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FOLK VOCAL MUSIC AS AN INSPIRATION FOR 20TH-CENTURY POLISH VERSE (A BRIEF OVERVIEW)

Elements of folk vocal music can be observed in 20th-century Polish poetry, both in the original form and mediated through imitation. The most basic type of unmediated reference to folk songs, namely a direct quotation (most often of a part of the vocal form), either creates an autonomous fragment within the poem – autonomous in its lexical, stylistic or verse dimension – or determines the shape of the whole poem. Apart from the usual imitation at a lexical level, a special role is played by the imitation of versification, whose purpose is to refer to the melic prototype of folk poetry (Dłuska 1970). The subject matter, involving rural life, customs or beliefs, typically serves the same function. Such references, which converge at the level of genre, can thus be found at different levels of a literary text. It is, therefore, necessary to consider a few poems that exemplify the various types of reference, among which we will focus on those related to versification.

A unique example in the history of the relations between folk music and the poetry of the period under discussion is "Marsz zbójecki ze *Skalnego Podhala*" ("The Highland Robbers' March from the *Rocky Podhale Region*") by Kazimierz Przerwa-Tetmajer, published at the turn of the 20th century in his *Poezje. Seria Piąta* (*Poems. The Fifth Series*). Inspired by Polish highlanders' folklore, the poem was created as a poetic work, yet, unlike the other poems analyzed in this article, it returned, with a musical accompaniment, to the folk culture as one of the most popular songs of the Podhale region. The return was possible due to some of its features that tightly bound it to the region's poetry and vocal music. This can be seen even in the first stanza of the poem (Przerwa-Tetmajer 1980: 821):

Hej! idem w las – piórko się mi migoce!
Hej! idem w las – dudni ziemia, gdy krocę!
Ka wywinem ciupazecką – krew cerwonom wytocę!
Ka obyrtnem siekierecką – krew mi spod nóg bulkoce![1]

First of all, we notice the regular form of the verse, which depends on two syllabic patterns: an 11-syllable verse (4 + 7) and a fifteener (8 + 7), both clearly marked with elements of an accentual-syllabic pattern. As we can see, the length of the second hemistich in all the lines is identical, but the first hemistich in the longer lines could be interpreted as a doubled first hemistich from the shorter lines. The metrical and syntactical shapes of the verse reveal the influence of two syllabic patterns popular in old folk songs from the Podhale region: the 4-syllable and the 7-syllable. They have been combined in the poem to form a single line, but their autonomy is emphasized by the dashes which consistently agree with the caesurae. All these features point to the melic character of the presumed sources of "The Highland Robbers' March," as well as to the melic character of the verse itself – viewed as an element of the song it became a part of.

Other metrical phenomena characteristic of the early modernist poetry influenced by folk music appear in "Taniec zbójnicki" ("The Highland Robbers' Dance"), which was written somewhat earlier by Jan Kasprowicz. We will begin by considering a long fragment of a verse which consists of two different syllabic patterns (Kasprowicz 1958: 514):

Hej! to nie Dunajec wody swe tu ciska;
Płynie on, jak dawniej, popod Kościeliska!

To końskie kopyta tętnią tak po moście,
Na orawski zamek h a r n i jadą goście,
Z pałaszem na przedzie,
Janosik ich wiedzie!
Hej!
Panowie, panowie,
Husarscy hersztowie,
Teraz nie po naszej, lecz po waszej głowie!
Hej![2]

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[1] Hey! I'm going into the forest – the feather on my hat is flickering!
Hey! I'm going into the forest – the ground thundering while I'm swaggering!
Where I'll brandish my shepherd's axe – I will spill red blood!
Where I'll whirl my hatchet – blood will bubble from under my feet! (trans. AT)
[2] Hey! This is not the Dunajec River throwing its waters here;
It flows as it used to, towards Kościeliska!

These are horse hoofs beating on the bridge,
Proud guests are arriving at Orava Castle,
His backsword in front,

Lucylla Pszczołowska highlights the correspondence between the dodecasyllabic fragments of the verse and "the authentic metre of many highlanders' songs" (Pszczołowska 1997: 291). It must, however, be noted that this metrical pattern is a derivative of the 6-syllable form, which reigned supreme in the oral poetry of the Podhale region for a long time. This fact is confirmed by ethnographic sources, for example, the research of Oskar Kolberg (Kolberg 1968: 465-466, no. 2247). The 12-syllable line originated from a concatenation of two 6-syllable lines, which is still seen in the strong caesura after the sixth syllable (Czernik 1951: 314-321). Echoes of this evolution of the metre can be found in "The Highland Robbers' Dance." A long fragment of 12-syllable verse begins with a quotation from a folk song, many variants of which can be found in several different sources. The trochaic song exists not only in the variants, which differ only slightly at the lexical level, but also in both aforementioned metrical patterns: as a tetrastich based on a trimeter and as a couplet based on a hexameter. Let us juxtapose the poetic paraphrase with the original song in two different notations:

/∪| / ∪|/ ∪ ‖ / ∪| / ∪|/∪
Z Orawskiego zamku chłopcy pozierają,
/ ∪ |/ ∪ | / ∪‖| / ∪|/∪|/∪
Czy się popod Tatry buczki ozwijają[3].

Z Orawskiego zamku chłopcy wyzierają,
Czy się popod regle buczki rozwijają.

/∪| / ∪|/ ∪ ‖ / ∪| / ∪|/∪
Z Orawskiego zamku chłopcy pozierają,
/ ∪ |/ ∪ | / ∪‖| ∪|/∪|/∪
Czy się popod Tatry buczki ozwijają.

Z ᵇrawskiego zomku
chłopc'i spᵇzirajom,
c'i sie pᵇpód Tatry
bucki ᵇzwijajom.

When comparing the poem by Jan Kasprowicz with the version of the song shown in the left-hand column (Zejszner 1845: 155), Konrad Górski concluded that the poet had paraphrased an authentic highlander song (Górski 1926: 24). The paraphrase resulted in two small alterations at the lexical level: "wyzierają" ("look out") was changed to "pozierają" ("watch") and "regle" ("mountain forest") was changed to "Tatry" ("the Tatra Mountains"). As can be seen in the example shown in the right-hand column, the poem by Kasprowicz could, in fact, be considered a more direct quotation of another variant of the song, which was

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Janosik leads them!
Hey!
Lords, lords,
Hussars' chieftains,
This time your heads will be hit, not ours!
Hey! (trans. AT)
[3] Boys are watching from Orava Castle,
If beeches are growing under the Tatra Mountains. (trans. AT)

written by folklorists using a 6-syllable line (Sadownik 1971: 50), whereas the poet uses a 12-syllable line. With regard to the above-cited fragment of "The Highland Robbers' Dance," one can see that these two notational forms remain, to some extent, dependent on the rhyme schemes. The following three-line fragment:

> Panowie, panowie,
> Husarscy hersztowie,
> Teraz nie po naszej, lecz po waszej głowie!

could be written also as a hexasyllabic tetrastich:

> Panowie, panowie,
> Husarscy hersztowie,
> Teraz nie po naszej,
> lecz po waszej głowie!

The word "naszej" ("of our"), at the end of the penultimate line of the second variant, is unable, however, to form a rhyme (with the exception of the pair: "naszej – waszej").

What is particularly interesting in the context of the relations between folk vocal music and poetry is that both the analysed metrical patterns retain what could be called "a genetic memory" of the accompanying music, that is, in other words, a memory of the specific rhythmic and melodic schemes, which became, over time, inseparably connected (Sadownik 1971: 253-255, Bobrowska 2000: 244). Bearing in mind the melic dimension of the verse, we can thus determine another aspect of the interrelation between the dodecasyllabic couplets and the hexasyllabic tetrastichs – both were accompanied by fast, lively music. In other words, they belong to a group of songs called either "wierchowe" or "ozwodne," names based on the corresponding moves of the highlanders' dances.

In the poem under analysis, these most popular patterns are interspersed with 4-syllable and 7-syllable lines – mentioned above in the context of Przerwa-Tetmajer's verse – the latter accompanied by the "krzesany" style of music (Sadownik 1971: 255):

> Tańczą już zbójnicy
> W zamkowej świetlicy,
> Każą sobie pięknie grać,
> Wino z beczki szumnie lać![4]

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[4] Highland robbers are already dancing
In the castle hall,
They order the band to play beautifully,
To pour wine from a cask copiously. (trans. AT)

Sam Janosik nas powiedzie
Z pałaszem na przedzie!
Wirszyczkami,
Turniczkami,
Za orłami,
Kozicami,
Od krzaka do krzaka
Z buczaka na pniaka!⁵

The first of the cited fragments is an obvious paraphrase of the well-known folk song "W murowanej piwnicy" ("In the Stone Cellar") composed of 7-syllable lines, although sung to the rhythm of a catalectic trochaic tetrameter (Przyboś 1953: 404):

Tańcowali zbójnicy
w murowanej piwnicy,
kazali se pieknie grać
i na nózki pozierać⁶.

The paraphrase mostly affects the lexical level of the poem, but, importantly, it does not destroy the rhyme. We thus read about "świetlicy" ("hall") instead of "piwnicy" ("cellar") or "lać" ("to pour") instead of "spozirać" ("to look"). Another important aspect of the verse, which was paraphrased, is the versification of the first two lines – each of them, devoid of one syllable, take the well-known 6-syllable form.

The same song also became the inspiration for a postwar poem with the incipit "***Tu na wysokiej Cyrhli" ("*** Here, on the High Cyrhla"), which was written by Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz (Iwaszkiewicz 1977: 129). The second stanza of the poem contains a direct quotation of two lines from the song (see the even lines of the second stanza):

Tu na wysokiej Cyrhli
Gospoda z siedmiu kotami

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⁵ Janosik himself will lead us
His backsword in front!
Through the ridges,
Through the peaks,
Following the eagles,
Following the chamois,
From shrub to shrub,
From beech to trunk. (trans. AT)
⁶ Highland robbers danced
In a stone cellar,
They ordered the band to play beautifully,
And everyone to look at their feet. (trans. AT)

Butelka z czerwonym rumem
I wielkie kosze z rydzami.

Tutaj widziałem kiedyś,
Jak tańcowali zbójnicy,
Tutajśmy wódkę pili
W murowanej piwnicy.[7]

The quotations, precisely interwoven with the lyrical I, become an integral part of the whole, which is possible thanks to the metrical shape of the verse. As we can see, the first stanza of the poem consists of one 7-syllable line and three 8-syllable lines, whereas the second stanza is, in the main, based on a 7-syllable measure. Excluding the first word of the second verse ("jak"), added by the poet, it is obviously subordinated to the metrical pattern of the song.

Another type of reference to folk music appears in "dzieciństwo" ("child-hood") by Józef Czechowicz. There is no direct quotation from a specific song, instead, one part has been adapted to the folk style (Czechowicz 1997: 160-161):

da ja mała pasturecka
da strachom sie wszystkiego
da nie sułka jasiecka
mego najmilejsego

śpiewała daleko gdzieś
w słonecznikowych słońcach zagubiona
wieś
były prace polne czyjeś
len się na kądzielach wije
[...]

niskie ule pod słomą
zgrzane lato nad rzeką
pachnące pachy pacholąt
i ta śpiewka

---

[7] Here on the high Cyrhla
An inn with seven cats
A bottle of red rum
And huge baskets of mushrooms.

Here I have once seen,
Highland robbers dancing,
Here we drank vodka
In a stone cellar... (trans. AT)

da ja mała pasturecka
da strachom sie wszystkiego
da nie sułka jasiecka
mego najmilejsego[8]

The poem consists of two parts, which differ from each other both stylistically and metrically. The first part includes an initial and final tetrastich that imitate the dialect and, as suggested by the title, the speech of a child as well. The second part contains the lyrical I. The above-mentioned tetrastichs consist of lines of a similar length, including those which are 6 syllables, 7 syllables and 8 syllables long. There are perfect and crossed rhymes: "pasturecka" – "jasiecka". The tetrastichs – set against the second part, which is created by fragments that are autonomous with respect to the metrical and the rhyme scheme, "fragments with various [...] numbers of lines, which do not create a regular stanza" – are thus "no longer stanzas, but become sections of text... governed by the syntax and by semantic divisions" (Pszczołowska 1997: 337). They remain, however, "a reminiscence of a regular verse". This is particularly evident in those poems in which the tertrastich plays a clearly imitative role, as is the case here, where it is a reference to the regular form of folk songs.

Jerzy Liebert's "Kolęda" ("Christmas Carol") is an example of a poem which in its entirety imitates a folk song (Liebert 1963: 75):

Nie płaczże, mój Syneczku, nie płacz,
Woda będzie w balijce ciepła.

[...]
Śpiewa Panna i woda śpiewa,
Bierze Dziecię, tuli, oblewa –

Panna schyla zdziwione lice:
Sama woda pluska w balijce.

---

[8] da i'm a little shepherdess
da i'm afraid of everything
[...]
a village
sang somewhere far away
lost in sunflower suns
there was someone's farm work
linen is spinning on distaffs
[...]
low beehives covered with straw
sweaty summer at a river bank
the scent of children's armpits
and this song (trans. AT)

[...]
Milknie woda i śpiewa Panna:
Licha-ć, cienka-ć koszulka lniana,

Ale nie płacz, Syneczku, nie płacz,
Bo u Ojca jest dużo ciepła,

Wyprosimy sobie giezłeczko –
Lulaj, Synku, lulaj, Syneczku.[9]

The imitation is primarily based on the stanzaic form. Pszczołowska mentions
"Christmas Carol" as an example of a verse which has a "musical and folk"
provenance, and notes the "imitative character" of the couplet (Pszczołowska
1997: 333-334). However, from a lexical and stylistic point of view it can be said
that both "Panna" ("the Maiden") and the lyrical I speak (and sing) with "the
same" voice.

This brief overview of various poetic references to folk vocal music, which
began with an analysis of examples from the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries,
should be completed by considering a contemporary verse inspired by the same
phenomenon. An interesting example is provided by Eugeniusz Tkaczyszyn-
Dycki's poetry, more specifically by the following fragment from a free verse
cycle (Tkaczyszyn-Dycki 2012: 43):

IX.
pomogę ci moja gżegżółeczko
raz jeszcze zamknę cię
w klatce mojego ojczystego
języka (niczym hniłki

---

[9] Don't cry, my little son, don't cry,
The water in the bathtub will be warm.
[...]
The Maiden sings and the water sings,
Takes the child in her hands, cuddles and pours water over him –

The Maiden bows her head in surprise:
There's only water splashing in the little tub.
[...]
The water is silent and the Maiden sings:
Your linen shirt is thin and flimsy,

Don't cry my little son, don't cry,
There's plenty of warmth at the Father's place,

He will give us a warm shirt –
Sleep my son, sleep my son. (trans. AT)

i bziuczki) ale i ty
musisz mi dzisiaj pomóc
uczyń mnie uczyń poetą
poeta bowiem to ktoś

kto wszystkim zrobi kuku

X.
kuku! kuku! kukułeczka kuka
chłopiec panny szuka kuku!
kuku! nie daj się moja gżegżółeczko
zepchnąć (niczym aliści) w nicość

która usidla nie tylko bziuczki
hniłki i cigięć ale i poezję
barokową na której się wychowałem
[...]¹⁰

It is not difficult to see that the poet utilized the well-known song "Kukułeczka kuka" ("Little Cuckoo Cuckoos") and, contrary to his predecessors, incorporated a fragment into a reality that is entirely different, both linguistically and intellectually. Whereas Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz adapted, to a large extent, his verse to the lines quoted from the song, Tkaczyszyn-Dycki uses them in an unexpected context. The insertion of the quotation into the verse is justified by the associations the lyrical I has with the sound of the word "kuku" ("cuckoo"). The regular, melic character of the original text allows a reconstruction of its primary metrical

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¹⁰ i will help you my little gowk
i will close you once more
in the cage of my native
language (like pears

and cherries) but today you
must help me too
make me make me a poet
for a poet is someone

who will "cuckoo" everybody

cuckoo! cuckoo! little cuckoo cuckoos
a boy is looking for a maiden cuckoo!
cuckoo! don't let them my little gowk
push you (like notwithstanding) into nothingness

which entraps not only cherries
pears and thicket but also poetry
of the baroque on which i grew up
[...] (trans. AT)

pattern, but this is transformed by the poet into longer lines with eight and ten syllables. Without any doubt we are dealing with a trochaic trimeter with clear rhymes:

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  / ∪|/  ∪|/ ∪
Kukułeczka kuka,
  / ∪ | / ∪| /∪
chłopiec panny szuka.
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As can be seen from this overview, the metrical patterns, the stanzaic forms and the rhyme schemes of folk vocal music have inspired and influenced Polish modern verse in various ways. These simple prototypes were often used by 20th-century poets as an element of more complex forms, or transformed into other patterns, enriching their individual poetics, as well as the history of the verse.

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Folk Vocal Music as an Inspiration for 20th-Century Polish Verse
(A Brief Overview)
Keywords: Polish verse, 20th century, folk vocal music in poetry

S u m m a r y

Elements of folk vocal music can be observed in 20th-century Polish poetry, both in the original forms and in that mediated through imitation. A special role is played by the imitation of versification, whose main purpose is a reference to the melic prototype of folk poetry. An analysis of this imitation is the main topic of the paper. The author discusses the issue based on examples, namely poems by Kazimierz Przerwa-Tetmajer, Jan Kasprowicz, Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, Józef Czechowicz, Jerzy Liebert and Eugeniusz Tkaczyszyn-Dycki.

Inspiracje ludową muzyką wokalną w XX-wiecznej poezji polskiej
(zarys problematyki)
Słowa kluczowe: wiersz polski, XX wiek, ludowa muzyka wokalna w poezji

S t r e s z c z e n i e

W XX-wiecznej poezji polskiej obecne są elementy ludowej muzyki wokalnej, zarówno oryginalne, jak i zapośredniczone przez stylizację. Szczególną rolę odgrywa tutaj stylizacyjna funkcja wersyfikacji, której głównym zadaniem jest odniesienie wiersza do melicznego wzorca poezji ludowej, na analizie której koncentruje się artykuł. Autorka omawia zagadnienie na przykładach z poezji Kazimierza Przerwy-Tetmajera, Jana Kasprowicza, Jarosława Iwaszkiewicza, Józefa Czechowicza, Jerzego Lieberta i Eugeniusza Tkaczyszyn-Dyckiego.