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ON MARIA KONOPNICKA'S TRANSLATION OF ADA NEGRI'S *FATALITÀ* AND *TEMPESTE*

Abstract: Maria Konopnicka's translation of Ada Negri's two early poetry volumes, *Fatalità* and *Tempeste*, was published in Warsaw in 1901. The article examines Konopnicka's translation in its historical and comparative context and presents her principal translation strategies. Since her début in 1890s, Negri's originals and Konopnicka's writings have been considered similar because of their social engagement and sensibility. Konopnicka's decision to translate *Fatalità* and *Tempeste* is usually seen as a result of her social interests. On the basis of Konopnicka's and Negri's letters and metaliterary enunciations, it can be assumed that Negri's vision of creative act as a sudden and unstoppable inspiration of the inner spirit was also highly appreciated by the Polish poet. In her translation Konopnicka tends to naturalize the Italian originals on all the levels of expression, deploying her own favourite rhythmic patterns and figures of speech.

Keywords: Ada Negri, Maria Konopnicka, history of translation, reception of the Italian literature in Poland

In the history of literature there are instances of writers whose lives, outputs and reception have been almost twin-like. Ada Negri (1870–1945) and Maria Konopnicka (1842–1910) constitute one such case. Apart from the obvious biographical differences and the dissimilar literary traditions they stemmed from, everything seems to connect them: their artistic interests, social sensitivity, engagement in the emancipation movement, and, last but not least, the history of their reception. Both are appreciated by contemporary readers; both have been viewed as old-fashioned, dull, sentimental, uninventive and uncreative, notoriously didactic (Arslan 1998: 211). The remarks directed by critics at Negri could well be applied to Konopnicka, and vice versa. “Ignota, ammuffita e arcaica per i lettori di oggi, che di

lei non conoscono che il nome, e forse una di quelle poesie per bambini” (Alien, fallen into oblivion and archaic for the contemporary readers, who love only her name and maybe some of her poems for children)¹ – this opinion about the Italian poet was expressed by Antonia Arslan (1998: 209) and matches the general reception of the Polish author. In the last two years we have witnessed a similar change in the reception of both writers – their works have been investigated in new contexts: biography (Tomasik 2008, Magnone 2009), methodology as well as literary history (among others, Folli 2000, Magnone 2008).

In view of these analogies, it is hardly surprising that Konopnicka and Negri had contact in real life (though only episodically) – they exchanged letters in connection with the protest against the policy of the Prussian authorities after the famous Września incident – the protest initiated by Konopnicka in 1902 during her stay in Italy. (Negri is said to have been the first to sign the appeal to authorities drafted by Polish women; Konopnicka 1975: 202–207). On this occasion, in her letter to Negri, Konopnicka mentions that she had translated her first two poetic volumes *Fatalità* (Fate, 1982) and *Tempeste* (Tempests, 1894) with the “utmost zeal.” This translation, *Niedola. Burze*, published by the Warsaw-based Natanson in 1901, was to bind the two authors in the history of literature forever.

Maria Konopnicka (1842–1910) was raised by her father (her mother died prematurely) in a patriotic and religious atmosphere, later reflected in her writing. Her husband, twelve years her senior, did not approve of his wife’s literary career, which she tried to combine with attending to their eight children. When in 1876 Henryk Sienkiewicz, a future Nobel Prize winner, praised her poetic sequence *W górach* (In the Mountains), Konopnicka decided to leave her husband and devote herself entirely to writing. Very little of her turbulent life (extramarital romances; her relationship with Maria Dulembianka, painter and politician, which lasted almost twenty years; the premature death of her first-born son, Tadeusz; the mental disease of her daughter, Helena) is reflected in her works. The poet felt comfortable with the roles of the nightingale, national seer, defender of the oppressed, which were imposed upon her and which she partly imposed upon herself. Her “strategy of mimicry” may be one of the reasons why

¹ All the quotations from the Italian primary and secondary sources are translated into English by Michał Choński on the basis of their Polish versions prepared by Anita Kłos.

her image became so strongly rooted in her work.² She is remembered as the author of genuinely patriotic, deeply lyrical poems (she wrote “Rota,” used as a Polish national anthem) often stylised in the “folk manner”; of novellas describing life of the poor living in villages and towns; and of children’s literature, most famously the book entitled *O krasnoludkach i sierotce Marysi* (Little Orphan Mary and the Gnomes, 1863). In her later years, Konopnicka spent most of her time travelling Europe with Dulembianka – her works of that period are permeated with the “worldly” spirit, full of serious reflections on human existence, richly endowed with Mediterranean motifs and inspirations: *Linie i dźwięki* (Lines and Sounds, 1897), *Italia* (1901), *Głosy ciszy* (Sounds of Silence, 1901).

Also a few basic facts of Negri’s life ought to be mentioned. She was born in Lodi, in Lombardy. She was raised by her mother, a worker in a cotton mill, alone after the death of her father. Due to her persistence and determination, Ada managed to graduate and obtain a teaching diploma. She entered the poetry scene as a voice of people; her biography, authenticated by the evocative, lyrical account of the life of the poor, certainly contributed to her success. After her poetry debut, Negri settled in Milan, where she became engaged in the budding socialist and emancipation movements. Her next volume of poetry, *Tempeste*, published in 1895, maintained the course set by *Fatalità*; however, among the accusatory images of poverty, more and more space was dedicated to intimate confessions. In 1896 Negri married Giovanni Garlando, an industrialist, who apparently fell in love with her having read her poems (Jabłonowski 1899: 207). The marriage was not successful and ended in separation in 1913, but the experience she gained from it, especially that of motherhood, determined the themes of her next poetic volumes: *Dal profondo* (From the Depths, 1910), *Esilio* (Exile, 1914), *Il libro di Mara* (The Book of Mara, 1919). Interestingly, Negri’s poems, investigating the mother’s relationship with her child, inspired the mysticism of motherhood which was devised by Fascist propaganda (Ghiddetti and Luti 1997: 536) and Mussolini’s Italy paid her the greatest tribute – in 1940, as a first woman, she became a member of Accademia d’Italia. In Negri’s later volumes, *I canti dell’isola* (The Song of the Island, 1925),

² The overlooking of Konopnicka’s biography, downplayed by the poet herself because it did not accommodate her own ideas about artistic and social roles, returns in Grażyna Borkowska’s study (1996), where it is labelled as the “strategy of mimicry.” The concept was widely embraced by Polish literary scholars as well as Lena Magnone (2011), who investigates Konopnicka’s work through psychoanalytical and feminist perspective.

Vespertina (Evening, 1930), *Il dono* (The Gift, 1935), the sophistication of poetic language is accompanied by meditative and religious tones. She also wrote prose works, of which *Stella mattutina* (The Morning Star, 1921), a childhood autobiography, is best known.

The similarity of literary experience and social sensitivity between Negri and Konopnicka attracted the attention of critics as early as 1906. The monthly *Swoboda i Christian'stwo* (Freedom and Christiandom) published in St. Petersburg featured an article “Dwie poetessy narodnego gorja: Ada Negri i Marija Konopnicka” (Two Poetesses of National Sadness: Ada Negri and Maria Konopnicka; Sebastiani 1993: 168–172). Its author (hidden behind the initials L-N) sees Negri and Konopnicka as representatives of a new type of socially engaged poetry, proponents of the democratic spirit and dedicated protectors of the impoverished. He most probably knew Konopnicka's translations or had at least heard about them.

Niedola. Burze (Misery. Tempests) was not the first collection of Negri's works to be published in Poland. Polish critics reacted to the debut of the Italian poet relatively quickly (Gurgul 2006: 61–62). In 1894 Leon Wieniawski published a review of the Italian edition of *Fatalià* in the Warsaw *Prawda* (The Truth). In 1896 the magazine *Biesiada Literacka* (Literary Feast) dedicated a monographic article to Negri, presenting her biography and three poems translated by Maria Mikulszyc. In the next few years, the poet's name regularly appeared in discussions of the latest Italian literature, in reviews of *Tempeste* and of Gabriela Jundziłło's translations (under the pen-name of Gabor) (cf. Negri 1899). However, it was Konopnicka's translations, published no more than two years after the much disparaged Jundziłło's versions, that ensured Negri's reputation in Polish literary culture. They also determined the further reception of Negri's writings, which in fact did not exceed the corpus delineated by Konopnicka. The translations of *Fatalià* and *Tempeste* gained important status among contemporary readers, guaranteed by the authority and artistic status of the translator who was very popular, addressed wide groups of readers and was considered an advocate of the Polish spirit, or even “the bard of the generation” (as she was called by young Żeromski; cf. Baculewski 1966: 21, Brodzka 1961: 29–30).

Due to the wide acclaim of Konopnicka's original works, her translations of Negri's poems were read and recognized, as borne out by considerable evidence. The whole collection (with minor amendments) was reprinted by the rival publisher of Gebethner and Wolff as early as 1904,

three years after the Warsaw edition of Natanson (Negri 1904). Particular poems were also reprinted periodically in various social and trade magazines even as late as the 1980s (cf. Miszalska 2007: 270–277). They became iconic poems of the socialist movement. Emil Haecker, an activist of Polish Democratic Party of Galicia and the editor-in-chief of *Naprzód* (Forward), the main voice of the antebellum socialists, in his obituary after Konopnicka's death in 1910 thanked her primarily for her translations of Ada Negri's poetry (Stępień 1985: 173–174). At the same time, the translations became an important element in the history of popular culture in the first half of the 20th century. Negri's name was adopted as a stage pseudonym by Barbara Apolonia Chałupiec, who as Pola Negri, a star of the silent film era, enjoyed numerous successes in Europe and in Hollywood. As she stressed in her memoirs, Konopnicka's translations had a crucial influence on her life, for example, helping her to make decisions concerning her film career (Negri 1976: 63, 65).

So far nobody has conducted an analysis of the translations collected in *Niedola. Burze*, although all relevant critical studies on Konopnicka see them as an eminent part of her translatory work. Scholars eagerly quote epistolographic sources on her process of translating the volume, and Grażyna Borkowska even suggests that Negri's poems changed the way Konopnicka perceived the fate of women (Borkowska 1996: 155). Bronisław Biliński deplored the lack of serious interest in the translations of *Fatalità* as well as *Tempeste* and intended to take up the subject himself (1972: 59). As far as we know, he never managed to carry out his plan (cf. bibliography in Biliński 1992: 477–499). The present study, focusing solely on Konopnicka's translations and summarising earlier knowledge on them, certainly does not exhaust the subject; rather, it aims to be a starting point for further research. The study focuses on the historical circumstances accompanying the publication of *Niedola. Burze* and on comparative issues associated with this volume, and not on the matters of translation theory. It seeks to answer the following questions: why Ada Negri's poetry appeared in Konopnicka's translation *oeuvre*, what attracted Konopnicka to the woman author ignored by her contemporary men of letters (Folli 2000: 111 and ff.) and how Konopnicka's translation strategies can be described.

In her letter to Eliza Orzeszkowa, dated 29th November 1879, Konopnicka, seeking opportunities to earn some money, asked her friend for texts which she could translate:

I will be grateful for such a job. I can translate from French and German. I also know Russian fairly well. As you know, my dear, every day I stumble upon some “lost hours.” I would like to make use of them in view of my duties (Orzeszkowa 1937: 382; trans. M.Ch.).

Konopnicka does not mention the Italian language – she must have learnt it during her visits to Italy (she first travelled there in 1882 and returned a number of times); she also studied Italian culture (Płaszczewska 2010: 460). At the turn of the century her Italian was fluent enough to allow her to undertake literary translation – apart from Negri, she translated Edmond de Amicis’s *Heart* and Gabriele D’Annunzio’s *The Daughter of Jorio*.³ Did she treat literary translation as a means of earning money and as a filler for her “lost hours”? The financial aspects of her work as a translator certainly played an important role.⁴ Still, her review of the translations of Jaroslav Vrchlický’s poetry, published in *Świt* (Dawn) in 1885, suggests that to Konopnicka the translation of poetry was a challenging poetic endeavor (“perfect translations of poetry are rare in every literature”; quoted after Balcerzan and Rajewska 2007: 105) as well as an opportunity to manifest literary talent and intuition, which helped the poet-translator in understanding and expressing her own artistic intentions. Also, Konopnicka’s translations themselves can be read as her praise of the art of translation: literarily brilliant, intrepid metaphorically, exhibiting the virtuosity of verse and sound.

Thanks to the poet’s correspondence, we know relatively a lot about the genesis of her translations of *Fatalià* and *Tempeste* as well as the circumstances of their publication. In her letter from Zurich, dated July 1899 and addressed to her uncle, Ignacy Waśiłowski, Konopnicka mentions that she is finishing the first of the assigned volumes (2005: 641). She finished her work on the second volume of Negri’s poems at the beginning of 1900, which we learn, among others, from a letter to Orzeszkowa she sent from Munich, dated 11th February (Konopnicka 1972: 75), as well as from her correspondence with Stanisław Krzemiński, who wrote to Konopnicka on

³ Konopnicka is said to have worked on the translation of D’Annunzio unassisted by an Italian dictionary (Płaszczewska 2010: 577).

⁴ In an unpublished letter sent from Munich to her daughter Zofia, dated 25th November (the year is not given; manuscript at the Warsaw University Library, catalogue number 1425), Konopnicka asks her family for a loan, so that, in spite of her financial problems, she could resign from her advance payment and receive higher royalties for the complete translation of Negri’s works.

behalf of the Natanson publishing house (the complete text was sent to the publisher in February 1900; Konopnicka 1971: 46). The exchange of letters with Krzemiński sheds light on the publishing process of the translations. The letters contain detailed information concerning the payment rates, circulation, proofreading and censorship problems (Konopnicka 1971: 46–48). The volume *Niedola. Burze* eventually appeared in 1901, although the publisher planned to publish it before Christmas 1900, due to “marketing factors” (as we would say today). The volume contained 41 poems from *Fatalità* and 52 poems from *Tempeste* (the original editions contained 61 poems).

The content differences between the original Negri volumes and Konopnicka's translations were caused by Tsarist censorship, which forbade some poems due to their socialist undertones (Brodzka 1975: 121).⁵ The rejected texts appeared in print in Galicia, where censorship was less rigid. They were published in Cracow's *Krytyka* (Criticism), edited by Wilhelm Feldman (1868–1919), a critic and literary historian connected with the socialist movement (Konopnicka 1973: 164 and 187), as well as in Lviv's *Tydzień* (The Week), a supplement of *Kurier Lwowski* (Lviv Courier), edited by Bolesław Wysołuch (1855–1937), a legendary figure of the Polish peasant movement (Konopnicka 1973: 205 and 216).

Critics agree that the socialist undertones, undoubtedly present in *Fatalità* and *Tempeste*, explain Konopnicka's recognition of Negri; they suggest that these undertones encouraged her to undertake translation. Such an opinion can be found in the poet's pre-war biography written by Julia Dickstein-Wieleżyńska: “Of foreign authors she [Konopnicka] grasped and passed on Negri, probably for her fighting spirit” (Dickstein-Wieleżyńska 1972: 231). Similar opinions are expressed by, among others, Bronisław Billiński (Billiński 1972: 59) and Alina Brodzka, who, quoting Konopnicka's undated letter to her daughter Zofia, observes that the translator sees in Negri not only an ideological charge, but a genuine account of the people's situation (Brodzka 1961: 100). It is beyond doubt that the social sensitivity of the Italian poet was important to Konopnicka. She states it

⁵ The censor removed also the “subversive” passages from the poems ultimately published in the volume. For instance, the translation of the poem “Non mi turbar...” (Do Not Disturb!) lacks the final stanza, which contained the allegorical image of freedom soaring into the sky: *E sul ruggito leonine e rude / De la terra I ferment / Libertà le sue bianche ali dischiude / Fiera squillando al vento* (And over the lion-like, fierce roar of the earth sunk into unrest, the freedom spreads her white wings, resounding proudly in the wind).

openly, even in her letter to Negri quoted earlier, in which she asks her (“who fights with such a zeal for all that is just and human”) to support the appeal in the Września controversy (Konopnicka 1975: 90). A detailed analysis of Konopnicka’s remarks on Negri’s works, scattered in the poet’s correspondence, as well as a look at the very lyrical fabric of the translations, also signal a different perspective on the affinity of souls.

In the aforementioned letter to Orzeszkowa, dated 11 February 1900, Konopnicka briefly reviews the poetic volume (probably *Tempête*) she finished translating:

There are things genuinely beautiful in this collection. The spirit creates almost solely with its intuitive force, incorporating scarce amount of abstraction, striking the complexities of life with emotional violence (1972: 75; trans. M.Ch.).

According to Konopnicka, the key categories of Negri’s poetry include “the spirit,” “intuitive force,” “emotional violence,” passion and the directness of expression. It is telling that in her letter to Tadeusz Garbowski, Orzeszkowa describes her friend’s unpublished translations in a similar manner. She calls the Italian poet “a talent brave and daring” and characterizes her works as “songs beautiful, striking the very heart” (1956: 177). Reading Negri through the prism of premonition and emotional outbursts was typical of the period. In a two-part sketch dedicated to her poetry, published in Lviv’s *Tydzień* in 1899, Władysław Jabłonowski stresses that:

The greatest quality [of Negri’s poetry] is honesty and emotional directness. All the indignations of her soul constitute an immediate, direct reaction to vexations coming from the external world. Ada Negri does not look at the world through the prism of a rationalized agenda because she belongs to some groups or she does not – she derives all her missiles, all her sources of vexation and passionate protests from her own loving heart which strongly empathizes with human suffering (1899: 215; trans. M.Ch.).

Emotionality and intuitiveness were viewed as inherent features of women’s artistic activities. In Konopnicka’s circles, Maria Dułębianka, her friend and companion, was an advocate of such views. As she observes in her sketch “O twórczości kobiet” (On Women’s Art):

If the computing mind is characteristic of the male intellect, intuition, as an extension of feelings, opposed to sheer reasoning, seems to be, by its very virtue, closer to the female intellect. (...) Her [the woman’s] art also today bears most

beautiful fruit in this very domain, in which the intuitive-emotional element reigns indisputably (1903: 190; trans. M.Ch.).

Konopnicka herself looks at the emotionality and intuitiveness of Negri's poetry with far greater insight. To her, these features are the exterior traces of a formation of spirit, the untameable artistic force. Such an opinion, laconic as it is, accounts for Konopnicka's deep understanding of the lyrical mechanisms found in the Italian poet's works. Negri herself employs similar notions with reference to her own works. In her letter to Edmondo de Amicis published in *Nuova Antologia* in 1905, she explains:

How do I create? (...) the idea of a poem (from an onset... my lyrical life) almost always appears in my head unexpectedly: it is distinct, vivid, almost pressing: pressing to such an extent that I cannot think of anything else and I have to put it down on paper. It is particularly astonishing that this idea most commonly manifests itself cloaked in its final shape, dictated by the rapid blow of the internal spirit. That's the truth. I could say that the labour of polishing the form used to be completely alien to me; today I look upon my poetry in a more strict manner, but still, because of the unique sharpness of my poetic vision, this polishing never runs deep (quoted after Folli 2000: 116).⁶

Negri's poetry is born through sudden, internal illumination, so intense that the word is compelled to "pour out" onto paper in its ultimate form; it derives from the whisper of an uncontrollable, internal force. The author admits that the moment of creation is accompanied by incomprehensible excitement which she experiences physically (Folli 2000: 119). As a result, a language closely intertwined with the physical code, rooted in the poet's female experience, comes into being. In the letter to Edmond de Amicis, Negri explains:

I was like these young actresses born in a wagon of a troupe of actors, growing up on the meanest stages, oblivious of regular education and subtleties of classical art of diction and acting: however, one day, when they have to imper-

⁶ Come compongo? (...) L'idea di una poesia (fin dai primi tempi della mia... vita lirica) si affaccia quasi sempre alla mia mente d'improvviso, netta, viva, direi quasi imperiosa; tanto imperiosa che non mi lascia pensare ad altro e subito debbo gettarla sulla carta. Lo strano è che l'idea si presenta, il più delle volte, vestita della sua forma definitiva, che mi viene dettata da un violento spirito interiore. Questa è la schietta verità. Il lavoro di lima una volta si può dire che non lo conoscessi affatto; ora sono più severa coi miei versi, ma in ogni modo, data la determinatezza singolare della mia visione poetica, il lavoro di lima non è mai molto grave.

sonate a character, as if by magic (...) they discover convincing gestures and accent, a pitch of voice which seduces, a passion which overwhelms, simply: an image of truth, truth derived at once from the whole world and from nothingness. And so, in the name of this truth, they begin to consider themselves artists and, attentive to the rhythm of their nature, they craft they own style (quoted after Folli 1988: 178).⁷

The author of *Fatalià* reaches literature not through intellect or the culture and tradition which are considered its domains, a fact pointed out sarcastically by her critics (Folli 2000: 131), but through an upsurge of the soul. From this perspective, it is easier to understand why her poetic debut – the very volume *Fatalià* – is so obsessed with poetic talent viewed as ominous destiny. The gift of creation remains a blessing and a curse for an author from the lowest social class. Negri senses the uniqueness of her calling, struggling with the gender complex, inadequate education and lack of appreciation from literary authorities, who accused her of traditionalism, or even imitation, of inspirational naivety and improvised poetic form (Folli 2000: 111). At the same time, what for Negri is a source of anguish: the intuitive creation of poetic language, its uncontrollable nature which cannot be rationally governed, for Konopnicka constitutes the greatest quality of the Italian poet.

It seems probable that Konopnicka, who also was frequently accused of undue easiness of rhyming as well as of melodic sentimentality, recognized her own dilemmas and predicaments in Negri's works and, above all, the power of the untameable element of poetry. According to Lena Magnone, who interprets Konopnicka in the framework of contemporary literary theories, especially the concepts of the Semiotic and the Symbolic of Julia Kristeva, who assumes two layers of poetic language, the Polish poet explores the primeval, protolingual and corporeal “motherly” idiom (Semiotic), manifest on the level of rhythm and hidden on the unconscious level of the “fatherly” verbal dimension of language (2008: 8 and ff).⁸

⁷ Io fui uguale a una di quelle giovani attrici nate in un baraccone di saltimbanchi, cresciute sulle tavole dei palcoscenici di quart'ordine, ignare di uno studio regolare, fine, classico di dizione e di gesto: ma che un bel giorno, dovendo rappresentare un carattere, (...) trovano, come per incanto il gesto e l'accento che convince, la sfumatura che innamora, la passione che travolge, l'espressione della verità, insomma, della verità fatta di nulla e di tutto, e in nome di tale verità si affermano artiste, e riescono a formarsi uno stile, seguendo il ritmo della propria natura

⁸ Kristeva presents the idea of opposition between the Semiotic and the Symbolic in *La Révolution du langage poétique. L'avant-garde à la fin du XIXe siècle: Lautréamont et*

The “trademark” features of Konopnicka’s style originate in her attempts to reach the sounds of this primeval tongue – they cannot be reduced to mere tendency of folk stylization, the “possession by the melodic devil” (Dłuska 1963: 10) or the accentual-syllabic verse, which the poet cannot resist (Dłuska 1950: 454). The search for the female tongue consists in Konopnicka’s giving in to the “divine frolics” of rhythm (Magnone 2008: 21 and ff), the same untameable, unexplainable force, which compels Ada Negri to create literature. Konopnicka and Negri are therefore bound (not only) by socialist views and sensitivity to human suffering; they also share the language of a song flowing from beyond the mind and consciousness, dictated by an internal, corporeal rhythm.

Moreover, rhythm constitutes a critical category in the characterization of Konopnicka’s translation strategy. The metre and sound of the translations are visibly marked by her approach to the original; mainly in terms of considerable naturalization of Negri’s verse, the “domestication,” which was valued by Konopnicka’s contemporary readers. Stanisław Krzemiński, who exchanged letters with Konopnicka on behalf of the Natanson publisher, appreciated her anchoring of the translations in Polish literary tradition: “It is in itself splendid poetry; thanks to you it becomes ours, so merged in our language that we ought to perceive it as natural to the Polish spirit and born from the Polish spirit” (Konopnicka 1971: 48). At the same time, Eliza Orzeszkowa observes changes of the source texts, which render them similar to Konopnicka’s poetry: “I am (...) of strong opinion that Maria rendered it [Negri’s poetry] more beautiful than it is naturally, but she swears that she didn’t, that she could not match the original” (1956: 177).

The “polonisation” of the original and fitting it into her own poetics was Konopnicka’s standard translation strategy, an outcome of the practices of the period – the approach was pointed out by Olga Płaszczewska who investigated another work Konopnicka appropriated from Italian literature: D’Annunzio’s *The Daughter of Jorio* (2010: 572–584). She comments on the formal virtuosity of Konopnicka’s translations, visible in her masterful command of versatile poetic metres.

Mallarmé (Paris 1974). The Semiotic concerns the archaic, prediscursive and preverbal dimension of language, which a child experiences in its earliest stage of development, before it is separated from the mother; this dimension is visible in a text through phonemic (the accumulation and repetitions of phonemes, rhythms) and melodic (intonation, rhymes) patterns. On the other hand, the Symbolic constitutes “structuralist *language*, oriented on communication, detached from all pleasures, formed in opposition to them as a fatherly space, the ‘over-I’” (Magnone 2008: 7–8).

These observations apply to *Niedola. Burze*. In almost all of her translated lyrics Konopnicka proposes new metrical solutions closer to her own musical and aesthetic intuition. Negri employs in her poems highly rhythmical and traditional forms of syllabic verse, rhymed, comprising regular stanzas (most often of four lines), constituting a linguistic and thematic whole, consisting of hendecasyllabic lines or hendecasyllabic verse intertwined with seven-syllable verse. The translator repeats the arrangement of rhymes, the size of stanzas and their closed form, but she modifies the syllabic length of verses. She almost always retains hendecasyllabic lines (rarely changing them to thirteen-syllable or ten-syllable verse, as she does in, for instance, the translations of *Senza nome* (Without the Name) and *Sgombero forzato* (Forced Eviction) respectively), while she almost always substitutes Negri's seven-syllable verse with eight-syllable or, rarely, five-syllable verse (for instance, in her translation of the title poem "Fatalià"). Arranging the hendecasyllable (especially dactylic, in the form of 5+6, which is most common in the translations of *Fatalià* and *Tempeste*) into the combinations of five-syllable and eight-syllable verse (also including dactyls) is Konopnicka's habitual strategy in her original work (Dłuska 1950: 412).

Among the Negri translations there are important instances when Konopnicka creates a new verse from scratch. As a basis of rhythmical construction she usually selects the trochaic eight-syllable verse, which she eagerly employs in her own poetry and which in nineteenth-century poetry was widely used in folk stylization (Magnone 2008: 11). One of the poems translated within a completely new metric frame is "Non mi turbar..." (Do Not Disturb!), a poetic vision of a world without war, famine and social inequalities. Four-syllable stanzas of alternating hendecasyllable and seven-syllable lines are translated by Konopnicka as the uniform eight-syllable verse:

Ma tutto il modo è patria e tutti un santo
 Entusiasmo aviva,
 E di pace solenne mite un canto
 Vola di riva in riva.

Cały świat – jedna ojczyzna...
 Wszystkie ludy – czeladź boża;
 Uroczysty hymn pokoju
 Brzmi od morza aż do morza.

(The whole world – one motherland...
 All peoples – God's servants
 The solemn hymn of peace
 Sounds from sea to sea.)

The second analysed poem, "Notte" (Night), belongs to the group of melancholic descriptions of nature (*Nevicata*, *Nebbie*, *Notte*; Snowstorm, Mist, Night), conspicuous because of a characteristic verse structure (a four-syllable stanza with the 7/7/7/2 syllable arrangement):

Sul giardino fantastico
 Profumato di rosa
 La carezza dell'ombra
 Posa.

Na ogrody fantastyczne
 Pełne róży tchnień,
 Kładzie miękka swą piesszczotę,
 Letniej nocy cień.

(Upon gardens fantastic
 Full of rose's breaths
 Its soft caress lays
 The summer night's shadow.)

Here the translator employs a stanza of the eight- and five-syllable verse which is rather typical of her own poetry.

Both versification schemes are frequent in Konopnicka's poetry; especially in her poems on countryside life and in her poetry for children, she consciously evokes the aesthetics of a folk song: such works as "Na jagody" (Picking Berries) or "O Janku wędrowiczniku" (About Johnnie the Wanderer) are written in eight-syllable verse, while the strophic scheme 8/5/8/5 is recurrent in, for instance, the cycles *Na fujarce* (Playing the Pipe) or *Z chaty* (From the Cottage). Similar poetic metres, although used in a crafted stanza with hendecasyllable verse broken into two lines (8/8/8/5/7+4/8), substitute the original combination of hendecasyllable and seven-syllable verse in the translation of the poem "Cascata" (Waterfall). Here, the song-like character is underlined by the chorus, repeated in the closing of each stanza: "A nikt ciebie // Nie wstrzyma, w wiecznym twym pędzie!" (None can // Hold you down in your eternal rush!).

Transforming Negri's poetry into metres of such a strong presence in Polish lyrical tradition and in her individual poetic practice, Konopnicka changes their particular significance. For example, thanks to the pulsing trochaic eight-syllable verse of the young poet's utopian vision, "Non mi turbar..." evolves into a dedicated hymn, a postulate for the world (which Konopnicka herself stresses by substituting the ellipsis in the title for an exclamation). In translation "Notte" loses its impressionistic character of "the soul's landscape."

The poem "Nevicata" belongs in the same group as "Notte." In its translation one can easily notice Konopnicka's tendency to gravitate towards the accentual-syllabic verse, so characteristic of her own poetry:

Sui campi e sulle strade
Silenziosa e lieve,
Volteggiando, la neve
Cade.

Danza la falda bianca
Ne l'ampio ciel scherzosa,
Poi sul terren si posa
Stanca.

Nad polem wskroś – mgła blada.
Lekuchny, srebrny, suchy,
Wirując lotne puchy,
Śnieg pada.

Zawieja tańczy biała,
Pod niebem gdzieś swawolna,
A zaś się kładzie zwolna,
Omdlała.

(All over the field – a pale mist.
So light, silvery, dry,
Circling, flying fluff,
Snow falls.

The white blizzard dances
Playfully somewhere under the sky,
And then she lies down slowly,
Weak.)

The original consists of five stanzas of four lines, first three in seven-syllable verse and the last – a short, two-syllable closure. Konopnicka keeps the seven-syllable verse in the first three lines (which is unusual) and extends the last line to three syllables. However, she primarily smoothens Negri's partly unsystematic distribution of stresses, endowing the poem with an impeccably regular accentual-syllabic scheme: an amphibrach and two trochees in long verses and an amphibrach at the end of the stanza. This gives the translation a steady, internal pulse, renders it extraordinarily melodic, whereas the three-syllable closure, distinct as a chorus, inevitably brings the poem closer to folk aesthetics. Such a rhythmic arrangement, the instillation of a syllabotonic "pulse" into the Italian poet's syllabic meter (Dłuska 1950: 448), can be noticed in Konopnicka's every single translation.

Such metrical shifts and the submission of the translations to the "melodic devil" not only render the poetry from *Fatalità* and *Tempeste* closer to the Polish reader's ear; they also blur the original disjunction between content and form, an expressive representation of the poet's disjunction between the reality of the lowest social class, to which she belongs, and the world of high literature, to which she aspires. Negri records her "commonplace" images with the help of classical metric schemes which go back to Dante's *Vita nova* (Folli 2000: 131) and Giosuè Carducci's poetry (Ghiddetti, Luti 1997: 537). She often does it naively and intuitively, but this is how she defines her ideal of the poetic form. By fitting Negri's poems into her own poetics, rooted in the Romantic tradition and stylized as folk, Konopnicka alleviates the tension between the classical form, sanctified by the most eminent authorities, and the "commonplace" content. She brings Negri's poetry closer to folk expression, symbolically delivering her to the world she grew out of.

A vocabulary analysis of the translations of *Fatalità* and *Tempeste* constitutes a most interesting issue, but because of its extensiveness only the matters central to Konopnicka's strategy will be mentioned. The Polish poet adapts Negri's lexical choices to her own poetics by employing stylistic solutions which endow the original with plasticity. The translated Italian verse becomes more concrete, imagery becomes more detailed and intricate. Let us consider two examples: 1) *Lecz po jej żyłach przebiegły promienie i dreszczę* (But over her veins ran rays and shivers), whereas in the original: *Ma nelle fibre / un tremito la colse – Mistica* (But in her fibres she was taken by shivers – Mystic); 2) *Wirując lotne puchy* (Circling, flying fluff), whereas in the original: *Volteggiando – Nivicata* (Circulat-

ing – Snowstorm). Konopnicka retains the imagery typical of the Mediterranean landscape: rice fields in “Pieśń pluga” (The Song of the Plough), fields of myrtus in “Largo!” (Make Way). Frequently, however, she seeks to replace cognitively neutral designators with equivalents peculiar to the Polish landscape: for instance, in the translation of “Strana” (Strange) the word *bosco* transforms into *bór*, a large forest.

Personifications and animalizations are characteristic of Konopnicka’s style: *Z roli, co dyszy rodząca* (From the soil, which gasps in childbirth), whereas in the original: *Dal fecondata suol* (From fertilised ground) – *Largo; Czy widzisz włosy moje? – Po kolana / lśniąca kaskada ich płynie* (Can you see my hair? – To my knees, their glittery cascade flows), whereas in the original: *Come lucida e nera e come folta / La mia chioma fluente!... – Autopsia* (How glittering and dark and thick / My floating mane!... – Autopsy). Negri also eagerly employs such tropes, but Konopnicka’s figures are almost ubiquitous, intensely plastic, endowing the reality with magic. The Italian poet embellishes the world of common people rooted in the experience of nature. Konopnicka endows this world with secret life, lending it a fairytale quality.

Ada Negri’s *Fatalià* and *Tempeste* rendered into Polish by Maria Konopnicka are so strongly filtered through the translator’s formal and aesthetic inclinations, so pervaded with a song-like musicality, that they almost merge with Konopnicka’s original works. In her reading of Negri’s poetry, Konopnicka sees herself, albeit more courageous in forming her social postulates. Can we then agree with Alina Brodzka, who claims that through her translations of *Fatalià* and *Tempeste*, Konopnicka intended to mislead the censors and popularize radical thought (1961: 100)? Let us hope that this study proves it was not the only motivation.

trans. Michał Choiński

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