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Between Homeland and Emigration Tuwim's Struggle for Identity

I divide Poles, like Jews and other nations,
Into wise and stupid, honest and thieves, intelligent and dumb,
interesting and boring, harmed and causing harm to others.¹

Julian Tuwim can be seen as one of the most controversial and ambiguous personas of the Polish literary world². It pertains not only to his ethnic background and the problem of identity connected with it, his status as a Polish and *émigré* writer, and his political opinions, but also to the issue of his reintegration after his arrival in the “new Poland” in 1946 and his “affair” with the newly established authorities in the People’s Republic of Poland.

The writer's origin

It is worth considering the question of the writer's origin in a slightly broader context. The dilemmas connected with identity appear mostly in the context of other worldviews – both in Poland and abroad (especially in multilingual and multicultural societies like those of Switzerland or America). Nowadays it can be safely assumed that there is no (more) national literature in the narrow sense of the phrase. Opinions on the nation, culture and national literature come from the nineteenth century when nation and culture were defined primarily on the basis of the national language (Sprachnation). Such an interpretation becomes meaningless especially in modern, multilingual and multicultural societies. It

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¹ J. Tuwim, *My, Żydzi polscy...*, edited and introduction by Ch. Szmeruk, Fundacja Shalom, Warsaw 1993, p. 15.

² See A. Brodzka, L. Burska, *Sporne postacie polskiej literatury współczesnej. Kontynuacje*, IBL, Warsaw 1996.

goes without saying that Polish language literature exists and belongs to so-called “Polishness”, but in a broader sense of the term. Just like in Germany, here in Poland we can distinguish between Polish literature and Polish language literature. Tuwim’s texts are addressed *To the simple man, To God, To fate*, the “titles of his poetry volumes accurately define the character of his topics: *Lurking for God, The gypsy Bible, The rhyme fair*”³. The idea of “Fatherland” – in its narrow and broad sense – which Tuwim always acknowledges plays an important role in his work. It should be noted here that the author in his poem *Jews* wrote that Jews are those “people who don’t know what Fatherland means” and that they don’t take any actions to achieve liberation⁴. In a different piece he defined Fatherland thus:

My Fatherland is God,
 The Spirit, The Son and The Father of all universes,
 On my every road,
 My soul to Him traverses.
 My Fatherland is this field,
 A field of Poland, simple and sincere,
 May the Lord yield
 To me eternal peace in here
 My Fatherland is my home,
 A place of love requited,
 Where quiet dreams roam
 Of youth heavenly pastoral

J. Tuwim, *Ojczyzna*⁵

The true Fatherland of Tuwim, who was called “the Paganini of Polish speech”⁶, was the Polish language. The Polish Fatherland (*ojczyzna-polszczyzna*) was a more important artistic and literary instrument than the nation or the state. After all, it was only Polish that never betrayed him (something strongly emphasised recently by Mariusz Urbanek⁷), everybody else refused to accept Tuwim as a Pole and as a Jew. The conditions of such broadly understood “Polishness” are met mostly by those authors who are not “true” (using the nationality criterion)

³ K. Dedecius, *Dlaczego Julian Tuwim skłonił mnie do przetłumaczenia swoich wierszy*, in: J. Tuwim, K. Dedecius, *Nasz 20. Wiek. Unser 20. Jahrhundert*, Muzeum Miasta Łodzi, Łódź–Stuttgart–Frankfurt am Main and Oder 2013, p. 17.

⁴ M. Stępnia, *Tuwima problem narodowościowy. Po tej i po tamtej stronie*, “Kronika Miasta Łodzi” 2013, issue 3, p. 96.

⁵ J. Tuwim, K. Dedecius, *op. cit.*, p. 20. Following quotes cited from that edition.

⁶ J. Wittlin, *Orfeusz w piekle XX wieku*, Instytut Literacki, Paris 1963, p. 56.

⁷ See for example the interview: Mariusz Urbanek: *Julian Tuwim miał poczucie, że jest niczyj*, <http://wiadomosci.wp.pl/kat,1342,title,Mariusz-UrbaneK-Julian-Tuwim-mial-poczucie-ze-jest-nicznyj,wid,16093950,wiadomosc.html>, 22.10.2013, [accessed on: 26.11.2013].

Poles. German-language culture and literature studies of Polish culture and literature, especially that of Jewish origin, introduced into that intricate, perhaps difficult cultural-linguistic context a new concept of Polishness, or *Polonität*. As a result, a definition of the so-called *jüdische Polonität*, or Jewish Polishness was coined. A German cultural and literary scholar, Karin Steffen, claims that in the cases of both individual and collective identity we can distinguish, apart from the traditional and well-known category of identity defined on the basis of language and ethnic background, several other concepts, such as: multiple, fluid, ambivalent, varied and hybrid identities⁸. Such a broadly understood multicultural identity can function as an alternative to the much-desired by most citizens integration or assimilation, which can be understood mainly as a form of loyalty to the state or to the dominating culture (in the sense of German *Leitkultur*). The presented concept of Polish identity can also serve as a bridge for understanding Poles not only of Jewish and non-Jewish descent – it can be an important mediator between other various cultures. Holding such a view on literature also allows us to conduct research and create new ideas, now freed of the burden of our national duties. Representatives of various cultures can work at cultural frontiers, but their pieces can still be found within the canon of allegedly “national” literature. Julian Tuwim can be said to belong to both those categories. As a member of the *Ska-mandrites*, Tuwim felt he had to become a poet of the contemporary, regardless of his ethnic identity. Besides, he wanted to discard the fossilised realm of national symbols, to ditch Polish conventions. A majority of Polish-language Polish writers of Jewish origin believed that the new, independent Poland would grant them personal liberty and equality of rights. They were free to use diverse literary forms, creatively used the richness of the Polish language. They devoted themselves and all their talents to the language and the culture of Poland.

Essentially, though, Tuwim turns out to be not only a talented Polish poet in all forms and themes, but also a “citizen of the world of global culture”⁹. Harsh nationalist propaganda calling for the “dejewification” of Polish culture provoked, especially in the thirties, aggressive attacks on Polish writers of Jewish descent, even those who themselves were far from manifesting their Jewishness or practising Judaism. Julian Tuwim, just like Bolesław Leśmian, was a writer who dealt with “ultra-Polish” themes, and their works belong to this day to even the very narrowly defined canon of Polish literature, both in the country and abroad¹⁰. We should mention here Tuwim’s popular *Lokomotywa*, a poem known by probably every Pole. The dilemmas of dual cultural identity, expressing oneself in “two emotional and

⁸ K. Steffen, *Jüdische Polonität. Ethnizität und Nation im Spiegel der polnischsprachigen Presse 1918–1939*, Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, Göttingen 2004.

⁹ K. Dedecius, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

¹⁰ L. Quercioli Mincer, *Literatura jidysz i żydowsko-polska*, in: *Historia literatury polskiej*, L. Marinelli (ed.), translated by M. Woźniak, Ossolineum, Wrocław 2009, p. 457.

linguistic codes”, a difficult choice “between the desire for assimilation and the need to preserve identity and tradition”, the question about Fatherland – these are the important, defining themes of literary work of writers similar to Tuwim¹¹. The literary work of the most brilliant writers of the interwar period, such as Mieczysław Grydzewski, Marian Hemar, Artur Sandauer, Bruno Jasiński, Bolesław Leśmian, Tadeusz Peiper, Anatol Stern, Aleksander Wat, Adam Ważyk, Bruno Schulz and Julian Tuwim can’t be said to be purely Jewish. Tuwim cooperated closely with his colleagues, who didn’t pretend not to be Jewish. Throughout his life, however, he struggled with his Polish-Jewish identity, since he was the kind of writer who had an ambivalent attitude towards it. Until the beginning of the Second World War he strongly advocated the assimilation of Polish Jews, he called himself a “Jew-Pole”, who “raised in the Polish culture subconsciously got attached to Polishness”¹². He used to joke about his Jewish descent, he mocked most of all the black, sly, orthodox Jews with deranged eyes, “which show eternal fear, / which show a centuries-old legacy” (the poem *Jews*). In the interwar period Tuwim was (still) an opponent of “uniformed bearded men”, he criticised them harshly for their lack of respect for the Polish language, their “Hebrew-German mess” and “traditional crippling of the Polish language”¹³. The writer called on his Jewish friends to cut the “long-tailed kaftans and side curls” and he demanded that they “respect the language of the nation” in which they live¹⁴. Tuwim reveals this complicated and ambiguous attitude to his origin in the poem *Żydek (Kike)* from 1926:

Singing in the backyard, all wrapped in tatters,
A poor Jewish boy, mad little kike scatters.

People banished him, God made him twitch,
Centuries and exile scrambled his speech.

He wails and dances, he scratches and cries
He’s lost, needs help, he begs through his eyes.

A man from the first floor watches the bother:
Look, my poor friend, at your sad little brother.

¹¹ Ibidem

¹² M. Stępniaak, *op. cit.*, p. 97.

¹³ See for example the report from the discussion devoted to Julian Tuwim during the Dni Książki Żydowskiej on 10 June 2013, attended by Piotr Matywiecki, Michał Głowiński and Bella Szwarzman-Czarnota (moderated by Alina Molisak): <http://dzieje.pl/kultura-i-sztuka/badacze-tuwim-cale-zycie-zmagal-sie-ze-swoja-tozsamoscia> [dostęp: 26.11.2013]. See also *Julian Tuwim. Dyskusja z udziałem Aliny Molisak, Belli Szwarzman-Czarnoty, Michała Głowińskiego i Piotra Matywieckiego*, “Midrasz” 2013, issue 5, pp. 12–20.

¹⁴ See ibidem

[...]

And we'll go then, each of us his own way
 To wander, glum and unbalanced, every single day.
 There's no quiet haven, this will not be changed,
 For us, singing Jews, for us, Jews deranged.

J. Tuwim, *Kike*¹⁵

For anti-Semites Tuwim remained only a 'kike', he was constantly attacked and slurred. For nationalist Jews he was a renegade, a traitor. His whole life was tainted with the "struggle with dual identity". Being a Jew or a Pole in the time of rising nationalism seemed like a curse. Often condemned, "banished by both cultures", Tuwim fought for a place for himself¹⁶. He was also accused of propagating debauchery, pornography and depraving children and the young: "The degenerate Mr Tuwim affects young souls like the most deadly poison" – somebody wrote in the conservative Polish press after the publication of his *Wiosna (Spring)* in 1918, attacking Tuwim for obscenity exemplified by the following excerpt:

How much it is! How very!
 How vividly, wholly, everything! –
 Come near, dear, Youth at Youth:
 Today I feel like fathering!

J. Tuwim, *Spring*¹⁷

His pacifistic poem *Do prostego człowieka (To the Simple Man, 1929)* was read as blatantly inciting desertion from the army, which even led prosecutors to intervene:

Blast your rifle at cobblestone!
 You get to bleed, they get the oil!
 And from one capital to the other
 Call out, be heard, defend your toil:
 "Leave out your lies, dear noblemen!"

J. Tuwim, *To the simple man*¹⁸

Other accusations pertained to the "jewification" of Polish literature. Polish nationalists treated Tuwim like a Jewish writer writing Jewish poetry, and criticised him for using Polish: "Tuwim writes in Polish, but only in the Polish

¹⁵ J. Tuwim, K. Dedecius, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

¹⁶ M. Stępniaak, *op. cit.*, pp. 97–99.

¹⁷ J. Tuwim, K. Dedecius, *op. cit.*, p. 22.

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 50.

language [...] and his spirit jabbars [in Jewish]” – wrote someone in “Prosto z mostu” (Point-blank) in the thirties¹⁹. In the anti-Semitic persecution of Tuwim which started in the thirties, he was called a “kikey Mickiewicz”. Tuwim himself used that term in his poem *Gieldziarze* (*Marketers*), which “caused massive indignation among the Jewish community” because the word “kike” had been used before only by Polish anti-Semites²⁰. It was then that the “first articles criticising Tuwim for betraying his own nation” appeared in the Jewish press²¹. Also here, in the Jewish community, Tuwim became a *persona non grata* and was considered a traitor to his own roots because he had chosen Polishness. Despite all that, most of his readers received his writing enthusiastically and didn’t pay attention to his ancestry. In a poll by “Wiadomości Literackie” (“Literary News”) Tuwim came first in the (non-existent) “Academy of the Independent”.

Tuwim in exile

It is not difficult to answer the question of what made Tuwim change his perception of his identity. The dramatic events of the occupation and the tragedy of the Holocaust during the war made him change his attitude towards his Jewish brothers. The time he spent in exile also played a role. In September 1939, Tuwim fled to France through Romania along with other Polish writers. There he temporarily collaborated with the emigratory periodical “Polish News” which regularly published works from other Skamandrites of the pre-war period. After the fall of France, Tuwim, along with Jan Lechoń and a group of other writers managed to get to Portugal. In July 1940 they sailed from Lisbon to Rio de Janeiro; several months later Józef Wittlin and Kazimierz Wierzyński²² followed the same route. It was then that the second phase of their emigration began. During a several month stay in Brazil, Tuwim began working on *Kwiaty Polskie* (*Polish Flowers*). The writer’s emigration creates a context for interpreting this work. This poem is understood mainly as a poetic expression of alienation and isolation. Afterwards, along with befriended writers, Tuwim left for New York, where he lived for nearly five years (1942–1946). The emigrant writers’ basic needs were provided for by stipends from The Fund for National Culture. In spite of this, Tuwim’s exile was far from the “glamour” of emigration, which is why he often mentioned the “mis-

¹⁹ Mariusz Urbanek about Tuwim: <http://culture.pl/pl/artykul/mariusz-urbanek-o-tuwimie> [accessed on: 26.11.2013].

²⁰ M. Stępnia, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

²¹ *Ibidem*.

²² M. Danilewicz-Zielińska, *Szkice o literaturze emigracyjnej*, Ossolineum, Wrocław–Warsaw–Cracow 1992, p. 157.

ery” of it²³. His literary works were dominated by themes, motifs and topoi associated with gloomy moods, longing for a lost fatherland, and fear of losing one's native language and cultural identity. Because Polish emigrant poets created with a duty towards traditions by using forms typical of Polish culture, their works are often characterized by nostalgic pathos. Only rarely did they open themselves up to the new, foreign influence of the culture and literature of their host country. Emigrants, such as Julian Tuwim, remained in the narrow cocoon of Polish culture and national literature, using their work to confirm the view that Polish emigrant poetry was meant to nurture national values. In their works, recollections of times past often took the form of nostalgic reminiscence of the past, and an exhibition of longing for the fatherland, which is what takes place in *Kwiaty Polskie*. This is mainly about a poetic reevaluation of the loss of the fatherland, and presenting life in exile in the romantic tradition of the “great emigration” of the nineteenth century. Tuwim's Jewish ancestry played nearly no role in any of this. The differences between Tuwim and other Polish writers in exile revealed themselves only in the third phase of his emigration, the phase associated with his stay in the United States. At the beginning of this phase, Tuwim cooperated with Jan Lechoń, Kazimierz Wierzyński and Józef Wittlin. All of them worked on the magazine “The Polish Weekly” (“Tygodnik Polski”), they also published in “The Polish News” (“Wiadomości Polskie”). Due to their growing differences in views, as well as conflicts, Tuwim moved further and further away from his previously close writer friends. The poet went through a serious crisis in the United States, he assimilated with great difficulty. At the end of 1941, he terminated his partnership with the periodical. Polish poets boycotted Tuwim not just socially, his subsidy from the Government of the Republic of Poland in exile in London, which he needed to support himself in exile, was withdrawn. This decision was made when Tuwim took the side of the Union of Polish Patriots and the Polish Worker's Party. His stance for the rise of a Socialist Poland after the war was not accepted. At the same time, the poet began cooperating with the left, with the International Workers' Association; he began speaking at rallies of Polish worker communities and publishing in leftist periodicals, such as “The Worker”, “People's Voice”, or “New Poland”. Tuwim also ceased correspondence with Mieczysław Grydzewski, and discontinued publishing *Kwiaty Polskie* in “The Polish News”.²⁴

When, in 1943, news of the Holocaust reached America, Tuwim started to feel guilty; he felt that he had betrayed the Jews. Shocking news of the annihilation of Jewish residents, not only in Poland, led Tuwim to an increased sense of solidarity with his Jewish compatriots. His view on his own ethnic and cultural identity also shifted. On 19 April 1944, the writer took part in celebrating the first

²³ J. Wittlin, *Blaski i nędze emigracji*, “Kultura” 1959, issue 9, pp. 4–6.

²⁴ M. Danilewicz-Zielińska, *op. cit.*, p. 159.

anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising; he decided to write a moving, dramatic manifesto *We, the Polish Jews*. In August 1944, during the beginning of the Warsaw Uprising, the piece was published as an article by Antoni Słonimski in a London monthly periodical “New Poland”²⁵. Tuwim dedicated it to his mother, who died in terrible circumstances during the liquidation of the Otwock Ghetto: “To my mother, or her most beloved shadow”. The manifesto had two addressees: The Jews, and the Poles. Through it, Tuwim attempted to explain to “genuine” Jews why he feels Polish, and to “genuine” Poles why he feels he is a Jew. The explanation for both Jews and Poles goes like this:

I am a Pole, because I like it this way. It is strictly my private affair, on which I do not plan to report, nor do I plan to demystify, explain, or justify it. [...] However, if it came down to explaining my nationality, or rather a sense of it, then I am a Pole for the simplest, nearly primitive reasons, mostly rational, some not, but with no “mythical” addition. Being a Pole – this is not an honour, it is not glory nor is it a privilege. The same is the case with breathing. I have yet to meet a man who is proud to breathe.²⁶

Tuwim also explains why – as he announced in the title – he feels that he is a Jew. He writes of a “Jewish blood river” which was poured during the annihilation: “And in this new Jordan I accept the baptism above all other baptisms: bloody, heated brotherhood of martyrdom with Jews”²⁷. The poet asks for admission to the honourable “community of Blood Innocently Spilled”: “To this Qahal, to this church I want to belong”²⁸. The writing is very emotional. It seems as though Tuwim wrote it in an attempt to retract his harsh criticism of Jewishness during the interwar period. How did the Jews react to this essay? Attacks and controversy appeared right after its publication. Journalists of Jewish descent underlined the fact that Tuwim had no right to speak for Polish Jews, because their national aspirations were invariably foreign to him. On the first page of the weekly “Echo of Jerusalem” (“מילשורי וואָקע”), a question for the writer appeared, “Julian Tuwim, where were you before?”²⁹. Other journalists demanded that the poet finally define his Jewish (national) affiliation. A typical statement made by Abraham Gołąb, previously a teacher in Vilnius, shows that Julian Tuwim was still not understood, or that no one wanted to understand him: “It is too late for you to become a Polish Jew now”. Gołąb continues by asking where the author

²⁵ “Nowa Polska” 1944, issue 8.

²⁶ J. Tuwim, *My, Żydzi polscy...*, pp. 15–19.

²⁷ *Ibidem*, p. 16. See also M. Stępniański, *op. cit.*, p. 95.

²⁸ J. Tuwim, *My, Żydzi polscy...*, p. 16.

²⁹ Z. Segalowicz, *Julian Tuwim, Heichan haita kodem [Julian Tuwim, where were you before?]*, “Hed Jeruszalim” from 27.11.1944, p. 1.

had been before the war, during anti-Semitic attacks and pogroms. He writes: "You are a Pole, but the Poles do not want you"³⁰. This is another pronounced aspect of the dilemma in which Tuwim found himself even in exile. This was no longer about a double identity, but about finding oneself in a place in between, about being neither a Pole nor a Jew; this was about the traditional fate of the forever wandering Jew, "There's no quiet haven, this will not be changed / For singing Jews, for us, Jews deranged."³¹

A kind of Polish-Jewish dialogue was established in New York, but it was not until the fifties that significant works about the complicated relations between the two nations were published. The Polish Institute of New York published collections, such as *The Polish – Jewish Dialogue*.

Speeches presented in New York on 26 September 1958³². Under the auspices of the Parisian "Culture", the immigrant community in Paris published an anthology entitled *Israel in Polish poetry in 1958*³³.

Tuwim's return to Poland

Tuwim returned to Poland from his exile in 1946 in order to continue his career, which had been interrupted by the war. Konstanty A. Jeleński wrote that Tuwim was convinced that he was "returning to the Poland from *The Coming Spring*, but he was returning to the Poland of the Janissaries"³⁴. After his return, Tuwim continued to suffer for his ethnic background. To many Poles, he remained someone "foreign"³⁵. He grieved in a letter to his sister: "The absence [...] of Jews in Polish cities [...]. There are none of them, they are gone – they, who made up an eternal scenery of our streets and plazas"³⁶. Konstanty A. Jeleński saw Tuwim as a "victim of pride, of a hurt love of his own, and a hurt love for his fatherland, a victim of revenge which slowly turns against him"³⁷. That same year,

³⁰ As cited in: <http://dzieje.pl/kultura-i-sztuka/badacze-tuwim-cale-zycie-zmagal-sie-ze-swoja-tozsa-moscia> [accessed on: 26.11.2013].

³¹ J. Tuwim, *Żydek*, in: J. Tuwim, K. Dedecius, *op. cit.*, p. 34. See also <http://dzieje.pl/kultura-i-sztuka/badacze-tuwim-cale-zycie-zmagal-sie-ze-swoja-tozsamoscia> [accessed on: 26.11.2013].

³² *Dialog polsko-żydowski. Przemówienia wygłoszone w Nowym Jorku 26 września 1958 w Polish Institute of Arts and Sciences*, Polski Instytut Naukowy w Ameryce, New York 1958.

³³ J. Winczakiewicz, *Israel w poezji polskiej. Antologia*, Instytut Literacki, Paris 1958.

³⁴ K.A. Jeleński, *Powrót Tuwima*, "Kultura" 1954, issue 77, p. 6.

³⁵ M. Stępniań, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

³⁶ *Ibidem*.

³⁷ *Ibidem*. See also M. Danilewicz-Zielińska, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

the poet adopted his daughter Ewa, a five year old girl who had lost her Jewish parents. His return was publicized and fêted as a great success of the new communist power in the People's Poland. Tuwim received various privileges, and was deemed a national poet. He collaborated with The People's Poland in a relatively liberal period, just after the war and during Stalin's reign (1948), and during the prime of soc-realism after the Polish Poet Convention in Szczecin (1949). He declared his support for the communist authorities several times.

I will return to my article's starting point. The problem of a general concept of Polishness is still very much current. It pertains mainly to all the representatives of ethnic, cultural, religious and sexual minorities, as well as the exile literature from modern day nomads. When it comes to the reception of Polish literature by someone from the outside, a German-speaking reader cannot tell whether or not a Polish writer has a different cultural/ethnic background. To most German readers, Tuwim is first and foremost a representative of Polish literature, to both adults and children the author of poems *The Locomotive* and *Trąbalski the Elephant*. New, better translations as well as new editions help with better recognition and popularization of Tuwim in Germany³⁸. In the *Almanach of Polish children's Culture*³⁹, it was stressed that not only does a great interest in the little known Polish children's culture and literature exist in Germany, but a demand for it is appearing as well⁴⁰. Janusz Korczak is first when it comes to popularity. A distinct position in the reception of Polish children's literature, besides Henryk Sienkiewicz's prose, is given to poetry written by Julian Tuwim⁴¹. As an example I'd like to mention that a group of our students (with support from the Saxon Ministry of Culture), is presenting Tuwim's *The Locomotive* to German schoolchildren through a project called "Cześć! – one day in Polish" at the Polish Institute of Leipzig⁴². Unfortunately, Tuwim's other works, such as *Ball at the Opera* or *Polish Flowers*, are not known to the common German reader.

What is exciting, not just to German children, in Tuwim's poetry? Most importantly, it is the incredible illustration, infectious rhythm and rhyme, but also refined onomatopoeias, the ability to search out and create onomatopoeic words, using the value of a word's sound, incredible musicality, and an entire arsenal of tools of orchestration. The way children approach Tuwim's poetry is very crea-

³⁸ See <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aWxPAjrseXI> [accessed on: 18.08.2014].

³⁹ M. Gorschenek, H. Hilzheimer, *Almanach zur Polnischen Kinderkultur / Almanach polskiej kultury dziecięcej*, Katholische Akademie, Hamburg 1996.

⁴⁰ Ibidem, p. 11.

⁴¹ Ch. Fischer, "Dunkle Nacht". *Julian Tuwim in deutscher Übersetzung*, in: *Poezja polska i niemiecka w przekładach współczesnych. Polnische und deutsche Poesie in modernen Übersetzungen*, U. Jekutsch, A. Sulikowski (eds.), Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Szczecińskiego, Szczecin 2002, pp. 131–142.

⁴² *Cześć! – jeden dzień po polsku*, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4QTpF0Wqah8> [accessed on: 28.11.2013].

tive, they love his language experiments. Tuwim's *Locomotive* is especially inviting to imitation, it encourages and stimulates children's imaginations. Through "Cześć! – one day in Polish", Saxony's children can also paint their own pictures and illustrate Tuwim's *Locomotive*. The children get to tinker and create an engine, with separate wagons and all the things which hide in them. The colourful pictures are later hung up on a string. The creativity which happens during this meeting is a pleasant surprise. After listening to the original poem in Polish, German children recite selected fragments of the German version (a very successful translation by James Krüss) according to the order in which the wagons are placed. The German writer's translation maintains the poem's original rhythm, the moving train, the chugging, huffing engine, the whistling steam are all audible the same way they are in the original version. Children enjoy all of this greatly. To many of them, this is their first encounter with poetry. Universitas, a Crakow based publisher, put out an issue of *The Locomotive* in three languages (Polish, English, and German) which is great not only for didactic purposes, but also for an evaluation of translated literature⁴³.

There is no doubt that Julian Tuwim belongs to the most important, and most popular representatives of Polish literature. As Karl Dedecius wrote, he was a faithful citizen of the city he was born in, a witness to sudden cultural, political and ethnic change in Poland and in Europe⁴⁴. Tuwim experienced the imposition of foreign ideologies and convictions, he observed and lived through the rise of nationalism, experienced exile; changes in social structure and living conditions happened before his eyes:

His work has deeper, visionary meaning. It allows us to feel out internal changes in all their boldness and fury. [...] His language unmasks the arrogance of "Residents" and "Barbers", anger and bitterness [...] at the non-thinkers, whom he avoids in panic [...]. Basically, Tuwim turns out to be, in all forms and themes, a citizen of the world, and of global culture⁴⁵.

Tuwim was, no doubt, a precursor of modern Polish literature, who contributed an immense share to the development of Polish language and modern literature as much in Poland, as in the world, regardless of his various identity and national affiliation entanglements.

⁴³ J. Tuwim, *Lokomotywa. The Locomotive. Die Lokomotive*, translated by W. von Polentz, M. Weyland, Universitas, Cracow 2013.

⁴⁴ K. Dedecius, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

⁴⁵ *Ibidem*.

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Hans-Christian Trepte

Between Homeland and Emigration. Tuwim's Struggle for Identity

(Summary)

Julian Tuwim belongs to the pantheon of the greatest Polish writers of the 20th century. His Polish-Jewish descent, his attitude towards the Polish language, towards Jews in Poland, his political activities as an emigrant as well as his controversial involvement with the communist Poland still fuel many critical discussions. Polish language and culture were for him much more important than the categories of nation or state. However, whereas for Polish nationalists and antisemites Tuwim remained “only” a Jew, Jewish nationalists considered him a traitor. It was in exile that his attitude towards his Jewish countrymen began to change, especially after he learnt about the horror of the Holocaust in occupied Poland. Thus, he began writing his famous, dramatic manifesto, *We, the Polish Jews*. After World War II, Tuwim came back to Poland, hoping to continue his prewar career as a celebrated poet. His manifold contributions to the development of the Polish language and literature, within the country and abroad, cannot be questioned, and the dilemmas concerning his cultural and ethnic identity only make him a more interesting writer.

Keywords: Julian Tuwim, Jewish-Polish identity, *Polonität*, exile, language