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## **GERMAN ROMANTIC POETS' POEM TRANSLATIONS: THE IMAGE OF THE SEA**

### *Abstract*

The German literature gives us an amazing wealth of images and motifs, and among them the most beloved and poetic has always been and still remains the image of the sea, a symbol of inspiration, a sublime dream. The radiance of the sea, the blue of its deep shades has become the basis of the palette of colors for a variety of poetic works. The German poets Heinrich Heine and Wolfgang Goethe are among the greatest lyricists in world literature. Many Russian poets and translators began their writing career with the translation of their great works.

**Keywords:** the image of the sea, romanticism, lexeme, motif, lyric poetry, symbol

### *Introduction*

The image of the sea is traditionally one of the most common images in romantic poetry. Many writers were fascinated by the mysterious depth of the sea, hiding numerous secrets from prying eyes. The poet could share with the sea the things that weigh on his soul, and the boundless dark. Obviously, this image was also captured in their works by German poets of the Romantic era. The image of the sea attracted writers with its depth

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and ambiguity of interpretation. The purpose of this article is to examine, compare and analyze the image of the sea in the poems of German poets and their translations into Russian. This study presents how and what ways each poet and translator interpreted their own feelings.

In this scientific work, we will consider only three poems from the entire variety of works. These are «Calm» by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, «Over the foam of the sea I'm embraced by thoughts» and «The wide sea in the glare of the day» by Heinrich Heine.

### **1. *WOLFGANG VON GOETHE: DEATH AT SEA***

Goethe's poem «The Sea» is a work of landscape and philosophical lyrics. The poet traveled a lot around the world, twice he visited Italy. Once in Sicily, he refused to go to Syracuse and stayed on the island. Probably, impressions of the view of the Mediterranean Sea formed in his poem «Calm at sea», or «Meeresstille», which we will review further.

Tiefe Stille herrscht im Wasser,  
Ohne Regung ruht das Meer,  
Und bekümmert sieht der Schiffer  
Glatte Fläche ringsumher.  
Kleine Luft von keiner Seite  
Todesstille furchterlich  
In dem ungeheuren Weite  
Reget keine Welle sich.

Глубокая тишина царит в воде,  
Бесчувственно, покоится море  
Обеспокоенно моряк глядит  
На ровную гладь вокруг.  
Ветер не дует ни с одной стороны  
Мёртвенная, ужасающая тишина  
На пугающем просторе  
Не шелохнётся ни волна.

Goethe creates a picture of nature before the reader's eyes: an absolutely quiet sea, not a splash of waves, not a breath of wind is heard. And in the midst of this silence, a sailor found himself alone. The reader gets from the text relying on the lexemes «boundless» and «resting» details of the landscape: firstly, the hero swims far into the sea and is far from the shore; secondly, based on the verb «ruht» – to rest, the reader completes the chronotope of the work, determining the time of day when the action takes place in the poem – the night.

The images of the sailor and the sea are opposed and associated with ambivalent motives, while they replace each other: the poem meets the reader with a description of a calm sea (the motif of sleep), but by the middle it changes – the image of a sailor appears, associated with the motif of death. In the description of the image of a sailor, polar opposite epithets are used: he looks at the sea with concern, with horror. For him, this calm means death, which is what the epithet «dead» declares. The sailor found himself one-on-one with a gigantic creature in the middle of a water desert. For miles around there is only a surface of water, there is nothing on any side that you can grab onto and stick to solid and reliable soil. There is not even a breeze that could inflate the sail of the boat and direct the sailor at least in some direction, where sooner or later he would stumble onto the shore.

The sea, on the contrary, is described as a sleeping and quiet creature, it «rests». This silence on the scale of the sea is ordinary calmness, which will change after a certain period of time. For it, the existence of human life does not matter, too insignificant against the background of a majestic being with great power and capable of wiping a person off the face of the earth, leaving no trace of them.

Silence as the main motive is indicated by the static nature of the poem – among the numbers of words used by the poet are: nouns – 11 words, and the least verbs that are 4 words.

This poem by Goethe attracted more than one translator. There are a sufficient number of versions of the translation of this poem. For the purpose of our study in terms of the view of Russian-speaking translators, we will take the versions by S. Shervinsky and N. Volpin.

Штиль глубокий над водою,  
Неподвижно море спит,  
И с заботой мрачной кормщик  
На немую гладь глядит.  
Ни струи! Ни дуновенья!  
Ужас мертвой тишины.  
Над громадой без движенья,  
Ни единой нет волны.

*Шервинский*

In this translation, the main motives of the work, laid down by the author himself, are almost completely preserved. The text is also static – the number of nouns, contained in the poem, is 12 words, which is still the largest group of lexemes. The characteristics of the main images also remain the same. Thus, the image of the sea in the translated poem,

as in the original, contains the features of an animated being – «sleeping», «mute».

The movement of the motif does not disappear either: the beginning, characterized by a picture of calm and peacefulness, flows into the second part of the poem, containing the motive of anxiety, fear. In the description of the sea, the action «sleeps» is used, and in the second half, the definition of «dead» appears, as in the original, referring to silence.

However, there are some differences between the texts. The poem in this translation is quite emotional: Shervinsky includes in his translation sentences with an exclamatory intonation: «Not a jet! Not a whiff!», which enhances the drama of the situation and informs the reader about a different mood of the sailor – impotent despair and annoyance, while Goethe uses an even intonation. This is how the poem looks translated by N. Volpin:

Дремлют воды. Недвижимый  
Словно скован кругозор,  
И с тревогой корабельщик  
Смотрит в сумрачный простор.  
Иль не стало ветра в мире?  
Мертвенная тишина.  
Ни одна в бескрайней шири  
Не шлохнется волна.

This translator also managed to convey the content of the poem quite closely. The text, as in the previous cases, is static – 10 nouns against 5 verbs. However, the list of motives is different. So, in this translation, the motive of unfreedom appears – «bound», but the motive of open space – «space» is preserved, which creates a contradiction. Among the new motives, one can also identify the doubt that appeared with the question «Or is there no wind in the world?» The question itself creates a sense of globality, of some event that affected the whole world, whereas Volpin designates the time of day, it is absent in the original text, when the action takes place in the poem – the expanse is «gloomy», which means the sun has already sunk below the horizon and night is falling; the reader can only make a guess based on associations with the words «silence» and «sleep».

## **2. *HEINRICH HEINE: A SEA OF MEMORIES***

Heinrich Heine was also affected with the image of the sea:

Es ragt in's Meer der Runenstein,  
Da sitz' ich mit meinen Träumen.  
Es pfeift der Wind, die Möven schreyn,  
Die Wellen, die wandern und schäumen.

Ich habe geliebt manch schönes Kind  
Und manchen guten Gesellen –  
Wo sind sie hin? Es pfeift der Wind,  
Es schäumen und wandern die Wellen

Выступает из моря рунический камень (скалистый утёс)  
Я сижу на нём в мечтаниях  
Свищет ветер, кричат чайки  
И волны блуждают и пенятся.

Я любил много прекрасных чад  
И много хороших ребят  
Куда они пропали? Свищет ветер,  
Пенятся и блуждают волны.

The poem combines the motifs of landscape and philosophical lyrics. The first stanza contains a description of the view revealing the seashore, stormy waves, restless seagulls circling in the air; also, the reader learns from the hero that he is not just watching the landscape, but is dreaming about something. The second stanza clarifies what the narrator is thinking about while sitting on the cliff: he remembers old friends and lovers who are no longer with him. This element gives rise to the motif of memory in the poem: the hero indulges in memories of people who are no longer in his life. In the future, this motive develops. In the text, the hero's question sounds: «Where have they disappeared?» shows that he did not notice how the friends, he is thinking about now, disappeared from his life. The runic stone, or the cliff protruding from the sea, on which the lyrical hero is sitting, is a symbol of these memories.

Literally translated, Runenstein means «runic stone». This was a natural structure, a large vertically standing boulder, on which runic writings were later carved by a man. Most of these stones are in Sweden. Runic stones are an invaluable treasure for the history and culture of the country: they speak about significant events for the one who put the stone, contain the memory of historical figures, and sometimes are dedicated to beliefs and myths. But most often the stones were erected by relatives in memory of a deceased member of the family.

The poem is full of movement: the most common category of lexemes in this poem is a verb – 11 words. There is also a new category of lexemes that is missing in the previous poem – pronouns: two «I» and one «they». This indicates the personal nature of the writer's reflections, and the subject is himself; events are covered from his point of view,

and the reader's attention is directed to the emotions and feelings of the author.

Although the sea is the common and central image in both of the poems we have considered at the moment, their meaning and intention, as we can observe, are completely different.

### 3. *HEINRICH HEINE: THE SEA IS MY OLD FRIEND*

The last work that we will analyze in this article is Heinrich Heine's poem «The Big Sea in the glare of the day ...», published after the poet's death.

Das Meer erstrahlt im Sonnenschein,  
Als ob es golden wär.  
Ihr Brüder, wenn ich sterbe,  
Versenkt mich in das Meer.  
Hab immer das Meer so liebgehabt,  
Es hat mit sanfter Flut  
So oft mein Herz gekühlet;  
Wir waren einander gut.

Море засверкало в лучах солнца,  
Словно оно было золотым.  
Ваш брат, когда умру,  
Похороните меня в море.

Я всегда так сильно любил море,  
Оно нежной волной  
Так часто охлаждало моё сердце  
Нам было хорошо с ним вместе.

The poem can be attributed more to philosophical lyrics, since the emotions of the lyrical hero are in the foreground, and the elements of the description of nature are intended to convey his feelings towards the sea. Here again the motif of death sounds, but in a different key than before. The poet mentions death as the logical end of the life cycle and implies that this will happen to him; the main thing here is the words of the will: «bury me in the sea.» The author has a desire to reunite with the sea after death, as if with an old friend with whom he shared his sorrows and joys.

Большое море в блеске дня  
Сверкает на просторе.

Когда умру я, вы меня  
Похороните в море.

Я в этой жизни так любил  
Бегущий вал свободный  
И охлаждал сердечный пыл  
Морской волной холодной.

In the Russian version by S. Marshak, the word «golden» was translated as «sparkling», which indicates its external property, a feature of the landscape, while gold acts as a symbol of something valuable. Such a change is not a mistake on the part of the translator, but part of the meaning that Heine put into his work is lost. The translator also changes the properties of the sea. Marshak replaces the definition of «gentle» with the word «cold», thereby emphasizing its properties as a natural object, an element of the landscape. At the same time, the characteristic given by Heine, tenderness, disappears from his image. The endowment of this object with human characteristics shows the poet's attitude to the sea as an equal living being that is able to feel and perceive.

### ***Conclusion***

So, we have reviewed several poems by German poets of the Romantic era – Heinrich Heine and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, as well as their Russian translations. Our goal was to find out how the writers depicted the sea in their works and to trace how its original image changed in the Russian version. We found out that the image of the sea in the German romantic poets is associated with various motifs, among which the motifs of death and the authors' personal experiences were more common. Russian translators, despite some difficulties in translating poems into Russian, were generally able to preserve and convey the main and the most important motives that sound in the works.

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## ОБРАЗ МОРЯ В ПЕРЕВОДАХ СТИХОТВОРЕНИЙ НЕМЕЦКИХ ПОЭТОВ-РОМАНТИКОВ

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Удивительное богатство образов и мотивов дарит нам немецкая литература, среди них наиболее любимым и именно поэтичным всегда был и остается образ моря, который является своеобразным символом вдохновения, высокой мечты, ведь именно лучезарность моря, синева



его глубинных оттенков, стала основой палитры красок для многообразия поэтических произведений. Работа посвящена исследованию глубокого символического значения образа моря в поэзии Вольфганга фон Гёте и Генриха Гейне, величайших лириков в мировой литературе, через призму переводов их произведений на русский язык. Образ моря рассматривается как символ и окончания, и новой жизни. Для Гёте море становится прежде всего метафорой человеческого существования. Образ моря оказывается связан и с мотивом воспоминаний, мотивом ностальгии и утрат. Гейне создает такой образ моря, который служит отголоском его личных переживаний и внутренней борьбы, в лирике этого немецкого поэта также отражается романтическая идеализация моря как образа, с которым связаны и реальность, и мечта. Анализируются в работе и другие символические значения образа моря, который поэтами воспринимается и как источник вдохновения и утешения для человека. В работе подчеркивается мысль, что многие русские поэты-переводчики начинали свою сочинительскую карьеру с именно с перевода произведений этих величайших лириков, стремясь запечатлеть уникальное звучание и эмоциональную глубину их стихов, обогащая российскую поэтическую традицию.

**Ключевые слова:** образ моря, романтизм, лексема, мотив, лирика, символ

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