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KONRAD WALLENROD BY ADAM MICKIEWICZ IN LESYA UKRAINKA INTERPRETATION

Abstract. The article presents Lesia Ukrainka's Prometheusism on the example of her translation of the historical story in the poems Konrad Wallenrod by Adam Mickiewicz. There are parallels between the romantic tradition of the Polish literary school and the Ukrainian so-called neo-romantics in the first half of the twentieth century to which Lesya Ukrainka belonged. The author of the translation deliberately chose a fragment in the description of a girl from Lithuania who is compared to the local river Vilija, and showed the tragedy of women's destiny full of patriotic motives. At the same time, the heroism of a woman-citizen, a woman-artist arouses admiration and awakens hope for the speedy liberation of the enslaved people. Mickiewicz's poetic lines translated into Ukrainian opened new perspectives for neo-romantics to combine both national and European traditions, and at the same time pointed to the tragedy of national histories.

Lesya Ukrainka went beyond the tragedy of the final scene of Mickiewicz's drama in her creative conception of the reinterpretation. Proceeding from the vicious circle of writing literary works exclusively "for domestic use" the poet sought to awaken the national consciousness in society to enable the synthesis of coexistence with other cultures. She took on the mission of ancient Prometheus symbolizing not only a rebellion against the power or charity towards the people, but also the revival of hope for salvation from imminent death. Following romantic motives she gives them a rebellious spirit, purposeful protests, which from the individual thoughts of the progressive intelligentsia were to move to the community level, which in literature is expressed in the ideas of Prometheusism.

It is assumed that tangible natural kinship of Polish and native languages grew in Lesya Ukrainka's work from the Volyn roots where noble traditions were very strong and had a decisive influence on the language picture of the writer.

The poetic material is especially valuable from an artistic point of view since it is based on samples of oral folk art, in particular the song, which can be traced not only in the original but also in translation.

Key words: Prometheusism, translation, romanticism, neo-romanticism, historical poems.

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"КОНРАД ВАЛЛЕНРОД" АДАМА МІЦКЕВИЧА В ІНТЕРПРЕТАЦІЇ ЛЕСІ УКРАЇНКИ

Анотація. У статті представлено прометеїзм Лесі Українки на прикладі її перекладу історичної поеми «Конрад Валленрод» Адама Міцкевича. Проведено паралелі між романтичною традицією польської літературної школи та українськими неоромантиками першої половини ХХ століття, до яких належала Леся Українка. Авторка перекладу свідомо вибрала фрагмент опису трагічності жіночої долі. Водночас героїзм жінки-громадянки, жінки-художниці викликає захоплення і пробуджує надію на швидке визволення поневоленого народу. Перекладені українською мовою поетичні рядки Міцкевича відкрили перед неоромантиками нові перспективи для поєднання національних і європейських традицій, проте водночас вказали на складний розвиток національної історії. Поетичний матеріал особливо цінний з художньої точки зору, оскільки в його основу покладено зразки усної народної творчості, зокрема пісні, що простежується не лише в оригіналі, а й у перекладі.

Ключові слова: прометеїзм, переклад, романтизм, неоромантизм, історична поема.

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"KONRAD WALLENROD" ADAMA MICKIEWICZA W INTERPRETACJI ŁESI UKRAINKI

Abstrakt. Artykuł przedstawia prometeizm Łesi Ukrainki na przykładzie jej przekładu historycznego poematu Adama Mickiewicza "Konrad Wallenrod". Nasuwają się paralele między romantyczną tradycją polskiej szkoły literackiej a ukraińskimi neoromantykami pierwszej połowy XX wieku, do których należała Łesia Ukrainka. Autorka przekładu świadomie wybrała fragment opisu tragedii kobiecego losu. Jednocześnie bohaterstwo kobiety-obywatelki, kobiety-artystki budzi podziw i nadzieję na szybkie wyzwolenie zniewolonego ludu. Wersy poetyckie Mickiewicza, przetłumaczone na język ukraiński, otwierały przed neoromantykami nowe perspektywy łączenia tradycji narodowych i europejskich, a jednocześnie wskazywały na złożony rozwój historii narodowej.

Łesia Ukrainka w swojej twórczej koncepcji reinterpretacji wykroczyła poza tragedię finałowej sceny dramatu Mickiewicza. Wychodząc z zaklętego kręgu pisania dzieł literackich wyłącznie "na użytek domowy", poetka dążyła do rozbudzenia świadomości narodowej w społeczeństwie, aby umożliwić syntezę współistnienia z innymi kulturami. Podjęła się misji antycznego Prometeusza symbolizującej nie tylko bunt przeciwko władzy i, ale także odrodzenie nadziei na zbawienie od nieuchronnej śmierci. Podążając za romantycznymi motywami, obdarza ich buntowniczym duchem, celowymi protestami, które z indywidualnych myśli postępowej inteligencji miały przenieść się na poziom wspólnotowy, co w literaturze wyraża się w ideach prometeizmu.

Przypuszcza się, że namacalne naturalne pokrewieństwo języków polskiego i ukraińskiego wyrosło w twórczości Łesi Ukrainki od korzeni wołyńskich, gdzie tradycje szlacheckie były bardzo silne i miały decydujący wpływ na indywidualny styl pisarki.

Materiał poetycki jest szczególnie cenny z artystycznego punktu widzenia, gdyż opiera się na wzorcach ludowej sztuki ustnej, w szczególności pieśni, które można prześledzić nie tylko w oryginale, ale także w przekładzie.

Słowa kluczowe: prometeizm, przekład, romantyzm, neoromantyzm, poemat historyczny.

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Lesya Ukrainka's creative translation heritage is well-known and is associated with examples of French, German and English culture. So many works in Ukrainian and foreign translation studies, and occasionally in literary studies are devoted to the study of such achievement [1; 10; 11]. On the contrary the Polish translations of the author, included in her twelve-volume collection are limited only to one work namely a fragment of the historical poem *Konrad Wallenrod* by Adam Mickiewicz [8, p. 130]. The other four poems by Maria Konopnicka are Lesya Ukrainka translations into Russian, which is a separate area of further translation studies. Such fact raises the following important questions such as why the number of Polish literature translations was so limited even though both Slavic peoples had similar ideas, and for what purpose did the author choose poem *Konrad Wallenrod* to present her own worldview.

In the light of the mentioned issues the translation of Adam Mickiewicz is studied by taking into account the romantic motives and their influences on the work of Lesya Ukrainka in representing the early neoromantic tendencies of her time [4, p. 270]. The poetess expressed her position in one of the letters to her brother Mykhailo in 1891 denying Russian ideas of populism.

She wrote: "There is a direction (God forbid that it does not last long) similar to that of the Russian populists in the radical community, but actually it is anti-poetic and anti-artistic. (...) It's true but everything is not as sharp and wild as in the Russians works, apparently the poetic Ukrainian nature and European culture do not allow it but still this direction is there. Every day I have to deal with the "Sich people" for neo-romanti-

cism, for poetry, and yesterday I forced them to admit that portraits have value in literature but not photography, and that there is no literature without «fiction»" [7, p. 72].

The Lesya Ukrainka and her contemporaries' neo-romantic ideas were expressed in the projection of modernity on history through the prism of the artist's perception of the past individual nations. In particular, historical themes come to the fore in the innovative style of Lesya's drama logically supplemented by her translation of a drama fragment *Konrad Wallenrod* by Mickiewicz.

The historical context in Mickiewicz's poem is very eloquent. These were events in the ancient Lithuanian lands automatically associated by the Poles with the so-called Kresy. Thus, from the very beginning the associative series of border locations extended to the Ukrainian lands (Rus) followed by the expansion of the subtext of the images system in the work.

The poet himself in the introduction to the drama noted it as follows: "The great power growing too fast was not able to develop an inner force that would unite and revive its forces. The Lithuanian people being scattered over a large area lost their inherent colors. Lithuanians enslaved many Rus generations and imposed political relations with Poland. The Slavs having been the Christian long before stood at the highest level of civilization though in captivity and under threat from Lithuania, slowly regained their moral superiority over the strong but barbaric oppressor and absorbed it like the Chinese absorbed Tatar cavalry" [8, p. 69].

Mickiewicz makes an even deeper digression into history describing the war between Lithuanians and the Crusaders. In this context the main character of the poem the knight Konrad Wallenrod is endowed with key Christian virtues such as poverty, modesty and contempt for earthly goods [8, p. 74]. A Lithuanian woman locked in a tower complements this image. She grew up among the pagan elements, but adopted the traditions of her beloved and followed his call to be converted to Christianity. National motives and ways of solving social problems are viewed according to the story of unhappy love between the representatives of two seemingly opposite worlds. Their artistic frame is a

long night hour, sad songs of a knight and a young girl, a monk's cell in a dark tower, grave crosses and bloody battles.

The image of the homeland has become the most eloquent image in Mickiewicz's work equated with the feeling of love, and its value is summed up in a short but apt phrase of the drama:

Słodszy wyraz nad wszystko, wyraz miłości, któremu Nie masz równego na ziemi, oprócz wyrazu – ojczyzna. (The sweetest expression above all, the expression of love for which On earth nothing can be equal but the word homeland) [8, 108].

The patriotic motives are deepened by the plot line of the work dealing with the loss of the homeland and its rediscovery in adulthood and mature age. The long-standing mysterious veil of the protagonist's origin, whose heart was touched by Lithuanian song motives and ancient children's smells and landscapes, is set out in Weidelot's song about the kidnapped boy Walter in Lithuania, who was hopelessly tried to be raised in German way.

The girl in the tower (in Weidelot's song – wife Aldona) is not just an image of longing for her native land and the tragedy of its loss, but above all it implies hope for the revival of the will of the people and loyalty to them to the last breath. With its romance and poeticism, this image surpasses the spiritual qualities of Conrad who is guided by the desire for revenge. Thus, the image of a woman who is only externally imprisoned in a dungeon but in fact free in her choices and decisions comes to the fore. To some extent it indicates the limited nature of the Mickiewicz messianism as well as other representatives of Romantics whose characters often dwelled on calls for revenge and undercut universal human values.

No wonder Lesya Ukrainka chose for translation not the whole Mickiewicz work but only one fragment that conveys the tragic fate of Aldona. The author compared her with the Lithuanian river Viliya. Following Mickiewicz she compares the Lithuanian girl with the beauty of the water flowing into a large river applying the means of artistic

parallelism (man – nature) which is the basis of all the Slavs folk songs. And women's destiny is lost in a closed tower in a foreign land, as in the sea. The conflict between native and foreign is the cause of the artist's tragedy being a citizen, a representative of the enslaved people. Therefore, the final notes of the translated fragment are sad and tragic.

Дівчина в любім Німані зникає, Дівчина в вежі пустельничій гине! (Viliya disappears in any Neiman, The girl in the lonely tower dies!) [6, p. 130].

Lesya Ukrainka went beyond the tragedy of the final scene of Mickiewicz's drama in her creative conception of the reinterpretation. Proceeding from the vicious circle of writing literary works exclusively "for domestic use" the poet sought to awaken the national consciousness in society to enable the synthesis of coexistence with other cultures. She took on the mission of ancient Prometheus symbolizing not only a rebellion against the power or charity towards the people, but also the revival of hope for salvation from imminent death [9, p. 52]. Following romantic motives she gives them a rebellious spirit, purposeful protests, which from the individual thoughts of the progressive intelligentsia were to move to the community level, which in literature is expressed in the ideas of Prometheusism.

The percentage of translated Polish texts or even phrases is relatively small in Lesya Ukrainka's works since the Polish language was so widespread among the Ukrainian people at that time that there was no natural need to translate Polish works into Ukrainian. Therefore, in communication with her family and prominent figures of her time, Lesya Ukrainka avoided any translation actions in such direction what cannot be said about the Russian language. We can assume that this tangible natural kinship of Polish and native languages grew in her work from the Volyn roots where noble traditions were very strong and had a decisive influence on the language picture of the writer. Among her letters there are the following abounding with the Polish phraseo-

logical units and other stable phrases speaking for themselves and did not require interpretation for the reader of that time. Thus, we come to the conclusion that the choice of a fragment of Polish poetic drama for translation was made solely for ideological reasons. The latter dominated the artistic prerogatives when choosing the theme of the original works for translation by Lesya Ukrainka.

Stanislaw Wyspianski creative concept can be considered decisive in the relationship "Lesya Ukrainka and Polish literature" who suggested considering reflections on history in the context of literary myth. Such aesthetic paradigm harmoniously fit into the cultural European community [2]. Within this concept, the myth of Prometheus dominated the works of Lesya Ukrainka including those of a translated nature.

One can trace the evolution of the ancient image in the culture of European nations. The initial interpretations had different connotations from condemnation to exaltation. The tragedy of Aeschylus *Chained Prometheus* gained the greatest popularity. The heroic interpretation derived from it has survived to the present days. It is this symbolic interpretation of the image that can be traced in the worldview as well as in the work of Lesya Ukrainka.

It is for the sake of humanity that Titan violated the order of Zeus revealing two main features such as love for the weak and rebellion against the strong. In the mentioned drama *Konrad Wallenrod* they are inherent in both main characters – the knight Conrad and Aldona. However, the manifestation of these Promethean qualities by every character is of individual nature. Conrad demonstrates somewhat ambiguous traits because his feeling of love is mixed with hatred, and he preached by him principles of Christian tolerance eventually failed. Instead, the Lithuanian Aldona has the fully developed Promethean qualities. At the very beginning of her life she follows her beloved in taking into practice the Christ's virtues and at the end of lives they reach their apogee.

The tragedy of the Prometheus figure lies in his choice between power and immortality, on the one hand, and weakness and transience, on the other. According to Lesya Ukrainka the protection of oppressed and imperfect humanity should become the prerogative of the artist and the

universal mission of every citizen. In John Milton's *Paradise Lost* Satan played the role of such a rebel. So we see that the idea of Prometheusism in the world thought has acquired new, somewhat unexpected modifications. Lesya Ukrainka highly appreciated this work given its mythological dimension. Her Aldona from the translation of Mickiewicz's work clearly points to the process of myth-making, which was far removed from the modern concept of atheism in society. Deeply symbolic (mythical) are the images of Neophyte (*In the Catacombs*), the prophetess Cassandra (*Cassandra*), Tirzah, and others. New elements to the idea of Prometheusism were also introduced by the Romantics, in particular Goethe in the drama Prometheus, which he began in his early period and ended in old age. It was about a titan-God-fighter who was guided not by the will of the Almighty, but by the inevitability of fate.

In this regard, Florian Nieuważny noted: "It is possible to continue the long list of Western European and Slavic writers who turned to the myth of Prometheus and made certain modifications that reflected the moods and needs of their time, but when it comes to Lesya Ukrainka, an important role in her interpretation of Prometheusism was played primarily by works of Aeschylus, Milton, Byron and Shelley" [9, p. 56].

Taras Shevchenko with his poem *The Caucasus* and Mykhailo Drahomanov, Lesya's uncle, with the *story On Envious Gods* were Lesya Ukrainka's prominent predecessors in the formation of Prometheus' myth-making tradition in Ukrainian literature. Although the poet did not directly dedicate any of her works to this mythical hero, the ideological orientation of Prometheusism is seen everywhere. We can see it in the poem *Dream* mentioning the omnipotent titan seeking education for people.

According to the plot Konrad Wallenrod from Mickiewicz's poem of the same name was supposed to be such a hidden titan for the Lithuanian people. However, the character did not arouse much interest by Lesya Ukrainka. The romantic motives of the destruction did not correspond to her vision of the world. Instead, the female prototype of social heroism and religious fidelity declared in Aldona's actions became for her a symbol of spiritual and intellectual strength, inspiration, and fidelity. The comparison of a girl with water although not on a universal

scale but only with a local river was to symbolize the immortality of the idea of Prometheusism based on feelings of love.

This is expressed in the form of folk song parallelism: Hi серце, ні хвиля ради не приймає: Дівчина любить, а Вілія плине... (Neither the heart nor the wave accepts advice: The girl loves, and Viliya flows...) [6, p. 130].

The common points of correlation between the main character of the poem *Konrad Wallenrod* and the author of the translation are the external weakness of the body, the gradual extinction and withering, but at the same time the internal crystallization of the spirit, the predominance of social ideas over personal preferences. Lesya Ukrainka brings the reader to the definition of the woman role as a public herald who represents everybody and speaks for the whole nation.

Similar parallels are found in *The Forest Song*, where the myth has found its full expression. The poet imposes elements of her own biography on these artistic perspectives. Thus, in the preface to the new bilingual edition of drama-extravaganza about Mavka in Polish and Ukrainian languages the compilers Serhiy Romanov and Tetyana Danyliuk-Tereshchuk emphasize the direct connection of Lesya Ukrainka with her female images.

In particular, they write: "Extraordinary, truly inhuman willpower, almost always realized at the expense of her own health, was hidden behind the apparent ease with which Lesya Ukrainka created ingenious paintings, especially in recent years. That's how she lived and worked – she had to pay for the opportunity to exist with the opportunity to create. However, only the closest people knew about it, but they never heard any regrets or complaints about fate. Communication with relatives is especially noticeable here" [5, p. 4].

The parallels between Mavka and Aldona – the girl-Viliya are regarded to be indisputable because both heroines are derived from the natural elements of Volyn and Lithuanian lush beauty. Both grow spiri-

tually through the inspiration of love but their both loved cannot grow to their hearts. A significant difference between the works lies in the historical context of the poem *Konrad Wallenrod*, in which the formation and establishment of the whole nation took place.

Woman as the guardian of the nation plays a key role in the work of Lesya Ukrainka. The image of a woman in art carries an additional semantic load. It is necessary to mention here the translations of Maria Konopnicka poems into Russian, in which Lesya Ukrainka saw the need of the public epoch. According to the poet, the greatness of the woman artist testified to the spiritual rebirth.

Anna Janicka writes: "In her dramas, it is the woman who carries the tragedy/fatalism of myth and the curse of history (actually this happens in the works Cassandra and the Fireplace Master); a story of considerable interest which becomes for the writer an instrument of extracting the female perspective from the myth" [3, p. 128].

In this sense, the translation of a fragment of Mickiewicz's poetic drama *Konrad Wallenrod* harmoniously fits into the ideological and thematic palette of Lesya Ukrainka's creative work, in particular her concept of Prometheusism in public life and culture.

The appeal to the figure of Prometheus coincides in time with the poet's fascination with the images of the goddess of fantasy, genius and demon, which she tries to consider in a syncretic dimension. At the same time, there is a clear tendency to combine romantic motives with mythological ones, first of all Prometheusism ones. In the poem *To a Friend* Lesya Ukrainka gives them national liberation characteristics, and some researchers consider ones to be a sign of the revolutionary struggle [9, p. 57]. One can partially acknowledge their rightness if we perceive revolution in the broadest sense of the word as social progress and the search for new solutions to national freedom. In this context, the desire to embody the ideas of Prometheusism not only within one nation, but throughout Europe or humanity was progressive and innovative.

In this context the poem *Fiat nox* is full of expression in which Lesya Ukrainka calls her contemporaries "sons of Prometheus", "brave descendants of Prometheus", who threaten revenge on the "queen of dark-

ness". Instead of punishing the eagle that tears the titan's chest, the poet sees the threat in the disgusting snakes that eat the hearts of the heroes [9, p. 57]. Her words are devoid of the old romantic elegia. So, despite the imitation of style, the author introduced completely new trends in literature. In Mickiewicz's poem Aldona reproduces these maximalist ideas, so it is in tune with Lesia Ukrainka's creative ideas.

Lesia Ukrainka's Prometheusism goes beyond the national idea. Anna Janicka notes: "Lesya Ukrainka's opinion corresponds to the discourse of emancipation and creativity in Polish women's literature beginning from the second half of the XIX century till the interwar period of twenty years and creates a common space for defining women's identity in that part of Europe, also due to the own, clearly defined individuality. The individuality is formed as a palimpsestic integrity, composed, on the one hand, of Ukrainian cultural identity, and on the other hand, of modernity and Europeanness, immersed in the ancient and biblical tradition or in the aesthetic currents of the time" [3, p. 124].

The feminization of the myth of Prometheus in the interpretation of Lesya Ukrainka is one of the modifications of his universal dimension. Thus, the writer implemented a strategy of intimacy and personalization of mythological structures, which were concretized in his research by Yaroslav Polishchuk [12]. The Lesya Ukrainka sphere of ideas was influenced by the prophets of the Old Testament among the biblical images.

The author of the *Konrad Wallenrod* fragment translation uncompromisingly spoke about people who are indifferent, humble, and willing to be enslaved. Therefore, her crusader Wallenrod (Walter), detached from the family environment does not agree to be defeated. His death causes the death of Aldona trapped in a tower. As we can see, the end of Mickiewicz poem has a traditional romantic denouement based on a love story. Lesya Ukrainka does not fully use the ballad plot of Mickiewicz drama as she has another artistic goal namely to convey to the reader the ascension and tragedy of women's destiny connected with the historical destiny of the people.

The historicism of the material used was confirmed by the playwright himself, who submitted an extended reference from the chronicles. According to them, historians unanimously confirm the uncertain origin of Conrad Wallenrod, his incomprehensible behavior, which led to the defeat of the Crusades and the victory of the Lithuanians. Thus, we are convinced that the historical plots of Polish, Lithuanian, and Ukrainian cultures were the main source from which Slavic romantics and neo-romantics including Lesia Ukrainka drew their creative inspiration. Another thing is that the level of development of the material by artists of different generations was not homogeneous and was used for different purposes, was differently artistically played, served to embody different social and creative ideas.

We can conclude that although Lesya Ukrainka translations of Polish literature were not numerous but rather fragmentary, the chosen material was not accidental, but served to reveal a single creative concept based on the ideas of Prometheusism and expressed in the spirit of neo-romantic lyrics. In this way it is necessary to interpret the translated song about Aldona-Viliya which symbolized a woman-fighter, a woman-creator and guardian of the people. The tragedy of the lyrical heroine reflects the fate of Lesya Ukrainka herself and resonates with other female images of her poems and dramas. New scientific research on the rather insufficiently studied topic is perspective in the studying of the prominent Ukrainian writer and translator creative works.

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