vulva bestiarum', see V. Dal', 1881: *Tolkovyj slovar' živago velikoruskago âzyka*, Tom" vtoroj. I – O. Sankt-Peterburg; Moskva, p. 251.

it performs expressive, impressive, persuasive, ludic and phatic functions⁴⁸. At the same time, adhering to literal, primary meanings of the discussed words is a hallmark of *LCL*: generally, this word is used throughout the novel in its literal meaning, as a verb for sexual intercourse, although its overtones are different. In the three examples cited below, the word occurs in the speech of, respectively, Tommy Dukes, who disdainfully addresses the issue of up-to-date sexual behaviours (3.1), Constance, who asks about the meaning of the word she identified as a vulgar one (3.2), and Mellors, who somewhat flippantly refers to his intimate relations with Constance (3.3):

(3.1 a) Fellows with swaying waists fucking little jazz girls with small boy buttocks, like two collar studs! (59)

(3.1 b) Хлопці, вихляючи стегнами, їбуть, як коні, маленьких джазових дівчат з худими хлоп'ячими задницями⁴⁹ (1989, 12, 23).

(3.1 c) Вихлявые мальчишки спят с грубыми девками, у которых бедра под стать мальчишечьим (1990, 9, 28).

(3.2 a) 'All on't,' she teased. 'Cunt! It's like fuck then.' (173)

(3.2 b) – «Та сама штука», – перекривила вона його. – Тоді це те ж саме, що їбатися (1990, 1, 109).

(3.2 c) – Кралечка, – опять поддразнила она его. – Это когда спариваются? (1990, 11, 101)

(3.3 a) 'The money is yours, the position is yours, the decisions will lie with you. I'm not just my Lady's fucker, after all.' (256)

(3.3 b) – У тебе гроші, у тебе становище, ти прийматимеш рішення. Зрештою я не просто їбун своєї пані (1990, 2, 107).

(3.3 c) – У тебя деньги, положение. Решения принимаешь ты. Я не могу делать в жизни только одно – спать с женой (1990, 11, 168).

The quoted examples show a fundamental difference in the translators' approaches: in every fragment, S. Pavlychko resorted to an uncompromising gesture of using words generally considered as highly indecent, which may still shock some readers even after 30 years, while the Russian translators made use of euphemisms meaning 'pairing up, mating' (3.2 c) and 'sleeping with wife' (3.3 c).

⁴⁸ Cf. M. Garcarz, 2006: *Wulgaryzmy a przekład, czyli życie wulgaryzmów od oryginału do przekładu*. "Acta Universitatis Lodzianis. Linguistica Rossica", no 2, p. 162.

⁴⁹ Here, the translator misinterpreted the comparison of small buttocks to collar studs.

In terms of the whole text of the Ukrainian translation, these are only individual instances of surpassing the boundary of a language taboo when rendering this word, but the Russian translators did not even try to get close to this boundary. In other contexts, S. Pavlychko used milder equivalents of the word *fuck* as well, as it happened e.g. in translating the final passages of the novel, where the word is used several times in the text of Mellors's letter to Constance. The translator must have considered that using a vulgarism in the context of the letter's elegiac and intimate atmosphere would result in a profound stylistic dissonance.

Conclusion

D.H. Lawrence's literary project, which played a crucial role in emancipating writing and publishing practices in the Anglophone world from the domination of puritanical principles, has certainly contributed to changes in the sphere of aesthetic sensitivity and shifting the boundaries of taboo in many other literatures into whose languages his novels were translated. For Russian and Ukrainian literatures, where the process of filling in the gaps in the reception of Western modernism naturally coincided in time with the democratization of public life under Perestroika, the publications of translations of *LCL* have become a kind of milestones in aesthetic and linguistic emancipation of post-Soviet societies. At the same time, translation of the novel became a challenge for translators and an opportunity for verifying principles formed by the so-called 'Soviet school of artistic translation', which was hostile to any radical and experimental solutions.

The comparison of both translations shows significant differences in the translators' strategies: while Solomiia Pavlychko preferred to break a linguistic taboo, thus repeating Lawrence's own gesture and contesting clichéd traditions of translation established in the target culture, the Russian translators demonstrated a more conventional and conservative approach to rendering the language specificity of the novel. It is obvious that the final shape of the translations was influenced by such factors as individual aesthetic and linguistic sensitivity of the translators or generational differences. It is not possible now to state for sure whether behind any particular translation decision introducing a paraphrase or a zero translation there stood a translator, a copy editor or a censor. It can be claimed with certainty, however, that more audacious solutions of S. Pavlychko's were her own merit. The fact that the translator had to overcome the resistance of the editor-in-chief is recalled by the renowned Ukrainian political scientist and commentator Mykola Riabchuk, who was a member of *Vsesvit*'s editorial staff at the time of the novel's publication: "there was some resistance from the editor-in-chief ([Oleh] Mykytenko), and Solomiia had personal discussions with him, tried to convince him, while we (the editorial staff) were

supporting her and each of us in their own way exerted pressure on Mykytenko”⁵⁰. The final success, in Riabchuk’s opinion, was the result of a combination of several factors:

I think that crucial was the overall atmosphere of Perestroika (constant extension of the boundaries of what is allowed, which also encouraged a kind of competition among journals: who will be the first? who will be more daring?), and this was complemented by the threefold pressure – the one exerted personally by Solomiia, the pressure of her family name and the pressure of the whole editorial staff⁵¹.

The case of Ukrainian and Russian translations of *LCL* is something that echoes the cited remark of M. Veller concerning some lagging of the centre behind the peripheries in the field of moral emancipation, although it might be an oversweeping generalization: under the conditions of dynamic social changes, too much depended on combinations of circumstances and individual factors. It would be no exaggeration to say, however, that the Ukrainian translation of the novel contributed to preparing grounds for fundamental changes in Ukrainian literature’s mainstream (an emblematic turning point here was the publication of Yuri Andrukhovych’s *Recreations* two years later). Furthermore, this gesture, which was a symbolic intrusion into the territory of “male language”, naturally fitted into S. Pavlychko’s pioneering activities in the field of Ukrainian feminist studies. Profoundly ironic is therefore the lack of due scholarly attention to that translation and, which is more, the very fact of it not being included in the bibliographies of translations of D.H. Lawrence’s works⁵², which is especially remarkable against the background of thoroughly documented translations into Russian.

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⁵² It cannot be found either in UNESCO’s Index Translationum or in the timeline of D.H. Lawrence’s publications compiled by the editors of the book about his reception in Europe, see D. Mehl, Ch. Jansohn, 2007: *Timeline: European Reception of D. H. Lawrence*, in: Ch. Jansohn, D. Mehl (eds), 2007: *The Reception of D. H. Lawrence in Europe*, London, Continuum, pp. xxxviii–xxxix.

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SUMMARY | The paper focuses on the two translations of *Lady Chatterley's Lover* by D. H. Lawrence into Ukrainian (by S. Pavlychko) and Russian (by I. Bagrov and M. Litvinova) published in 1989 and 1990. The framework for the analysis is provided by Loren Glass's idea of a significant role that obscene vocabulary played in the aesthetics of the twentieth-century Anglo-American literary modernism. The comparison of the two translations from this perspective shows significant differences in the translators' approaches: while the Ukrainian translator broke the linguistic taboo repeating Lawrence's aesthetic gesture and challenging conventional traditions of

the target literary system, the Russian translators presented a more conservative approach to rendering Lawrence's sexual-based language.