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THE STUDY OF POLISH FOLKLORE ON THE CENTENNIAL ANNIVERSARY OF "LUD"

1. Romantic Views on Folklore

Studies of Polish folklore started in 1802 when Hugo Kołłątaj's famous memorial was published. The memorial anticipated the program of ethnographic studies and closed the period of the so-called pre-ethnography (e.g. discoveries of handwritten collection of 18th century songs (Hernas, 1965)).

Conscious and planned collection of materials, today called folkloric materials, started in Romantic Poland (Maślanka, 1984). Field investigations conducted with "a cane held in hand" were started by Zorian Dolęga-Chodakowski, who was followed by a group of enthusiasts, among them Żegota Pauli, Waclaw of Olesko, Ryszard Berwiński, Roman Zamorski, Józef Lompa, Jan J. Lipiński and, first of all, Lucjan Siemieński and Kazimierz W. Wójcicki. These collectors of the so-called "Polish and Slavonic antiquities" gathered folk songs and sagas believing that they would help them to directly learn about the past of the nation preserved in the spiritual culture of peoples inhabiting Polish territories and territories in neighbouring countries (Lithuania, Belarus and the Ukraine). As the collectors were not scholars, their publications were burdened with various editorial interpolations, literary interpretations and regional inconsistencies (Kapelus, Krzyżanowski, 1970).

In the middle of the 19th century, first attempts at theoretical discussions of the sense and value of this collection "rush" were made by J. I. Kraszewski, M. Wiszniewski, W. A. Maciejowski, W. Pol and E. Dembowski. Generally, however, the authors mentioned above followed Chodakowski's manifesto. For this reason Ryszard Berwiński, who in 1854 tried to prove that folk creativity was not independent but reproductive and therefore should be researched scientifically (Berwiński, 1854), did not win many supporters. Despite the criticism of his views by his contemporaries, he was the first to pave the way for investigations by scholars of the post-Kolbergian era.

Oskar Kolberg grew up amidst the romantic fashion of folkloric literature and music and in the atmosphere of enthusiasm for field collecting. Kolberg collected his materials more thoroughly during regular field investigations

(from 1839 for fifty years) on almost all Polish lands. Although an amateur, he had an enormous methodological talent, seen in the evolution of his research programme. Initially, he wanted to popularize folk songs in salons. Therefore, he recorded both the text and music, at the same time ordering the genres and giving the location of each song. As he was gaining experience and as his collections were growing, he planned to systematize the songs and started to record their melodic variants in different areas. Soon, however, he changed his research assumptions. He noticed a relation between songs and other elements of folk culture, which he also started to collect and describe, although he was not always able to properly explain and understand individual phenomena. Such a wide spectrum helped him to abstract the notion of region (most often referred to by him as “the country”), for which he created a model of folkloric-ethnographic monograph. Thirty three volumes arranged in a “series” (i.e. regional encyclopedic monographs) were published during Kolberg’s life under one common title *Lud, jego zwyczaje, sposób życia, mowa, podania, przysłowia, obrzędy, gusla, zabawy, pieśni, muzyka i tańce* [The people, its customs, way of life, speech, sagas, proverbs, rituals, superstitions, games, songs, music and dances]¹. The title itself is the first definition and classification of folklore. The extent of Kolberg’s work has won him the first place among other European collectors of folklore. In history of Polish studies of folklore he was a link between Romantic collecting of “antiquities” and the scholarly study of the folklore of the positivist era.

2. Beginnings of Scholarly Studies of Folklore

In the last quarter of the 19th century a tendency grew up to study folklore in accordance with the requirements of modern European science. Likewise, in Poland it was thought necessary to respond to an urgent need to expand knowledge about one’s own country and nation, at the time annexed by foreign powers.

That period witnessed the development of archaeology, anthropology, linguistics, ethnography and ethnology. These sciences gave a new meaning to such terms as “culture” and “civilization”. This was also a time when a new term, namely “folklore”, discovered by William Thoms in 1846 and brought to Poland by Jan Karłowicz in 1888, was popularized².

When the Anthropological Commission at the Academy of Sciences in Cracow and its Ethnological Section were established in 1874, the research

¹ A new edition of Kolberg’s works, with the *inedita*, comprises 68 volumes published as *Dzieła wszystkie Oskara Kolberga* [Oskar Kolberg’s Complete Works], Wrocław – Poznań, 1961 - 1995.

² J. Karłowicz, *Folklore*, “Wiśla” vol. 2, 1888, p. 84. Cf. also W. Thoms, *Folklor* [Folklore], “Literatura Ludowa” 1975, No 6, pp. 37-39 (translated by V. Krawczyk).

programme of ethnographic work was agreed upon. It was later modified by various resolutions (Jaworska, 1982). Much space in the programme was devoted to the principles of collecting ethnographic materials in the field, fidelity of recordings, methods of text verification (it was proposed to omit obscene elements), problem of phonetic transcription of dialectal expressions³ and other editorial problems. Another postulate was to restrict collection as such and focus on interpretation.

Consequently, towards the end of the 19th century studies of folklore were inspired by positivist scholars, who interpreted folk literature and culture from ethnological, historical, linguistic and literary points of view. They conducted their own research and headed teams of amateurs who furnished field materials. They also organized institutional scientific activities in all three annexed territories. Their views were published in scholarly journals edited by anthropologists and philologists.

One of such journals was "Zbiór Wiadomości do Antropologii Krajowej" (an organ of the Anthropological Commission, Polish Academy of Sciences in Cracow), edited by Izydor Kopernicki between 1877 and 1895⁴. Articles on folklore were also published in this periodical by Kolberg's followers: Władysław Siarkowski, Władysław Kosiński, Karol Mątyś, Józef Rostafiński and Seweryn Udziela.

"Wisła", a monthly issued in Warsaw between 1887 and 1916, published articles written by amateurs (usually more progressive inhabitants of the country), who submitted them following precise instructions given by the editorial board. Up till 1903 "Wisła" was edited by Jan Karłowicz, an eminent linguist and father of the Polish comparative school in folkloric studies. In his works on sagas, fairy tales and songs (Kapeluś, 1982a), he advocated studies based on extensive comparative Polish and foreign materials. This approach rejected the old views advocated by Max Müller (the solar theory of myths) and the romantic concept of the national character of plots of fairy tales and lyrics of songs. Noticing the polygenesis of folkloric phenomena, he came close to the English anthropological school of Tylor and Lang. Karłowicz also took account of the historical aspect of sagas. The research method to study folk prose, which he advocated, was very similar to the Finnish method (also called comparative-geographic method), although Karłowicz was not familiar with

³ After the discovery of the phonetic alphabet by Lucjan Malinowski, the discussion related to the use of the phonetic transcription continued in the Commission from 1888 to 1890. Eventually, it was decided not to publish texts in their phonetic transcription, which was unintelligible to many readers, and let dialectologists study them phonetically.

⁴ After 1895 anthropological and philological articles were published in "Materiały Antropologiczno-Archeologiczne i Etnograficzne" (1896-1919); the ethnographic section was edited by Seweryn Udziela, the author of many works on the folklore of Galicia, organizer and first director of the Ethnographic Museum in Cracow.

the latter (Krawczyk-Wasilewska, 1986, pp. 123 - 125). In this way, Karłowicz laid foundations for modern folkloric comparative studies which were followed by the next generation.

3. “Lud” (1895 - 1918) – a Folkloric Periodical

Apart from “Wisła” an important contribution to the development of the Polish folkloric thought at the beginning of the 20th century, was made by “Lud”, published in Lvov as a journal of the Ethnological Society.

In the first volume the editorial board (headed by Antoni Kalina, a Slavist) published an extensive methodological article entitled *Najnowsze prądy w ludoznawstwie* [The latest trends in ethnography] by Iwan Franko, an Ukrainian writer and scholar (Franko, 1895). It is significant that in the article, which was an expanded version of a paper read at the first meeting of the Ethnological Society, the word *folklore* was used as an English equivalent of the Polish word *ludoznawstwo* [ethnography] and German *Volkskunde*. The concept was used in a very broad meaning, although it pertained to the study of a people, generally understood as “the lower strata which underwent the smallest civilizational changes”. Speaking in favour of modern research in the spirit of the migratory-historical and comparative-literary and anthropological schools, Franko often made references to examples from traditional oral literature: myths, fairy tales and songs.

Folkloric phenomena understood as above were extensively represented in successive volumes of “Lud”, edited by Kalina’s followers (after 1904), i.e. Karol Potkański (historian), Seweryn Udziela (ethnographer) and historians of literature – Wilhelm Bruchnalski and Józef Kallenbach.

In the twenty volumes of “Lud”, which appeared till 1918, various valuable ethnographic materials were published, mainly on the folklore of Galicia (written by B. Gustawicz, J. Świętek, H. Dobrowolski, L. Młynek, H. Windakiewiczowa, W. Brzega, S. Udziela and others). Materials on the folklore of other areas were published sporadically, for example on the Sieradz folklore (I. Piątkowska), Poznań folklore (W. Łabiński) or Silesian folklore (W. Madłówna). It must be mentioned that towards the end of the 19th century research work was not comparable with the great collection effort. The situation did not change much after 1905 when Seweryn Udziela published an appeal to the collectors (in “Lud”) to put more emphasis on descriptions and comments (Udziela, 1905).

Apart from documentation on fairy tales and songs, editors of “Lud” were also interested in folk theatre. They published many articles on satirical performances and Christmas nativity plays (S. Gonet, W. Semkowicz, F. Gawełek, J. Cieplik and others) and a historical synthetic study entitled

Polskie widowiska ludowe [Polish folk performances] prepared by Adam Fischer in 1913.

In the first decade of the 20th century "Lud" published articles on current folkloric phenomena. There were articles on written documents of Galician peasants, such as literary pieces or folk epistolographic forms. Collection of children's and Jewish folklore was promoted. Notice was made of the dialect and folklore of Polish and Ukrainian recruits, the folklore and language of rafters and the Lvovian suburban folklore and thieves' jargon (Kapelaś, 1982b, pp. 355 - 358).

The editorial board of "Lud" also encouraged contributors to collect and write about proverbs. This appeal was responded to by Franciszek Krček who wrote a critical supplement to Samuel Adalberg's *Księga przysłów i wyrażeń przysłowiowych* [A book of proverbs and proverbial expressions] (Adalberg, 1880 - 1894). It must be said at this point that Krček wrote many short articles and reviews and made a considerable contribution to the modern approach to problems of folklore.

Very few articles were written about the folklore of Slavs inhabiting territories bordering Poland. Most of them were on Ukrainian and East Carpathian folklore. There were also some reviews, among them one of the collection of fairy tales made by J. Polivka, a Bohemian comparative scholar.

Comparative studies on oral literature dominated in volumes published between 1909 and 1912. Mention should be made of interesting articles by Stanisław Ciszewski and Adam Fischer, as well as an extensive essay by Witold Klinger, a classical philologist, entitled *Do wpływów starożytności na folklor* [The influences of ancient times on folklore] (Klinger, 1909). "Lud" must be also credited for publication of articles bordering on literature and folklore. These articles, belonging rather to literary comparative studies, were published by W. Bruchnalski, S. Dobrzycki, W. Jankowski, H. Łopaciński, S. Maykowski, W. Nartowski, S. Wasylewski, H. Windakiewiczowa, S. Windakiewicz, W. Szyszkewicz and S. Zdziarski (Karpińska, Niewiadomska, 1988).

In 1907 editors of "Lud" published a pioneer study entitled *O metodach zbierania i porządkowania melodii ludowych* [On methods of collecting and ordering folk melodies] by Adolf Chybiński, the father of modern musical ethnography in Poland (Chybiński, 1907; 1910).

In sum, between 1895 and 1918 "Lud" played an important role in the promotion of folkloric studies which, at the time, were part of ethnography. The studies were pursued by skilled amateurs and scholars representing different humanistic, social, artistic and natural disciplines. This was the reason for the variety of methods used and problems researched. All the activities were subordinated to one supreme goal — to deepen knowledge about the nation at the time annexed by foreign powers.

4. Folklore in the Interwar Period

When Poland regained her independence, new social, cultural and scientific reality appeared. The attitude to folklore and peasant culture changed under the influence of regionalistic ideology (also promoted outside the boundaries of Poland) and the agrarian orientation. Agrarianism as a doctrine of folk movement ennobled peasant culture, seeing in it a valuable part of the national culture, worthy of development.

Agrarian ideas became apparent, *inter alia*, in the discovery of folkloric and literary achievements of peasant diarists, such as J. Kupiec, H. Derdowski, Jantek of Bugaj, S. Nędza-Kubiniec or F. Kuraś. The ideas of regionalism, on the other hand, shaped the national ideals, opposing the culture of Polish villages to urban cosmopolitan culture. Regionalists noticed creative powers in folklore and folk tradition, capable of providing incentives for national art and culture.

Due to this type of thinking, folk features were often included in literature, music, art and theatrical plays. The ideas of an amateur folk theatre were also born then. Jędrzej Cierniak, the author of these ideas, wanted to create a peasant theatre that would stage dramatized rituals and customs, traditional and modern ones, with genuine props, costumes, music and folk songs (Olcha, 1963).

In the interwar period field collecting was continued and amateur movement pursued. A network of regional circles of the Tourist Society and regional museums was established. First issues of such magazines as "Ziemia" and "Orli Lot" were published.

The scientific approach to folklore lost its former, one-sided character. In ethnographic, sociological and cultural studies conducted by Adam Fischer, Aleksander Brückner, Stefan Czarnowski or Kazimierz Moszyński one could easily detect new theoretical and methodological assumptions. Folklore was investigated from the genetic and typological, interethnic and historical-sociological positions, as a living category, constituting an integral element of the national culture. The view advocated in 1929 by Stefan Czarnowski, a sociologist, that folklore was a relic of primary times and that the folklore of different social and occupational groups should be studied (Czarnowski, 1956), was very significant for the history of Polish studies of folklore at the time.

At this point special mention must be made of a publication entitled *Przysłowia polskie* [Polish proverbs] by Jan S. Bystroń (1933), the first Polish synthetic paremiological monograph. Bystroń, like Karłowicz who analysed fairy tales and sagas, followed the trends at that time dominant all over the world (Krawczyk-Wasilewska, 1986, p. 127).

Assumptions of comparative literature and linguistics could be detected in the works written by philologists Witold Klinger, Jan Janów, Stefan

Vrtel-Wierczyński and Ryszard Gansiniec. One could find ancient elements in Polish folklore, Slav elements in fairy tales, legends and romances. The comparative school was created by Julian Krzyżanowski, the author of many studies on the relations between literature (mainly old Polish literature) and folk and popular literature (Krzyżanowski, 1935) and works on ancient Russian epic folk songs and fairy tales.

Mention should also be made of the presence of folklore in "Lud". The periodical, edited by Adam Fischer (from 1914 to 1939), changed its character and became more a scholarly and anthropological journal. Fischer had excellent collaborators in the persons of Jan Czekanowski and Bronisław Malinowski. Soon, many reviews of and articles about works of foreign folklorists were published in "Lud". Much attention was given to Slavonic folkloric studies (in Bohemia, Slovakia, Slovenia, and Lusatia). Works by English, French, German, Italian and Hungarian authors were discussed (e.g. reviews by Karol Korany). Readers could also find information about Greek, Lithuanian and Panamanian folklore. "Lud" also carried articles describing investigations of folklore connected with customs and rituals (satirical performances and nativity plays), methodological, regional and historical descriptions of musical and choreographic folklore (Karpińska, Niewiadomska, 1988).

5. Studies of Folklore Versus Philology and Anthropology

In post-war history of the Polish folkloric thought a separate chapter was written by Julian Krzyżanowski (1882 - 1976), an eminent historian of Polish literature, editor and theoretician of folklore and organizer of the ethnographic scholarly community.

Krzyżanowski's studies of fairy tales begun before the First World War resulted in a pioneer catalogue entitled *Polska bajka ludowa w układzie systematycznym* [Polish folk fairy tales], arranged in accordance with the international system developed by Aarne-Thompson (Krzyżanowski, 1947). In addition to many studies of fairy tales, Krzyżanowski also entered the domain of paremiology — he dealt with the genesis and systematic description of Polish proverbs. Results of his studies were published in *Mądry głowie dość dwie słowie* [A wise head will do with two words] and in a critical and enlarged version of Adalberg's books (Krzyżanowski, 1958 - 1960; 1969 - 1978). Krzyżanowski was in favour of the isolation of folkloric studies from ethnography. In his studies of the theory of oral and written literature he proved the integrity of the two. This won him the support of a group of young philologically-oriented scholars (Helena Kapelińska, Ryszard Górski, Ryszard Wojciechowski and others). Krzyżanowski helped establish the Research Department of Folk Literature affiliated with the Institute of Literary Studies of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw. In 1957 he founded the first folkloric

magazine, "Literatura Ludowa", which he edited till 1972. Of his many publications, mention should be made of *Slownik folkloru polskiego* [A dictionary of Polish folklore] (1965) and *Dzieje folklorystyki polskiej* [The history of Polish studies of folklore] (Kapelaś, Krzyżanowski, 1970; 1982).

Julian Krzyżanowski's work continued and developed the long tradition of comparative, genetic and historical investigations. This direction was also dominant in the works of Polish folklorists of the past fifty years.

In the middle of 1960s Polish investigations of folklore were very diversified. The topics addressed were very varied and methodologies used very different. Increased interest in the folklore of different occupational communities and a new approach to children's folklore (Jerzy Cieślikowski, Dorota Simonides) were noticed. More monographs on single types of folklore were published (for example, there were monographs of the ballad (Jadwiga Jagiełło), riddles (Mirosław Kasjan). Discovery of such phenomena as folklorism (Burszta, 1974, pp. 309 - 311) or a new approach to the folk character of literature (Sulima, 1976) and the language of folklore (Bartmiński, 1973; 1990) indicated an interdisciplinary approach to the study of folklore.

The profile of "Literatura Ludowa" was changed in 1972 when Czesław Hernas became editor-in-chief. The editorial board abandoned regional descriptions of verbal folklore and opened themselves to the modern folkloric thought. The magazine published translations and reviews of foreign works written in the spirit of structuralism, semiotics, contextualism and ethnolinguistics. The magazine also sponsored contemporary Polish investigations and was a discussion forum about the specific character of folklore and its functioning, particularly in modern times.

Scholars more frequently adopted the anthropological-cultural approach in which folklore was treated as a living element of social communication. Because of this, investigations had to account for the cultural and situational context.

At the end of 1970s problems related to the new definition of folklore as part of symbolic culture (expressed not only by words) were strengthened. This was connected with the need to use new methods to investigate the phenomenon within the framework of folkloric studies. Mention should be made here of manual-like works (Waliński, 1978; Krawczyk-Wasilewska, 1979; 1986; Czekańska, 1988; Kowalski, 1990). Such terms as "folklore", "folkloric studies", "folklorism" were redefined in *Slownik etnologiczny* [An ethnological dictionary] (Staszczyk, 1987) and an anthropological approach could be detected in articles on folklore published in "Polska Sztuka Ludowa", particularly when the name of the periodical was changed to "Polska Sztuka Ludowa. Konteksty" (in 1990).

One must not forget about the development of ethnolinguistic investigations, particularly in the last decade, which focused on means of expression

in folklore, main linguistic stereotypes, themes and formulae. The most notable achievements in this respect must be attributed to the Lublin centre, where "Etnolingwistyka" was published since 1988 (editor-in-chief: Jerzy Bartmiński).

In recent years the Łódź centre initiated investigations of modern folklore from the ecological point of view. Experience in human and deep ecology inspired the need to look at folklore as an expression of ecological awareness, in which the latter is a relation between the condition and quality of life in face of civilizational, cultural, political and moral hazards.

In the past fifty years a considerable progress was made in the investigations of Polish musical folklore owing to the development of ethnomusicology, particularly at the Institute of Art, Polish Academy of Sciences, but also at the academic centres in Poznań and Katowice. Mention must be made of interesting achievements by Jadwiga Sobieska, Jan Sadownik, Ludwik Bielawski, Anna Czekanowska, Jan Stęszewski, Piotr Dahlig, Bogusław Linette and Zbigniew Przerembski. All these authors also used the experience of "philological" and "anthropological" folkloric studies.

Let us also remember that Slavonic philologists, active in many scientific centres, were also interested in problems of folklore. These problems were also followed by the Polish Ethnological Society, the sponsor of many publications. In 1961, the Polish Ethnological Society appointed the editorial board of Oskar Kolberg's *Dzieła wszystkie* [Oskar Kolberg's Complete Works], headed till 1987 by Józef Burszta and after J. Burszta's death by Bogusław Linette. Sixty eight volumes have been published to date.

In the foregoing only the most characteristic directions of modern folkloric studies were discussed. It is clear that they are mutually supportive and complementary although often their basic assumptions are different. Folkloric studies have not developed a uniform research base; they are rather a system of interpretative views on a specific fragment of culture in change. As there are possibilities of new interpretations, the number of folklorists grows as sciences on culture develop.

In conclusion it must be stressed that folklore and folkloric studies are still present in "Lud", in studies and articles, reviews and reports on conferences and events significant to modern studies of folklore.

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