

II. RECENZJE

Jerzy Paszek, SZTUKA ALUZJI LITERACKIEJ. ŻEROMSKI—BERENT—JOYCE. (THE ART OF LITERARY ALLUSION. ŻEROMSKI—BERENT—JOYCE) Katowice 1984, ss. 174. "Prace Naukowe Uniwersytetu Śląskiego w Katowicach", nr 641.

The work reviewed is of considerable importance in the studies of narrative fiction, and will certainly be of interest to a comparative-oriented theoretician analyzing the phenomenon of literary allusion. The author of the work in question, a research employee at the University of Silesia, focused his attention mainly on two Polish novels, i.e. *Popioły* (*Ashes*) by Stefan Żeromski (1864—1925) and *Próchno* (*Rot*) by Waclaw Berent (1873—1941), and alongside, on James Joyce's *Ulysses*. As a matter of fact, however, the author went far beyond the above scope, taking into account the works of other Polish novelists. The list opens with the names of the 17th century (S. Zimorowic and S. F. Klonowic) and entails those of the 19th and 20th c. to close up with the most recent ones (e.g. European-known poet and playwright T. Różewicz and the Nobel of 1980—C. Miłosz).

What may appear striking—in Jerzy Paszek's study — to a specialist in the Polish or Slavic literatures is, first, the names given in its subtitle (having been promptly explained they lose, however, an air of surprise); then it is meticulous and, as it seems, permanently poignant accentuating of "stylistic detail" connecting two, or more, literary works. Literature is seen here as if from two viewpoints: this of style and that of certain

peculiar text affinities which may be considered as intentional or unintentional connections between the text. In this respect Paszek's book turns out even more resourceful than the subtitle alone might imply, apart from *Rot*, *Ashes* and Joyce's *Ulysses* the author examines, in a somewhat detective manner (as if engrafted onto a literary ground), the output of K. Wierzyński, J. Tuwim, S. Wyspiański, T. Różewicz. Also, in the course of his pursuit of the allusive material contained in the three subtitled novels the author of the study surveys a considerable number of Polish novelists of *Młoda Polska* (Young Poland) through the most recent ones, e.g. Józef Łoziński and Wiesław Myśliwski. Therefore it would be appropriate to say that Paszek's study supplies the reader with a wide range of literary history (mainly narrative fiction) presented through an intertextual method practised sporadically here and there.

Another determinant of the study in question is a kind of a "charade ontology of a literary work", though not defined *expressis verbis* in the study. Commenting upon the possibility of allusiveness in Miłosz' *Kolędnicy* (*Carollers*) in relation to Żeromski's *Ashes* the author of *The Art of Literary Allusion* comes to the idea that "one can never be assured as to whether the riddle hidden in his [Miłosz'] poem has been positively solved". And here is the crux of the matter: in Paszek's approach a literary text constitutes a kind of a charade or cross-word puzzle, demanding that the reader (and, equally, the scholarreader) should disclose it lest the proper interpretation prove impossible. In addition, the riddle must be solved

in such a way as to enable the reader to identify precisely the work to which its counterpart alludes intentionally or casually. There is still one more important aspect of this problem: the reader need not only identify the corresponding work, but he must locate the allusion itself. It follows that the reader should assume this cross-word puzzle method as a principle of reading. Referring to W. Thornton's voluminous work entitled "Allusions in *Ulysses*," Paszek maintains that the Polish translator of Joyce's novel, unaware of certain allusions, had distorted, or even omitted, some meanings hidden in the original version of the book (apropos of this Paszek puts forth a number of important remarks concerning the theory of translation).

It is just in practical application of that "charade" method that Paszek is most successful when analyzing his literary material—and successful to the point of almost tempting the reader to replace the title of his study by a sort of "an art of detecting literary allusion". What might tempt the reader to do so is the author's vigilantly "unmistakeable" memory (is it an allusion?); it is, too, vast strata of his literary erudition as well as his almost mysterious gift of spotting stylistic (or other) detail. Due to the above, the allusive groups (i.e. the works to which the work examined alludes and vice versa) of *Ashes*, *Rot* and *Ulysses* have been largely extended with sometimes unexpected members and affiliates. And that is how, for instance, it turns out that Żeromski used to mingle various Polish translations (by J. Kremer and J. Paszkowski) of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*, or that he took from Zimorowic and Klonowic (surprisingly enough to a casual reader), or else that he resorted—and quite frequently—to the diaries of J. Lelewel, A. Mickiewicz, W. Pol, J. Słowacki, Z. Krasiński, etc. Even more astonishing are the results of Paszek's attempt to index the works alluding to *Ashes*: the list comprises the works of "self-

-copying" Żeromski together with *Legiony* (Legions) by H. Sienkiewicz, *Zarzewie* (Yeast) by S. Ostrowski, *Jaskółka* (Swallow) by G. Daniłowski, *Wieczny płomień* (Everlasting Fire) by T. E. Jaroszyński as well as Berent's *Nurt* (Current) and L. Kruczkowski's *Kordian i cham* (*Kordian and the Churl*), the last two being allusive to *Ashes* in a polemical way.

The *Ashes* group has been called forth here only to exemplify Paszek's investigative procedure. Similar is his approach to *Rot*, an even more resonant novel in the Polish literary history and the one whose "group of allusive works" entails such items as the poems of Bronisława Ostrowska, the novels of Nałkowska, Mueller, Strug as well as some short stories, e.g. *Hilary, syn buchaltera* (*Hilary the Book-keeper's Son*), and *Księżyc wschodzi* (*Moon is Rising*), both by J. Iwaszkiewicz, and finally the fiction of Wrocławski—though it must be admitted that the *Rot* group is outnumbered by that of *Ashes*. Following Paszek's inquiry (supported by Thornton's study mentioned before) into *Ulysses*, with all its emphasis on Joyce's techniques of allusion, a Polish reader will undoubtedly focus his attention upon the Polish branch of the *Ulysses* group. Simultaneously the author offers a panoramic sketch of the reception of Joyce's work in Poland from the 'twenties up to nowadays (one of the commentators was W. Gombrowicz, which prompted Paszek to remark that the function of word play and punning in Gombrowicz' *Ferdynand* might have evolved under the influence of *Ulysses*). As to the Polish affiliates Paszek goes back (to some extent after M. Promiński) to the fiction of the 'twenties (Z. Grabowski, A. Rudnicki, A. Ważyk, B. Schulz, A. Tarn). Next he examines "the two most significant works from before 1969 connected with *Ulysses* (1969—the year of the Polish edition of *Ulysses*), i.e. *Bramy raju* (*Gates of Heaven*) and *Idzie skacząc po górach* (*Here he comes, bounding over the mountains*), both by J. Andrzejewski —

to end up his survey with the works of M. Białoszewski, T. Różewicz and J. Łoziński.

As it was stated above the area of Paszek's investigation is mainly stylistics which is the key author applies aptly in other field of his research. And this is the reason why the work in question is attractive for its justified empiricism. Nevertheless, the dominance of this empirical awareness results, on the other hand, in a feeling of some lack of theoretical basis in Paszek's study. Having read it through one can lose the initial idea of what allusion is. Also, this misorientation is possibly an effect of the author's inconsistency in naming connections among empirical elements in texts. And thus, for instance, Paszek shows that a given element is a regular citation while some other time, to an obvious citation he ascribes an authorship of translation. Or he would call allusive fragments mutually "evocative" (cf. pp. 23, 110) only to state later on that they are "repeated after" (cf. p. 161) or, simply enough, stolen. As it seems, this vague delimitation of the term "allusion" results in Paszek's once and again resumed endeavors to classify allusions. Yet, the classifications are being practised ad hoc in order to solve some newly arising problem. Hence, in the domain of historical novel one is offered the distinction between allusions "proper" and "anachronic", which division intersects the one into allusions "obscure" and "clear". The latter is, in turn, supported (a few pages further) with a classification according to the criterion of identification as well as with an arrangement into "chain" and "group" allusions. Next, although for different purposes, Paszek builds up "authorial line" and "the line of foreign allusions", and these are soon followed by the term "allusionplagiarism" (replaced in some other place by "copying" or "epigonism"). Discussing the relationships between *Kordian* and *the Churl* and *Ashes* the author coins the terms of "counterrallusions" and

"allusions polemical on the principle of ideology". Examples of such confusion are numerous and what they reveal is the author's uncertainty of his theoretical grounds (though this uncertainty can, to some extent, be justified on the account of the drawbacks of current theories concerning literary allusion). It is probably the reason, too, why the appendix to the book contains three sub-chapters. All this prompts the conclusion that — as for as the issue of literary allusion is concerned—it would have turned up most useful if the author had narrowed the meaning of the term "allusion" and had introduced notions synonymous to that instead of multiplying classifications. His theory suffers from the absence of, say, the category of stereotyp (it seems, after all, that—a few decades having passed—not all "hounds run into the forest"¹ right from the first lines of *Ashes*). A nation like that might have distanced the works one from another — the works whose affinities are, in Paszek's view, relatively loose.

These are, however, suggestions only (instances of a poor stereotype of book-reviewing) that could possibly be utilized in another book. Apart from that it must be admitted that *The Art of Literary Allusion* (which has been merely outlined in this brief review) fully materializes the assumptions of a dissertation on the substance of a great deal of the Polish 20th century fiction — the substance that Jerzy Paszek is able to investigate with notable precision and an accurate memory and intuition.

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Translated by Edward Szyndler

Terry Eagleton, LITERARY THEORY: AN INTRODUCTION. University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis 1983, ss. 244.

Piąta znacząca książka wykładowcy z Oxfordu (po *The Rape of Clarissa*:

¹ "The hounds ran into the forest" — opening phrase of Żeromski's *Ashes*.