

**Krystyna Pietrych\***

 <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9796-185X>

## Tkaczyszyn-Dycki's Continuous "Song About..."

Bohdan Pociąg, an outstanding musicologist, convinced of the existence of the spiritual dimension of music and its metaphysical essence, once said about the links between music and poetry:

If one wants to talk about poetry – its essence, or rather about the essence of ideal, complete poetry – [...] one has to distinguish three essential components that make it complete and ideal. This is how I see it. The first of them is the sing-song quality or musicality, and it consists of sonority, rhythm and rhyme [...]. This musicality is for me the most important feature of ideal poetry today, but Sarbiewski also wrote about it in his treatise *De perfecta poesi* and it is precisely what I am referring to here. [...] And now, in my opinion, contemporary poetry lacks that very [...] element of musicality. Often, at least, it seems to me to be suffering from some sickness because of the lack of musicality – that sonority, that sing-song quality, rhythm or rhyme, all that together<sup>1</sup>.

I start with Pociąg's statement, who, idealistically and today too traditionally, not to say anachronistically, saw the rudiments of poetry in the close relationship of music, imagination and metaphysics, because it is a convenient pretext to reflect on the

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\* Dr hab. prof. Uniwersytet Łódzki, Wydział Filologiczny, Instytut Filologii Polskiej i Logopedii, Zakład Literatury i Tradycji Romantyzmu, ul. Pomorska 171/173, 90-236 Łódź; e-mail: pietrych@op.pl

1 *Rozmowa Pociąga z Rymkiewiczem w Milanówku* [Pociąg's interview with Rymkiewicz in Milanówek]. Apart from musicality, according to Pociąg the markers of ideal poetry are also "imagination playing with the so-called reality" and "metaphysicality, with the addition of: transcendence and mysticism". <http://www.podkowiaskimagazyn.pl/archiwum/rozmowa24.htm> [dostęp: 28.08.2009]

musicality of Eugeniusz Tkaczyszyn-Dycki's poems. Tkaczyszyn-Dycki is one of the few contemporary poets whose work fulfills Pocij's criterion of ideal poetry. Anyone who has come into contact with these works in their written form, and even more so when reading them out loud, will have no doubt that Tkaczyszyn-Dycki reactivates this method of composing poetry, in which the word regains its aural power, and its sound dominates over semantics. This does not mean, of course, that the author of *Peregrynarz* decided to resurrect a mode of sung poetry, long since rejected by modern poetry, which conveys in a Romantic and Symbolic spirit that which is otherwise inexpressible. Dycki, a contemporary poet, draws on a more distant past than his predecessors from the first half of the nineteenth century, the Young Polish poets, and addresses the distant origins of poetry, its archaic roots, exploring whether in the Postmodern world the primeval lyric model, in the source sense of this word, has any potency and can still be utilized, beyond stylistically oriented measures. His attitude is not one of planned experimentation and distanced research, but of ecstatic dedication, to the rule of poetic "frenzy". How does a contemporary poet become an inspired singer, while at the same time aware that today it is impossible to experience an undisturbed state of creative enthusiasm? If one is to achieve the equivalent of such a state of affairs, even to an incomplete degree, for what purpose does he or she perform the lay, or rather, to cite the poet, the song?

All those who write about Tkaczyszyn-Dycki agree on one thing: that repetition is a specific signature of his poetic diction of works such as *The Song of Dependencies and Addictions* (2008), to cite the title of the most acclaimed volume (Nike Award, Gdynia Award, 2009). Thus critics talked about poetry "filled with repetitions and recitations"<sup>2</sup>, with "mantra-like repetition, [which – K. P.] brings to mind prayers, rituals, spells"<sup>3</sup>, "obsessive repetitions of phrases, themes, images and situations" or "the "unreasonableness" of certain recurring phrases, which [...] makes a great impression"<sup>4</sup> – these are the most expressive judgments. One could say that Tkaczyszyn constantly repeats "his" song. This is not primarily because he incorporated that very word into the titles of many of his poems, thus pointing to the close relationship between poetry and singing. It is worth noting that texts with "song" in the title (e.g. *A Song About a Fairground Rooster*, *Little Shepherd's Song*, *A Song about a Rake*, *A Song About Cigarette Butts*) are not fundamentally different from others, neither in the poetological (especially versificational) nor in the thematic dimension. It can therefore be said that, in fact, every poem, regardless of the title it bears, is a song in the sense that the poet defines it. This special "songfulness", based on repetitions, chorality, and a uniquely performed sing-song quality, is a permanent foundation and inseparable dimension of all of Dycki's

2 G. Jankowicz, *Alegoria (Dycki)*, „Studium” 2005, no. 2, p. 129.

3 A. Wolny-Hamkało, *Tkaczyszyna-Dyckiego życie z duchami*, „Gazeta Wyborcza,” October 4, 2009.

4 A. Kałuża, *Uzależnienia*, [biuroliterackie.pl / przystan / czytaj](http://biuroliterackie.pl/przystan/czytaj)

texts. It is also worth noting that these texts, by virtue of the author's decision, become songs, not lays. Revealed in such genre qualifications is a tendency to diminish the importance and meaning of one's own words, their – perhaps perverse and deceptive – depreciation and shallowing, indicating their ordinary, everyday roots, far from the lofty, often sacralizing speech of the Romantic or Young Poland's bard, who most often created lays.

Reading successive poems by Tkaczyszyn-Dycki, we are in contact with One Poem, constantly re-written, which while never fully realized, exists to some extent in every realization, but never completely and ultimately. This is the reason for his subsequent attempts to create a constantly repeated, never-ending song. Everything that appeared at the very beginning (already in the volume of *Nenia and other Poems*, 1990) will later reappear in numerous versions, installments, variants, subsequent realizations and repetitions – and so the great themes of this poetry will always return: death, love, eroticism, illness, the body. Also evident from the very beginning is the sophisticated style, often identified with mannerist, baroque stylizations, and subsequent realizations of the One Poem are marked by the return of the same words, sentences, phrases, characters, events, images... Thus, the debut is the paradigmatic volume for all of his work, an anticipation and an essential extract of further development. And repetition is the signature of this poetry, the primary technique shaping the statement both in terms of content and expression, a great rhetorical figure and a basic proseodic procedure. Repeating is much more important than just a stylistic or phonetic way of organizing an expression – it is the expression's essence and principle in terms of versification and meaning; something without which no poem (so: first, next, last, and, in this case – again another) would be possible. In general, speaking without constant repetition would be impossible, and what we are trying to say would be doomed to total silence<sup>5</sup>.

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5 For very interesting comments on the different functions of repetition, see G. Tomicki, *Po obu stronach lustra. O poezji Eugeniusza Tkaczyszyna-Dyckiego*, Szczecin, Bezręcze 2015, especially the chapter *Funkcje powtórzenia w poezji Eugeniusza Tkaczyszyna-Dyckiego* (p. 117–145). It is worth quoting here the fragments of the researcher's conclusions which activate meanings similar to those I am interested in: "There is [...] a mechanism of repetitions, an 'eternal return of the same', the memory of the same events, processes of sensations, traumas, the same states of things and states of mind, the memory of the same cases of life and the same, indefinitely postponed, constantly occurring death. So there are micronarrations repeating the histories that have seemingly already been processed by the consciousness, arranging them into a sequence of constant breaks and references, into a spinning wheel of obsessions, compulsions and perseverations, into a 'claustrophobic story of unsolved (unsolvable?) mental and existential conflicts that persist from birth to the present day' [...].

But the primary function of the ritualization of expression [by repeating – K.P.] is the ritualization of one's own way of being in the world, i.e. the mythization of the world itself, i.e. the attempt to transform it into an environment friendly to the existence immersed in it" (p. 123–124).

The poems of Tkaczyszyn-Dycki are governed by the logic of substitution. The first rule here is a special substitution, a change of value within this seemingly constantly talked – one can even get the impression that the (over)talked – utterance. This (let us keep this term for now, even though it is not the most fitting) poetic talk, or more precisely its subsequent segments or episodes, are links in widely understood poetic expression. Expression that is always incomplete, imperfect, not final, random, violating the rules of traditionally developing lyrical expression; situated on the borderline, beyond which the area of communication atrophy stretches, where only some asemantic, though subject to rhythmic regularities, already extraverbal noise would be heard or... silence would fall. All the poems that Dycki stubbornly writes are substitutes for the One Impossible Poem; they are attempts to speak in spite of everything; speaking about could never be said; speaking about the “weak” world full of disability, fragility, changeability; speaking despite doubt about the ability to speak; speaking with the knowledge that language as a mediation method never achieves the Real in the Lacanian sense<sup>6</sup>. This is probably the reason why this poetry constantly starts again, from the very beginning, with faith (or is it still with faith? or maybe rather unbelief?) that this time it will be possible to not just say something but to add, reveal, recall or, as the poet himself says, “throw in”<sup>7</sup>. This multiplicity, this peculiar rhetorical-rhythmic excess, is a testimony to the impossibility of a full and finite statement, adequate in relation to the experience that is expressed and simultaneously inexpressible in its essence. On the other hand, however, only an obsessive rhythm and repetition, and not the semantic dimension of the text, are capable to cope with this experience, or at least accompany it to some limited extent.

Dycki’s inimitable voice, built on “incantation-like repetition”<sup>8</sup> results from his personal traumatic experience – from his inability to name/express his own inner states, but also from a particular perception of the world, which always appears to be amorphous, fluid, unsupportive, unfinished, subjected to the power of death, therefore always – hurtful and oppressive.

The particular way of using language in the case of Tkaczyszyn’s poetry is extreme – not only is it far from conscious discoursivization and conceptualization, but it also violates the boundaries of traditionally understood textuality. Dycki’s poem questions the linearity of expression, subject only to recurring rhythms; it is processual, but not teleologically oriented, constantly flowing – with no beginning and no end. A text that is impossible and extreme at the same time. In fact, it is

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6 See. G. Tomicki, *op. cit.*, p. 132–138.

7 This is the word (“throw in” – *dorzucić*) that Tkaczyszyn-Dycki himself often used, adding something “from himself” after subsequent papers during the conference devoted to his own writings (Poznań; May 4–5, 2012).

8 G. Tomicki, *op. cit.*, p. 121.

not so much a text as – let us stress it again, bringing out the immensely important opposition to semantics – a sound, that is, voice.

Therefore, taking into account the extremes of this poetic project, which has an enormous impact (positive or negative) on the audience, it is necessary to ask how a "Dycki poem" is created, bearing in mind the warning once formulated by Piotr Śliwiński:

Dycki ridicules most of the ready-made languages of interpretation, even those very eccentric, involuntarily showing that they can be perfectly (i.e. just as insufficiently) substituted with well-intentioned languages. The poet requires something separate, a language that is able to describe the wound left behind by this poetry, which represents the impossible to comprehend by itself. [...] In a sense, it requires of an interpretation deliverance from one's own dilemmas, the tender killing of anxieties within it. The impossible<sup>9</sup>.

How, then, is this permanently unfinished poem by Dycki, based on returns, repetitions, digressions and additions, created? This is a flow I have once called trance-like<sup>10</sup>.

Reading this poetry in chronological order, one can see a certain regularity. Well, in his debut volume, there is already an intra- and extra-textual repetition combined with inversion. The rhythm of repetitions in *Nenia* does not yet organize the whole space of the volume – there are often poems where there is no repetition. The text becomes more independent, although it can hardly be described as fully autonomous in this case, as leitmotivism is still a strong link between subsequent poems. However, already in his subsequent volume, *Peregrynarz*, there are far fewer independent works, even if only in such a way, that are not directly involved in the order of repeated sequences. In this volume, the types of repetitions that already exist in *Nenia* are interwoven and intersected, but there are many thematic, syntactic and pictorial references to the first volume. The echolalia is becoming more and more intense from volume to volume. In later collections, for example in *The Song of Dependencies and Addictions*, it is evident how the relationship between subsequent lines is based on the repetition not of individual verses anymore, but on ever larger fragments of the text. The compositional scheme in general can be outlined as follows: first, there are two themes, and then, after a while, a third one is added, to slowly supplant the first two and take their place as the central theme. This way, the

<sup>9</sup> P. Śliwiński, *Świat podminowany*, „Przystanek Literacki” 2011, no. 2, p. 5.

<sup>10</sup> I refer in this text to my previous findings, but I am expanding and modifying them considerably, now making the relationship between poetry and music a fundamental issue; see K. Pietrych, *Na granicy słowa. Transowy tok Dyckiego*, in: *Pokarmy. Szkice o twórczości Eugeniusza Tkaczyszyna-Dyckiego*, ed. P. Śliwiński, Wojewódzka Biblioteka Publiczna i Centrum Animacji Kultury, Poznań 2012, p. 121–134.

structure of the whole work becomes very compact, the relationship between consecutive texts becomes even stricter. As a result, subsequent poems begin to form a kind of quasi-cycle, although with blurred boundaries, but on the other hand they clearly gravitate towards some unattainable whole, suggested by an acoustic plan of expression. A similar strategy can be observed in the volume *Name and Nevus*, especially in the cycle of seven poems entitled *The Nest*, accompanied, surprisingly, by a footnote in which Dycki tells the story of his family in a discursive flow.

The strong tendency to create a compact, paramusical composition, with a constantly transformed main theme, makes it rare for separate poems to appear, that are not entwined in this intricately woven network of mutual sound relations and addictions.

In juxtaposing Dycki's early and late volumes, it is worth noting that at the beginning, we deal with a much greater autonomy of individual poems, with a relatively loose – that is, not obligatory, but optional – combining them into larger wholes. From the perspective of the last volumes, the composition of *Nenia* and *Peregrynarz* still seems to be somewhat dispersed, spotted, reminiscent, metaphorically speaking, of the pointillist painting technique, where the colorful spots retain their individuality, while at the same time building larger structures. The song about dependencies and addictions and the *Name and Nevus* are the wholes, in which repetition becomes the main constructional principle, absorbing every single instance, determining the semantics of every part, subjecting the reading to the rhythm of trance enslavement. If we were to use a much more adequate musical metaphor here, we could say that at the beginning the sound of Dycki's poems could resemble Webern's punctualism, which with time transforms into monotonous, recurring, captivating rhythm, associated with some ritualistic, trance music.

If you listen to this rhythm<sup>11</sup> you first hear consecutive words, sentences, phrases, although some of them are repeated more often than others. Separate, coexisting music tracks can still be heard. With time, there are more and more of these recurring consonances, and it is these that become audible above all else. In the stream of speech it becomes more and more difficult to distinguish individual words, sentences or phrases, everything merges into a single stream of sound. Sound, rhythm, whisper and noise appear more important than building meanings. The intensity of repetition determines the course of subsequent poems. Despite the frequently appearing irony, the tonality grows denser and darker, we have a sense of being trapped in a cage of constantly recurring words, an impression of a labyrinth-claustropho-

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<sup>11</sup> It seems necessary to listen to Tkaczyszyn-Dycki "reading" his poems. Reading takes the form of a special recitation, or rather – melodeclamation, during which the word, subjected to rhythm, frees itself from its meaning and, by activating its tonal potential, transforms itself into a singing incantation evocative of spell-casting. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NxuuJsqZlkl> [dostęp: 25.06.2010]

bic loop. We are on the verge of speaking, because nothing more can be said using semantics alone. Then there is the area of silence or music. On the one hand, therefore, the word entangled in the order of reprises and repetitions, losing its meaning, is heading towards the zero state in a discursive dimension. On the other hand, by emphasizing the sound, it exploits its own acoustic potential, which now becomes a carrier of meanings. Dycki's poem is a liminal text. The one who speaks as far as possible from discursive communication, reveals and conveys his or her own fears and obsessions. Whoever listens, hears modulated sounds, hears a voice subjected to the rhythms of repetition and succumbs to incomprehensible vibrations and pulsations. The relationship between the speaker and the listener is reminiscent in this case of participation in a ritual or a mysterium<sup>12</sup>. The poetry of the author of *Nenia* is approaching a magical incantation whose task is not to describe, but to enchant reality. The magus-poet (according to the meaning of the Latin source of the word, *incantare*) is supposed to enchant the world, and thus to shape it according to the new rules. And we, listeners-readers, must surrender to this magic in order to be able to participate in the ritual and experience its transforming effect.

If one were to search for the genealogy of this poetic trance, one might see connections with some source prehistoric beginnings of the poetic word. As Stanisław Balbus aptly put it on the margin of reflections on the versification of Miłosz's poems:

There is something in poetry that makes it poetry, something that is a necessary condition for the act of artistic expression, something "subterranean and unrestrained", something earlier than words, images, thoughts, therefore something extra-rational. And this "something" – just like in the case of pre-Romantic poetry theorists, Giambattista Vico or Herder – is a singing, melody, rhythm. It is tied to the pre-rational, expressive aspect of the poetic act, as well as the thought and image – to its rational and communicative aspect<sup>13</sup>.

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12 Critics have interpreted Dycki's texts in terms of prayer (see K. Hoffmann, *Dycki. Niepowtarzalna powtarzalność*, „Czas Kultury” 2010, no. 5), ritual [see A. Kopkiewicz, *O ostatniej książce Tkaczyszyna-Dyckiego (i o wszystkich innych jego książkach)*, „Dekada Literacka” 2009, no. 5–6] or a particular type of post-secular retreats (see P. Bogalecki, *Laska i trup. Eugeniusz Tkaczyszyn-Dycki odprawia (rekolacje)*, in: *Pokarmy. Szkice o twórczości Eugeniusza Tkaczyszyna-Dyckiego*, ed. P. Śliwiński, Wojewódzka Biblioteka Publiczna i Centrum Animacji Kultury, Poznań 2012). In Bogalecki's interesting reflections, I find it extremely inspiring to juxtapose the poetry of the author of *The History of Polish Families* with Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises*. However, my reading brings out the ancient sources and inspirations in order to indicate the profound cultural ties and affinities of Dycki's idiom with the archaic prehistory of European poetry; I am only marginally interested in the broadly understood religiosity of this poetry.

13 S. Balbus, „Pierwszy ruch jest śpiewanie” (*O wierszu Miłosza – rozpoznanie wstępne*), in: *Poznanie Miłosza. Studia i szkice o twórczości poety*, ed. J. Kwiatkowski, Wydawnictwo Literackie, Kraków–Wrocław 1985, p. 464–465.

In Dycki's works, the rhythmic flow of "mentions and repetitions" originates precisely from what precedes the words and seems to be pure expression. Therefore, it may bring to mind, for example, Orphic mysteries, particularly if one considers that "it was not them," as Adam Krokiewicz writes, "that gave birth to Orphic literature, but on the contrary, Orphic literature gave birth to mysteries"<sup>14</sup>. Orpheus, the mythical poet and singer playing the lyre, forever combined music and the poetic word into a ritual for the initiated. For Greeks, poetry had a musical character, and the community of participation (performed and/or listening) built a strong sense of social bond. One could also, reaching back to those prehistoric beginnings, recall at least the concept of the triune choreia, according to which the source of poetry is rhythm, realized through gesture (dance)<sup>15</sup>, sound (music) and word<sup>16</sup>. To put it this way: the "prophecizing" of Tkaczyszyn, his "poetic frenzy", his "melancholy" seem to have archaic sources in what Giorgio Colli saw as the beginning and essence of Greek pre-Socratic wisdom – in "Pythean elations, in mystical and mysterious experiences"<sup>17</sup>. Poetry emerged from them. The ancients believed, Jacek Brzozowski pointed out, that "on the path of poetry – on the path of song, music and dance in its archaic meaning – one can achieve harmony with the world, harmony with nature and with divinity"<sup>18</sup>. Tkaczyszyn does not believe in the possibility of achieving

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14 A. Krokiewicz, *Studia orfickie. Moralność Homera i etyka Hezjoda*, Wydawnictwo Aletheia, Warszawa 2000, p. 56.

15 It is worth noting here the gestures of Dycki performing his poems: a special position of the body, movement, gestures that can be treated as a kind of special dance.

16 See T. Zieliński, *Literatura starożytnej Grecji epoki niepodległej*, part 1, Wydawnictwo J. Mortkowicza, Warszawa–Kraków 1923.

17 G. Colli, *La nascita della filosofia*, Adelphi, Milan, 1975, translation mine based on the Polish edition: *Narodziny filozofii*, Polish transl. and ed. S. Kasprzyśiak, Oficyna Literacka, Warszawa–Kraków 1991, p. 70.

18 J. Brzozowski, *Muzy w poezji polskiej. Dzieje toposu do przełomu romantycznego*, Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, Wrocław 1986, p. 130. In the context of reflections on rhythm, it is worth quoting one more fragment of the scholar's reflections: "The Greek language was subordinated to rhythm, the rhythm was its essence – inalienable, necessary, profound, constantly present characteristic of this language. It was contained in the language, and at the same time it embraced it, giving to every word and every statement a meaning that was self-imposed, a deep, metaphysical sense. When one recalls that rhythm, order and harmony are the basic attributes of divinity, then this meaning can be defined as follows: speech is the place where the divine is manifested and present. Or, in other words, the world reveals its divine nature. The rhythm and harmony of speech itself, being the opposite of chaos, disorder and evil, allow humans to connect with the divine.

If we now were to call thus defined speech poetry, the boundary between them – and today it is usually considered to be very clear – blurs, dissolves and disappears. Speech is, as it were, poetry in itself. Poetry, on the other hand, that divine meaning of the world manifested through rhythm and harmony – chronologically precedes speech, establishes it, gives birth to



such harmony, but the source of poetry, according to him, still beats in the states of inspired trance, which transcend everyday perception.

Other means of musical organization of expression must be taken into account here. Each of Dycki's texts usually consists of two or three stanzas of four verses (and often the final distich/verse). Such a versification is repeated without exception, building, through the duplication of this pattern, that One Poem, created continuously. Its individual links, i.e. subsequent pieces, are neither syllabic nor accentual-syllabic verses, as one would expect from a song. It is worth noting that the author of *Song of Dependencies and Addictions* does not use such models of a numeric verse that activate the sing-song aspect of speech to the greatest extent. It is not the melodiousness that is the main goal, but rhythmicity, built primarily through the utilization of the potential of proseodic repetitions. But not only that. In order to achieve this trance-like flow, Dycki uses irregular tonic verse<sup>19</sup>: the poet compensates deviations from the phonological equilibrium (usually from 3 to 5 phonological words) with another technique – performance associated with music, in this case a special melodeclamation, or chanting, of his poems. This approach also ensures that the enjambment (including interstanzaic) often used in the text do not interfere with the measured flow of speech, because the acoustic realization of the text primarily takes into account verse intonation, rather than sentence intonation. It is characteristic of melic poetry that syntactic and versification discrepancies are overcome in versification and not in the syntactic structure. However, the versification issues – it should be emphasized – are secondary rhythmizing factors in this case. The main function is performed, first of all, by the mechanism of repetitions, which is at work continuously from the moment it is put into motion, and secondly, by the author's oral performance, which still strengthens it. We are dealing here with a contemporary variety of melic poetry – which establishes affinities not only with Greek but also archaic sources of lyric poetry in general. This, in turn, leads to folk inspirations. There is no doubt that Dycki's poetry has strong links with Ukrainian folklore<sup>20</sup>, with ritual songs and dumkas, performed

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it. It is, in the noblest sense of the word, primordial. Primordial like music and like dance – the ordering of the sound itself and the natural ordering of the gesture itself". (p. 133)

19 It is worth noting that in the case of the accentual verse, the boundary between the regular and irregular verse is much more ambiguous than in the case of the syllabic and accentual-syllabic verses: "The regularity of accentual verses is less respected [...]. Sequences of verses with a fixed number of accents often include slightly longer or shorter verses, and sometimes ones that are entirely dissimilar". (*Słownik terminów literackich*, ed. J. Sławiński, Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich, Wrocław 200; A. Okopień-Sławińska, entry: *Wiersz toniczny [accentual verse]*, p. 619) Therefore, it is difficult to say unambiguously whether the option used by Dycki is regular, irregular or sometimes approaches free verse.

20 Dycki's sensitivity (also esthetic) – which he himself often emphasizes – was to a large extent shaped in childhood by Ukrainian folklore. Tomasz Majeran pointed to the poet's reference to

with the accompaniment, if not a lyre, then of a bandura<sup>21</sup>. Maybe in the case of Dycki's poetry it is what Leśmian meant when he wrote:

Variety of content and variety of sound is due to rhythm and is derived from rhythm as an invisible source. He wields the word and transforms it to his own liking. Like a mysterious magnet, he attracts the only, the infallible, the most fitting words, which merge into a sing-song indivisibility with a hexameter measure<sup>22</sup>.

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the Ukrainian *kolomyjka* through the use of chorus (see T. Majeran, *Znak wodny*, „Nowy Nurt” 1996, no. 8, p. 10),

- 21 The musicality of Dycki's poems has often been noticed by researchers. Tomasz Cieślak-Sokołowski analyzes their acoustic aspect, finding no justification for it either in symbolic or avant-garde projects, whether inspired by William Carlos Williams or Velimir Khlebnikov (see T. Cieślak-Sokołowski, *Krajobrazy dźwiękowe wierszy Eugeniusza Tkaczyszyna-Dyckiego*, in: *Pokarmy...*). Also Magdalena Łopata wrote about the musicality: “A sing-song quality that won't let you sleep and is even while asleep you'll feel it, as it reveals the power it holds over the singer. ‘New variations’ (sometimes only graphic) on the theme of ‘old poems’ are an obsession of the chorus, insistent and tender at the same time. It may seem like an expansion of a phrase which, in its pride, trembles in fear being forgotten”. (M. Łopata, *Dziwny, dziwny głos. Rzecz o muzycznej stronie poezji Eugeniusza Tkaczyszyna-Dyckiego*, in: *Pokarmy...*, p. 184. The author also drew attention to the great significance of the Polish-Ukrainian ancestry of the poet and the important role of the Podlachian (‘chachłacki’) language in the formation of Tkaczyszyn's poetic diction. Another trace is worth noting here; it is pointed out by Jerzy Borowczyk, who brings out the idyllic stylization present in this poetry in many variations, at the same time drawing attention to the Ukrainian variety of idyll – *dumka* (see J. Borowczyk, *Z kości piszczałka (sielanka, dumka, nekrolog)*, in: *Pokarmy...*, p. 199). Cf. also M. Kisiel, *Barok, fuga, śmierć*, idem, *Świadectwa, znaki. Głosy o poezji najnowszej*, Katowice 1998; S. Mateusz, *Dwojaki koniec – dumki na głos i papier Eugeniusza Tkaczyszyna-Dyckiego*, „Migotania, Przejaśnienia” 2009, no. 3–4.
- 22 B. Leśmian, *U źródeł rytmu*, idem, *Dzieła wszystkie. Szkice literackie*, ed. J. Trznadel, Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, Warszawa 2011, p. 52.

It is also worth mentioning here the importance of Ukrainian inspirations in Lesmian's work: “This incomprehensibility of greenness is Ukraine, where I grew up [...] Uman and Bila Tserkva, Zofiówka and Szamrajówka. There was the Branickis' forest, oh my dear sir, what a forest it was. A forester called uncle Agaton kept grew shrubs of the most beautiful roses in the depths of the forest, the smell of which was mixed with the smell of resin. [...] People in Ukraine were strange, as strange as the greenery there.” (E. Boyé, *Dialogi akademickie – w niepojętej zieloności*. Rozmowa z Bolesławem Leśmianem, in: B. Leśmian, *Szkice literackie*, Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, Warszawa 1959, p. 500–501; first printed as *W niepojętej zieloności*, “Pion” 1934, no. 23). See also Ź. Nalewajk-Turecka, *Związki twórczości Bolesława Leśmiana z folklorem i kulturą Ukrainy*, „Tekstualia” 2010, no. 2; I. Migal, *Leśmiana w język rosyjski wyprawa*, „Teksty Drugie” 2010, no. 6 (Migal writes: “There are landscapes and folk themes from Ukrainian culture in Leśmian's work. Ukrainian wedding songs have much in common with the works by the Polish poet. There are as many tender words in them, for example in Meadow”; p. 197).

Perhaps surprisingly, in the case of poetry projects that are so fundamentally different, there is a surprising agreement in assigning a leading role to the music factor, as if we were all "participants of the universal rhythm"<sup>23</sup>. Dycki seems to refer to a concept of poetry which – with all the differences, diversity and time distance of the proposals mentioned here – attributes demiurgical power to rhythm in the creation of poetic speech. Does it mean that Dycki is of a similar opinion as Leśmian? For the author of *A Drink of Shadows*, the rhythm of poetry resulted from the primeval beginnings and the deepest essence of being; it was a fundamental, dynamic element of the world; according to him, through rhythm words:

regain a disturbed harmony, a lost paradise, in which every comparison, every metaphor, reminds them of a secret link, of an eternal affinity, of a strange – despite differences – identity. In the sense of this kinship and identity color eagerly merges with shape, shape with fragrance, and fragrance with sound, restoring unity to the whole world<sup>24</sup>.

The belief in the ontological dimensions of rhythm and its meaning-making effect is no longer available to Dycki, although the rhythmizing repetitions in his poetry also have a fundamental meaning, they play a different role, more difficult to grasp and more ambiguous. What he and Leśmian have in common is the certainty as to the exceptional importance of the musical factor, the only one that is able to convey what eludes the semantics of individual words and discursive flow. However, the author of *The History of Polish Families* is not animated by the belief that it is possible to communicate through a "living word" with a mysterious source of the primeval being. His continuously repeated song seems rather a possibility, not so much to express as to keep expressing his own obsessively looped human existential experience, which can never be expressed in a definitive and finite way. But at the same time it becomes the only way to be saved from an overly traumatic experience. As Alina Świeściak rightly points out: "Dycki's hero is (...) an ecstatic entity. It is not the mind, but the ecstatically transgressed corporeality is for him a place where humanity 'happens'"<sup>25</sup>. She continues:

[...] the subject does not provide an explicit account of his traumas [...], he does it involuntarily at a different than semantic level of language. Allowing the depressive to return below the layer of meaning (in what is rhythm, incantation, almost magic, and what can be called revealed linguistically, albeit involuntarily obsession, or – after Foucault – madness), the subject generates a state of ideal ambivalence

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<sup>23</sup> B. Leśmian, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

<sup>24</sup> B. Leśmian, *Rytm jako światopogląd*, idem, *Dzieła wszystkie. Szkice literackie...*, p. 42.

<sup>25</sup> B. Leśmian, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

– he is closed off in the world of depression and at the same time advances towards creative catharsis. What is below the words and meaning, both reveals subjective obsessions and acts against them. It kills the subject and gives him a chance to resurrect himself<sup>26</sup>.

Let us ask again: what is the purpose of Dycki's turn to the distant mythical past, to the archaic beginnings of poetry, the reunification of word and music, the return to a pre-modern way of composing poems? It seems that the poet is thus seeking (despite the lack of faith, hope, trust, oppressive experience, etc.) a lost sense of the world and existence; that this particular form of ritual can be an expression of longing and a deep need to (re)gain – through language and in language, but above all using its sound potential – some fundamentally primordial dimension of existence. This is an attempt to reach places where “the nature is more authentic, more profound, not yet separated from the cosmic-metaphysical whole of the universe”<sup>27</sup> – it is the rhythm, the musical element, which may become a way of discovering such realms of existence, which outside the ritual (even if only artistic) remain completely inaccessible. This, one could say, is a kind of secular postmysteriousness in the modern world, in which one can no longer unconditionally believe in the revelatory effects of poetry.

The tropistic mode of the manifestation of rites (both mythical and folk) also reveals a strong desire to cultivate the closest local community, both spatially (Wólka Krowicka and the surrounding area) and spiritually; seeking one's own roots, or rather establishing their linguistic existence, simultaneously building one's place on earth through relationships with specific people, native culture and customs<sup>28</sup>. This is also linked to the elegiac character of this poetry, in which repetition serves as a constant mourning of those who have passed away, or in fact are still passing away in the poet's memory. It is not, of course, a simple reenactment of some ancient ritual and artistic model, nor a resurrection of the myth of the primitive poet, but a glimpse in Dycki's poetry of traces of a mythicized form (nowadays forgotten? rejected? hidden?) of an archaic and ethnic model of experiencing reality, these “spaces of the little shepherd” (re)gained in rhythmic language. This is done by triggering the mechanism of repetition and reactivation of the musical potential of the language.

Examining the ways of understanding music after the affective turn, Anna Chęćka-Gotkiewicz notes:

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<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 177–178.

<sup>27</sup> S. Balbus, *op. cit.*, p. 467.

<sup>28</sup> That is why there are the same characters recurring all the time, and words from Ukrainian and Podlachian languages appear.

The power of music stems from the fact that it does not have to tell a story, and its enthusiasts derive pleasure from subjecting themselves to the flows of tension and relaxations present in sound structures. The logic of these structures has a purely musical character. And it is surprisingly close to the logic that governs the world of emotions<sup>29</sup>.

The poetry of Tkaczyszyn stems from emotions and at the same time awakens them, becoming a part of an effective communication model, in which the one who broadcasts the message and the one who receives it are connected by a living and dynamic bond, first of all emotional one<sup>30</sup>.

It must be stressed, however, that Dycki's medium-like and repetitive flow is as much a magical ritual as a staged performance, and the poet is at the same time a singer-priest performing the ritual as an actor playing this role. Opposing the Apollonian art of appearances in *The Dionysian Worldview*, Nietzsche reconciled the opposites of sublimity and comedy:

Above all, that disgusted thought of the awfulness and the absurdity of existence had to be transformed into presentations with which one could live: these are the *s u b l i m e* as the artistic taming of the awful and the *r i d i c u l o u s* as the artistic discharge of disgust at the absurd. These two intertwining elements are unified in a **work of art that imitates intoxication that plays with intoxication**<sup>31</sup> [emphasis mine – K.P.].

And further:

In the actor [*Schauspieler*], we apprehend once more the Dionysian man, the instinctive poet singer dancer, but now as a **p l a y – a c t e d Dionysian man** [emphasis mine – K.P.]. He seeks to attain to his model in the convulsions of sublimity or else in the convulsions of laughter; he transcends beauty and yet he does not seek truth. He remains floating in between the two<sup>32</sup>.

29 A. Chęćka-Gotkiewicz, *Stuchanie „afektywne” jako strategia interpretacyjna. Współczesna estetyka filozoficzna wobec problemu rozumienia muzyki*, in: *Kultura afektu – afekty w kulturze. Humanistyka po zwrocie afektywnym*, ed. R. Nycz, A. Łebkowska and A. Dauksza, Warszawa 2015, p. 617.

30 Cf. similar conclusions by A. Świeściak: "Appearing in the rhythm reminiscent of a pendulum, a mantra or an incantation, language is not so much a tool of communication (aside from its poetic function, which is also approaching its own origin, i.e. the ties with musicality), but rather influence". (A. Świeściak, *op. cit.*, p. 180)

31 F. Nietzsche, *The Dionysian Vision of the World*, transl. I. Allen, Minneapolis 2013.

32 *Ibid.*

The trance of Dycki's poetry is also theatricalized. It cannot be otherwise – in a world that is funny and terrible, trivial and sublime at the same time, in a world that has long been devoid of symbolic order or axiological hierarchy. The mystery played out here is not questioned or ridiculed. Imitation is an interpretation, which in this case, although it reveals the weakness of today's poetic language, does not deny the source power of poetry. Dycki states this conviction explicitly in the volume *I Won't Give You Myself In Any Form*: "We know well / that poetry does not speak with the same / same power as in days of yore,"<sup>33</sup> as well as in the recurring, refrain-like phrase in many variants in the earlier volume: "I will never ever ever / come to terms with the uselessness / poetry"<sup>34</sup>.

Uttering endless incantations, Tkaczyszyn-Dycki does not unconditionally believe in the power of the poetic word. In language, he often exposes its rhetorical and ironic potential. Nor does he question the power of poetry, either. As Krzysztof Hoffman rightly points out:

Dycki's protagonist, experiencing disbelief in rhetoricity, experiencing rhetoricity in disbelief, does not surrender to the exegete that delineates rigid divisions, definitions, and typologies. Regardless of the definition of these attitudes: as homo rhetoricus and homo seriosus, jester and priest (...), Dycki – through his disbelief – always sides with the former, and the one who expects some answers – with the latter<sup>35</sup>.

As a (post)modern poet, he is as much subject to the trance of ecstatic speech as he is liable to doubt its causative power. Trying to transcend this aporia, he crosses the border of semantics, and exploits the prosodic value of language<sup>36</sup>, be-

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33 E. Tkaczyszyn-Dycki, *Nie dam ci siebie w żadnej postaci*, Lokator Media, Kraków 2016, p. 19.

34 E. Tkaczyszyn-Dycki, *Imię i zamię*, Biuro Literackie, Wrocław 2011, p. 11.

35 K. Hoffmann, *Dubitatio. O poezji Eugeniusza Tkaczyszyna-Dyckiego*, Wydawnictwo Forma, Szczecin, Bezrzecze 2012, p. 93–94.

36 It is worth quoting here an interesting interpretation of Baka's *Notes On Inevitable Death* by Paweł Bukowicz: "Józef Baka is a religious poet [...] above all because he successfully represents the unique mystical and manic experience of death by subjecting his speaking to an alien logic (not absurd!) to an overwhelming rhythm [...]. It is undoubtedly a spiritual, extra- and extra-intellectual experience. Its most important carrier, the vehicle of representation, is not the logos of this poetry, but its lexis, and especially [...] its subjection to the foreign, non-competitive logic of an overwhelming rhythm. [...] Baka's father finds shelter from the threat of contamination of the word with human willfulness in entrusting him to an entirely alien, indiscursive order of overwhelming rhythm. He escapes from the potential machinality of the act of verbal representation of spiritual communion with death, i.e. talking about death [...] to the mechanical rhythmic organization of that act, to talking about death, talking about 'inevitable death'. In the manic reduction of sentences to words, words to syllables saves the idiomatic trace and path of mystical

cause only sing-song – as he wants to believe – brings some comfort, as it opens what may seem to have been lost for a long time: the unity of poetry and existence. The unity here is not a stable ontological foundation, but an impermanent and always temporary space, which, however, has the valuable property that it becomes, for the poet, the only one that exists at all, an area that can be inhabited – creatively and existentially. That is why the selection of his poems from 1989–2003 is entitled: *Poetry As a Place On Earth*<sup>37</sup>. For Dycki's omnipresent, intrusive rhythm reveals with its persistent, obsessive presence the meta-text plane and activates it. By exposing itself, the intensified pattern of repetition becomes the most important carrier of the poetic function, pointing to the endless processuality of the continuously repeated verse as the ultimate and most important goal of the poet's trance.

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experience”. (P. Bukowiec, *Metronom. O jednostkowości poezji “nazbyt” rytmicznej*, Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, Kraków 2015, p. 95). Only at first may it seem that the above conclusions of the Baroque poet have nothing in common with Tkaczyszyn-Dycki. However, there is an interesting analogy between them. Just as Baka does not so much talk about death as “with the overwhelming rhythm successfully represents the experience of death”, so the author of *Norwid's Lover* through constant repetitions does not so much talk about poetry, as he points to it as an outcome of his efforts: he does not so much speak about poetry, but speaks poetry. The metatextual dimension therefore becomes extremely important.

- 37 See K. Hoffmann (op. cit., p. 40): “[...] Eugeniusz Tkaczyszyn-Dycki's poems are a declarative search for the power of performative. It is a desire for the written words [...] to become a sanctuary for whoever writes them (...). In other words, there is no other home for the poet [...] than the home of the poem, and at the same time he knows – and his knowledge is all the more acute because he is more aware than other language users that the poem is a space of mobile meanings – that the poem only transfers the sense that emerges from an unknown place [...] goes in a direction that cannot be programmed or predicted [...]. Dycio has the only possible home in his poems and at the same time is heartbreakingly homeless”.

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Krystyna Pietrych

## Tkaczyszyn-Dycki's Continuous "Song About..."

### Summary

In this article, the author analyzes the poetry of Eugeniusz Tkaczyszyn-Dycki, positing that through his individual works we are in contact with One Poem, constantly written, which cannot be fully realized; it exists to some extent in every realization, but never completely and ultimately. This is the reason for his subsequent attempts to create it – a constantly repeated, never-ending song.

Dycki's omnipresent, intrusive rhythm reveals with its persistent, obsessive presence the meta-text plane and activates it. By exposing itself, the intensified pattern of repetition becomes the most important carrier of the poetic function, pointing to the endless process of the continuously repeated verse as the ultimate and most important goal of the poetry.

**Keywords:** Poetry, Musicality, Trance, Rhythm, Tkaczyszyn-Dycki



## Tkaczyszyn-Dyckiego nieustannie ponawiana „piosenka o...”

### *Streszczenie*

Autorka w swoim artykule analizuje poezję Eugeniusza Tkaczyszyna-Dyckiego. Zakłada ona, że poprzez jego odrębne utwory jesteśmy w rzeczywistości w kontakcie z jednym, ciągle pisanym wierszem, który wciąż nie może być w pełni zrealizowany, a jednocześnie istnieje dla niektórych w zakresie każdej realizacji, ale nigdy całkowicie i ostatecznie. To jest powód kolejnych prób jego stworzenia – stale powtarzanej, niekończącej się piosenki.

Wszechobecny, natrętny rytm Dyckiego ujawnia się z jego uporczywą, obsesyjną obecnością na płaszczyźnie meta-tekstu i aktywuje ją. Zintensyfikowany wzorzec powtarzania, odsłaniając się, staje się najważniejszym nośnikiem funkcji poetyckiej i wskazuje na niekończącą się procesualność ciągłego powtarzania wiersza jako ostatecznego i najważniejszego celu transu poety.

**Słowa kluczowe:** poezja, muzyczność, trans, rytm, Eugeniusz Tkaczyszyn-Dycki

**Krystyna Pietrych** head of the Department of Literature and Tradition of Romanticism at the University of Łódź. Author of a monograph on Aleksander Wat's poetry (*O Wierszach śródziemnomorskich Aleksandra Wata*; Warszawa 1996) and editor of his writings (*Dziennik bez samogłosek*; Warszawa 2001). Then she also published a book entitled "Co poezji po bólu? Empatyczne przestrzenie (Łódź 2009). Her main area of interest is the twentieth-century Polish poetry, she has written about poems by Leśmian, Tuwim, Baczyński, Wat, Szymborska, Herbert, Białoszewski, Barańczak, Iwaszkiewicz, Różewicz, Miłosz, Krynicki, Sommer, and others.

Editor-in-chief of the yearly "Czytanie Literatury. Łódzkie Studia Literaturoznawcze". Head of the Interdisciplinary Humanities Research Centre of the University of Łódź.