

Ілля Маліновський
Марина Полховська
Житомирський державний університет
імені Івана Франка
м Житомир (Україна)

Suspense in the Language of the Horror Novel: From the English Original to the Ukrainian Reader

Abstract. *The article tackles the problem of translating the concept of suspense in contemporary horror literature. It examines the theoretical justification of the term suspense in fiction, where the practical explanation of the communicative effect on the recipient is based on Adam Nevill's horror novel "The Ritual".*

Keywords: suspense, horror, terror, translation, transformation.

Suspense in horror is a product of the work of filmmakers, screenwriters, special effects, makeup, sound, etc., but its meaning and potential for expression in the fiction of contemporary literature are rather vague and general scholarly observations. It should be noted that most concepts of the term suspense are interpreted differently and do not have a clear distinction between literary and cinematic narrative. A Dictionary of Literary and Thematic Terms defines suspense as the uncertainty surrounding the outcome of a specific action or the overall narrative in a story, novel, or play [6, p. 407].

According to Hans J. Wulff's, suspense is anticipation, which already includes calculating future developments. The linguist claims that anticipation exists within four factors: foreboding, expectations from the main audience, danger zone, and direct reader involvement [8, p. 114]. There is an opinion that no difference exists between tension and suspense, but it warrants emphasis that although these

concepts do not have a clear boundary, they still denote slightly different experiences. Suspense involves a confrontation between opposing outcomes. Tension, based on similar psychological principles, refers to a state of affairs where the expected outcomes are less specific and lie on a continuum of vague actions.

Although Hans J. Wulff implies this meaning of suspense, there are other views on this issue. Linda F. Alwitt defines suspense as the reader's cognitive and emotional response, which includes the structural characteristics of the unfolding of a dramatic narrative [3, p. 35]. Meanwhile, Andrew Kaplin and John Lichy define it as immediate satisfaction from the anticipation of resolving uncertainty, which is positively associated with a certain degree of risk [4, p. 73].

It should be noted that there are general limitations to the theory of suspense. According to Christy Mag Uidhir, the paradox of suspense is that it requires uncertainty, while knowledge of the probable outcome eliminates uncertainty and the feeling of tension in response to narratives when the outcome is already known [7, p. 122].

Noel Carroll shows that suspense is the emotional accompaniment to a narrative about the course of events that point to two logically opposite outcomes. The contrast between the two is actively emphasized, where the unlikely outcome is improbable, albeit correct, and the other is morally unacceptable but probable [5, p. 260].

We consider it relevant to examine the implementation of suspense in translation using the example of Adam Nevill's novel "The Ritual". From the very beginning, the author "throws" the reader into a zone of tension, where the description of a mutilated body begins with visual details and gradually unfolds, creating shock: "From the large rib cage drooped the gut, wet and blue in the light seeping through the canopy of leaves..." [2, p. 8]. The core elements that add

dynamism and enrich the visual image are conveyed with high accuracy in translation: "З великої грудної клітки вивалювалися нутрощі. Світло, що пробивалося крізь запону листя, фарбувало мокрі кишки в синюватий відтінок" [1, с. 5].

For the purposes of this translation, we focus on analyzing the adaptation with the addition of clarity, where the emotional coloring was realized through elements of intensifying horror (*шкіра стерва*) and the introduction of elements (*жертвва*) into the text that were not present in the original source text. "*The pelt was spread out across surrounding branches, holed but stretched taut in places. A ragged hem about a crumpled centre suggested the skin had been torn from the back in one quick ripping motion*" [2, p. 8]. – "Шкіра стерва була натягнута на поблизу гілки. Хай і пошматована, але міцно напнута на дереві. Рваний край і зіжмакана середина вказували на те, що жертвву оббілювали одним швидким ривком" [1, с. 5]. The sensory element of "оббілювання одним ривком" generates the motif of "man – beast", which develops throughout the chapters and is an indication of long-term suspense.

The original text is concise and figurative, while the translation makes certain thematic constants even more emotionally charged and descriptive, giving it a descriptive meaning that evokes associations with the "devil" or "чорт" in Ukrainian culture, which only intensifies the element of horror: "A goatish breath panted over his head and bare chest and made him cough" [2, p. 63] – "Дихання з цапиної пащі огорнуло його обличчя й голі груди, змусило зайтися кашлем" [1, с. 43].

The gradual unveiling of the victims killed by the forest creeper has a clear structure: (1) gaze – (2) eyes and mouth – (3) chest – (4) spine – (5) stomach – (6) the force that did it.

(1) "Luke looked into the flatbed. Surtr stared back at him" [2, p. 305]. – "Люк зазирнув у кузов. Звідти на нього витріщалася Суртр" [1, с. 216].

(2) "Pale-blue eyes wide in surprise, lipless mouth open, as if to say, Remember me?" [2, p. 305]. – "Блідо-блакитні очі широко розчахнуті від здивування, безгубий рот розкритий, ніби вона промовляла: "Пригадуєш мене?" [1, с. 216].

(3) "Beneath her breasts, her rib cage had been torn asunder like a cardboard box" [2, p. 305]. – "Грудна клітка розірвана на шмаття, наче картонна коробка" [1, с. 216]. The intensity of violence in this fragment of text is conveyed with extreme accuracy.

(4) "She had red-whitish flesh wings attached to an all too visible spinal column" [2, p. 305]. – "Хребет відсвічував з-під червонясто-рожевих шматочків плоті" [1, с. 216]. The figurative metaphor of ribs and muscles in a wing-like form loses its surrealistic effect and is reduced to a literal description – pieces of flesh. This causes the fragment to be perceived more physically, losing the metaphorical nature of visual poetics.

The brief suspense to heighten the horror is successfully conveyed in Ukrainian through a brutal shock effect – gutted, where the accuracy of the pose emphasizes the hint of ritualization. (5) "She was all gone, down to her dark, sopping abdomen, but sat upright, her inert body resting against the tail gate of the truck" [2, p. 305]. – "Її випатрали аж до темного, залигого кров'ю черева, і посадили прямо, обіперши спину до заднього борта кузова" [1, с. 216].

(6) "An inconceivable strength had done that to sinew, muscle and bone; literally torn her body wide open" [2, p. 305]. – "Якась неймовірна сила розірвала її сухожилля, м'язи й кістки. Буквально вивернула її тіло назовні" [1, с. 216]. The physical level of translation is more intense and slightly alters the cold tone of the original, creating an almost cinematic frame that fully conveys the image to the reader and evokes a sense of disgust.

Suspense is a multifaceted phenomenon that combines cognitive, emotional, and structural components. The translation of Adam Nevill's literary text "The Ritual" demonstrates fidelity and accuracy to the original, explication, but there are also minimal interpretations that, although deviating from formal equivalence, enrich the text. The fragments translated by Kobylinska I.V. reproduce the following types of suspense: long-term - the "man-beast" motif, short-term - "hooks" reinforced by fragments with enhanced graphicity, mini-suspense - details for relief.

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