

Without a rough draft: Composing Baczyński

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In March 1973, Kazimierz Wyka talked about his *Droga do Baczyńskiego* [Road to Baczyński] at a PEN-Club meeting:

[...] I beatified him [Krzysztof Baczyński], I was the one who tried to do everything that could be done, from interpretation to editing, to popularize his poetry. And it is all over now. It is a closed chapter.¹

Wyka referred to himself as a postulator only as a joke; it was a sign of irony and distance. However, the role played by the Krakow critic not only in making Baczyński present, but also (or perhaps most of all) in popularizing his works, was indeed crucial. As Tadeusz Lewandowski observes, Wyka was the one who “investigated the basic traces that critics still analyze today in their study of Baczyński.”² It was Wyka who first extensively and enthusiastically reviewed Baczyński’s debut collection of poems published during World War II. Together with Baczyński’s mother, Wyka also co-edited the poet’s legally published debut collection of poems in 1947. Eventually, together with Aniela Kmita-Piorunowa, a literary scholar and the poet’s cousin, he also researched and edited *Utwory zebrane* [Collected Works], published for the first time in 1961. “Such an adventure happens only once in a lifetime,” Wyka claimed. Let us also add, for the sake of completeness, that the first and still the most important monograph devoted to Baczyński

¹ Kazimierz Wyka, *List do Jana Bugaja. Droga do Baczyńskiego* [Letter to Jan Bugaj: Road to Baczyński], ed. Aniela Kmita-Piorunowa (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1986), 26.

² Tadeusz Lewandowski, “Lustro sentymentalne – próba” [Sentimental mirror: Attempt], *Poezja*, no. 1 (1989): 53.

was published by Wyka in the same year as the first edition of *Utwory zebrane*. It was no coincidence. The monograph was meant to serve as an introduction to the collected works. However, “It turned out to be too detailed and too extensive and was therefore published separately.”³ A slightly shortened version of the text was included as a critical introduction to *Utwory zebrane*.

This, as Wyka put it, “beatification process” gave rise to a legend and later an icon, which has permanently entered not only the canon of Polish 20th-century literature, but also popular culture. These facts are well known, but are not the focus of this article.

The unique nature of Baczyński’s *Utwory zebrane*, and not only the 1961 edition but also all subsequent editions, does not only have to do with the fact that it made Baczyński a legend. The book, which was published four times and successively supplemented and corrected, is endowed with a unique editorial quality. There are few collected works that collect not only everything that the poet had ever written but also everything that he had ever signed. Both the writings that Baczyński approved for publication and those that he did not were published in *Utwory zebrane*. Indeed, apart from literary works, in Baczyński’s *Utwory zebrane*, there are also letters, postcards, a publishing contract, and early dedications (basically written by a child). Some texts are therefore so irrelevant that the author not only did not prohibit their publication, but most likely did not even think that they deserved to be published. Naturally, the fact that Baczyński left behind a small number of writings must have played a role in this process. However, not just the question of the length or even the content of the collected works is at issue here. Such an attempt to present the author comprehensively stems from the fact that he is clearly identified with his “work.” At first glance, such a concept may seem anachronistic and even a bit naive. In fact, however, it was a conscious, rhetorical and, above all, calculated decision. In the last paragraph of the introduction to *Utwory zebrane*, Wyka wrote:

If we were to compare the achievements of two twenty-three-year-old and extraordinarily talented poets, we have the right to answer the question of whether Baczyński’s death as a soldier in 1944 could be compared to Słowacki’s death in 1831.⁴

Let us not answer this question, however, and forget about Słowacki for the time being. We will come back to it. Wyka did not originally think of the comparison between Słowacki and Baczyński and it was a purely polemical move. At this point, we should actually focus on, as Wyka emphasized, whether we have the right to answer the question in the first place.

In *What is an author?*, Michel Foucault argued that the question of collected works is one of the most important “theoretical” and “practical” problems in literature. Foucault asks: “Certainly, everything must be published, but can we agree on what ‘everything’ means?”⁵ It seems that in the process of collecting and meticulously examining Baczyński’s works Wyka was confronted with the same problem.

³ Kazimierz Wyka, “Od autora »Wstępu«” [From the author of » Introduction«], in Krzysztof Kamil Baczyński, *Utwory zebrane* [Collected works], ed. Aniela Kmita-Piorunowa and Kazimierz Wyka vol. 2 (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1970), 712.

⁴ Kazimierz Wyka, “Wstęp” [Introduction], in Baczyński, *Utwory zebrane* [Collected works]: 1, LXVII.

⁵ Michel Foucault, “What is an author?” in *Modernity and its discontents*, ed. J. Marsh, J.D. Caputo and M. Westphal (New York: Fordham UP, 1992), 302.

No edition of *Utwory zebrane* was complete. In the first edition, “some manuscripts were overlooked,” and besides, some of the documents left by Baczyński were found after the book had been published. In the second edition, the “omission” was corrected, and new texts were added but one poem was censored. The third edition, published five years after Wyka’s death, turned out to be over-complete – Jerzy Kamil Weintraub’s poems were published in it as well. Consequently, in the fourth (and for the time being final) edition, the whole was slightly supplemented and shortened. It would seem, therefore, that the peculiarly dynamic re-edition of *Utwory zebrane* literally answers the question about the meaning of “everything.” “Everything” is identified with Baczyński and thus “everything” had to be included in the book.

To put it differently: Wyka is “a technician and a theoretician,” because “everything” has to be published in the collected edition of Baczyński’s works, but at the same time he has to “balance the accounts” and show that the poet “did not interrupt his work in half, in a quarter of a shapeless sentence, [...] his poetry is a complete and finished sentence.”⁶ “Everything” is not unconditionally everything, but only “means ‘everything.’” The main goal of *Utwory zebrane* was not so much to collect the writings but render them complete.

In the cosmos of abandoned rough drafts and scattered documents, such actions are necessary. Without significant editorial intervention, incomplete or disordered texts could be completely unreadable. As Wyka recalled, in the case of Baczyński, an exceptionally great effort was required to edit his prose:

We got it [...] in the form of (almost but not utter) rubbish: unnumbered, often it was not known where certain texts belonged, without titles, usually without beginnings and without endings. [...] A very careful reading was required to organize Baczyński’s prose.⁷

However, an act of recovery is never innocent. Correction and organization obscures or blurs, often irretrievably, the draft nature of the text. And the draft allows us to reconstruct the creative process. It allows us to understand how the author’s mind works. It often allows us to define or even determine the final version of the text. However, this was never the case with Baczyński. Even the beginning is difficult to find.

Baczyński’s literary career was not typical – its stages were not marked by publications in literary magazines or books. Two mini-collections of seven poems from 1940 entitled *Zamknięty echem* [Closed with an echo] and *Dwie miłości* [Two loves] cannot really be considered a poetical debut. They were provided with a “certificate” and the impressive ex-libris “*Wydawnictwo Sublokatorów Przeszłości*” [The Publishing House of the Tenants of the Past], but only seven copies of each were published. They can hardly be considered a proper publication. In fact, both “collections,” which commemorate Baczyński’s friendship with Jerzy Kamil Weintraub, are only several pages long. The text is typewritten, and the pages are bounded together with staples. According to Wyka, both collections were later “disqualified” by the poet. However, as Jerzy Świąch, the editor of *Wybór poezji* [Selected poems] by Baczyński published in the Polish

⁶ Wyka, “Wstęp”, LXI.

⁷ Wyka, *List do Jana Bugaja. Droga do Baczyńskiego*, 38.

National Library series, observes, both volumes mark “a poetical debut that took place under Nazi occupation in an exclusive” series. Świąch also noted that “Baczyński recorded only half of these poems in the handwritten ‘codex’ approved for publication.”⁸ This is quite an unusual observation on behalf of the editor. He believes that the fact that some texts were missing from the manuscript is more important than the fact that the author agreed to publish it.

Therefore, Baczyński’s actual debut should be *Wiersze zebrane* [Collected poems]. The poet published it in 1942 under the pseudonym Jan Bugaj. While the volume was published under Nazi occupation, it nevertheless received critical acclaim: it was reviewed, quite poorly, by Tadeusz Gajcy and Stanisław Marczak Oborski, and, enthusiastically, in the form of *List do Jana Bugaja* by Kazimierz Wyka.

The book was twenty pages long (and also included three unnumbered pages). Twenty poems were arranged in three cycles (of different length) entitled: *Legenda* [Legend], *Krzyż* [Cross], and *Erotyki* [Erotics]. Thirty years after the publication of *List do Jana Bugaja*, the former reviewer was equally enthusiastic in assessing Baczyński’s 1942 collection. Wyka praised:

[...] an exceptionally brilliant selection of poems, which proved how self-critical this young man was. In fact, if only these works by Baczyński [...] were to survive, we would still call him a great poet. [...] He was fully aware of what is the most precious, valuable, and important in his writing; indeed, it is easy to talk about it now, when we know his entire *oeuvre*, when we know that he chose the poems.⁹

And yet, despite such a favorable review, none of the post-war editors of Baczyński’s poems duplicated or referred to the poet’s original selection.

The order proposed by Baczyński in his wartime volumes did not allow one to “investigate basic traces.” It was almost certain that apart from a relatively small group of readers who had access to the underground publications, Baczyński’s work was not known to the wider public. To paraphrase the title of Wyka’s wartime sketches, we could say that the underground publications were “pretend editions.”

The next edition faced similar problems. In mid-1943, Baczyński carefully prepared another collection of poems. Twelve poems were divided into two cycles of six poems: *Krzyż złamanych rąk* [The Cross of Broken Hands] and *Słowa nadziei* [The Words of Hope]. The book, or more precisely, “seven loose pages,” was published under the pseudonym Piotr Smugosz. It was titled *Śpiew z Pożogi* [Song of Fire].

Nobody had known this collection existed until the end of the 1960s. It caused quite a stir when it was found in an archival file of Tadeusz Borowski’s texts. However, we know little apart from the fact that such a volume was once published: it is not known how many copies were published and whether they were distributed in any way. Nevertheless, such ignorance was in fact blissful. The 1943 collection was discovered after the publication of *Utwory zebrane*. As such, it was not

⁸ Jerzy Świąch, “Wstęp” [Introduction], in Krzysztof Kamil Baczyński, *Wybór poezji* [Selected poems], ed. Jerzy Świąch (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1989) BN I 265, X.

⁹ Wyka, *List do Jana Bugaja. Droga do Baczyńskiego*, 28.

subjected to editorial limitations and reviewed, alas forty years too late. It was reprinted in 1989 in the first issue of *Poezja* [Poetry] entirely devoted to Baczyński. Jan Z. Brudnicki reviewed the poems. And although the very idea of restoring Baczyński's original voice not only as the author but also as the editor was excellent, it fell through. Brudnicki followed in the footsteps of Wyka's critical and editorial findings. The only new discovery was Baczyński's new pseudonym. Other than that, literary scholars were not interested in the volume. The existence of the book was acknowledged in the Editors' note to the second and all subsequent editions of *Utwory zebrane*, but the fact that some poems had been originally published in *Śpiew z Pożogi* was not mentioned.

At the time when this short twelve-poem collection was published (or perhaps later), Baczyński signed a publishing agreement with Zbigniew Mitzner. He agreed to prepare and publish "the work entitled *Śpiew z pożogi*." The contract was made as a part of the "Wisła" Archive. The book was to be published "within one year from the restoration of state sovereignty or from the end of the war."¹⁰ Under Nazi occupation, about a hundred similar agreements were made with Polish writers and scientists, but none were honored. The royalties were in fact considered a kind of grant.

Baczyński, however, wished to honor the contract and began to work on the most extensive collection of his poems to date. The book was described in the contract in detail. The new collection was to consist of two parts. The first part was titled *Krzyż człowieka* [The Human Cross] and the second part was titled *Śpiew z pożogi* [Song of Fire] (like the entire collection). Apart from the handwritten contract, "a collection composed of 16 pages [...] with 13 poems that were typed on one side of the page" has survived to this day.

Under the contract, *Śpiew z pożogi* was to be published as the second volume of the *Droga* [Road] Library publishing series, i.e. as part of the publishing series of the underground periodical edited by Ewa Pohoska and Marczak Oborski and published by Juliusz Garztecki. Baczyński was the editor of the poetry section in *Droga*. After the war, the publisher of *Droga* observed that the volume prepared by Baczyński had 60 typewritten pages:

Poems that were included in this collection were selected by the author, his wife Barbara and his publisher J. Garztecki. The draft version of the text was carefully revised by the author, he chose the title of the collection and made decisions concerning punctuation, etc., and then the draft version was handed over to J. Garztecki so that the technical publishing works could begin.¹¹

The final manuscript was kept by the publisher. Shortly before the outbreak of the Warsaw Uprising, Garztecki, who had a safe hiding place, also received from Baczyński his notebooks with fair copies of almost all of his poems. Garztecki retrieved this deposit in the early days of February 1945 and shortly afterwards all materials were handed over to the poet's mother Stefania Baczyńska. These notebooks, later called "codices" by Wyka, became the blueprint for post-war editions. Un-

¹⁰The text of the agreement was included in the annotations to the second and all subsequent editions: Baczyński, *Utwory zebrane* vol. 2, 590–592.

¹¹"Wojenne losy rękopisów K.K. Baczyńskiego" (Uwagi redakcji spisane na podstawie rozmowy z Juliuszem Garzteckim) [The wartime fate of K.K. Baczyński's manuscripts (Editorial notes based on an interview with Juliusz Garztecki)], *Przegląd Humanistyczny*, no. 3 (1958): 178. See also: Juliusz Garztecki, "O »Drodze« i Krzysztofie Baczyńskim" [On *Droga* and Krzysztof Baczyński], *Miesięcznik Literacki*, no. 1 (1972): 86–95.

fortunately, a typescript of 60 pages, as described by Garztecki, has not survived. However, handwritten fair copies of 37 poems, entitled, as it was agreed in the contract with Mitzner, Part I: *Krzyż człowieczy*, did survive. It is true that the second part of the oldest “codex,” with poems written between 1939 and 1942, also has the same title, but the titles and the arrangement of the 13 poems attached to the *Śpiew z pożogi* contract is the same as of those 13 poems in the handwritten fair copy. And although it is not a typescript and it has 44 (and not 60) pages, it can nevertheless be assumed that it is a copy of the majority of the poems approved for publication.

It is not known what happened to the typescript Garztecki had received so that he could begin “the technical publishing works.” Garztecki may have miscalculated the exact number of pages, but this question is crucial because the final approved copy of *Śpiew z pożogi* may be verified, as evidenced by Stefania Baczyńska’s letters to Jerzy Andrzejewski, one of Baczyński’s best friends. The letters are archived in the Museum of Literature. In a letter dated Nov. 3, 1945, Stefania Baczyńska writes:

Well, Krzyś left a final selection of his poems, ready to be published. It seems to me that the selection was rather unfortunate. I don’t know why he chose these poems. But a young man brought them to me, Krzyś himself had given them to him in July [ast] y[ear] and he somehow saved them, but now he cannot publish them and he brought them to me.

I want to publish them, I have paper, Father Drapczyński wants to print them in his printing house, but before they are published, I would like to ask you and Mr. Wyka for advice as to whether I should add other poems, a preface, or a few words [...]. I kindly ask you or Mr. Wyka [...] to visit me for a week so that we can select poems together.¹²

When I first described this situation ten years ago, I assumed that Andrzejewski initially agreed to write a preface, but eventually failed to submit his text and did not edit *Śpiew z pożogi*.¹³ However, thanks to Anna Synoradzka’s recent discovery, today we know that Andrzejewski not only responded to Baczyńska’s letter, but also attempted to write a short essay – a preface to the collection. Two drafts were written but the text was never published. According to Synoradzka, Andrzejewski most likely failed to fulfill his promise because “Baczyńska refused to acknowledge that her son was dead.”¹⁴

It is difficult to say whether the mother truly did not acknowledge Krzysztof’s death or whether she wished to believe that her son was alive. Stefania Baczyńska we know from the letters is a very complicated character. On the one hand, she is hopeful as regards the unconfirmed news about her son’s death. On the other hand, she quickly edits an abridged collection of her son’s poems, as if wishing to commemorate him and his legacy.

¹²The manuscript of Stefania Baczyńska’s letter to Jerzy Andrzejewski, Adam Mickiewicz Museum of Literature in Warsaw, ref. no. 1587 [81].

¹³See: Maciej Tramer, “Edycja, której nie było – albo: jak zrobiony jest Krzysztof Baczyński” [An edition that did not exist: How Krzysztof Baczyński is made], in *Balaghan: mikroświaty i nanohistorie* [Balaghan: Microworlds and nanohistory], ed. Mariusz Jochemczyk, Magdalena Kokoszka, Beata Mytych-Forajter (Katowice: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Śląskiego, 2015), 85–79.

¹⁴Anna Synoradzka-Demadre, *Jerzy Andrzejewski. Przyczynek do biografii prywatnej* [Jerzy Andrzejewski: Towards private biography] (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Krytyki Politycznej, 2016), 245. Both versions of the preface are included in this book.

Stefania Baczyńska sent a similar letter to Wyka, who also agreed to help edit the collection.¹⁵ The two most probably chose the poems in March 1946 and the book was published in the summer of 1947. However, the third edition of *Śpiew z pożogi* was unlike any earlier edition. The selection and the arrangement of the poems, described by Baczyńska as “rather unfortunate,” was changed. As a result, instead of two poetical cycles, as Baczyński had intended, the new edition included 129 poems divided and composed into seven separate thematic chapters/cycles entitled as follows: *Oczy otwieram* [I open my eyes], *Magia* [Magic], *W żalu najczystszym* [Pure grief], *Ty jesteś moje imię* [You are my name], *Poematy* [Poems], *Rorate coeli*, and *Z głową na karabinie* [With my head on my rifle]. The poem *Niebo złote ci otworzę* [I’ll open for you a golden sky] opened the collection. It stood on its own and was not included in any cycle.

Wyka explained that the nature of his cooperation with Baczyńska on the third edition of *Śpiew z pożogi* was complicated:

[...] she agreed to cooperate with me, but she did not show me a single manuscript, she did not show me a single codex [...] – she only gave me copies she had made and still hesitated: should I give it to him? Shouldn’t I? Should I? Shouldn’t I?¹⁶

We do not know the details of this cooperation. However, Wyka’s opinion is contradicted by a very short editor’s note in the post-war edition of *Śpiew z pożogi*. The source of the texts as well as the role played by Wyka and the poet’s mother in the edition and selection of the poems is acknowledged. Respectively, Wyka’s opinion is contradicted by Stefania Baczyńska’s letter to Andrzejewski, dated March 25, 1946. The poet’s mother thus describes the editing process:

[...] so I waited calmly and finally, in March, Kazimierz arrived. He stayed with me for a few days, we worked hard on editing this collection and I think that the result is good. Kazimierz is very kind and has invaluable qualities as a man, as a poetry expert, as ... as ... my God! I am delighted with him, but I do not have the courage to share with him my experiences and thoughts, I am ashamed to talk about my ideas, because I think that he would find them bizarre, or exalted, or outdated.¹⁷

Perhaps Baczyńska did not make the manuscripts available and demanded that they should be read only in her presence. Anyway, such limitations, if any, probably applied only to poems. In several letters sent to Wyka at the turn of 1946 and 1947, Baczyńska asked about

¹⁵Jerzy Andrzejewski, Stefania Baczyńska, Tadeusz Gajcy, Karol Irzykowski, Karol Ludwik Koniński, Czesław Miłosz, Jerzy Turowicz, Kazimierz Wyka, *Pod okupacją. Listy* [Under occupation: Letters] (Warsaw: Fundacja Zeszytów Literackich, 2014), 247–248.

¹⁶Wyka, *List do Jana Bugaja. Droga do Baczyńskiego*, 36.

¹⁷The manuscript of Stefania Baczyńska’s letter to Jerzy Andrzejewski, Adam Mickiewicz Museum of Literature in Warsaw, ref. no. 1587 [83]. Aniela Kmita-Piorunowa, who co-edited all editions of *Utwory zebrane* and transcribed Wyka’s last lecture on Baczyński, questioned Stefania Baczyńska’s attitude. See: footnote 18: Wyka, *List do Jana Bugaja. Droga do Baczyńskiego*, 36–37.

Baczyński's prose: "Why didn't you publish Krzysztof's prose in the last issue of *Twórczość*? It was confiscated from me and I couldn't even say no."¹⁸

5,000 copies of the third edition of *Śpiew z pożogi* were published. The collection received favorable reviews. And it was only this first collection of Baczyński's poems published after the war that is considered the poet's proper debut. However, in their selection and edition of texts, Baczyńska and Wyka completely ignored the original authorial design from 1943. Only the title was the same. We can no longer reconstruct the book that was the object of the publishing agreement with Mitzner. However, we may reconstruct its fragment and thus try and understand the idea behind the whole.

The materials which were used to create the second edition of *Śpiew z pożogi*, i.e. those 37 poems on 44 pages (which were also later used to compose the first part of the volume), indicate that Baczyński designed his work carefully. *Krzyż człowieczy* ignores the chronological order of the texts. Indeed, it could be said that at the beginning of the cycle, religious themes dominate, and they later give way to erotica. The beginning and the end of the cycle are not independent; nor are they contrasted with each other. All 37 poems from the *Krzyż człowieczy* cycle form a consistent story about transformation. It will take place without sudden twists or flashes, although light will play a very important role in it. The collection opens with the following poem:

Pod nieba dłoniastą palmą nie daj mi chodzić samotnie, Agni	Don't let me walk alone under the hand of the sky, Agni
Otwórz rzeki, a sosny krzykiem z ognia i wiosny Podpal i nagnij.	Open the rivers, with a scream of fire and spring set fire to and bend the pine trees

The meter of this poem is the Polish epic hexameter. The beginning is heavy and dark. So is the entire poem and the next poems. The second poem in the collection is *Pieśń o ciemności* [The Song of Darkness], and the third poem is *Rapsod o klęsce* [Rhapsody on Defeat]. Let us focus on the first poem. The sky and the pines are subject to the force of gravity, which Baczyński considered one of the most important forces. We can sense impending doom. In such a world, man does not grow up tall but is forced to bend towards the ground. As man matures and grows, he does not so much become heavier but is subjected to gravity. Such a relationship between man and the ground, conditioned by gravity, is difficult and complicated: it both pulls and attracts. Gradually and sequentially, beginning with the central theme of the first poem:

[...] bo oto spadam – owoc w grób ziemi pod sobą Dojrzały.	[...] Because here I am falling – like a fruit into the grave of the ground beneath me Ripe.
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¹⁸Pod okupacją. Listy, 258.

In *Pieśń o ciemności* this relation is not as intense:

[...] idą chłopcy o oczach z największych przeznaczeń,	[...] boys with the eyes filled with the greatest
Idą, aż za daleko przechodzą – do ziemi,	destiny march,
	They march until they go too far – to the ground,

However, after four stanzas, the close relationship between people and the ground becomes almost perverse:

Więc przypadają do stóp drżącej ziemi,	So they fall to the feet of the trembling ground,
A ta otwiera paszczę, całuje i wchłania,	And she opens her mouth, kisses and absorbs,
I niebo drga, nie woła żaden głos.	And the sky trembles, no voice calls out.

The fatal force of gravity gradually decreases in the entire preserved fragment of the volume. “Falling into” later turns into “coming down” and then into “passing,” and finally the direction is reserved completely. This change may already be seen in the middle of the cycle, as the titles of two poems in the middle of the volume demonstrate. The seventeenth poem is titled *U niebios rozkwitających* [At the Blooming Heaven] and the eighteenth poem is titled *Nie wstydz się tych przelotów* [Do not be ashamed of these flights]. The closer to the end, the lighter the tone: *Promienie* [Rays], *Wróble* [Sparrows], *Z wiatrem* [With the Wind]. The end is brilliant, light, fast, and short:

Niebo złote ci otworzę,	I’ll open for you a golden sky
W którym ciszy biała nić...	where the white thread of silence is...

Indeed, a similar transformation may be seen when one examines closely the gradual shift from darkness to light, from *Pieśń o ciemności* to the “golden sky” and “the liquid song clear birches sing.”

However, let us move away from the careful reading of the doomed *Śpiew z pożogi*. We have only discussed it so that we may compare it with the post-war collection of the same title. In the post-war collection, the poems arranged in seven cycles also tell a story, as evidenced by the table of contents. The story begins with *Oczy otwieram* [I open my eyes] and *Magia* [Magic] and ends with *Z głową na karabinie* [With my head on my rifle]. In the third edition of *Śpiew z pożogi*, the story is completely different than in the authorial edition of the collection. Gravity and light are not important; quite the opposite. The post-war *Śpiew z pożogi* is conceived of as a story of awakening: illusions give way to death. Indeed, the “I’ll open for you the golden sky” trochee stands on its own at the very beginning of the collection.

Such a dramatic change was by no means made against Baczyński’s will. Baczyński’s intentions were simply not taken into consideration. We do not know how the final version of the typescript which Garztecki received from Baczyński looked like. After all, the entire second part is missing. Perhaps Stefania Baczyńska was right when she said that the selection made by the poet was “rather unfortunate.” The fact that the post-war edition was well-received proves that both editors were right. In 1947, a collection/story which begins with “opening

one's eyes" and ends with "one's head on one's rifle" better corresponded to the "tragic loss" of Baczyński, his career, and his works, despite the mother who found it difficult to come to terms with the poet's death.

In the volume edited by Wyka and Baczyńska, there were 129 poems. It means that the post-war edition included at least twice as many poems as Baczyński's original collection. The careful reader who read a short editors' note discovered that the 1947 book presents only a number (but not all) of Baczyński's works. The 1947 edition violated the authorial integrity of the previous edition, but it certainly contributed to popularizing Baczyński's works.

The laconic editors' note to *Śpiew z pożogi* reads: "the poet recorded the final versions of his works in special notebooks."¹⁹ And it seems that the formula of the "final" or "fair" copy has become the most representative for presenting Baczyński's works. After all, Święch referred to it, rejecting the publication "in the exclusive, at least back then, *Biblioteka Sublokatorów Przyszłości* series" in favor of "final" manuscripts "that were approved for publication." Every text in the notebook was considered approved for publication by the author. A fundamental change took place at the level of the manuscripts, when the editor no longer treated them as "thick notebooks" or "special notebooks" but as "codices." It was an act of "beatification." Baczyński's works were elevated to a higher status. As Wyka observes,

we called these notebooks codices [...] and these codices contain everything, all Baczyński's works, in chronological order, which makes the publisher's work very easy.²⁰

The "codex" should be and was treated with the utmost respect. In subsequent editions, the "codices" were arranged chronologically: the original arrangement of poems gave way to a "chronicle." Indeed, in *Utwory zebrane* edited by Wyka and Kmita-Piorunowa published 14 years later, there were no cycles and no special arrangements.

After the death of Baczyński's mother, Kmita-Piorunowa looked after the poet's legacy. We may also assume that after the death of the poet's mother, Baczyński's documents and texts were no longer treated as a holy relic. As Wyka observed, "they have fallen into the hands of people who analyzed them without emotion."

But there are also – because he clearly loved his papers – preliminary editions, drafts, everything. Sometimes there are three or four editions of the same text, and you can see how a given text was created. Later, [...] Baczyński's prose and his only untitled drama were found.²¹

Thanks to this discovery, it became possible to prepare the first edition of *Utwory zebrane*. Contrary to appearances, however, some selections were made. An extensive preface and a carefully prepared and detailed editors' note were added. In subsequent editions, new discoveries and new illustrations were added as well. All texts collected in the book were

¹⁹Krzysztof Kamil Baczyński, *Śpiew z pożogi* (Warsaw: Wiedza 1947), 247.

²⁰Wyka, *List do Jana Bugaja. Droga do Baczyńskiego*, 37.

²¹Wyka, 38.

grouped in accordance with a specific principle. The editors' note, published in every edition of *Utwory zebrane*, reads:

This edition does not aspire to be a critical edition [...] that is entirely scientific and thus we do not pay attention to every version of the text. Neither scientific purposes nor common sense advocated this. [...] We believe that as editors and publishers we had to correctly read final versions, if under such circumstances, any version may be considered final.²²

Draft versions allow us to "see how a given text was created" but the editors decided against it. In *Utwory zebrane*, a uniform publishing formula was adopted, especially regarding texts recorded in the "codices" (fair copies). The editors assumed that the author approved each text in his codices for publication. The editors did not take into account the author's decision to use individual poems in various wartime editions and collections, and arranged texts into new cycles, which meant that they did not even try to establish which poem Baczyński considered representative and which he considered *inedita*. The editors only respected the author's decision not to publish his early writings. However, they quickly came up with a solution: poems that Baczyński did not approve for publication were published at the end of the collection. All other texts that the author approved for publication, fair copies, and "(almost but not utter) rubbish: unnumbered, [...] without titles, usually without beginnings and without endings," were treated in the same manner and arranged together.

A comprehensive edition that transforms everything into *inedita* and eliminates the process of selection is a technical and theoretical editorial idea. For the co-editor of *Utwory zebrane* and the author of one of the most important monographs that allowed scholars to "investigate basic traces," the word "choice" seems to be the key to Baczyński. All his works and his biography as a soldier/poet, the two being closely interconnected, are all about choice. According to Wyka, this choice was made when Baczyński almost simultaneously published the poems *Wybór* [Choice] and *Ciemna miłość* [Dark Love] and decided to join the Fighting Boy-Scouts of the Polish resistance during World War II (Harcerskie Grupy Szturmowe). According to Wyka, choice had nothing to do with choosing:

After all, the term [choice] is so indefinite; it is in itself devoid of content. After all, a choice is only an act of making a decision, because we believe in something, we think that something is true, or we cherish something. The act of choosing and what you choose are closely interconnected.²³

There is no room for many choices because for Wyka a choice is synonymous with a decision. It marks a turning point. And that is why *Utwory zebrane* functions as the only and ultimate choice that invalidates all other choices. Two selections entitled *Śpiew z pożogi* are too many, as they could suggest that the decisions made by the poet were not final.

²²Baczyński, *Utwory zebrane*, vol. 2, 594.

²³Kazimierz Wyka, "Krzysztof Baczyński (1921–1944)", in *Baczyński i Różewicz* [Baczyński and Różewicz] (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1994), 48.

All subsequent editions of *Utwory zebrane* were gradually supplemented with new discoveries and findings but the preface remained essentially unchanged. Paying attention to the original collections compiled by the poet, comparing *Wiersze wybrane* from 1942 with three completely different editions of *Śpiew z pożogi*, and noticing how Baczyński included different poems in different editions, would undermine or question the choice. In a dynamic transformation, and even in the “creative process,” choice could mean hesitation, questions, seeking answers, or doubt. It was not a one-time decision. By collecting and including “everything” in the monograph *Utwory zebrane*, Wyka moves Baczyński away from the conditional mode and contextualizes him in the “decision mode.” Thus, Wyka chooses not to read the drafts left by Baczyński and chooses not to pay “attention to every version of the text.” “Common sense” was not at stake. Decisiveness that eludes the editorial process was at stake.

It only appears to be inconsiderate or neglectful. Even though new discoveries were included in subsequent editions of *Utwory zebrane*, the editor did not change the preface. He did not even list all the texts collected in the volume. Yet, he kept an eye on the balance sheet and “assessed equal achievements accordingly.”

The change in Baczyński’s attitude and writings is not a process that needs to be investigated. It happens instantaneously and only takes place once. No preliminary editing and drafts are required:

What began in Baczyński’s writing in the fall of 1941, or, more precisely, in September of 1941, and continued until the spring of 1942, or, more precisely, until April of 1942, may only be referred to as an explosion. A sudden explosion of mature talent.²⁴

Apparently, it was Jerzy Zagórski who “transformed” Baczyński into “a new Słowacki,” or so Wyka claimed. However, this is not entirely true. Andrzejewski first used such a comparison in September 1941 in a letter to a professor from Krakow, describing a newly discovered “outstanding poetic phenomenon.”²⁵ Perhaps this analogy was even more popular. However, in Zagórski’s essay published in the Easter issue of *Tygodnik Powszechny* in 1947, such a comparison was made only in the title and a single sentence. Indeed, the author of *Śmierć Słowackiego* [Słowacki’s Death] argued that, unlike the author of *Anhelli*, Baczyński did not have wise friends and protectors who could send him on a diplomatic mission and thus persuade the young poet to leave Warsaw and not take part in the Uprising.

Wyka tells a different version of this story. He does not revive Baczyński but kills Słowacki at the age of 23. He does not claim that Baczyński is equal to Słowacki. Instead, he balances the accounts. He “freezes” and carefully assesses the achievements of both. And indeed, at the age of 23, it was Słowacki, and not Baczyński, who was up-and-coming. Moreover, in accordance with the accounting books on which the monograph and all the prefaces to *Utwory zebrane* are based, Wyka shows that, despite what Zagórski says, Baczyński was not abandoned but made a conscious choice against the advice of his trusted friends. During his last speech devoted

²⁴Wyka, *Wstęp*, XX.

²⁵*Pod okupacją. Listy*, 43.

to Baczyński, Wyka showed a calligraphed manuscript of 3 *wiersze* [3 poems] he had received “in gratitude for *List do Jana Bugaja*” with an original dedication: “To Mr. Kazimierz Wyka, the first critic with whom I fully agree.” Wyka also joked that “Everyone would agree with me if I wrote such a letter for them.” Joking aside, consent granted Wyka the status of a trusted friend. And as a trusted friend, Wyka could talk about his attempts to dissuade the poet from taking part in the Uprising and his categorical answer:

Of course, I knew that Baczyński had graduated from the Cadet School [...], I knew which Home Army battalion he joined. And then, like everyone else, I started to explain to him whether it was really necessary for him to fight in the Uprising with a rifle in his hand [...]. It made Baczyński angry. He was composed but this made him angry. And he told me in no uncertain terms: “Sir, you of all people should know why I have to fight.” [...] It was non-negotiable.²⁶

Friends did not fail. Baczyński did not turn out to be as naive as Słowacki, which Zagórski, in his otherwise benevolent comparison, inadvertently implied. According to Wyka, Baczyński was a mature poet and a mature man who did not act on the advice of his friends. In short, he was not as thoughtless as young Słowacki. As a monographer and an editor, Wyka believed that it was dangerous to see Baczyński as reincarnated Słowacki. Indeed, though he found himself in the midst of such a discussion, he did not wish to be a part of it. Consequently, he approached this discussion from a completely different perspective and focused on balancing the accounts. It turned out that at the very beginning of his career the future author of *Beniowski* and *Lilla Weneda* was Baczyński, who did not make a decision. From the very beginning, *Utworky zebrane* constituted a collection of final texts (in slight disarray) that were based on fair copies recorded in the “codices” or attached to them. Subsequent discoveries were of secondary importance. The preface did not require fundamental changes, as Baczyński had triumphed from the very beginning.

It is difficult to say whether the conversation between Baczyński and Wyka actually took place. It is unlikely that a student at a secret cadet school would be so reckless as to tell even the most respected critic “which battalion of the Home Army he joined.” Perhaps Garztecki’s story is more credible. After all, he co-edited an underground literary magazine with Baczyński and was his trusted friend. The poet decided to leave the majority of his writings with Garztecki. According to Garztecki, Baczyński, similarly to all other members of the secret editorial office, was very discreet and never spoke of his role in the Home Army.²⁷

Almost certainly, however, Wyka did not get Baczyński’s autograph and dedication as a “thank-you” gift for *List do Jana Bugaja*. In fact, he was given a handwritten book almost a year before writing his rave review.²⁸ Perhaps Wyka misspoke or perhaps he simply misinterpreted

²⁶Wyka, *List do Jana Bugaja. Droga do Baczyńskiego*, 34. Original spelling.

²⁷See: Garztecki, O “Drodze” i Krzysztofie Baczyńskim, 87.

²⁸See Marta Wyka, “»List do Jana Bugaja« czytany dzisiaj” [“» Letter to Jan Bugaj« read today”], in *Krzysztof Kamil Baczyński. Twórczość – legenda – recepcja* [Krzysztof Kamil Baczyński: Works – legend – reception], ed. Janusz Detka (Kielce: Kieleckie Towarzystwo Naukowe, 2002), 185. The letter from Jerzy Andrzejewski to Kazimierz Wyka dated October 28, 1942 shows that the critic could have obtained the book in November 1942. See: *Pod okupacją. Listy* [Under occupation: Letters], 79–80. On p. 278 there is a facsimile of Krzysztof Kamil Baczyński’s signature, 3 poems with the date 1942.

the event at the PEN-Club meeting, which was chaired by Jerzy Zagórski. In any case, the poet's handwritten document, which proved that Baczyński "fully agreed" with the critic, legitimized all editorial decisions made by Wyka, even if Wyka received this document before writing his most important review. After all, from the very beginning, legitimization was at stake. Thus, "the theoretical and technical problem" was resolved. "Everything" in the final balance sheet was a hard currency. "Everything" gave us "the right to answer the question" and was synonymous with every choice.

translated by Małgorzata Olsza

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KEYWORDS

SELECTION

Krzysztof Kamil Baczyński

ABSTRACT:

The story of the post-war edition of Krzysztof Kamil Baczyński's poems entitled *Śpiew z pożogi* [Song of Fire] (1947) is discussed. The book edited by Stefania Baczyńska and Kazimierz Wyka completely disregarded and differed from the authorial version of *Śpiew z pożogi* prepared before the outbreak of the Uprising, which was meant to be Baczyński's official poetic debut. The impact of the post-war edition of *Utwory zebrane* [Collected works] on the reception of Baczyński's poetry and the poet's image in Polish literary culture is discussed.

edition

choice

document**NOTE ON THE AUTHOR:**

Maciej Tramer – professor at the University of Silesia, literary scholar, and author of *Literatura i skandal. Na przykładzie okresu międzywojennego* [Literature and scandal: The example of the interwar period] (2000), *Rzeczy wstydlive a nawet mniej ważne* [Embarrassing and even less important things] (2007), *Brudnopis in blanco. Rzecz o poezji Władysława Broniewskiego* [Blank draft: On Władysław Broniewski's poetry] (2010). He also edited Władysław Broniewski's critical texts: *Pamiętnik* [Journal] (2013) and *Publicystyka* [Journalism] (2016). |