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## SPRUNG RHYTHM IN THE POETRY OF STANISŁAW BARAŃCZAK

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Stanisław Barańczak is a poet who considers the issue of poetic rhythm to be one of the most important factors with regard to poetic creativity.<sup>1</sup> In his essay “On writing poems,” explaining the arcana of artistic technique, Barańczak wrote: “Hence, all the rhymes, r h y t h m s, metaphors, and wordplays. These are just various ways to structure the mumble of the world into a meaningful order, for setting the torrents of its chaotic diction on a directed and reasonable course” (Barańczak 1996: 154, spacing by J.D.-P.). In an interview with Krzysztof Biedrzycki the poet claimed that the rhythmic modulation in a poem allows the shaping of “an indispensable and inalienable” form of poetic utterance (Barańczak 1993: 11-36). Barańczak highlighted this also in his interpretation of Czesław Miłosz’s poem “The Dawns.” As he pointed out, the “hypnotic rhythm” in this poem was related to the inner dynamics of the narrative representation, as well as to the existential tragedy. He wrote: “Whenever I read it anew, [...] it is still breathing with the same tattered but thrilling rhythm” (Barańczak 1990: 17-28). In an essay about Josif Brodsky’s work Barańczak emphasized the exceptional role of lyrical creation. He was convinced that the poetic “power over language is nothing but a form of respect for the rhythm of life and the rhythm of human history – contained in language” (Barańczak 1990: 132-138). Barańczak found a similar connection between poetic rhythm, existential experience and the dynamics of life in the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins.

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<sup>1</sup> The subject of rhythm in S. Barańczak’s works (however with no reference to G.M. Hopkins’s idea of sprung rhythm) was discussed in the chapter of my book entitled: *Stanisław Barańczak – Unique rhythm of a poem*. See: Dembińska-Pawelec 2010: 389-435.

Barańczak translated Hopkins's poems in the late 1970s, at a time when he was an active member of the opposition, which led to many reprisals, including his dismissal, surveillance and arrest, as well as to the censorship of his work and the impossibility of its publication within Poland. For him it was, as he said, "quite a nasty time, without any faint hope" (Barańczak 1993: 114). "I was dismissed from the University of Poznań – he said in an interview – and I spent a good while at home [...] dividing my time between seeing KOR<sup>2</sup> interrogators, changing my newborn daughter's diapers and – during the breaks – writing my own poems and translating foreign poetry" (Barańczak 1993: 38). During this time Barańczak translated the poems of various 17<sup>th</sup>-century poets, for example, the work of John Donne, George Herbert, Andrew Marvell and Robert Herrick, as well as the poetry of Gerard Manley Hopkins.

Thus, Barańczak translated Hopkins's poems in very unusual circumstances at a time of national crisis. Indeed, in his memory the work of this 19<sup>th</sup>-century English poet is permanently associated with those circumstances. In an interview with Michał Okoński and Adam Szostkiewicz, when looking back on the 1970s, Barańczak said:

My attitude towards Hopkins is particular, because I was translating his poetry in the most bizarre conditions. I translated one of his poems, *Peace*, during the hunger strike in May 1977 in the church on Piwna Street. Even before, just after KOR was formed and started its work, in the fall 1976, I used to take a volume of Hopkins's poetry to interrogations. I arrived punctually and, of course, I was told to wait for an officer, which meant waiting for a very long time (a well-known psychological method). In order to make the wait seem shorter I read – for example – the sonnet "Hurrahing in Harvest" (Barańczak, 1994; 13).

The existential, political, and social circumstances, and at the same time the conditions in which he wrote and translated, became intermingled and interconnected within the extraordinary story of the author of *I know it's not right*. In an interview with Maciej Zięba OP, Barańczak thoughtfully said:

Recalling those days now, it strikes me that when I was writing my own poems about the trivial facts of life in the PRL,<sup>3</sup> about the housing estates made of concrete and about the queues for meat, simultaneously – as a translator – I was interested in [...] a "metaphysical" Englishmen. Apparently this was not so far-removed from my own experiences in that period, experiences embracing the full gamut: from rage – when pork shoulder ran out in a shop or when the heating was shut down in a block of flats – through my social or political activity, to my inner conversations with God about the meaning of life (Barańczak 1993: 38).

Despite his political and existential experiences, the texts of certain seventeenth-century poets and the work of G.M. Hopkins, both translated at that time by Barańczak, somewhat paradoxically sensitized him to metaphysical issues.

<sup>2</sup> KOR is Komitet Obrony Robotników, Workers' Defence Committee (established 1976).

<sup>3</sup> PRL is Polska Rzeczpospolita Ludowa, the Polish People's Republic (1944-1989).

Hopkins's *Selected Poems*, a volume prepared by Barańczak, was published in 1981 at the time of the *Solidarity* movement when censorship was suspended (Hopkins 1981). A new edition of this book, including an additional seven works, entitled *33 poems*, came out in 1992 as part of the *Library of the English-Language Poets* series, which was compiled by Barańczak (Hopkins 1992). The poet has also written several papers which describe G.M. Hopkins, both the poet as well as the man.

For Barańczak, translating Hopkins was an opportunity to discover not only Hopkins's philosophical and religious poetry but also his idea of sprung rhythm. Derek Attridge wrote that Hopkins "was developing his own idiosyncratic metrical mode" (Attridge 2006: 169). This unusual rhythmical form that preceded the time of free verse became, for Barańczak, an extremely interesting translation issue. He even suspected that Hopkins "to some extent *had to* invent his own versification and rhythmical system: none of the traditional systems would have been able to carry the burden of the spiritual experience which the poet tried to create within the words and sentences" (Barańczak 1992a: 309-310).

Philip Hobsbaum explained Hopkins's idea of rhythm as follows:

Sprung rhythm was measured by feet of from one to four syllables, and for particular effects any number of light syllables might be used. The lightest of these could be termed out-rides, which were virtually weightless syllables added to a given foot. These need not be counted in the scansion, on the grounds that the weight of stress would be almost negligible (Hobsbaum 2007: 53).

Stanisław Barańczak also addressed the phenomenon of this rhythmical modulation, which was freed from regularity: "Hopkins recommended reading the poems written in this rhythm aloud, so that the 'exploding' impacts of the stress and the ecstatic pace of the acceleration in the places where a few unstressed syllables were concentrated could be heard more clearly" (Barańczak 1992b: 19).

Derek Attridge, interested in the phenomenon of the doubled perception of sprung rhythm, wrote that in Hopkins's poems "there are two levels of structure simultaneously perceived by the reader; [...] what we are aware of in reading a metrical line is an onward movement which at times approaches a marked regularity and at times departs from it, constantly arousing and thwarting rhythmic expectations" (Attridge 1982: 17-18). According to Barańczak, metrical looseness gained through the random number of syllables within the limits of particular metric feet, as well as the occurrence of the opposite tendencies, namely verse freedom yet at the same time its regularity, determined the unique character of Hopkins's poetry. Writing about sprung rhythm Barańczak remarked that "this rhythm is dynamic, rough, dramatic. It confronts the idea of regularity [...] with increased irregularity and freedom, leading to a specific tension with great possibilities to modulate and intensify" (Barańczak 1990: 175).

For Hopkins, the motivation behind these two levels of structure simultaneously perceived was a reference to the *counterpoint* concept. In a letter to Richard Watson Dixon, he explained it as follows: “each line [...] has two different coexisting scansion” (Hopkins 1972: 61). Derek Attridge commented on this poetic measure in the following way: “Hopkins’s influential borrowing of the term ‘counterpoint’ from music, [...] gives the erroneous impression that the double structure is the equivalent of two voices in a polyphonic composition, each clearly perceptible, and each with a distinct character of its own” (Attridge 1982: 17). The author of *Poetic Rhythm* placed this double tendency at the centre of how poetic language was traditionally understood. However, in his analysis of Hopkins’s poetry Philip Hobsbaum was willing to perceive its musical relations. He wrote: “if a reading is rehearsed, the chorus will be found to make sense rhythmically and indeed to be an engaging form of song-lyric. [...] It is, in fact, an attractive set of echo effects” (Hobsbaum 2007: 55-56). When Stanisław Barańczak referred to the notations in Hopkins’s works which made them similar to a musical score, he stressed at the same time the fact that it is not poetry of harmony, but poetry of variational alterations shaped by sprung rhythm. “This musical, dramatic nature of the rhythm he wrote is, similarly to other rhetorical devices with an analogous function, not only a goal in itself: it is also a peculiar poetic reflection of the philosophical concept of human fate, spread between the poles of ecstasy and despair, happiness and suffering” (Barańczak 1990: 176).

The form of Hopkins’s works, which is based on double versification and constructed according to the rule that incorporates irregular and variable numbers of syllables as well as a constant number of stresses in a verse, is in fact similar to the Polish tradition of an accentual long-line system, stemming from Mickiewicz’s poetry (Dłuska 1978; Dobrzyńska and Kopczyńska 1979). It is to this kind of accentual verse that Barańczak referred in his translations, thus emphasizing a fundamental difference between the English and Polish realizations. The translator of Hopkins perceived the difference in the dramatic nature of the versification, so typical of these poems, and in the disproportionately greater – in comparison with Polish poetry – variety of adjacent feet structures, which contain between one and several syllables. This intensified impression of irregularity was restrained by the arbitrary choice of stress location. Perhaps this is why, according to Barańczak, sprung rhythm is “rough,” is a rhythm of “tempestuous emotions” (Barańczak 1992b: 19), of the “poet’s heart throbbing irregularly” (Barańczak 1992a: 310).

We could question whether the experience of translating Hopkins’s works, as well as commenting on his poetry and sprung rhythm, have influenced Barańczak’s own artistic output.

It is Jerzy Kwiatkowski's opinion that Barańczak is "a virtuoso of word-play," a "manneristic conceptualist," "one of the most artistic contemporary poets," a "creator of sophisticated compositions" (Kwiatkowski 1995: 340). In his artistic achievements the richness of the entire Polish tradition of verse, both ancient and modern, is reflected. He used syllabic and accentual-syllabic verse, as well as sophisticated irregular patterns of versification. The detailed calculations made by Małgorzata Szulc Packalén demonstrate that he often used long verses (especially of thirteen syllables) (Szulc Packalén 1987). However, being a poet of the so-called New Wave in Polish poetry he is well-known first and foremost as an author of non-metrical poems with asyntactic endings to the lines (Pawelec 1994: 124-138). The linear diversity of the text outline and the application of the semantic functions of exaggeration and verse confines were measures used by Barańczak in his free verse (Sadowski 2004: 77-79, 93-94). Among such poems examples of the so-called *anti-verse*, as defined by Maria Dłuska, can also be found (Dłuska 1978: 328-333).

The rule that confronts regularity with irregularity, which can be observed in Hopkins's poetry and was described by Barańczak, is the most recognizable feature of his own work, even from the earliest days, i.e. long before Barańczak encountered the texts of the 19<sup>th</sup>-century English poet. This rule is most noticeable in the impressive cycle of "broken sonnets," from the *Facial Corrections* volume (1968).<sup>4</sup> Likewise, it is present in the sestinas, madrigals and villanelle, written in "loose-line" form.<sup>5</sup>

Amidst all the variety of poetic forms, traces of the fascination with Hopkins's poetry, as well as the impact of the idea of sprung rhythm can also be detected. In 1980, shortly before Hopkins's *Selected Poems* were published, a new poetry book by Stanisław Barańczak came out. It was entitled *Triptych with Concrete, Fatigue and Snow*. It is interesting to note that the poems included in this volume have much in common with the works of the English poet with respect to the poetic form. In the first place, the verses are based on feet patterns, which is rare in Barańczak's poetry, but the Polish poet had by then encountered this kind of verse in Hopkins texts that he was translating.

In *Winter Diary*, a part of the *Triptych with Concrete, Fatigue and Snow* volume, there are four elegies preceded by a motto "What if this present were the world's last night?" It was taken from a poem by John Donne, who is considered to be a precursor to Hopkins as Donne's poetic rhythm became an inspiration for the creation of sprung rhythm two centuries later.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> On the subject of Barańczak's "broken sonnets" cycle see: Pawelec 1992: 33-38.

<sup>5</sup> On the subject of Barańczak's villanelle see: Dembińska-Pawelec 2006.

<sup>6</sup> Similarities between the poetic rhythms of Donne's and Hopkins's poetry were demonstrated by P. Hobsbaum in his work, see: Hobsbaum 2007: 57-60.

“11.01.79: The first elegy, early winter,” the opening poem of the cycle by Barańczak, is an interesting example, since it was written in accentual verse with six stresses, which proves the undoubted impact of the sprung rhythm concept on Barańczak’s artistic activity. Here is the initial fragment of the poem:

/ u u | / u | / u | u u / u | u / u | u / u  
 Zima nas nie zaskoczy. Nas zmarzniętych, zmartwionych zawczasu,  
 u u / u | u / u | u / u | u u / u | u / u | u /  
 dmuchających na zimny październik, żeby prędzej już sparzył nas mróz.  
 u / u | / u u | / u | u / u | / u | / u u | /  
 Kto w wietrznym śnie tutaj wyrósł, kto w wieczny śnieg tutaj wrósł,  
 u u / u | / u u | / u  
 temu lato, zawsze zbyt krótkie [...]  
 (“1.11.79: Elegia pierwsza, przedzimowa,” Barańczak 1997: 185)<sup>7</sup>

This elegy is a parabolic tale about one community’s existential situation (certain traits of the Polish society that existed in the decadent phase of the 1970s can be clearly seen). Krzysztof Biedrzycki wrote that, “the winter which freezes the country becomes a symbol of the hopeless (political? existential?) situation that forces people to adapt and to give up their dreams” (Biedrzycki 1995: 34). Dariusz Pawelec remarked that “a picture of winter in Barańczak’s elegy was united with a picture of death into one poetic vision” (Pawelec 1992: 104). “Zima nas nie zaskoczy” (“The winter will not surprise us”) – a phrase which returns several times in this poem – was not an expression of optimistic faith, but instead became a testimony to the sense of defeat, resignation, even acceptance of failure (Dembińska-Pawelec 1999: 37-52).

In the Polish tradition of poetry, accentual verse with a six-stress line was derived from the so-called Polish hexameter. Maria Dłuska listed its numerous advantages:

Determined with regard to intonation, bound only by the number of stresses, but not limited syllabically, in its most fundamental form it already gives a broad and convenient framework, which includes all the meaning with ease, and the flow of the language current is free within these confines. [...] This verse seems to be ideal for poems requiring a long breath (Dłuska 1978: 291).

Therefore, the accentual verse that Barańczak encountered while translating Hopkins became – to some extent – a vehicle for his own lyrical voice. The rhythm of the accentual verse with six stresses proved to be the most appropriate

<sup>7</sup> The winter will not surprise us. Us – frozen, worried beforehand,  
 blowing on the cold October, so that frost will not burn us anymore.  
 He who grew up in a windy sleep here, he who grew into a perpetual snow here,  
 for him – the summer is always too short [...] (trans. MS)

measure to express emotions which oscillated between hope, a sense of doubt and resignation.

It should not be forgotten that the choice of rhythmical pattern was also motivated by tradition – since ancient elegies were written in hexameter and pentameter. However, the rhythmical order of “The first elegy, early winter” is not only a reference to the elegiac tradition, as most of all it seems to be paying homage to Hopkins. This is easily observed in the verses where the metrical units are characterized by a large number of syllables. Let us analyze the following example:

s krywa przed czasem szarość, niejasność, brud; a mróz trzyma  
 (“1.11.79: Elegia pierwsza, przedzimowa,” Barańczak 1997: 185)<sup>8</sup>

This verse’s metrical pattern can be shown as follows:

/ u | u / u | / u | u / u | / | u u / u

The expression “a mróz trzyma” (“and the frost still lasts”) at the end of the line must be said at a strong but fast pace and so it disturbs the elegiac rhythm. This foot of four syllables follows a very short – almost broken of – syllable “brud” (“dirt”). These two feet, one after another, form a dynamic leap, “brud; a mróz trzyma,” which can be treated as an interference, an instability, a disturbance of the elegiac rhythm. There are many similar verses in “The first elegy, early winter,” in which the feet are simultaneously prolonged and contracted to one syllable. Their presence gives the impression of an articulatory pause, which limits the fluency. The following couplet is also interesting:

Nam, zawczasu zmartwionym, za życia zmartwiałym, szron  
 skroń bieli przed terminem; a śnieg jak schludny schron  
 (“1.11.79: Elegia pierwsza, przedzimowa,” Barańczak 1997: 185)<sup>9</sup>

/ | u / u | u / u | u / u | u / u | /  
 / | / u | u u / u | u / | u / u | /

A sequence of short units constructed of one stressed syllable, additionally strengthened by enjambment, segments the utterance, breaks it up and atomizes it, and as a result disturbs the continuity of the elegiac rhythm.

In *Triptych with Concrete, Fatigue and Snow*, apart from the elegy cycle there is also a cycle of poems collectively entitled *Snow*. One, “4.2.80: Snow V” is also written in accentual verse with six units:

<sup>8</sup> It conceals grey, vagueness, dirt from time; and the frost still lasts (trans. MS)

<sup>9</sup> We – worried beforehand, freeze alive, the hoarfrost  
 paints our temple white before a deadline; and the snow is like a neat shelter (trans. MS)

Milczkiem opadający, chyłkiem bielący się śniegu,  
cóż w lutym, za oknem, nad ranem może być w tobie jasnego

bardziej niż to, że trzeba pod kołdrą jedną i ciepłą  
objąć się, spleść ze sobą obydwu sny, nim uciekną  
("4.2.80: Śnieg V," Barańczak 1997: 211)<sup>10</sup>

/ u | (/) u u | / u | / u | u / u u | / u  
u / u | u / u | u / u | / u | u / u | u / u

/ u | u / | u / u | u / u | / u | u / u  
/ u u | / | u / u | u / u | / | u u / u

The poem describes an experience of love and the sexual act between two lovers woken by a winter dawn when the snow is drifting against the window. The last line, containing a short unit of one syllable: "spleść" ("splice"), "sny" ("dreams"), shapes a rough rhythmical course, stopped, broken off – just like the dream interrupted by the awakening and a noise from behind a wall. The alternating rhythm of this poem matches the situation described, as well as the increase in the erotic experience:

ten chłód nagi, wilgotny, przed którym tylko nagie,  
wilgotne ciepło chroni – i to, co zrywa się nagle,

dwoiste, jednolite, zdławione, nie do zniesienia,  
wzbijające się z krzykiem, jawne i mroczne jak ziemia.  
("4.2.80: Śnieg V," Barańczak 1997: 211)<sup>11</sup>

The initial fragment, expressed calmly, is created with disyllabic and trisyllabic units: "ten chłód; nagi; wilgotny; przed którym" ("this coldness; naked; moist; from which"). After a pause in the second verse, announced by a hyphen, the dynamics of the experience rises, which is stressed by a longer unit of four syllables: "co zrywa się;" "jednolite" ("what leaps up;" "uniform"). This increases in the next couplet, to a peak of two units of five syllables, separated by an enjambment, as in the following expressions: "nie do zniesienia;" "wzbijające się" ("unbearable;" "soaring"). The next two units are definitely shorter

<sup>10</sup> Falling tacitly, appearing white stealthily, snow!  
in February, behind the window, early in the morning what might be clear to you

more than that it is needed under a single and warm quilt  
to embrace each other, splice both dreams together before they escape. (trans. MS)

<sup>11</sup> this naked moist coldness, from which only naked  
moist warmth protects – and that which leaps up suddenly,

dual, uniform, quelled, unbearable,  
soaring with a cry, open and dark like earth. (trans. MS)



and disyllabic: “z krzykiem;” “jawne” (“with a cry;” “open”). The ending is calm, with the return of a trisyllabic unit: “i mroczne;” “jak ziemia” (“and dark;” “like earth”). By alternating the number of syllables in successive units Barańczak is able to create a dynamic, evolving tension which evokes the erotic sensations.

In Barańczak’s accentual poems that are discussed in this paper the co-occurrence of units containing different numbers of syllables shapes a wide-range of rhythmical patterns, which is characteristic of sprung rhythm. It is not as dramatic and rough as that seen in the work of Hopkins, because it concerns different emotions which are not so extreme in their spiritual and religious expression. In “First elegy, early winter,” the tendency towards metrical stabilization is continuously confronted with the necessity to speed up, slow down or segment the text. A love song in “Snow V” demands alternating dynamic transformations. The rhythmical effect of both poems is strengthened by inter-linear and interstanzaic enjambments, which force a flowing connectivity to appear in the place of the expected pause. All this means that the lyrical I’s voice becomes rough, dynamized, and subordinate each time to the emotions, for it is modulated in a way that resembles sprung rhythm.

In Hopkins’s poetry sprung rhythm was inextricably linked with the euphonic effects of the text. The author’s aim was to create a poetic language that renders the sensual concreteness of an object or phenomenon, their individual uniqueness and their inner quality, a language which was designated *inscape* by the poet. The particular individual property of an object was extracted and emphasized by Hopkins, within the individual shape of a lyrical utterance based – above all – upon the sounds of poetic language and word formation. Barańczak described Hopkins’s poetic philosophy as follows:

If sensory cognition of what is particular, individual, self-contained is in the foreground for intellect, if every object allows us to see the *inscape* in it [...] – in this case the poem’s language [...] it must be characterized by an analogous drive towards concreteness and the uniqueness of naming (Barańczak 1992b: 13).

Hopkins applied the means of verse instrumentation to obtain these values in poetic language. The following means seem to be the most characteristic: onomatopoeia clusters, alliteration sequences, echolalia, internal rhymes and – last but not least – numerous paronomasias. The sound proximity of words formed in this way was meant to suggest semantic proximity, mutual relations and a unity of meaning. As Barańczak explained, Hopkins “wraps the words together and forces us to see a certain hidden necessity, a certain deeper similarity or relations in their connection” (Barańczak 1992b: 17).

It seems that Hopkins’s philosophy regarding poetic language influenced Barańczak’s work to a considerable extent. His poetry was permeated with such linguistic tendencies from the very beginning, but it was in the late 1970s that the

author of *I know it's not right* intensified the euphonic effects in his own texts, filling them with chains of alliterations and instrumentations, to create chains of paronomasias, paronyms, equivoques and anagrams. The poem "Tłum, który tłumia i tłumaczy" ("The crowd that restrains and translates") remains one of the most famous examples of his work that is based on a play on paronomasias and anagrams:

Tłum, który tłumia i tłumaczy;  
 stłoczony w autobusach i tunelach, tłumia  
 słabiutkie tętno sensu, stukające w czaszce,  
 ale który tłumaczy ten ulotny puls  
 na nieodwołalną mowę  
 swej tłumnej samotności;  
 [...]  
 I, niewytłumaczalny, jest wytłumaczony.  
 ("Tłum, który tłumia i tłumaczy," Barańczak 1997: 167)<sup>12</sup>

A paronomastic sequence – "tłum," "tłumi," "tłumaczy" ("crowd," "restrains," "translates") – forms a web of mutual relations, namely verbal, sound and meaning, within the limits of the whole poem. In the last verse this entangled progression leads to a forceful line expressed through the wordplays: "niewytłumaczalny" – "wytłumaczony" ("untranslatable" – "translated"). In the Polish language this poem's key word – "tłum" ("crowd") – is contained within both of these words, which are here confronted in an oppositional and oxymoronical, and at the same time paradoxical, manner.

When Barańczak described Hopkins's concept of poetic language, he initially stressed the significance of echolalia, alliteration and paronomasia as far as the euphonic level of a text is concerned. He also observed that an accumulation of these means has "a structural effect, because the relation of sound similarity exposes certain patterns in the poem's verbal matter, and thus it outlines the text's inner architecture more clearly" (Barańczak 1990: 174). This rule, adopted from Hopkins's poetry, is also evident in Barańczak's "Tłum, który tłumia i tłumaczy." Within the limits of this poem the word "tłum" ("crowd") repeatedly *returns* in the form of equivoques and wordplays. Furthermore, this structural sound effect appears in many other works by Barańczak, and it shapes their sophisticated architectural form.

<sup>12</sup> The crowd that restrains and translates,  
 crowded on the buses, in the tunnels, it restrains  
 a faint pulse of the sense, knocking inside the skull,  
 but it translates this ephemeral pulse  
 into an irrevocable idiom  
 of its populated loneliness  
 [...]  
 And, untranslatable, is translated. (trans. MS)

In “First elegy, early winter” the richness of the instrumentation of the verse is noticeable, as it completes the poem’s text euphonically. However, it is the third verse that is constructed using a complex play of paronomasias and paronyms:

Kto w wietrznym śnie tutaj wyrósł, kto w wieczny śnieg tutaj wrósł  
 (“1.11.79: Elegia pierwsza, przedzimowa,” Barańczak 1997: 185)<sup>13</sup>

They form characteristic pairs connected by a sound similarity, which is followed, as Hopkins postulated, by an unexpected semantic proximity:

**wietrznym – wieczny; śnie – śnieg; wyrósł – wrósł**  
 (windy – perpetual; sleep – snow; grew up – grew into)

In this poem, just as in Hopkins’s texts, chains of alliterations, instrumentation and paronomasias appear. In the second stanza, for example:

[...] Szkoleni w skuleniu, w stuleniu dłoni,  
 w stuleciu tym i w tych stronach [...]  
 (“1.11.79: Elegia pierwsza, przedzimowa,” Barańczak 1997: 185)<sup>14</sup>

The sequence of paronyms thus created is particularly interesting:

**skuleniu – stuleniu – stuleciu**  
 (being cringed – closed up – century)

The sequences which continue to return within the poem are an important component, similarly to the characteristic pairs of words, matched paronomastically, where the recurring “**zmart-**” always evokes the word “śmierć” (“death”), pronounced [sm’rt’] in Old Polish:

**zmarzniętych – zmartwionych; zmartwionym – zmartwiałym,**  
**zmartwiałych – zmarniałych**

These pairs, assimilated at the level of sound and recurring within the text, as per Hopkins’s guidelines, “expose certain patterns in the poem’s verbal matter”, and “outline the text’s inner architecture”.

In “Elegy...” the use of verse instrumentation grows in importance, since it co-creates this poem’s semantics. For instance, in the closing section the text is dominated by the phoneme **r**: “zanika // szerniała pryzma, jak żyzne błoto wygrywa w tej walce, / jak ziemia przebiśniegiem przebija kartę śniegu”

<sup>13</sup> He who grew up in a windy sleep here, he who grew into a perpetual snow here (trans. MS)

<sup>14</sup> Trained in being cringed, in having hands closed up,  
 in this century and in this neighborhood (trans. MS)

(“it’s vanishing – // the blackened pile, as fertile mud is winning this battle, / as earth is drilling through a snow sheet with a snowdrop”). The sequence of *r* instrumentations is continued in the words that are the most important in this poem: “śmierci” (“of death”), “wróca – twardsze i trwalsze” (“they will return – harder and more persistent”). All such measures of poetic language, intensified euphonicly, build – as in Hopkins’s poetry – the *inscape* effect. They mean that the world depicted in “First elegy, early winter” becomes a concrete, sensual vision, expressive and individualized.

Translating Hopkins’s poetry influenced Barańczak’s own artistic work in a substantial and significant manner. It acquainted the Polish poet with a method by which sprung rhythm could be created. Hence, he was able to gain, as Hopkins postulated, the “distinctness of rhythm and a naturalness of expression”. It also made it possible for him to investigate the philosophy of poetic language, the issue of the *inscape* concept and it sensitized him to a poem’s sound values that are capable of shaping its inner architecture in an independent way. Stanisław Barańczak was always interested in linguistic experiments, but thanks to translating Hopkins’s poetry and analyzing the theory behind Hopkins’s work, he investigate the poetic possibilities of metrical language in much greater depth.

(translated by Maciej Skrzypecki)

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### **Sprung Rhythm in the Poetry of Stanisław Barańczak**

**Keywords:** poetry, sprung rhythm, S. Barańczak, G.M. Hopkins, translation

#### **S u m m a r y**

This article demonstrates the influence of G.M. Hopkins's poetry, especially his idea of sprung rhythm, on the works of S. Barańczak. Barańczak translated Hopkins's poems in the late 1970s. He is also the author of articles addressing Hopkins's life and poetry. During the process of translation Barańczak had the opportunity to investigate not only Hopkins's philosophical and religious poems, but also his concept of sprung rhythm. This specific rhythmical form was an interesting translation issue for Barańczak, which he analysed in his articles. The author of this paper shows that sprung rhythm which was encountered during the process of translation permeated Barańczak's own poems. The rhythmical form in Hopkins's poems is similar to the Polish tradition of accentual long-line verse, originating from Mickiewicz's poetry. Barańczak used this pattern in translations and in his own poems, but he modified it to make it similar to Hopkins's model of sprung rhythm. The author also proves that Barańczak was inspired by Hopkins's prosodic effects, especially instrumentation of verse and paronomasia.

***Sprung rhythm* w poezji Stanisława Barańczaka****Słowa kluczowe: poezja, *sprung rhythm*, S. Barańczak, G.M. Hopkins, przekład**

## Streszczenie

Szkic ukazuje wpływ poezji G.M. Hopkinsa, a zwłaszcza jego koncepcji *sprung rhythm* na twórczość S. Barańczaka. Barańczak tłumaczył wiersze Hopkinsa w drugiej połowie lat siedemdziesiątych dwudziestego wieku. Jest także autorem szkiców o jego życiu i twórczości. Praca przekładowa stała się dla Barańczaka okazją do spotkania nie tylko poezji filozoficznej i religijnej, ale także koncepcji *sprung rhythm*. Ta specyficzna postać rytmu okazała się dla niego również interesującym zagadnieniem translologicznym, o którym analitycznie pisał w swoich artykułach. Autorka szkicu ukazuje, że poznany w czasie translacji *sprung rhythm* przeniknął do własnych wierszy Barańczaka. Rytmiczna forma utworów Hopkinsa podobna jest w polskiej tradycji do wiersza tonicznego długoformatowego, wywodzonego z poezji Mickiewicza. Barańczak sięgał do tego wzorca w tłumaczonych oraz własnych wierszach, jednak modyfikował go i upodabniał do modelu *sprung rhythm* Hopkinsa. Autorka ukazuje ponadto, że Barańczak inspirował się także efektami prozodii Hopkinsa, szczególnie instrumentacją i paronomazją.