

## *Joseph Conrad and his Polish (female) translators*

### *Joseph Conrad i jego polscy tłumacze/tłumaczki*

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#### **Keywords**

Joseph Conrad, Aniela Zagórska, *simpatico*, femininity/ masculinity in Conrad's works

#### **Słowa kluczowe**

Joseph Conrad, Aniela Zagórska, *simpatico*, kobiecość/męskość w dziełach Conrada

#### **Abstract**

This paper presents an overview of Polish translators of Joseph Conrad's works. The ratio of male to female translators, the works translated by men and women as well the fluctuations of the number of male and female translators in particular periods are set against the issues of femininity/masculinity in Conrad's works and the notion of *simpatico* as defined by Lawrence Venuti. Additionally, Conrad's attitude to the art of translation is discussed as well as his major female translators in the first period of translatorial efforts in Poland, with special attention paid to his most eminent (female) translator: Aniela Zagórska.

#### **Abstrakt**

Niniejszy artykuł stanowi przegląd tłumaczy dzieł Josepha Conrada na język polski. Stosunek mężczyzn do kobiet, którzy podejmowali się przekładu utworów pisarza, teksty wybierane do tłumaczenia przez mężczyzn i kobiety, jak również wahania liczby tłumaczy kobiet i mężczyzn w określonych okresach omówione są w odniesieniu do pierwiastków męskich i kobiecych w twórcach Conrada oraz koncepcji *simpatico* w rozumieniu Lawrence Venutiego. Ponadto zarysowany jest stosunek pisarza do sztuki przekładu oraz przedstawione sylwetki jego tłumaczek w pierwszym okresie, gdy jego dzieła zaczęły być przekładane na język polski. W tym kontekście, szczególna uwaga poświęcona została najbardziej znanej tłumaczce dzieł Conrada – Anieli Zagórskiej.

## Joseph Conrad and his Polish (female) translators

### Introductory remarks on femininity in Conrad's fiction

Issues of femininity, womanhood, female sexuality, and, most of all, the significance of female characters in Joseph Conrad's fiction have always proven a bone of contention between critics and readers. Generally, as Yumiko Iwashimizu neatly summarizes: "Conrad's portrayal of women has widely been regarded as unsuccessful, and his female characters have been the target of criticism for more than half a century" (2016: 147). Initially, critics presented somewhat schizophrenic attitudes, especially with respect to stories set aboard ships, which were almost exclusively male. For instance, an anonymous reviewer of *The Nigger of the "Narcissus"* for *Daily Mail* complained in 1897 that "[t]he only female in the book is the ship herself" (in Sherry 1973: 83). A reviewer for *Spectator*, for whom Conrad "is a man of genius" commended the novel, stressing: "there is no heroine in the plot – for the excellent reason that there is no woman in the ship's company" (in Sherry 1973: 92). Similarly I. Zangwill (unsigned review for *Academy*) found this specific aspect of the novel innovative: "The tale has no plot and no petticoat. [...] Up to a certain point it is refreshing to dispense with the love of women and the love of money, those hackneyed themes of the common novelist", yet he criticized the author nevertheless because "the writer who sets them aside assumes responsibility of finding adequate substitutes, and this Mr. Conrad has not succeeded in doing" (in Sherry 1973: 95). Thus, as Jennifer Turner observes with respect to Conrad's fiction set aboard ships, some critics "considered the women characters of the sea stories as unnecessary, unsubstantial, and artless concessions to public taste", whilst others "admire Conrad's sea tales *because* of the relative marginalization of women characters, considering it a noble artistic refusal to submit to popular pressures" (2004: 143; original emphasis). The latter would be predominately male readers, though. For years H. L. Menckens's ideas expressed in his chapter on Conrad in *A Book of Prefaces* (1917) that Conrad's writing is basically "antithetical to the tastes of female readers, since his works run so counter to conventional fiction" (Peters 2013: 12) have predominated in Conradian criticism. Traditionally, Conrad has been perceived as a writer for male readers, not only because of the relative scarcity of prominent female characters and the absence of the love motif in many works, but also due to several almost exclusively masculine works, with women present only as a backdrop.

Critical reception of Conrad's female characters has evolved dramatically over the years. Since early reviewers criticized the author for creating flat and implausible women, as early as 1914 Richard Curle in his *Joseph Conrad: A Study* deemed it necessary to defend him from such harsh judgment. In his study, Curle argues "that Conrad's female characters exhibit a femininity that reveals their intuition and pity, alongside their positive qualities" (Peters 2013: 8). Nevertheless, until the late 1950s the long-held views of Conrad's alleged inability to present female characters convincingly prevailed (cf. Middleton 2013: 144). In the influential biographical study of that time, Jocelyn Baines typically remarks that Mrs Travers, the wife of the owner of the yacht in *The Rescue* "is one of Conrad's few convincing female portraits" (1960: 418; my emphasis). In his *Joseph Conrad: Achievement and Decline* (1957), Thomas Moser discussed Conrad's misogyny, pointing to Marlow's comments on women in *Chance*. Thus immediately when analyzing this novel and the attitude of the narrator to women, Baines emphasized: "Marlow's views on women are generally sardonic, and verging on misogyny" (1960: 386). Although in the following decades an increasingly large body of works dealing with the portrayal of women and feminist issues appeared<sup>1</sup>, it was not until Ruth Nadelhaft's *Joseph Conrad (Feminist Readings)* published in 1991 and Susan Jones's *Conrad and Women* (1999) that a serious, in-depth investigation of the role of women in Conrad's works began (cf. Peters 2013: 75; Middleton 2013: 165). Both contemporary critics underline that female characters are often crucial figures, especially in later fiction (*Chance* being the prominent example here), and that their significance has been vastly overlooked. Nadelhaft, in particular, took issue with Conrad's alleged antifeminist and misogynist attitudes, stemming – in her view – from confusing Conrad with his narrators (Peters 2013: 175). As John G. Peters summarizes: "Nadelhaft feels that if one carefully separates Conrad from his narrators, he is often sympathetic to the plight of women in a generally hostile patriarchal environment" (2013: 175). Susan Jones demonstrated the significance of female characters, but also the importance of "women writing" and "women readers" in shaping Conrad's later fiction (cf. Middleton 2013: 165).

When investigating the critical reception of Conrad's works, one can clearly notice a shift from considering his works (especially early ones) as de-

<sup>1</sup> The most influential ones included: Gordon Thompson's *Conrad's Women* (1978) which discussed the stereotypes of femininity in Conrad's fiction; Ruth Nadelhaft's essay "Women as Moral and Political Alternatives in Conrad's Early Novels" (1982) later developed into her book in which she employed feminist theory to discuss Conrad's oeuvre; and Nina Pelikan Strauss's "The Exclusion of the Intended from Secret Sharing in *Heart of Darkness*" (1987) which provides feminist critique to the novel's sexist and masculinist assumptions (cf. Middleton 2013: 165).

void of both important female characters and feminist issues to discovering that “femininity and gender make their way into his narrative surreptitiously through female allegory and imagery, as well as through feminine narrative strategies” (Peters 2013: 214). Feminist theories employed for the analysis of his works in the last decade of the 20th century resulted in an evident breakthrough, shedding new light on novels which had not been earlier perceived as containing feminine elements. For Nadelhaft, who examines female characters such as Nina Almayer and Aissa from earlier novels (both resist patriarchal control and colonial centers of power), Nathalie Haldin and Antonia Avellanos from political novels (who can function in both personal and political worlds), Flora de Barral from *Chance* (objectified and oppressed by the patriarchal world), feminine influence can also be found in “male” works: the ship in *The Nigger of the “Narcissus”*, the land in “Heart of Darkness”, Jewel in *Lord Jim* (Peters 2013: 175). These new approaches (feminist, gender and queer theories) demonstrate how complex Conrad’s writing is, how many different perspectives can be applied to it, and how many different responses it generates, subverting traditional and conventional interpretations.

Given the aforementioned shift from viewing Conrad’s works as those about men and for men to finding in them profound criticism of the dominant patriarchal culture, it is interesting to investigate who translated such: male or female translators. Since it is impossible to carry out such a study concerning various languages due to the limitations of one paper, this will be done on the basis of Polish translations as a preliminary examination.

### Conrad’s attitude to translation

Before presenting Conrad’s Polish translators, it is relevant to refer to the author’s personal opinions on the art of translation. In this context I wish to mention only two aspects: HOW to translate in general according to the author of *Lord Jim* and WHO should translate his works. Conrad believed that translation should be idiomatic, in other words it should create similar effects and evoke similar responses as the original due to the familiarity of language to target readers. This, of course, is reminiscent of Eugene Nida’s modern concept of dynamic equivalence (1964) or Alexander Tytler’s classic third principle of translation: “the translation should have all the ease of the original composition” (1907 [1791]: 9). In his letter to Ford Madox Hueffer, dated June 1902, Conrad advised Elsie Hueffer how to translate Maupassant: “There are three requisites for a good translation of M. Imprimis she must be idiomatic, secundno she must be idiomatic, and lastly she must be idiomatic. For in the idiom is the *clearness* of a language and the language’s force and its picturesqueness – by which last I mean the picture-producing power of

arranged words” (in Najder 2007: 332; original emphasis). As can be inferred from this letter, Conrad was very conscious of the power of words to create sensory images as well as their various shades of meanings. Being multilingual (Polish was his mother tongue, French the first foreign language he learnt, English the second one), he had extensive metalinguistic knowledge and understood perfectly well that translation is far from a simple substitution of words from one linguistic system with words from another one. For him, literature was powerful when it reached readers directly evoking in them emotions desired by the writer. And this, in his view, could only be done when readers could relate to the language of the work, and this in turn could only be achieved by its idiomaticity, hence the postulate of idiomatic translation. Conrad allowed translators some freedom, as long as what they produced had artistic merit comparable to the original, and was capable of influencing the readers emotionally and aesthetically. Yet, he was also very critical of translations of his works into French and Polish, since his knowledge of the respective target languages allowed him to evaluate their value in artistic terms.

What is perhaps more relevant to this study, on one occasion Conrad expressed his views as to who should translate his own works. In a letter to his French friend André Gide (4 November 1919) he wrote:

If my writings have a distinct character it lies in their *virility* – in their spirit and method of expression. No one has denied me that. And you throw me to women! In your letter, you yourself say that in the final reckoning a translation is interpretation. Very well, I want to be interpreted by *masculine intelligencies*. It's perfectly natural (*Letters*, 2002: 516; emphasis mine).

Although this statement may have been dictated by personal reasons connected with previous commitments<sup>2</sup>, it nevertheless points to a very important aspect of Conrad's works: their masculine qualities. In his own view what he created was permeated with the masculine rather than the feminine. In his Author's Note to *Lord Jim* he responded to a comment by a female reader, according to whom everything in the novel “is all so morbid”, stating: “the subject itself [is] rather foreign to women's normal sensibilities” (Conrad 1948: iii). Obviously this does not mean that Conrad excluded women from the circle of his readers. Similarly, he was not in reality that obsessed with being translated by men. Many of his works were translated into French and

<sup>2</sup> This letter was written to Gide because he commissioned the translation of *The Arrow of Gold* to his friend Ms Maus. Conrad was in a very awkward and difficult situation because he had already promised the translation of this novel to his dear friend Gérard Jean-Aubry (this is discussed in more detail in my *Marlow pod polską banderą...* (Kujawska-Lis 2011: 51-52).

Polish by women, and, at least, in the case of the French translations he did not object to women translators and the quality of their work. The sentiment expressed in the letter merely indicates his personal preferences if he had a choice as to the selection of the translator's sex. It appears that because he spent much of his adult life in the company of men (as the captain on sailing ships with male crews), he felt more familiar with the male world and perhaps was convinced that what he wrote would be of more interest to men. The idea of being interpreted by "masculine intelligencies", as he puts it, is closely related with this conviction.

### Polish translators of Conrad

Conrad's oeuvre constitutes 28 volumes containing fictional works, literary criticism, essays and memoirs. No single translator managed to render all his works. This, of course, has both advantages and disadvantages. Translating all works by a given author allows the translator to create a linguistically consistent and internally coherent version of the oeuvre in the target language, as was the case with Polish versions of William Shakespeare's plays and sonnets created by Józef Paszkowski, Jerzy Stanisław Sito or Stanisław Barańczak. In such cases the translator may employ consistently a chosen translation strategy and produce a homogenous collection of works, e.g., archaized or modernized linguistically, domesticated or foreignized linguistically and/or culturally. The translator becomes an expert on his or her chosen writer, in all aspects that such an expert knowledge entails, e.g., linguistic continuity, linguistic diversification, linguistic development, recurrent motifs, intertextual references, etc. Yet, a translator may also become so influenced by his or her own vision of the author's artistic output from one period and the created equivalent of the style from this period that this may result in the stylistic unification of the entire oeuvre. Traps waiting for translators are numerous both in the case when one translator renders all works by a selected author and when the author is interpreted and translated by many individuals of various sensitivities, expert knowledge and skill.

Conrad's works were translated into Polish by a large group of people, both men and women, mostly professional translators, but also by literati (poets, fiction writers, essayists) for whom translation was not their major artistic occupation. The table below illustrates the distribution of translated works among various translators.<sup>3</sup> In order to illustrate the volume of works

<sup>3</sup> I have attempted to collect an exhaustive list of translators and translated works and can only hope that I have not missed any translator. Only the first edition of a given translation is provided (many of them were reprinted in various versions and under

produced by given translators, by men and women translators, as well as the diachronic perspective on undertaken translatorial work, the translations are placed on a time scale and, if possible, each work is given separately (short stories are indicated by inverted commas, novels by italics).

No	male	No	female
		1	M.G. [Maria Gąsiorowska] 1897 <i>Wygnaniec</i> ( <i>An Outcast of the Islands</i> ) 1908 <i>Tajny Agent</i> ( <i>The Secret Agent</i> )
		2	Emilia Węśławska 1904 <i>Lord Jim</i>
		3	Wilhelmina Zyndram-Kościałkowska 1913 <i>Banita</i> ( <i>An Outcast of the Islands</i> )
		4	Maria Bunikiewiczowa 1914 "Janko Góral" ("Amy Foster") 1914 <i>Powrót</i> ( <i>The Return</i> )
		5	Helena Janina Rogozińska-Pajzderska 1917 <i>W oczach zachodu</i> ( <i>Under Western Eyes</i> )
1	Jan Lemański 1920 <i>Murzyn z załogi „Narcyza”</i> ( <i>The Nigger of the “Narcissus”</i> ) 1924 <i>Uśmiech szczęścia</i> ( <i>A Smile of Fortune</i> )	6	Felicja Nossig 1920 <i>Prowokator</i> ( <i>Under Western Eyes</i> )
2	Leon Piwiński 1922 "Il Conte"	7	Barbara Beaupré 1922 <i>Los</i> ( <i>Chance</i> )
3	Tadeusz Pułjanowski 1923 "Anarchista" ("An Anarchist")	8	Aniela Zagórska 1923 <i>Fantazja Alamyera</i> ( <i>Almayer's Folly</i> ) 1924 "Freja z Siedmiu Wysp" ("Freya of the Seven Islands") 1927 <i>Zwycięstwo</i> ( <i>Victory</i> ) 1928 <i>Wybawienie</i> ( <i>The Rescue</i> ) 1929 "Amy Foster" 1930 "Młodość" ("Youth")

changed titles). The compilation is based on Wanda Perczak's bibliography devoted to Conrad in Poland (1993) and my own research.

			<p>1930 "Jądro ciemności" ("Heart of Darkness")</p> <p>1932 "Falk: wspomnienie" ("Falk")</p> <p>1932 "Jutro" ("To-morrow")</p> <p>1933 <i>Lord Jim</i></p> <p>1934 <i>Ze wspomnień</i> (<i>A Personal Record: Some Reminiscences</i>)</p> <p>1934 <i>Zwierciadło morza</i> (<i>The Mirror of the Sea</i>)</p> <p>1936 <i>Wykolejeniec</i> (<i>An Outcast of the Islands</i>)</p> <p>1939 <i>Opowieści niepokojące</i> (<i>Tales of Unrest</i>):</p> <p>"Karain" ("Karain: A Memory")</p> <p>"Placówka postępu" ("An Outpost of Progress")</p> <p>"Laguna" ("The Lagoon")</p> <p>1939 "U kresu sił" ("The End of Tether")</p> <p>1939 <i>Tajny agent</i> (<i>The Secret Agent</i>)</p> <p>1948 <i>Złota strzała</i> (<i>The Arrow of Gold</i>, with Jadwiga Kornilowiczowa)</p>
4	<p>Wilam Horzyca</p> <p>Selected stories from <i>A Set of Six</i>:</p> <p>1924 "Gaspar Ruiz"</p> <p>1924 "Szpieg" ("The Informer")</p> <p>1924 "Bestia" ("The Beast")</p> <p>1924 "Pojedynek" ("The Duel")</p>	9	<p>Bronisława Neufeldówna</p> <p>1924 "Conrad w Krakowie w 1914 r." (fragment of "Poland Revisited")</p>
5	<p>Jerzy Bohdan Rychliński</p> <p>1924 <i>Ukryty sojusznik</i> (<i>The Secret Sharer</i>)</p> <p>1925 <i>Korsarz</i> (<i>The Rover</i>)</p> <p>1928 "Tajfun" ("Typhoon")</p> <p>1960 <i>Oczekiwanie</i> (<i>Suspense</i>)</p>		
6	<p>Józef Brodzki</p> <p>1924 "Dusza przeciwnika" ("The Character of the Foe", fragment of <i>The Mirror of the Sea</i>)</p> <p>1924 "Geografia i niektórzy jej twórcy" ("Geography and Some Explorers")</p>		



7	Stanisław Olgierd 1925 "Dusza przeciwnika" ("The Character of the Foe", fragment of <i>The Mirror of the Sea</i> )	10	Jadwiga Sienkiewiczówna (Korniłowiczowa) 1925 <i>Smuga cienia</i> ( <i>The Shadow Line</i> ) 1948 <i>Złota strzała</i> ( <i>The Arrow of Gold</i> , with Aniela Zagórska) 1959 <i>Nostromo</i>
8	Stanisław Wyrzykowski 1925 <i>Nostromo</i> 1926 "Dusza wojownika" ("The Warrior's Soul") 1928 <i>Opowieści zasłyszane</i> ( <i>Tales of Hearsay</i> , with Teresa Sapieżyna)	11	Teresa z Potworowskich Tatarkiewiczowa 1925 "Gospoda pod 'Dwiema wiedźmami'" ("The Inn of the Two Witches") 1927 "Plantator" ("The Planter of the Malata") 1928 "Z powodu dolarów" ("Because of the Dollars") 1928 "Wspólnik" ("The Partner") 1955 <i>Los</i> ( <i>Chance</i> )
9	Bolesław Wieniawa-Długoszewski 1925 "Laguna" ("The Lagoon")		
		12	Teresa Sapieżyna 1926 "Książę Roman" ("Prince Roman") 1928 <i>Opowieści zasłyszane</i> ( <i>Tales of Hearsay</i> , with Stanisław Wyrzykowski) 1933 "Autokratyzm a wojna" ("Autocracy and War")
10	Floryan Sobieniewski 1928 "Jeszcze jeden dzień" ("One Day More", play based on "Tomorrow")		
		13	Helena Gay 1939 "Idioci" ("The Idiots") 1939 "Powrót" ("The Return")
11	J. Jasińczyk [Janusz Poray-Biernacki], Witold Turno [Wit Tarnawski] 1945 "Książę Roman" ("Prince Roman")		
12	Czesław Miłosz 1948 "Zbrodnia rozbiorów" ("The Crime of Partition")		

		14	Karola Zagórska 1952 "Podróż do Polski" ("A Journey to Poland", fragments of "Poland Revisited")
		15	Anna Niklewicz 1952 "Wspólnik" ("The Partner")
13	Wojciech Gniatczyński 1953 "Jutro" ("To-morrow", stage adaptation)		
14	Wit Tarnawski 1955 <i>W oczach Zachodu</i> ( <i>Under Western Eyes</i> ) 1967 "Siostry" ("The Sisters" with Aleksandra Poleska)		
15	Bronisław Grodzicki [Zdzisław Najder] 1957 "Książki"		
16	Zbigniew Herbert 1958 "Jutro" ("To-morrow")		
17	Henryk Krzeczkowski 1959 <i>Spadkobiercy</i> ( <i>The Inheritors</i> , co-written with Ford) 1974 "Charakter przestępstwa" ("The Nature of Crime")		
		16	Agnieszka Glinczanka 1960 <i>Przygoda</i> ( <i>Romance</i> ) 1973 <i>Tajny agent: opowieść prosta</i> ( <i>The Secret Agent</i> )
18	Bronisław Zieliński 1961 <i>Murzyn z załogi "Narcyza"</i> ( <i>The Nigger of the "Narcissus"</i> )		
		17	Aleksandra Poleska 1967 "Siostry" ("The Sisters" with Wit Tarnawski)
		18	Halina Carroll-Najder 1972 "Idioci" ("The Idiots") 1972 "Tajfun" ("Typhoon") 1973 "Uśmiech fortuny. Opowieść portowa" ("Smile of Fortune") 1973 "Tajemny wspólnik" ("Secret Sharer")

			1974 <i>Opowieści zasłyszane (Tales of Hearsay)</i> : “Czarny Oficer” (“The Black Mate”) “Książę Roman” (“Prince Roman”) “Dusza wojownika” (“The Warrior’s Soul”) “Opowieść” (“The Tale”) 1974 <i>Ostatnie szkice</i> (with Leszek Elektorowicz Józef Miłobędzki)
19	Jan Józef Szczepański 1973 <i>Smuga cienia (The Shadow Line)</i> 1981 <i>Nostromo</i>	19	Krystyna Tarnowska 1973 <i>Sześć opowieści (A Set of Six)</i>
20	Józef Miłobędzki 1974 <i>O życiu i literaturze (Notes on Life and Letters, with Maria Boduszyńska-Borowikowa)</i> 1974 <i>Ostatnie szkice</i> (with Halina Carroll-Najder, Leszek Elektorowicz)	20	Maria Boduszyńska-Borowikowa 1974 <i>O życiu i literaturze (Notes on Life and Letters, with Józef Miłobędzki)</i>
21	Leszek Elektorowicz 1974 <i>Ostatnie szkice</i> (with Halina Carroll-Najder, Józef Miłobędzki)	21	Maria Skibniewska 1974 <i>Wśród prądów (Within the Tides)</i> : “Plantator z Malaty” (“The Planter of Malata”) “Wspólnik” (“The Partner”) “Gospoda pod ‘Dwiema wiedźmami’” (“The Inn of the Two Witches”) “Dla dolarów” (“Because of the Dollars”)
		22	Ewa Krasnowolska 1974 <i>Korsarz (The Rover)</i>
		23	Anna Przedpełska-Trzeciakowska 1974 <i>W zawieszaniu: powieść napoleońska (Suspense. A Napoleonic Novel)</i>
22	Jędrzej Polak 1994 “Jądro ciemności” (“Heart of Darkness”)		
23	Michał Filipczuk 2000 “Tajfun” (“Typhoon”) 2003 <i>Lord Jim</i>	24	Barbara Koc 2000 “Jądro ciemności” (“Heart of Darkness”)

24	Michał Kłobukowski 2001 <i>Lord Jim</i>		
25	Ireneusz Socha 2004 “Jądro ciemności” (“Heart of Darkness”)		
		25	Magda Heydel 2011 “Jądro ciemności” (“Heart of Darkness”)

Quite surprisingly, for those who might have assumed that since Conrad was regarded as a writer for a male audience he would be predominately translated by women, the ratio of male to female translators is identical (a mere coincidence). However, when one considers the volume of works translated, it turns out that women translated twice as many pieces as men. Additionally, women translated most of the longer novels, whereas men dealt with shorter pieces (short stories, essays, and relatively short novels, like *The Nigger of the “Narcissus”*). Thus, despite the equal ratio in terms of the sex of the translators, Conrad was primarily rendered into Polish by women. This is quite intriguing, given the traditional assumption that in order to translate well a translator must feel some affinity with his or her writer, must share the same worldview and have similar sensitivity. While it is not my intention to enter into a discussion on the notion of *simpatico* (this has already been done and the notion itself has been redefined<sup>4</sup>), I would like to quote extensively from the introductory section of Lawrence Venuti’s paper entitled “*Simpatico*” to illustrate the commonly held view on the relationships between the translator and the writer. Venuti, who first introduced the term *simpatico* and immediately undermined and rejected it, describes the special bond between the translator and the author (as believed by his friend-translator) as follows:

[...] when author and translator live in the same historical moment, they are more likely to share a common sensibility, and this is highly desirable in translation because it increases the fidelity of the translated text to the original. The translator works better when he and the author are *simpatico* [...] not just “agreeable”, or “congenial” [...] but also “possessing the underlying sympathy”. In other words, the translator should not merely get along with the author, not merely find him likeable; there should also be an identity between

<sup>4</sup> In her paper “Is *Simpatico* Possible in Translation?” (2011), Anna Strowe redefines the concept of *simpatico* introduced and undermined by Venuti. She puts it in a historical perspective and so provides a historicised and expanded definition of this notion. *Simpatico* is also extensively discussed by Piotr Blumczynski in his *Ubiquitous Translation* (2016), especially in chapter 2 “Philosophy: Translation as Understanding, Interpretation, and Hermeneutics”.

them. The ideal situation occurs [...] when the translator discovers his author at the start of both their careers. In this instance, the translator can closely follow the author's progress, accumulating exhaustive knowledge of the foreign texts, strengthening and developing the affinity which he already feels with his author's ideas and tastes, becoming, in effect, of the same mind. When *simpatico* is present, the translation process can be seen as a veritable recapitulation of the creative process by which the original came into existence; and when the translator is assumed to participate vicariously in the author's thoughts and feelings, the translated text is read as the transparent expression of authorial psychology or meaning (Venuti 1991: 3-4).

While the concept of *simpatico* as presented here is quite utopian, it nevertheless somehow functions in the commonly held beliefs about translation. If one relates it to the views of Conrad as the original writer and WHO he would like to be translated by, it would seem highly relevant: in other words, only a similar mind could interpret him to create a "congenial" translation and this would entail a MALE translator. Considering the fact that, as indicated in the introductory section, Conrad was initially perceived as a writer of fiction devoid of the feminine element, *simpatico* would again point to a MALE translator as the one who would actively seek to render his works. And yet, paradoxically perhaps, Conrad was introduced to Polish readers by women translators and for two decades no male translator was interested in him. Even more paradoxically, the very first translation appeared in a weekly primarily dedicated to women *Tygodnik m6d i powieści*. It is impossible to trace now the motivation of the first women translators in undertaking the task of rendering Conrad (no specific prefaces exist or sources that would extensively explain the reasons). But it is certain, for instance, that it was Maria Gašiorowska's initiative to translate *The Secret Agent* (cf. Dürr 1932: 238). The first female translators did not focus on shorter pieces but translated fully fledged novels of an exotic setting and political intrigue (*An Outcast of the Islands*), of moral dilemmas represented by a male (*Lord Jim*), and political novels set in Europe (*The Secret Agent*, *Under Western Eyes*). The quality of these translations varies; they cannot be considered "congenial" translations if only for the reason that the Polish versions are heavily abridged (the first translations of *An Outcast of the Islands* and *Lord Jim*) and follow domestic conventions of Polish literature, thus completely changing the original poetics (*Banita* by Zyndram-Kościałkowska). Although some of these translations remained unnoticed (Gašiorowska's *Wygnaniec*) or garnered little critical attention, the fact is that Polish readers became acquainted with Conrad thanks to women translators.

Men turned to Conrad when he had been already recognized as a writer. Ever since the review of *Lord Jim* written by Maria Komarnicka for *Chi-*

*mera* in 1905, in which she named him a conscious manipulator of words and a strategist of impressions (Włast 1905: 333), he became noticed by critics. He visited Poland several times, but perhaps the most significant stay in terms of his recognition as a writer occurred in 1914. First he stayed in Krakow and then moved to Zakopane where he was visited by prominent Polish intellectuals and writers, including Stefan Żeromski, with whom he discussed politics and literature. As can be noticed, man-made translations started to spring forth then, and especially so following his death in 1924. This outburst of translations created by well-known Polish writers and translators may be considered either in pragmatic terms or as a form of tribute and recognition. Pragmatically speaking, men translators noticed Conrad when he had already achieved status as a writer in Poland. Thus *simpatico* appears to be of a lesser importance here. Considering Conrad's death in 1924 as a turning point, the sudden appearance of translations done by men may be viewed as a sign of appreciation. In 1924 *Wiadomości Literackie* published an issue devoted to Conrad and this may have also triggered men translators' interest in this writer. Interestingly, male translators generally worked on shorter pieces (short stories or short novels, except for *Nostromo* translated by Wyrzykowski). This can also be seen as a sign of a pragmatic approach to translation: the shorter the work, the less work.

The 1920s were by no means dominated by male translators of Conrad. Quite the contrary, along with men many women translators made his works available to Polish readers. As the table demonstrates, among many female translators, and actually among translators of Conrad irrespective of sex, one name stands out as the creator of the largest number of Polish translations: Aniela Zagórska.

### **The special bond between the author and the translator: Joseph Conrad and Aniela Zagórska**

If Conrad had THE Polish translator, it was by all means his cousin Aniela Zagórska (1881-1943). Not only did she translate more works than any other of his translators, but for years her versions were a point of reference for other translators, critics and researchers. Unlike her female predecessors, when Zagórska began to translate Conrad's works she had had no previous translatorial experience.

Just for the sake of comparison: before Maria Gąsiorowska (date of birth unknown – 1929) published her Polish version of *An Outcast of the Island* in 1897, she had already created other translations: *Pieniądze* (*Money, A Comedy in five acts*) by Edward Bulwer Lytton in 1879; stories by Margaret Wolfe

Hungerford (whose name was not mentioned and she was termed “the author of *Molly Bawn*”): “Deska zbawienia” (“Fortune’s Wheel”) and “W złą godzinę” (“The Witching Hours”) both in 1891; Rudyard Kipling’s “Porucznik w Bengalskiej Armii” (“The Arrest of Lieutenant Golightly”) in 1895. All of them appeared in *Tygodnik Mód i Powieści*, hence she was a regular contributor to the periodical. As a translator she remained hidden employing the initials M. G., which was a common practice at that time.

The next translator diachronically, Emilia Węśławska (1863–1921), was primarily a social activist, but she also wrote stories for children and reviews for *Dziennik Wileński* and *Goniec Wileński*. She translated both French and English literature. In 1904 she published her version of *Histoire comique* (1903) entitled *Historia komiczna* Anatola France’a. Before her *Lord Jim* appeared, she introduced to Polish readers less known American and English writers, for instance Hall Caine – *Wieczne miasto* (*The Eternal City*, 1901) in 1902.<sup>5</sup> As can be noticed, her versions were printed almost immediately following the publications of the originals, so she must have had easy access to the original works and worked rather rapidly.

The next female translator of Conrad’s novel was a writer and translator Wilhelmina Zyndram-Kościałkowska (1844–1926). She was considered an accomplished translator (although in view of modern translation theories this evaluation may easily be questioned). Before her re-translation of *An Outcast of the Islands*, she created, i.a., Polish versions of Bret Harte’s novellas (1885), Charles Dickens’s *David Copperfield* (1888) and *Hard Times* (1899), Pierre Loti’s *Pêcheur d’Islande* (*Rybak islandzki*, 1888), Rudyard Kipling’s short stories from *Plain Tales from the Hills* (1892) to name just a few of her translations. She was a prolific translator, undertaking translations from English, French and Italian (e.g. works by Grazia Cosima Deledda).

Not much information is available concerning Maria Bunikiewiczowa (died 1948) who translated two of Conrad’s works, except for the fact that these were probably the only pieces done from English, as she mostly translated from Czech. She introduced such writers as Josef Václav Šmejkal, Bohumil Vydra and Jaroslav Podroužek to Polish readers.

Helena Janina Rogozińska-Pajzderska (1862–1927) was a very popular writer and poet who used the pseudonym Hajota to sign her works. She was perhaps better known as a creative writer and activist in her times than trans-

<sup>5</sup> She continued her translatorial activity later. Her other translations include: *Polska jako rycerz wśród narodów świata* (1908) (*Poland, the knight among nations*, 1907) by Louis E. Von Norman, *Państwo wschodu, czyli wojna japońsko-rosyjska 1904-1905 roku* (1905) (*Empire of the East; or, Japan and Russia at war, 1904-5*, 1905) by Bennete Burleigh, *Jaką młodą dziewczyną być powinna* (1912) (*The girl wanted: a book of friendly thoughts*, 1910) by Nixon Waterman.

lator, although she produced Polish versions of such versatile writers as V. Blasco Ibáñez (*Cuatro jinetes del Apocalipsis – Czterech jeźdźców Apokalipsy*), James Fennimore Cooper (*The spy; a tale of the neutral ground – Szpieg: opowieść o Ziemi Niczyjej*), Oliver Goldsmith (*The Vicar of Wakefield – Pleban z Wakefield*) and Honoré de Balzac (*Père Goriot – Ojciec Goriot*).

The first feminist translator (if such a term can be applied) of Conrad's works was Felicja Nossig (1855–1939). She was a sociologist, journalist and translator who was associated with social-democratic movements. She published her journalistic pieces in many influential newspapers and magazines, i.a., *Die Neue Zeitung*, *Ateneum*, *Bluszcz*, *Głos*, *Głos Kobiet* (supplement to *Kurier Lwowski*), *Krytyka*, *Nowe Słowo* and *Robotnik*. She was well recognized as a pro-women activist and in 1892 she organized a congress of working women, in which 200 women representing various nations, social classes and professions participated. She actively advocated for women's rights. She translated from the Ukrainian and Russian languages into German, but she also worked from French and English. For instance, from French she translated works by Célestin Charles Alfred Bouglé, Jean Joseph-Renaud, Gaston Leroux; from English by Upton Sinclair, from German by Otto Weininger, Margarete Böhme. As for Conrad, she provided the Polish version of one of his major political works, dealing with revolutionary movements and ideas. Although present-day feminist criticism emphasizes strong female characters in this novel, such as Natalie Haldin believed to be “Conrad's most effective portrait of a woman” (Baines 1960: 362), it seems unlikely that Nossig undertook the translation due to its female elements. Given the absence of such approaches to Conrad's writing at the time, she may have been more interested by the sociological study of the characters. After all, she earned her PhD in sociology in 1894, thus she was extremely interested in character studies concerning various conflicting situations.

And the last of the early female translators before the era of Aniela Zagórska, Barbara Beaupré (no dates of birth and death available) was a prolific translator of fiction and poetry from French and English at the turn of the centuries. She was mostly valued for her versions of poems by Paul Verlaine and Edgar Allan Poe (including “The Raven”). But she also translated from Russian; her most known translation was her version of Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *Brothers Karamazov* (*Barcia Karamazow*, 1913). Unfortunately, she frequently abridged the originals, omitting important fragments in terms of cultural and ideological background, as was the case with *Brothers Karamazov* (cf. Puntaka 2012: 96–97). As for the choice of Conrad's *Chance* (the most “feminist” work, featuring the feminist character Mrs Fyne), again it should be doubted that Beaupré selected it for ideological reasons. Rather the



choice was motivated by the success it garnered in England – it was actually a breakthrough in Conrad’s writing in terms of popularity, being considered to be written both for men and women readers.

It is not clear which of these translations, as well as the ones created by men, Conrad actually read, but in 1914 he expressed a very negative opinion concerning Polish versions of his works, when asked “Do you like the Polish translations of your books?” during an interview held by Marian Dąbrowski. His answer was:

Oh, not at all! To begin with I was never even asked for permission to translate my books and besides, the translations are extremely poor. It is real agony for me to read things that were written in English in my native language. After all, I know Polish and French quite well. And the Polish translations are so careless, so unfaithful to the original. The French are faultless, but the Polish always irritate me. For example this fragment in a Lwów daily paper. Awful, absolutely awful. Even ‘Malay’ has been translated as ‘little Negro’... (Dąbrowski 1983 [1914]: 200).

The last sentence refers to Zyndram-Kościalkowska’s translation, so this one he must have known and detested. The poor quality of the Polish versions and the fear of unauthorized translations springing about, as well as personal considerations were probably the reasons that the major translator of this writer of “male” fiction became a woman: Aniela Zagórska. The writer met his cousin during his stay in Poland in 1914, and spent much time with her when he was hosted by her mother in “Konsantynówka”, a villa in Zakopane. He then could assess her command of English, though the talks were mostly held in Polish, and her literary sensibility as she introduced him to Polish writers and literature was a frequent topic of discussions. His intuition and perhaps their kinship resulted in a very special bond between them and his decision to encourage her to translate his works, although she had not any experience in the field of translation. He had absolute faith in her abilities, though no translatorial works had been presented to him. Typically, while instructing her as to how to translate, he would implicitly refer to the notion of idiomaticity, which explicitly was presented as interpretation rather than “faithful” translation. For him, the translator’s intuition was more important than the literal closeness, because the former would allow the translator to make correct choices in terms of one’s native language and its naturalness, while the latter would destroy linguistic idiomaticity. He wrote to Zagórska:

My dear, don’t trouble to be too scrupulous about it. I may tell you (in French) that in my opinion ‘il vaut mieux interpréter que traduire’ [interpretation is better than translating]. My English is not at all literary. I write idiomatically. Je me sers des phrases courantes qui, après tout, sont celles avec

lesquelles on se garde le mieux contre ‘le cliché’. Il s’agit donc de trouver les équivalents. Et là, ma chère, je vous prie laissez vous guider plutôt par votre tempérament que par une conscience sévère. [I use everyday expressions, which, after all, are the best defence against “cliché”. It is, then, a question of finding equivalents. And there, my dear, I beg you to let yourself be guided more by your temperament than by a strict conscience.] (Letter to Aniela Zagórska, 10 April 1920, *Letters*, vol. 7, 75-76).

Being multilingual he was fully aware of linguistic difficulties inherent in translating, and, moreover, he was after all critical of the earlier achievements (he also criticized and corrected some French translations, although he did not mention that in the interview with Dąbrowski). Nevertheless Conrad unquestioningly trusted Zagórska, her intuition and linguistic skill, despite her complete lack of experience. In the same letter encouraging her to translate *Almayer’s Folly* he continued: “Je vous connais. J’ai foi en vous. Et vraiment Conrad vu à travers Angèle, ça ne sera pas déjà si mauvais, Inspirez vous bien de cette idée qui pourra peut-être alléger un peu la tâche que vous pensez entreprendre” [I know you. I have confidence in you. And indeed Conrad seen through Aniela’s eyes will by no means be bad. Take heart from this idea that may perhaps lighten a bit the thankless task you are considering taking up] (Letter to Aniela Zagórska, 10 April 1920, *Letters*, vol. 7, 75-76). He agreed to any changes and modifications that she planned to introduce to her translations. The confidence in her was so great that the writer appreciated the product even before it emerged. In 1921 he wrote: “I am relieved that the translation of Almayer has already been decided on. I am sure your translation is excellent. J’ai beaucoup de confiance dans votre tempérament et le tour particulier de votre esprit m’est infiniment sympathique” (Letter to Aniela Zagórska, 14 December 1921, *Letters*, vol. 7, 393-394; emphasis mine). He added that he had always felt that she understood him well.

One could venture here a hypothesis of a reversed notion of *simpatico*: it is not the translator who chooses the writer, but the other way round. And it is not the translator who needs to be convinced of sharing the author’s ideas and tastes, but it is the author who himself feels some affinity with his translator. Interestingly in this special case the author does not insist on the identity (as inherent in *simpatico* defined by Venuti and then undermined) between himself and his translator, but relies on his intuition and trust and explicitly expresses his wish to be interpreted through “the translator’s eyes”, implying similarity rather than sameness in translation. In terms of personal features, the identity between Conrad and Zagórska was, after all, hardly possible. Despite the gender differences, they also differed in many other aspects: age, life experiences, interests, upbringing. Moreover, unlike in the concept

of *simpatico* outlined in Venuti, Zagórska did not begin to translate Conrad at the onset of his career and developed an understanding of his works along with his development as an artist. Her first translation appeared one year before his death, and although this was his first novel, she later did not select his works for translation chronologically as they appeared originally. The special bond between the translator and the writer was in this case independent of sex and the latter's beliefs that he wished to be interpreted by men.

Conrad and Zagórska exchanged letters in which the writer would occasionally provide some clues as to how to deal with particular problems. These mostly concerned suggestions of Polish titles, which the translator did not always follow, indicating her degree of independence. She accepted the hint of *Fantazja Almayera* for *Almayera's Folly*: "With respect to titles, what do you think of *Fantazja Almayera*? That is a possibility. In English the word folly may also be used of a building. In Polish the word obłęd can't be used in the same way" (Letter to Aniela Zagórska, 10 April 1920, *Letters*, vol. 7, 75). She also followed Conrad's advice on the title of "Heart of Darkness". As she recalled, he told her once: "To się powinno nazywać po polsku *Jądro ciemności*" [This should be called *Jądro ciemności* in Polish] (Zagórska 1996 [1928]: 315). But as Zdzisław Najder argues, Conrad suggested the title *Córka Almayera*, believing it was an excellent title considering the readers, for *An Outcast of the Islands*, which she ignored selecting *Wykolejeniec* instead (cf. *Listy* 1968: 405, 502). It seems that the influence of Conrad on Zagórska's work was in fact minimal (after all, almost all her translations were published after his death). The bond between them was, however, strong enough to lead Conrad into the decision to entrust her exclusive rights to publish translations of his works in Polish and Russian. In the already quoted letter of 10 April 1920 he wrote: "I give you my best and completest authority and right to translate all my works into Polish. You are authorized to give or refuse permission and to decide all matters concerned therewith, using your own judgement and taking decisions in my name" and added "I should be happiest if you yourself had the wish and the time to translate at least those books you like" (Letter to Aniela Zagórska, 10 April 1920, *Letters*, vol. 7, 75). Official documents followed and thus the career of THE translator of Conrad began.

Zagórska remained faithful to Conrad in the most literal sense of this word. She never translated any work of another author. She was also "faithful" in terms of translation, attempting to reconstruct as much as possible not so much Conrad's idiomaticity, but his style. If previous translations were much more poetic, bordering on romanticizing the language, and following the domestic conventions of the Young Poland, her versions showed Conrad as a frugal and almost austere writer at times. She became the most accom-

plished female translator of her times, and was awarded in 1929 the first ever award for translations of foreign literature into Polish by the Polish Pen Club. During her lifetime she was highly respected and appreciated as a translator and most of the reviews of her works were enthusiastic. Even if some shortcomings were noticed, as was the case with nautical vocabulary, they were immediately excused. It was only after her death, in the mid-20th century, that her achievements were critically reevaluated by Waclaw Borowy and Zdzisław Najder).<sup>6</sup> Being the most acclaimed translator of Conrad and one of the most eminent female translators per se, she deserves a separate study examining her achievements.

### General remarks on later female translators of Conrad

Aniela Zagórska was unable to translate all of Conrad's works on her own. Thus with her permission, other women translators, as well as men, contributed to the creation of Polish versions of his oeuvre. Jadwiga Kornilowiczowa, Teresa Tatarkiewiczowa, Teresa Sapieżyna and Helena Gay undertook the task in order to complete the gap when Conrad's collected works were to be published. They mostly worked on collections of short stories and shorter novels that had remained untranslated, thus their work may be considered as being commissioned. After Zagórska's death one can notice a fervent translatorial activity, mostly by female translators, especially after the Second World War and in the 1970s. In that period, retranslations of previously rendered works appeared as well as translations of not translated essays. The sudden outpour of translations was created by accomplished and recognized contemporary female translators: Agnieszka Glinczanka, Aleksandra Poleska, Krystyna Tarnowska, Maria Boduszyńska-Borowikowa, Maria Skibniewska, Ewa Krasnowolska and Anna Przedpełska-Trzeciakowska. These versions did not appear, however, due to some raised awareness of the feminine element in Conrad's fiction brought to life by criticism. The reason was much more prosaic and down-to-earth: "Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy" attempted to publish a collection of Conrad's works and decided to correct the existing versions, and additionally commissioned new translations when the older ones were deemed of poor quality. Hence the new versions were done for purely pragmatic reasons rather than ideological ones. This is especially evident in the works published in 1972-1974 in the series of *Dzieła* edited by Zdzisław Najder. He, in particular, desired to make the entire collection more homogenous linguistically, so he eliminated outdated interpretations and or-

<sup>6</sup> A critical analysis of Zagórska's translations is beyond the scope of this paper. Some comments on the initial evaluations and later more critical views on her achievements are provided in my *Marlow pod polską banderą...* (2011).

dered new translations (mostly by female translators and especially by his wife Halina Carroll-Najder). Thus the 20th century witnessed the shift from selecting a writer to translate by the translator himself or herself based on personal reasons (affinity with the writer, attempt to introduce an unknown writer, or any other) to the more commercialized commissions. Obviously, not all works are requested by publishing houses and translators, at least those accomplished ones of high status, still enjoy their freedom to choose whom they want to translate.

For twenty years following the publication of *Dziela* there was stagnation in translatorial activity as regards Conrad's works. New translations emerged at the turn of the centuries mostly due to commercial reasons, as publishing houses decided to reintroduce Polish readers to classical literary works in new editions, new interpretations and new versions tailored for a new generation of readers to mark the new millennium. Barbara Koc's 2000 version of "Heart of Darkness" was thus not created because of the feminine element discovered by the critics but to commemorate a centenary of the original publication of "Heart of Darkness" (Conrad 2000: 8). It was also meant to be a polemical version to the one presented by Jędrzej Polak in 1994 and a reaction to the unfortunate situation of the absence of adequate translation of this novella available. In the "Note from the Publisher" both Zagórska's and Polak's versions are criticized, though for different reasons. Unlike Zagórska's apparently wordy translation and Polak's incomprehensible one, Koc's proposal is deemed one that achieves the level of condensation so significant in translations of Conrad's works (Conrad 2000: 8). Barbara Koc is not a professional translator; she is a literary scholar particularly interested and in fact specializing in the literary output of Joseph Conrad. This lack of translatorial skill is unfortunately evident in her version<sup>7</sup>, and so new target texts soon followed, one of them by a female translator. Magda Heydel in her extensive foreword does not specify the reasons why she undertook the task of retranslating this particular work. Being a literary scholar, in her analysis of the novella she provides various interpretations and refers to the latest critical readings of "Heart of Darkness", including post-colonial and feminist interpretations (Heydel 2011: 117-136). Her translation can hardly be seen as applying a feminist theory of translations. Heydel is an accomplished translator and does not impose any specific ideology on the text. Her translation was published in a series of 50 books for the 50th anniversary of "Znak", thus the main motivation was to finally create a version that would fully do justice to the original in terms of its diversified style. Thus far this latest translation of Conrad's work has not been challenged by any other.

<sup>7</sup> Many problematic solutions adopted by Koc are discussed in my *Marlow pod polską banderą...* (2011).

## Instead of conclusions

Conrad, for years considered a “male” writer writing “male” fiction for a “male” audience, can be safely claimed to exist in the Polish literary system due to female translators. Obviously, this is not to diminish the achievements of men translators, among which *Nostromo* in the version of Jan Józef Szczepański, *The Nigger of the “Narcissus”* by Bronisław Zieliński and *Under Western Eyes* by Wit Tarnawski seem unparalleled. Michał Kłobukowski was awarded for his *Lord Jim*, though in many respects this version is questionable (cf. Kujawska-Lis 2011). Yet, female translators were extremely prominent in introducing Polish readers to the world created by this writer: the world of universal values, of significant moral dilemmas, of deep insight into the human soul. It appears that critical labels attached to writers (a male/female fiction writer) should by no means direct the choice of translators whether to translate a given author or not. I would argue that the translator’s gender is irrelevant in the case of professional and talented translators who focus primarily on the text itself, and are not influenced by fleeting critical impressions.

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