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New York

SOME FUNCTIONS OF LITERARY ALLUSION IN "KWIATY POLSKIE"

One of the assumptions which the author of a digressive narrative poem has traditionally made in regard to his audience is that his readers share the poet's literary heritage and awareness although not necessarily his taste. (This is but one aspect of a broader assumption of shared milieu, traditions and experiences). Byron in *Don Juan*, Pushkin in *Evgenij Onegin*, and Słowacki in *Beniowski* are all fundamentally concerned with the literary traditions out of which their poems arose (whether they claim links with these traditions or are at pains to demonstrate their independence of them), the literary styles and tastes of their times and, not unexpectedly, their own standing as poets. Contentiousness over literary positions and questions of style is not, however, the sole indicator of the literary ambience of the digressive narrative poems. They also abound in literary allusions in the form of direct quotations, references to numerous works and authors, parodies of traditional themes and of popular literary tastes. It cannot be over-emphasized that such poetry assumes a well-read audience.

A literary ambience is also a significant feature of *Kwiaty polskie* — that modern effort at reviving the dormant genre of the digressive narrative poem. Tuwim, like his predecessors, assumes a well-read audience, although except for some deliberately obscure references to medieval scholastics, he generally confines his sphere of reference to a relatively narrow corpus of mostly Polish literature. The literary sphere to which he refers is a far cry from the casual cosmopolitanism of Pushkin's forays into French, English, German and other more exotic literatures, as well as his native Russian¹.

¹ See Vladimir Nabokov's remarkable study, *Eugene Onegin: A Novel in Verse by Aleksandr Pushkin Translated from the Russian, with a Commentary, by Vladimir Nabokov* (New York 1964) for an exhaustive and illuminating study of Pushkin's indebtedness to and exploitation of other literatures.

In *Kwiaty polskie* there are more than fifty places in the text which are direct or indirect literary allusions. These range from the briefest of references (the mention of a writer's name, a book title, a character) through extended quotations and paraphrase, to explication of the work in question. In addition there is the underlying reference to *Othello* in the narrative plot line which centers around Dziewierski the gardener; the shade of Othello haunts the poem as it does the gardener, usually remaining in the background but on occasion made explicit by direct quotations from the play.

The uses to which Tuwim puts his numerous literary references are quite varied and it is difficult (and perhaps misleading) to establish several rigid functional categories under which they could all be subsumed. We need hardly emphasize the inevitable fallibility of any rigid theoretical constructs when confronted with the suppleness and flexibility of a work of creative imagination; no matter how distinct the categories there will always be examples which represent borderline cases, or whose function in the poem is multifaceted. However, certain broadly defined, distinct functions of literary allusion in *Kwiaty polskie* can be discerned as follows:

1. Self-quotation: basically for the purpose of self-advertisement.

2. The decorative effect: a literary equivalent of name-dropping. Its purpose is basically ornamental and the allusion in question could easily be dispensed with without any reduction in meaning or clarity of the poem.

3. The literary work as artifact: The work referred to is mentioned not for itself but for its value as a cultural artifact — as evidence of the literary aspect of the pre-war Polish culture which Tuwim was attempting to evoke in *Kwiaty polskie*.

4. The polemical allusion: The literary allusion serves as ammunition in an extra-literary quarrel, whether political, sociological or religious. In these allusions either a quotation is used for purposes of an argument unrelated to that quotation's context, or the work in question (or author) is treated as a symbol of general cultural values and then assailed.

5. Metapoetry: The text alluded to is not only incorporated into *Kwiaty polskie* for purposes of enlarging its dimensions (as in 6 below) but is also evaluated as a work of literature.

6. The "enlarging" function: A passing reference or a more extended paraphrase or quotation is incorporated into the text for purposes inherent in *Kwiaty polskie* as a literary work to enlarge, by association, the dimensions of the lyrical digression or narrated fragment, to lend to a specific instance a more universal authority.

The following analysis of literary allusions in *Kwiaty polskie* does not pretend to an exhaustive thoroughness, and not all of the many minor literary references in the poem will be mentioned.

1. Self-quotation

Living in exile and finding it increasingly difficult to write at all, Tuwim was often concerned in *Kwiaty polskie* with his own development as a poet and his place in Polish letters. (There is an obvious parallel here with Słowacki in *Beniowski*.) The simplest instances of his self-advertisement are two references to his own early poetry: the poems *Zieleń* and *Zasypianie*. *Zieleń* is mentioned parenthetically and jocularly (a sure sign that the matter is important for Tuwim) as an example of the kind of etymological fantasies that can be spun around a single word, almost as an assurance to the reader that the poet is an old and practiced hand at controlled digressions who will not let this digressive poem escape his control:

Przez zieleń brnąć i jej odcienie
Można, jak wiemy, nieskończenie
(Patrz „Zieleń”, bo już nie powtórzę),
Lecz gdy się pióro raz rozjedzie
(Rok nie pisałem, nawet dłużej),
To trudno! muszę o rezedzie.
(14)²

The reference to *Zasypianie* is more simply motivated. In this instance Tuwim merely reminds the reader that he has described a particular scene once before (91—92).

The most extended instance of self-quotation is also quite the simplest. As part of his fictionalized autobiography which forms one of the narrative strands of *Kwiaty polskie* Tuwim inserts, with minor changes, the poem *Parademarsz. Wspomnienie z r. 1916*. The poem is a self-dramatization in which the narrator sees his act of crossing the German line of march in order to keep a date with a girl as a patriotic blow for freedom. It is the self-aggrandizement of adolescence, the period of his life to which Tuwim keeps returning in *Kwiaty polskie*. The use of *Parademarsz* in the larger poem seems to function, however, less as self-display and far more as simply a matter of convenience³.

² All page references are to J. Tuwim, *Dziela*, vol. 2, Warszawa 1955.

³ Tuwim made very few and insignificant changes in the text of *Parademarsz*. The major revision is the omission of a twelve-line section which foresaw an uprising of the men in the front lines against their officers — a vision invalidated by history. There is also a consistent subduing of the text by the replacement of exclamation points (which were copious in the original) with periods.

The final example of self-quotation is multi-layered. Not only is it an allusion by Tuwim to his own writing, but it is a quotation within the frame of an apostrophe to *Kwiaty polskie* of the opening words of the poem itself:

...Był sobie niegdyś bukiet wiejski...
 („Bukiety wiejskie, jak wiadomo,
 Wiązane były wzwyż i stromo”...
 Już mi ten dwuwiersz mży legendą,
 Już się śród jego liter przędą
 Słoneczne nitki żalu, marzeń...)
 [.]
 Był sobie...
 Nagle wzrok przezierny
 Śród kwiatów dostrzegł ludzkie twarze...
 I patrz — zza gęstych sztachet wierszy
 Rozbłysły wielkie oczy zdarzeń...
 (277—278)

One can also discern here, if not a direct allusion, then at least an echo of a similar leavetaking in *Evgenij Onegin* between Pushkin and his poetic creation:

Prosti ž i ty, moj sputnik strannyj,
 I ty, moj wiernyj ideal,
 I ty, živoj i postojannyj,
 Xot' malyj trud. [...].
 [.]
 Promčalos' mnogo, mnogo dnej
 S tex por, kak junaja Tat'jana
 I s nej Onegin v smutnom sne
 Javilisja v pervye mne —
 I dal' svobodnogo romana
 Ja skvoz' magičeskij kristall
 Ešče ne jasno različal.
 (VIII: 50)

2. The decorative effect

There are a small number of literary allusions in *Kwiaty polskie* which can be called purely decorative or ornamental. The digression on monsters, for example, is a display of erudition which not coincidentally provides the material for a stunning display of the poet's abilities as a virtuoso:

Te sprawy, czytelniku, znam-ci
 Nie gorzej niż profesor Jan Tur.
 Znam Lycosthena, Aldrovanda,
 Wiem z „Prodigiorum Chroniconu”

O wszelkich bestiach i potworach
Antarktyki i Septentrionu,
(86)

In terms of their effect the allusions in this passage are no different from, for example, the impressive list of thirteen synonyms for "okręt" which Tuwim offers in a later digression (p. 125). In both cases the poet bedazzles his reader with a pyrotechnic verbal display; whether the material used is literary or not is of relatively minor significance. The emphasis is on the poet's craft rather than his message.

Far less dramatic examples of literary allusions which fulfill the same functions of ornamentation are the instances of name dropping which do not serve, by association, to elucidate any point in the text. Passing references to Lucullus (p. 180), *Vanity Fair* (p. 56), Rossinante and Dulcinea (p. 120) are strictly decorative. A less straightforward case of name-dropping is the reference to Iłakowiczówna:

Nie, czytelniku... Całkiem płonne
Są twe obawy, że rozpocznę
Na temat imion snuć przestronne
Poetyczności zaobłoczne.
Nie podejrzewaj, że Anielę
W związku z imieniem wyaniełę,
Że wdam się, à la Iłła miła,
Co z tego wierszy tom zrobiła,
W sprawy magiczne i wróżebne;
Są one tutaj niepotrzebne...
(69—70)

In this case, though, the reference to Iłakowiczówna also functions as an introduction to a discussion of the possible romantic treatment of his plot, which Tuwim rejects.

3. The literary work as artifact

Tuwim's lonely attempt to rescue the Poland of the pre-war era from destruction, by recreating it in poetry, led him to devote several long and moving passages in *Kwiaty polskie* to the evocation of such artifacts of daily life as the contents of a desk drawer, the cries of newsboys, sensory perceptions, etc. Not surprisingly, among the artifacts he was attempting to preserve, Tuwim introduces into *Kwiaty polskie* allusions to literary works of varying value. Except for one instance (the reference to Słonimski discussed below) these works are valued in the poem not as literary creations in their own right, but as material evidence of the culture which they represent.

The clearest example of this preservation of cultural artifacts by means of literary allusion is the following passage where a folk song is

incorporated into the text of *Kwiaty polskie* without typographical indication of the borrowing. Following a description of Dziewierski's suddenly awakened patriotism, Tuwim evokes his own new awareness of the love he as an exile now feels for Poland, and specifically identifies the song alluded to as one of those things which for him *are* now Poland:

Wiedział i w Polsce oczywiście,
Lecz że tak mocno go to ściśnie,
O tym nie wiedział, wolny, młody,
Po tamtej stronie Wielkiej Wody,
Daleko — z tamtej strony Wisły,
Gdzie „kapalàsie” wrona,
A pan kapitan myślał,
Że to jego żona;
Panie kapitanie,
To nie twoja żona,
To jest taki ptaszek,
Nazywa się wrona...
Bo ta piosneczka — to też ona,
Jedyna i nieunikniona,
[.]

(95)

A similar use is made of the brief references to the operettas, vaudeville performances and popular tunes which made up adult petty bourgeois culture during the decade preceding World War I. The corresponding “sophisticated” culture is evoked by the supposed correspondence between Tuwim's character Amelia Folblutowa and Eliza Orzeszkowa on the theme of exalted maternal feelings (pp. 269-270) and the crisp appraisal of Asnyk's place in Polish literature:

[...] W owych czasach,
W przededniu „purpurowych szalów”,
A tuż po orgii czarnych żalób,
Nauczycielem serc kobiecych
Był Asnyk, bukiet „idealów”;
Dziś — zielnik, wtedy — bukiet świeży.
Błogosławiony wiek, co wierzył!

(270)

References to Sherlock Holmes, Nick Carter and other detective stories (p. 151) and to an adventure story titled *Młody wygnaniec* (p. 128) establish some of the artifacts of children's literature at the turn of the century.

A more complicated example of the use of a literary allusion as a piece of cultural documentation is the five-line quotation from Antoni Słonimski's *Czarna wiosna*. The allusion is first introduced by a refrain-

like repetition of one line from the poem: "PANOWIE SZLACHTA! BIJE GROM"! which is said to haunt the memory of the playboy protagonist Folblut. Folblut has been a witness of one of the early evenings at the Skamander *café* "Pod Pikadorem" and it is through his alcohol-beset consciousness that the Skamander debut is seen. *Czarna wiosna* appears as the literary parallel of the social and political upheaval in Warsaw in 1919. It is also linked with a parenthetical apostrophe by Tuwim to Słonimski, recalling and cherishing the early Skamander years. As such it is an indirect form of self-advertisement as well as an appreciation of poetry from the standpoint of literary values:

(Antoni! Oto po ćwierćwieczu,
Zza Atlantyku martwych czasów,
Na którym mnie, rozbitka, trzyma
Poezji ratowniczy prom —
Rozognionymi w dal oczyma
Widzę nasz brzask, ten pierwszy wieczór,
Gdy razem z nami się zaczynał
Historii Polski nowy tom:
Gdy się na przestrzał nam otworzył,
Może i w nędzy, ale w zorzy,
Rozstajny nasz, przydrożny Dom...)

(242)

Our final example of a literary allusion which serves as a cultural document is the imitation of the narrative technique of Wiech (pp. 17-18) in which Tuwim relates the story of three drunken Warsawians, their cabdriver and their encounter with an equally drunken policeman after an accident caused by the heady aroma of lilacs. By taking a ridiculous situation and appropriating Wiech's linguistic mannerisms, Tuwim achieves a highly successful pastiche which has more than one clear-cut function in his poem. The pastiche itself serves as a dual artifact — a recreation of two distinctive but intertwined facets of Polish culture of the period Tuwim is attempting to recapture. Wiech's stories and feuilletons were themselves a literary and cultural institution, while the lower class urban life they stylized was an equally "objective" reality (however distorted in Wiech's humorous vision). Tuwim, in parodying Wiech, celebrates both the social reality and its literary refraction as a product of his times. To the extent, however, that parody is a performance, the fragment in question can also be considered to perform a decorative function in the poem. Finally, it should be noted that Tuwim intended to make further use of his Wiechian characters. It was his intention at one point to show them under war-time conditions, to demonstrate how these most ordinary people would rise to the situation and emerge as heroes. The passage, quite unsuccessful in its flat and banal

heroics, was ultimately rejected by Tuwim. As he himself remarked, it was "more suitable for streetsong than a poem" ("Nie poematu— lecz piosenki / Godni ulicznej...", p. 283).

4. The polemical allusion

There are a small number of allusions in *Kwiaty polskie* in which the work or author referred to functions as a political or social symbol of a phenomenon against which Tuwim is polemicizing, or which are used, out of their original context, for purposes of a non-literary argument. The simplest of these references are the brief allusions to right-wing writers of the 30's whom Tuwim attacks for their political, not their literary, efforts. All of these references are concentrated in the six-page diatribe which closes Part I of the poem. Here we find Gałczyński remembered in one of his worst hours ("Gdy groził 'nocą długich noży' / Liryk, deliryk, satanista", p. 110). Lesser literary lights are also assailed:

Kiedy sztrabanclom z oenerii
Miedziński składał ukłon dworski,
A Słonimskiego bił w cukierni
Plagiografoman Ipohorski;
[.]
A dla mnie szubienicy żądał
Poeta polski Pierd-Piertkiewicz;
[.]
Hula-babula Hulewica,
Kontryfalowa hitlerzyca;
(pp. 111—112)

This section is clearly a bitter and venomous denunciation of political enemies whose literary calling is, for Tuwim, of only secondary importance.

In this same general fragment Tuwim alludes to the popular Legion song *O, mój rozmarynie* (which figures elsewhere as a kind of theme song for Dziewierski) as a symbol of the kinds of humane values destroyed by rightists during the 30's. The opposition between hypocritical sentiments and deeds is revealed:

Gdy zwiądl rozmaryn, kwiat prześliczny
Polskiej paproci romantycznej
(Pamiętasz? „O, mój rozmarynie...”
I pierwsza łza gorąca spłynie,
Że zakwitł... jest... więc ty do kwiecia:
„Rozwijaj się” — i druga, trzecia,
A ty przynaglasz, szerzej, głośniej,
I płynie: „O, mój rozmarynie,
Rozwijaj się!...” [...] [.]

I śpiewasz: „Pójdę do jedynej,
Zapytam się...” —

Zapytaj się:

O podeptane butem kwiecie,
Choćby o jedno pięciolecie —
Kiedy się Wilk Żelazny rozpadł
Na setki piesków skocz-hitlerków,
[.]

(109)

The sentimental romantic song is here made by Tuwim to bear the burden of an increasingly emotional argument and is (perhaps because the song is not equal to the demand made on it) one of the weaker spots in this long rhetorical section.

The scathing vituperative attack on his reader whom Tuwim identifies in this monologue as a secret Nazi sympathizer comes to a raging end with a quotation from *Pan Tadeusz*. Tuwim begins the passage with a mocking parody of his new-found admirer's approbation and goes on to unmask him:

— Mój demokrato, któryś z wtorku
Na środe tak się zmył do czysta,
Że, myślę, z Rio do New Yorku
Pojedziesz jako... komunista.
Mój anglofilu i zelancie
Wolności, tolerancji, prawa,
Co ze mną jesteś dziś w aliansie,
Za dobrze, mój figlarzu, znam cię...

(108—109)

After citing a long list of fascistic offenses against which this reader could have protested in the years preceding the war, Tuwim brings his indictment to a close with a resounding refusal to ally himself in any way with former fascists and anti-Semites:

„A sio!”, jak mówią. „A ze szkody!”
...Bo ja pamiętam Grzmot Majowy
I ogień wiary mojej młodej,
Że się w tej Polsce ucieleśni
Sen z czarodziejskiej opowieści,
Jeśli się ziścił sen wiekowy...
Ale się prześnił... prędko prześnił.
„A sio!” powtarzam. „A ze szkody!”
Nie ma „aliansu”.. „NIE MA ZGODY,
MOPANKU”.

Taki koniec pieśni.

(113).

By closing the first part of *Kwiaty polskie* with a quotation from *Pan Tadeusz* Tuwim in effect assumes the role of Gerwazy, that ir-

rascible defender of the old order who refuses to admit of peace between the two feuding clans. Gerwazy may be wrong, even a bit absurd in his passionate obstinacy, but he is indisputably noble. By adopting Gerwazy's stance and fitting Mickiewicz's words to his own purposes, Tuwim affixes the seal of Polishness on his own position. He — the Jewish poet, political and ethnic outcast — remains the preserver of what is Polish, the cultivator of the Polish flowers which can bloom now only in the hothouse of poetry.

Tuwim had also used the device of alluding to *Pan Tadeusz* for polemical extra-literary purposes in two earlier sections of *Kwiaty polskie*. In both cases he compares and contrasts, through the medium of a literary allusion, a vulgar ugly reality of the present with the idyllic legend of manorial life in *Pan Tadeusz* which has come to represent the essence of the Sarmatian tradition. The first instance of this use of Mickiewicz occurs during Tuwim's description of the resort at Inowłódz which he depicts as the summer residence of his youth. Tuwim describes in considerable detail the petty bourgeois tone of the resort — its shabby buildings and low-brow "culture". Despite the hostility which suffuses this description there is also (as in so many of the reminiscent fragments of *Kwiaty polskie*) an undertone of all-forgiving nostalgia. The lengthy description of the clientele at Inowłódz is strikingly summed up in one laconic comparison:

Takie letnisko. Jedno słowo:
Wypisz-wymaluj — Soplicowo.
(32)

Here, with a master stroke, Tuwim admits into full Polish citizenship the "Łódź Goldbergs" who frequent such resorts. By comparing Soplicowo with Inowłódz Tuwim both elevates his Jewish non-heroes and debunks the aura of sanctity surrounding the outmoded and absurdly heroic manorial life described by Mickiewicz. (This is not to deny that there is also in this comparison a strong element of mockery, which expresses Tuwim's ambiguous attitude toward the resort — his youthful contempt for its petty preoccupations and his mellow nostalgia and guilt as an exile safely living through the physical extermination of these Jews whose daily existence he had earlier mocked.)

The second such allusion to *Pan Tadeusz* also opposes to the world of Mickiewicz's poem the painful realities of rural poverty in independent Poland:

Wracam do willi. A po drodze
Był sad. BYŁ SAD. Zauważ plagiat,
Dwusłowy wprowadzie, lecz bezsporny.
Lecz jakaś poetycka magia

Ten fakt wczaruje w nowe formy,
 Oryginalne, własne? [...]
 [.]
 Piszę: „był sad”, bo właśnie sad był:
 Mizerny, rzadki i zwarzony,
 Z ubogim sadownikiem-Żydem.
 (38—39)

What lends considerable interest to this passage (and the naturalistic description of the poverty-stricken Jewish gardener which follows it) is the provocative “plagiarism” which undoubtedly would escape most readers: attention had Tuwim not underscored the allusion so insistently. “Był sad” refers to the kitchen garden in *Pan Tadeusz* in which the romantic Count spies Zosia feeding geese amidst a clamorous flock of dirty peasant children. While the Count was taken aback by the rude shock of reality to his idyllic fantasy, Tuwim insists on a far uglier reality than that which disturbed the Count’s sensibilities. Here again, as in the preceding description of Inowódz, Tuwim alludes provocatively to *Pan Tadeusz* in order to legitimize as Polish the unpoetic manifestations of Polish Jewish life.

All three of the *Pan Tadeusz* allusions share the same basic impulse: Tuwim, in each of them, detaches a few words from their context and then wrenches the entire poem from its own cultural context as a national epic in order to adopt its authority in defense of his own sense of reality.

An anomalous use of literary allusion masking, this time, a religious polemic, occurs in Tuwim’s portrayal of Dziewierski’s idiosyncracies. Among the gardener’s various eccentric preoccupations Tuwim refers to his having once copied out in microscopic script the text of Psalm 42. Under the guise of providing documentary evidence of his protagonist’s activities Tuwim presents his own translation of almost the entire text of the Psalm⁴. Tuwim’s translation subtly diverges in a few places from the standard versions of the Psalm, particularly in the shift from the declarative statements of the singer’s praise of God to a rhetorical question which challenges divine justice (“Nie chadzałem do Twej świątyni / Z weselem, z chwałą, jako inni?”, p. 78). Tuwim’s version ends on a note of challenge: “Ozwij się, skało, gdy cię wzywam!...”, which is interpolated into the text and replaces the four conciliatory concluding lines of the original in which the Psalmist recognizes that the burden of praising God remains his irrespective of whether his praise elicits a divine response or not. Tuwim’s version is, instead, marked by an irritable aggressive-

⁴ The entire text was included in the original publication of this section in “Wiadomości Polskie” (London), II: 18 (60), 4 May 1941.

ness which identifies the resolution of divine indifference as God's problem, not man's.

The position of alienation from a divine order suggested by this translation and its attribution to Dziewierski serves a dual function in the text as it is identified with both Tuwim and his protagonist. Like the description of Dziewierski's flight to art from the fear of the abyss, it is one of the several moments in *Kwiaty polskie* in which the fluid boundary between the gardener's incoherent preoccupations and Tuwim's own projected personality evaporates.

5. Metapoetry

The metapoetic literary allusions of *Kwiaty polskie* are only one element of a general concern with the nature of poetry which appears in varying form throughout the poem. (See for example the programmatic statements on Dziewierski's art (pp. 76-77) and the invocation to poetry which opens Part II of the poem.)

Because it would lead too far afield we will not consider here the several extended fragments of *Kwiaty polskie* in which Tuwim develops and expounds a sometimes contradictory *ars poetica*, although its central paradox is made explicit by means of literary allusion:

Zwyczajnych ludzi zwykle dzieje,
Codzienne sprawy ich i troski,
Nie mniej ciekawe niż koleje
Person tragedii Szekspirowskiej.
[.]
A potem — trzeba by Szekspirów,
By w wiekopomne zakuć słowa
Łódzkich Otellów, Królów Learów
I was, Ofelie z Tomaszowa!
(33)

This provocative and paradoxical affirmation of the poetry of ordinary events leads naturally into a description of Tuwim's early fascination with the poetry of Leopold Staff. Tuwim's tribute to Staff first focuses on the emotional impact Staff's poetry had on him as a youth and then blends into an elaboration of and commentary on Staff's poem *Dzieciństwo*:

Czytam: „Poezja starych studni”; —
Tak, to poezja: gdy głos dudni
W chłodnym, spleśniałym mroku studni;
I to poezja: martwy zegar —
Milczenie, śmierć, a czas ubiega.
Strych, nieme skrzypce, już bez grajka —
I one martwe, jak ten zegar:
Są, ale pieśń się nie rozlega.

Rupiecie strychów — marność, marność,
 Znieruchomienie i umarłość...
 „Księga, gdzie niezapominajka
 Drzemie” — znów martwość, zaprzestanie,
 Jak zegar, skrzypce: bezruch, trwanie. —
 Dzieciństwo, pełne snów, oniemień...
 [.]
 [...] wszystko stare,
 Skazane śmierci na ofiarę;
 Tak od zarania do starości
 Trwa niszczyielskiej mocy pościg
 (I to poezja? Jak latarki
 Magicznej cuda na tapecie?).
 Wszystko jak ja: motyle, marki,
 Odjazdy w wszystkie świata części,
 Sen niedorzeczny... sen jak szczęście...
 (35—36)

In the thirty-one lines of this passage Tuwim offers an interpretation of Staff's sonnet and concomitantly a dramatization of his reaction to it as a youth. Prominent in this reaction is the wondering sense of discovery — the overwhelming experience of poetry as something that can speak to one of one's own deepest experience. Tuwim's interpretation of *Dzieciństwo*, however, places more emphasis on death than does the original. Staff's vision of the odds and ends in the attic is magical, a world of fantasy and romance and the mysteries of a child's imagination. For Tuwim the magic remains but the awareness of death is always present. Despite the differences in interpretation the essential "lesson" of Tuwim's reading of *Dzieciństwo* is clear: it is poetry because it is real and recognizable but also magical:

Jak on wie wszystko, *ten czarodziej...*
 We Lwowie? Nie: To było w Łodzi.
To było wszędzie i tak samo!
Tak, to poezja, bo — to samo...
 (36; italics added)

This analysis complements the later definition of poetry: "Poezja! lampo czarnoksięska / I lampo laboratoryjna!" (p. 118). The fragment is resolved as it began with an "autobiographical" incident. Tuwim's final tribute to Staff is his writing his first poem in the margin of the volume of Staff's poetry ⁵.

⁵ Although there is no direct allusion to *Evgenij Onegin* in this passage, Tuwim's sentimental-ironic attitude towards his younger self is strongly reminiscent of Pushkin's indulgent criticism of Lenskij's romantic effusions (*Evgenij Onegin*, II: 10). In both cases derision is so tempered by indulgence as to be virtually negated (with the essential difference that Pushkin, despite his mockery, composes for Lenskij a perfectly good sample of Romantic verse (VI: 21-22) while the young Tuwim's verse is unquestionably inept).

A lesser example of metapoetic allusion is the implied contrast between *Król Duch* and *Pan Tadeusz* which appear, respectively, on the minus and plus sides of Tuwim's long catalogue of likes and dislikes (pp. 71-72). Elsewhere, in a manner typical of the digressive-narrative genre, Tuwim suggests one traditional direction that his own narrative might develop in:

Jak mocno śwędzi wietrzne piórko,
By w związku z nieszczęśliwą córką,
Na konia wsadzić ogrodnika,
Nie, nie na konia! — na konika,
Co, klusem lekkich jambów gnany,
Wystukałby nam podkówkami
Starą piosenkę o małżeństwie
Polki z „Moskalem” — i męczeństwie
Ojca, prawego Polonusa...

(72)

Here, as in an earlier passage in this section where he rejects the temptation to make a mystic out of Dziewierski, Tuwim rejects the romantic-symbolist tradition in the name of sensible verisimilitude. In both instances the allusion is to a cultural tradition and literary mode, rather than to one particular literary work.

To summarize, all of the metapoetic allusions affirm the belief expressed in the first quotation under this heading: that poetry can and should be found in the ordinary lives of ordinary people.

6. The “enlarging” function

The largest group of literary allusions in *Kwiaty polskie* is also the most difficult to classify. The allusions in this group are less specialized in function and more nearly demonstrate the “normal” basic function of the literary allusion: they serve to enhance the text by lending to the particular sentiments or incidents described therein a certain universality by reflecting them in the mirror of another literary work. (Unlike the metapoetic allusions, the emphasis here is on *Kwiaty polskie* and not on the work cited or on poetry in general.) In addition, these allusions can also be used to further define the fictional characters of the poem in terms of their literary awareness.

Our first example of the enlarging function is the definition of Dziewierski's circumstances by his link with Othello. Dziewierski is intimately connected with Othello through a weird chain of circumstances and the images of Othello (the Shakespearian hero, the dead but real actor, and the *papier-maché* player fashioned by Dziewierski) all haunt the gardener until he breaks with his ghosts entirely by seeking refuge in a fervent patriotism. The Othello theme first appears as it is re-

fracted in the imagination of Dziewierski's young granddaughter. Aniela, who has often seen her grandfather stage *Othello* in his *papier-maché* playhouse, perceives the rudimentary Othello theme in a clash of floral colours:

[...] Do ogrodu,
Gdzie pośród róż i rezed mieszka
Błękitnooka białośnieżka,
Królewna z lilijnego rodu,
Wdarł się gorący Murzyn krwawy,
Straszny, błyszczący król z Afryki,
[.]
Rzuca się na nią, w usta wpija,
Przygniata, pierś do piersi ciśnie!
(28)

The basic complication in Dziewierski's life (outside the time sequence of the narrative but related in flashbacks) is the affair Dziewierski's dead wife Andzia may have had with a Negro actor who played Othello. For the most part Dziewierski is preoccupied with a "real-life" situation which mirrors only the racial aspect of *Othello* but which is complicated by the dual role of the actor, as a make-believe Othello on stage and a real Cassio in his affair with Andzia (if there really was such an affair). In Tuwim's version of a reduced Othello it is Dziewierski, not the Moor, who is inordinately jealous, although his jealousy does not lead to a tragic denouement. The parallel with *Othello* suggests, indeed, that Dziewierski's suspicions about his wife may have been as unfounded as Othello's about Desdemona. Tuwim leaves the question open:

A prawda gdzie? Po wieki wieków,
Póki odrzucasz cień, człowieku,
Tylko w Williamie opętanym,
Co wszystkie kręgi piekła obiegi!
„Nie”, mówi cień... „Tak”, mruczy człowiek...
I myślą, że trafili w sedno,
A straszny William, co był na dnie,
Jak duch podnosi się z zapadni
I wyrokuje: „Wszystko jedno”...
(89—90)

Finally, direct English quotations from *Othello* are introduced as the climax to Dziewierski's epiphany-like realization of his love for his wife. The fact that the gardener does not know English adds to the mystery of his experience:

Była to może noc Przemiany
I cudu — wyraźnego cudu:
Bo ręką strącił cień ze ściany,
Na ziemię rzucił i podeptał...

I raptem, w mowie mu nie znanej,
Perdition catch my soul, wyszeptał,
*But I do love thee. [...]*⁶

(90)

Dziewierski's marital tragedy, a real-life reduction of the grandeur of Othello's tragic jealousy, seems then to be Tuwim's attempt to illustrate his proposition that "Zwyczajnych ludzi zwykle dzieje, [...] Nie mniej ciekawe niż koleje / Person tragedii Szekspirowskiej", by identifying in ordinary life a theme of Shakespearian magnitude.

The first of the major enlarging allusions in *Kwiaty polskie* is also the first personal lyric digression of the poem. It is a rich example of the many-layered complexity of Tuwim's art in this work at its best. Tuwim is attempting to capture the distinguishing characteristics of roses in a country bouquet:

A woń kwiatowej mają wody,
 Świeżej jak w mojej Łodzi młodej
 Kwietniowy dyngus na Piotrkowskiej
 I uśmiech Zosi Opęchowskiej.
 Gdzie jesteś dziś, dziewczyno śliczna,
 O dwu warkoczach wyłożonych,
 Na pierś, wzdłuż ramion, przerzuconych,
 Smukła i smagła, i pszeniczna,
 Miodna, dysząca płonem pszczelnym
 I wiatrem w zbożu pochylonem,
 I wczesnym na wsi dniem niedzielnym,
 Gdy kolorowe, krochmalone,
 Krajkami szumiąc wzorzystemi,
 Ścieżką przydrożną idą z siola
 Kwietne dziewczęta do kościoła:
 Z oczyma niebu odjętemi
 I chabrom inowłodzkiej ziemi;
 Choć wystrojone, idą boso,
 Trzewiki na ramionach niosą.
 Wcześniej na świecie — i po łące
 Świeżości płyną parujące.
 Ja, siadłszy na zwałonym drzewie,
 Patykiem w pniu żywicznym grzebię,
 Wyciągam bursztynowe pasmo
 W nitkę wciąż cieńszą, aż pajęczą;
 Las pachnie mocno, kwiaty brzęczą;
 Zamykam oczy — jak w nich jasno!

⁶ The other direct quotation in English from *Othello* marks a curious shift in voice from Tuwim as narrator to Tuwim speaking in the first person. Sentiments which previously were attributed to Dziewierski become, by implication, Tuwim's as well. It is Tuwim himself who utters Othello's words: "*I am declined, jak rzekł Otello, Into the vale of years... I błądzę*" (p. 91).

Otwieram oczy — co to? o czym?

Urwana nitka... Gdzie warkocze?

Gdzie echo napiętego rymu?

Gdzie wiersz? gdzie sen?

„Kłębami dymu

Niechaj otoczę się”... I płaczę.

(11—12)

This digressive fragment begins ostensibly by direct association with the fragrance of the roses the poet is describing, which leads him back to memories of his youth and the freshness characterized by the smile of a young girl he has known. Following the description of girls going to church (also a memory from youth), the associational basis of the vision shifts. If at first memory was awakened by the fragrance of the roses, now another association emerges as the triggering one: “Tuwim”, sitting on a tree-stump somewhere, at some time, pulls out a strand of resin whose golden glow is like the blond hair of the girl of memory. With the breaking of the resinous thread the life-like memory of the braids snaps too and the boundary between dream, life and verse again exists, however unclearly, where for one instant it had disappeared and all were fused. The fragment concludes with an appropriate quotation from *Beniowski*. The stanza of that poem from which the quoted line is taken makes it apparent that Tuwim’s carefully wrought lyrical digression into “personal memory” is to a large extent an elaboration of Słowacki’s musings on his own lost youth:

Kłębami dymu niechaj się otoczę,

Niech o młodości pomarzę półseny.

Czuje, jak pachnie, kochanki warkocze

Widzę, jaki ma w oczach blask promienny;

Czuje znów smutki tęskne i prorocze,

Wtórjuje mi znów szumiąc liść jesienny,

Na próżno serce truciznami poim!...

Kochanko pierwszych dni! — Znów jestem twoim.

(IV:473—480)

Tuwim’s elaboration of Słowacki’s digression is so convincing as personal memory that it is difficult to know where to draw the boundary between his memory as he wishes to portray it and Słowacki’s poetry. The fusion of these two lends a further layer of meaning to the closing question, “Gdzie wiersz? gdzie sen?” Tuwim’s reverie is more complex than Słowacki’s both in attention to details and in the levels of memory it evokes. Where Słowacki goes directly to the past, Tuwim, as we have seen, piles layer upon layer and blends them with each other so expertly as to make it next to impossible to distinguish them. His ability to weave so many different strands together into an integral pattern is, of course, one of the triumphs of *Kwiaty polskie*.

In contrast to the harmonious fusion of allusion and text in the passage based on Słowacki, a curious discrepancy between what can be assumed to have been Tuwim's intent in introducing a literary allusion and its actual effect can be seen in the following fragment. Tuwim is describing the sickly slum children of Łódź:

Upiorki znad cuchnącej Łódki,
Z zapadłą piersią, starym wzrokiem,
Siadając w kucki nad rynsztokiem,
Puszczają papierowe łódki
Na ścieki, tęczujące tłusto
Mętami farbek z apretury —
I płyną w ślad nędzarskich jachtów
Marzenia, a za nimi — szczury.
Wiatr zawiał. A z szumnego wiewu
Napływa śpiew rozkołysany
Szaleńca: *J'ai heurté, savez-vous?*
D'incroyables Florides? — Pijany
Rozbijał statek oceany
Śród tłoku cudów, barw zalewu,
Tańcząc na pieśni fal — i nagle:
„Jeżeli jakiej wody pragnę
Tam w Europie, to kałuży,
Gdzie dziecko schyla się nad bagnem
I puszcza o zmrokowej chwili
Statki wątlejsze od motyli”...⁷.

(41—42)

By means of the association between the children's paper boats and the drunken boat of Rimbaud's *Le Bateau ivre* (which itself dissolves into a child's boat) Tuwim's depiction of slum childhood shades into a tribute to the "madman" poet who so influenced Tuwim's generation. As in the preceding fragment, it is difficult to draw a line between Tuwim's "genuine" vision and his pleasure at a display of his talents at translation and assimilation of another poet's work. The most striking aspect of this particular use of literary allusion is the strange conflict between its intended and its actual effect. Presumably, Tuwim meant the quotation from *Le Bateau ivre* to heighten the pathos of his poignant depiction of slum childhood. Instead, Rimbaud's nostalgic recollection of "statki wątlejsze od motyli" lends Tuwim's picture a poetic aura which he, as ideologue, would surely have rejected. (Similar tensions between Tuwim

⁷ The translated lines read in the original:

Si je désire une eau d'Europe, c'est la flache
Noire et froide ou vers le crépuscule embaumé
Un enfant accroupi plein de tristesses, lache
Un bateau frêle comme un papillon de mai.

Cf. A. Rimbaud, *Le Bateau ivre*, [in:] *Oeuvres*, Paris 1958, pp. 110-114.

the "revolutionary" ideologue and Tuwim the nostalgic, essentially conservative, exile occur on several occasions in *Kwiaty polskie*).

An example of the opposite effect, in which an allusion suffuses an entire passage with political implications, occurs in the following fragment. The passage begins with Tuwim's description of the colors denoting the different bus lines in Łódź and then passes to a depiction of working people seen in the streets of the city:

W bramie robotnik usiadł stary,
Suche kartofle z miski je,
A kolor jego żółtoszary,
Bo głodno, chłodno, brudno, źle.
[.]
Popatrz na usta tej dziewczyny,
Podręcznej z magazynu mód:
A kolor ich niebieskosiny,
Bo smutno, trudno, chłód i głód.
[.]
W tryby maszyny rozpetanej
Robotnik rzuca resztki sił,
A kolor jego ołowiany,
Bo na nim metalowy pył.
(59)

Finally the source of the pattern indicated here is clearly identified:

Za barykadą — tłum stłoczony,
A nad nią, w górę podniesiony,
Sztandar-wyzwanie, sztandar-gniew:
A kolor jego jest czerwony,
Bo na nim robotników krew.
(60)

The refrain-like echoing of the revolutionary anthem, *Czerwony sztandar*, underlines the revolutionary implications of the social conditions to which Tuwim draws attention in this section and serves as a logical prelude to the succeeding description of the 1905 workers' uprising. In this fragment (which bridges the digressive and narrative strands of the poem) one stanza of *Czerwony sztandar* is directly introduced as the rallying cry of the revolutionary workers and thus, in the latter instance, fulfills primarily a documentary function.

Perhaps the most far-reaching literary allusion in its effect of enlarging characterization is found in the last part of *Kwiaty polskie*. An episodic character, an old actor, is first introduced as an element of a Homeric simile for the "proto-wind" of creation, and soon develops into an independent character:

Wspomnienia szumne lubi wiatr...
 Tak aktor, tragik starej szkoły,
 Co w rolach królów grzmiał przed laty,
 Wspomina młodych dni żywioły:
 Pięcioaktowe swe dramaty.
 A ten najczęściej: gdy w zamęcie
 Rozpaczy starczej, w noc burzliwą,
 Przy gromów akompaniamencie
 Łbem skołatany dziko trzęsie,
 W chłoszczące niebo wznosi pięście
 I klnie swą dolę nieszczęśliwą...
 Lub gdy, przedśmiertnie obłąkany,
 Trupowi córki ukochanej
 Żale swe szlocha, klęski, krzywdy,
 Rzezi chwytając się za szyję
 I — „Nigdy! nigdy! nigdy! nigdy!”
 I po raz piąty „Nigdy!” wyje.
 [.]
 Dziś nie Szekspiry i nie liry...
 Dziś za pięć złotych i kolację
 Da w Starym Sączu w restauracji
 „Wieczór humoru i satyry”.

(177—178)

The actor, who had once merely entered into the role of Lear, is now its very embodiment. Lear's homeless fate and the howling tempest are repeated in reduced form in the actor's circumstances to the accompaniment of the vicious Tatra winds. While on the one hand the particular tragedy of the actor is ennobled and universalized by the allusion to Lear, on the other hand it is emphatically maintained on the level of dreary, eternal reality. Reality is unfortunately much duller than tragedy and the final word on the actor's fate is not Shakespeare's but Gogol's: "Skuczno / na etom swiecie, gospoda!" (p. 179)⁸. The fate of the actor as refracted through the allusion to Lear is also, in a sense, Tuwim's. Thus, in one of those strange ironic reversals which appear so frequently in *Kwiaty polskie*, Tuwim the poet who aspired to be a Shakespeare for ordinary heroes, has become a very ordinary character himself, playing out a deflated version of a Shakespearian role. The depiction of the restaurant where the old actor vainly awaits his audience ends with a description of the inevitable menu found in such eating-houses. From this starting point Tuwim digresses into a joyous celebration of Polish delicacies which ends with a poignant evocation of herring in cream sauce:

I wreszcie on, srebrzystej wódki
 (Koniecznie dużej, zimnej, czystej)
 Najulubiejszy druh srebrzysty,

⁸ From *Povest' o tom, kak possorilis' Ivan Ivanovič s Ivanom Nikiforovičem*.

Kawior ubogich, ust pokusa,
 Bezsenne noce Lukullusa,
 Modły kartofli parujących,
 W niebo podniebień dym wznoszących,
 Brat mleczny żwawych rybich panien:
 Marynowany śledź w śmietanie!
 ...Jest i w New Yorku ten specyjał,
 I wódkę-m już pod niego pijał,
 Lecz wódka nie ta i śledź nie ten,
 I nie ta aura nad bufetem,
 I nie ja nawet... Mówiąc krótko:
 Nam w Polsce, śledziu! w Polsce, wódko! [180]

The bravado with which this digression within a digression ends contributes to a double elaboration of the personal theme of Tuwim's exile. For not only does Tuwim admit that even he is not the same, but his confession of the pain of exile points back along the tortuous digressive path to the isolated broken Lear and clearly marks him as an analogue of the poet himself.

The last allusions which we shall consider here are the two quotations which serve as epigrams for the poem as a whole. The first is from *Beniowski*: „Próchno się w gwiazdy rozlata...”; the second, from Pushkin's *Cygany*: “I vsjudu strasti rokove / I ot sudeb zaščity net...” Together they amount to a commentary on both the “message” and the form of *Kwiaty polskie*. The quotation from *Cygany* speaks for itself as a succinct reminder of man's helplessness before the fates. If the ubiquitousness of “fatal passions” is not so clearly dramatized in *Kwiaty polskie*, the second line of the quotation is amply documented. A strange fate, in the form of history, casts its shadow over the lives of all the main fictional characters of Tuwim's poem and, even more significantly, over the poet himself and his native land to whose threatened existence this poem serves as monument. The quotation from *Beniowski* (also of course a digressive narrative poem) serves as a precise yet flexible metaphor for the digressive narrative form of *Kwiaty polskie* itself in which sparks of genius fly off from a central, disintegrating, but still vital core.

O NIEKTÓRYCH FUNKCJACH ALUZJI LITERACKIEJ W „KWIATACH POLSKICH”

STRESZCZENIE

Jedną z cech poematu dygresyjno-narracyjnego jest szczególna literacka atmosfera przejawiająca się m. in. zwłaszcza w częstym użyciu aluzji literackiej. *Kwiaty polskie* Juliana Tuwima pełne są takich aluzji — zgodnie zresztą z tradycjami tego gatunku literackiego.

Aluzje literackie występujące w *Kwiatach polskich* zarówno w narracyjnym, jak i dygresyjnym wątku stanowią ogniwo łączące. Aluzje te są różnorodne, poczynając od zwięzłych, drobnych uwag dotyczących jakiegoś utworu literackiego lub autora, cytatów i parafraz, a kończąc na komentarzach do omawianego dzieła. Aluzja literacka może być liryczna, retoryczna bądź dyskursywna.

Kwiaty polskie zawierają przeszło 50 aluzji literackich, pełniących 6 różnych funkcji (przy czym niektóre aluzje pełnią kilka funkcji równocześnie):

1. Autocytat, służący wypowiedzi odautorskiej.
2. Funkcja upiększająca. Aluzje tego typu służą przede wszystkim celom zdobniczym, nie wpływając w najmniejszym stopniu na sens ani na jasność wywodu tych partii tekstu, w których występują.

3. Dzieło literackie jako dzieło sztuki. Tuwim cytuje w takich wypadkach dzieła, które uważa za wyraz polskiej kultury literackiej. Są to: popularne piosenki, przygodowa literatura dla dzieci, felietony Wiecha, *Czarna wiosna* Słonimskiego. Cytowane tu utwory traktowane są nie jako dzieła literackie w ścisłym tego słowa znaczeniu, lecz jako cenne wartości kultury zagrożonej zniszczeniem. Tuwim pragnie je w ten sposób ocalić od zagłady.

4. Aluzja polemiczna. Aluzja literacka może służyć jako „broń” w sporze literackim. W *Kwiatach polskich* wiele aluzji typu retorycznego odnosi się do pisarzy tzw. „prawego skrzydła”, których Tuwim atakuje za poglądy polityczne. Interesujący zwłaszcza jest w tej kategorii polemicznej cykl trzech aluzji do *Pana Tadeusza*. Tuwim prowokacyjnie posługuje się cytatami z tego poematu, aby dowieść polskości Żydów.

5. Metapoezja. Aluzje metapoetyckie w *Kwiatach polskich* są jednym z elementów ogólnego związku z istotą poezji. Program literacki Tuwima streszcza się w zaskakującym stwierdzeniu, że życie zwykłych ludzi nie jest wcale mniej dramatyczne od życia bohaterów szekspirowskich, a przy tym trzeba by właśnie Szekspira, aby opisać tragiczne dzieje tych szarych ludzi. Potwierdzeniu tego służy fragment poematu, w którym Tuwim wprowadza cytaty z sonetu Staffa *Dzieciństwo*, oświadczenie raz jeszcze je przeżywa, komentuje i własne reakcje na te utwory nasycą dramatyzmem.

6. Funkcja „rozszerzająca”. Uważa się ją często za „normalną” funkcję aluzji literackiej. Aluzja zostaje wpleciona w tekst, aby zwykłej sprawie nadać bardziej uniwersalne znaczenie. Przykładem użycia aluzji literackiej w takiej właśnie funkcji jest zestawienie ogrodnika Dziewierskiego z Otellem. Już mniej bezpośrednio porównuje Tuwim ból swojego własnego wygnania z losem banity Leara; do tego posłużyła mu epizodyczna postać głośnego niegdyś szekspirowskiego aktora, obecnie zapomnianego. Najbardziej wyszukaną aluzją tego typu jest liryczna dygresja, która przybrała formę osobistych wspomnień i została zręcznie a subtelnie wpleciona w „pieśń” przeniesioną z *Beniowskiego*.

Wreszcie dwie ostatnie aluzje stanowią jakby epigramy podsumowujące cały poemat. Są to: wyjątek z *Cyganów* Puszkina („I wszędu strasti rokowyje / I ot sudieb zaszczity niet”), oraz z *Beniowskiego* („Próchno się w gwiazdy rozlata...”).

Przełożyła Anna Kruczkiewiczowa