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Elżbieta Oraczowa / Elizaweta Oracz. Eugenia Żmijewska in Relation to Eliza Orzeszkowa*

Elżbieta Oraczowa / Elizaweta Oracz. Eugenia Żmijewska wobec Elizy Orzeszkowej

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Abstract. Eugenia Żmijewska (1865–1923) wrote the short story *Dwa spotkania* [*Two Meetings*], from an idea which was provided to her by Eliza Orzeszkowa. The article presents the relations between the writers: 1) on the biographical level (correspondence, critical and literary articles and memoirs); 2) at the textual level (analysis of *Two Meetings* and Żmijewska's novel *Jutro* [*Tomorrow*], whose protagonist is Orzeszkowa). The analysis of the first editions and reprints of Żmijewska's works shows frequent rewriting. This makes us doubt the theory of the faithful fulfilment of Orzeszkowa's testament as a writer. A comparison between Żmijewska's journalism and her novels proves that through the literary creation of the character of Orzeszkowa she presented her own views.

Keywords: Eliza Orzeszkowa, Eugenia Żmijewska, novel, biography, character

Abstrakt. Eugenia Żmijewska (1865–1923) napisała opowiadanie *Dwa spotkania*, do którego pomysł dała jej Eliza Orzeszkowa. Artykuł przedstawia relacje obu pisarek:1) w płaszczyźnie biograficznej (korespondencja, artykuły krytycznoliterackie i wspomnieniowe); 2) w płaszczyźnie

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tekstowej (analiza *Dwóch spotkań* i powieści Żmijewskiej *Jutro*, której bohaterką jest Orzeszkowa). Analiza pierwodruków i przedruków utworów Żmijewskiej wykazuje częste przeredagowania. Każe to wątpić w tezę o wiernym wypełnieniu pisarskiego testamentu Orzeszkowej. Porównanie publicystyki Żmijewskiej z jej powieściami dowodzi, że przez kreację literacką postaci Orzeszkowej prezentowała własne poglądy.

Słowa kluczowe: Eliza Orzeszkowa, Eugenia Żmijewska, powieść, biografia, postać

For Krzysztof Stępnik

It was Krzysztof Stępnik (1998) who pointed out the relationship between Eugenia Żmijewska and Eliza Orzeszkowa with regard to the writing oeuvre of the former. Their relationship has been acknowledged by Orzeszkowa's biographers, who referred to the correspondence between the authors in order to reconstruct Orzeszkowa's worldview and her ideological dilemmas during the final years of her life (Jankowski, 1988, p. 524, 537, 588). Stępnik analysed Żmijewska's short story *Dwa spotkania* [*Two Meetings*] (1914), which was written to fulfil Orzeszkowa's last will as a writer. He considered it to be "a bizarre artistic fact of a mental and intertextual nature, resulting from the double authorship of the work" ["przedziwny fakt artystyczny o charakterze psycho-intertekstualnym, ze względu na podwójne autorstwo utworu"], which constitutes a "withdrawn ideological return to *Gloria victis*" ["korespondencyjnym powrotem ideowym do *Gloria victis*"] (Stępnik, 1998, p. 152). The similarity of the creative method of both writers concerns the moral, but not the psychological "motivation of the characters' behaviour" ["motywacji zachowań bohaterów"] (Stępnik, 1998, p. 156); both *Gloria victis* and *Dwa spotkania* are "patriotic morality plays" ["moralitetami patriotycznymi"] outlining idiosyncratic approaches to "patriotic feminism" ["feminizmu patriotycznego"] (Stępnik, 1998, p. 157).

The vivid interest in Żmijewska's oeuvre in recent years has remained oblivious to this interpretative direction. Żmijewska was mainly the subject of feminist research. Her works were used as an illustration of the summertime eroticism within the resort subculture (Eremus, 2016; Poniatowska, 2014, p. 165). Researchers carried out analyses of her descriptions of infatuation with other female characters throughout girls' adolescence in finishing schools (Głuszek, 2015; Kępa, 2016) and the formation of schoolgirls' ideological attitudes owing to the readings of Romantic poets (Zacharska, 1994, p. 140). The resemblance in the plot between Żmijewska's *Dola* [*Fate*] and Orzeszkowa's *Marta* [*Martha*], which does indeed exist, was recognised (Mucha, 2013, pp. 461–462), although the adventures of the heroine "on the streets of Warsaw," with the tension between self-critical regrets

of the lack of professional qualifications and the repulsive vision of being a kept woman, could just as well be juxtaposed with the novels by Zofia Urbanowska, Antoni Sygietyński, and Adolf Dygasiński. Żmijewska's trilogy of novels which were also presented as popular romance, typical of the early 20th-century women's prose, with a concurrent didactic attitude to the "subject of inadequate education of girls" ["tematem niewłaściwej edukacji dziewcząt"] resulting from the influence exerted by Orzeszkowa (Sadlik, 2006, p. 213, 215). The romantic plot is interwoven with "patriotic notions," while within the imagery, "the Ukrainian woodland surrounding the family seat in the Eastern Borderlands" ["ukraiński bór, okalający kresową siedzibę"] corresponds to the motif of the forest in *Gloria victis* (Sadlik, 2006, p. 217). Also, the motif of the destruction of the manor house after 1863 was interpreted separately (Ratajczak, 2014, pp. 16–18); in this case, although Wiesław Ratajczak did not refer to Stępnik, his analysis introduced a new insight into the matter in the form of the parallels of descriptions in *Dwa spotkania* and in Orzeszkowa's *Śmierć domu* [*Death of the House*].

ŻMIJEWSKA – ORZESZKOWA: KINDRED SPIRITS?

By proposing to investigate "the mental and intertextual artistic fact" ["faktu artystycznego o charakterze psycho-intertekstualnym"], Stępnik limited his research field to a single – albeit central – work by Żmijewska, i.e. *Dwa spotkania*. However, the field of intertextual relations may be broadened with other works by Żmijewska and the sphere of the psyche deepened basing of the writers' personal contacts and the literary-critical stances they took. The two first met in Warsaw in May 1904. That year they spent the summer together in the spa resort of Druskininkai. They corresponded with one another (Orzeszkowa, 1958, pp. 214–226, 409–416), and Orzeszkowa often asked about Żmijewska other friends, for instance, Lucyna Kotarbinska, so she had both first and second-hand information (Orzeszkowa, 1971, pp. 116–118, 120–122) and always had a particular regard for Żmijewska (Orzeszkowa, 1955, pp. 246). In May 1904, Żmijewska sent the original version of *Płomyk* [*Glimmer*] to Grodno (still under the planned title *Dola* [*Fate*]), thus Orzeszkowa became the first critic of the novel, published in *Bluszcz* 47–53 (1905) and 21–42 (1906), and later as a book in 1907. Żmijewska acted as an intermediary in the publication of Orzeszkowa's *…i pieśń niech zapłacze* [*…Let the Song Weep*] in *Słowo*. At her request, Orzeszkowa wrote *Pani Dudkowa* [*Mrs Dudkowa*] which was printed by *Przyjaciel Zwierząt*, a magazine edited by Żmijewska. She was particularly active in organising Orzeszkowa's jubilee celebrations in Warsaw. She also went to Uman' and Kyiv to give lectures about Orzeszkowa. She visited

Grodno several times, and they also went to Raków together in the summer of 1908 (Wiśniewska, 2014, p. 833). It seems highly probable that Orzeszkowa liked Żmijewska, since she suggested switching to a first-name basis with her. She wrote an extensive "Preface" to *Dola*, although she expressed her criticism of the work in a letter to Tadeusz Bochwic (Orzeszkowa, 1958, p. 416). Żmijewska dedicated *Płomyk* to Orzeszkowa "as a token of honour and gratitude," moreover, she dedicated the collection of novellas *Dwa spotkania* "to the memory of Eliza Orzeszkowa." In April 1910, she came to Grodno, and Orzeszkowa, who was ill at the time, related to her the plot of a planned short story that she was no longer able to write herself (which Żmijewska did, giving it the title *Dwa spotkania*). Directly after Orzeszkowa's death, she announced a memoir that was reprinted by other journals (Żmijewska, 1910d, p. 2). She was a special correspondent of *Słowo* at Orzeszkowa's funeral ceremonies, and her accounts of the funeral were also reprinted. Her commitment to Orzeszkowa's jubilee in 1907 as well as to the other's posthumous publications contributed exceptionally to the development of the cult of the author of *Cham*.

In her letters, Żmijewska reported the course of revolutionary events in Warsaw in 1905. At first embittered, Orzeszkowa assumed that the younger writer represented the generation that "either does not know me or ignores me" ["albo nie zna mię, albo ignoruje"] (Orzeszkowa, 1958, p. 215). Żmijewska assured her that she had been and continued to be popular among all social strata, that her novels exerted great influence on human attitudes and that she herself grew up reading them.

> I know people for whom their well-being, money, and personal comfort have become an idol, and yet even they forget – alas, only for a short while – about their everyday lives when they read your works. Several generations have cried their first tears over them. I will not even mention the fact the first novel that I ever read was *Pamiętnik Wacławy* [...] Some years ago, my mother and my younger sister at the same time cried over *Babunia*. I know a young, 25-year-old woman who says that it was you who educated her. And what about *Eli Makower* and *Meir Ezofowicz* – those were not novels, but discoveries, almost equal to those made by Copernicus. I remember well when they had just been published. You were the first to tell us that the Jew was not created for the nobleman to hold propination, nor to cheat him and concurrently provide with money. I remember the impact they made. At the time, I was living in a backward country, not overly concerned with civic feelings – in Ukraine. And yet, these words also found their way into the hearts of lordlings. And now *Anastazja* has raised many discussions, much enthusiasm. [...] For you are read by those who do not even like novels. (Orzeszkowa, 1958, p. 410)[1]

[1] "Znam ludzi, dla których dobrobyt, pieniądz, osobista wygoda są bożyszczem, a jednak i ci zapominają – na krótko niestety – o powszedniości, czytając Panią. Kilka pokoleń pierwsze swe łzy wylewało nad utworami Pani. Nie mówię już o tym, że pierwszą powieścią, którą ja czytałam, był *Pamiętnik Wacławy* […] Przed kilku laty nad *Babunią* spłakała się jednocześnie moja matka i moja młodziutka siostra. Znam młodą 25-letnią kobietę, która powiada, że Pani ją wykształciła.

Her mother, Zuzanna, *née* Garbińska, died in 1898, hence she may have read *Babunia* (first published in "Biblioteka Warszawska" in 1895). Could Żmijewska have been a credible witness to the Ukrainian reception of *Eli Makower* (first published in 1874) and *Meir Ezofowicz* (first published in 1878)? She was born in 1865, but "when they had just been published," she was still unlikely to be exposed to adult conversations. Thus, the plausibility of it is doubtful, much like that of *Pamiętnik Wacławy* having been the first novel by Orzeszkowa she had read, but neither is there a way to rule it out entirely.

Researchers consider Orzeszkowa's "Preface" to *Dola* to have been an important literary-critical statement (Wiśniewska, 2014, p. 887). The writer was intrigued by the "physical and mental constitution" ["ustrój fizyczny i psychiczny"] of the heroine – a naive damsel with no preparation, who enters the world of "mercilessness, heartlessness, amorality of thinly civilised males" ["bezlitości, bezsercowości, amoralności ucywilizowanych z wierzchu samców"] (Orzeszkowa, 1909, p. X), which leads to a tragedy that could have been prevented. She held it in high regard as a psychological novel, although she criticised the younger author for the excess of "physiology, and pathology in particular" ["fizjologii, a szczególnie patologii"] (Orzeszkowa, 1909, p. 12); incidentally, an opinion she sharedwith conservative male critics (Sadlik, 2006, p. 216). She ended her "Preface" contented with the work that "contributes to the awakening of the world's conscience from its slumber" ["przyczynia się do budzenia ze snu sumienia świata"] (Orzeszkowa, 1909, p. 16). Thus, she saw it as the fulfilment of her own authorial *credo* – that of socially engaged literature. She recommended it to others as an attractive and intelligent novel (Wiśniewska, 2014, p. 779).

As a literary critic writing about Orzeszkowa, Żmijewska emphasised her civic and patriotic ethics. Between 1906 and 1910, she published a dozen or so statements about Orzeszkowa, it was the period when they remained in direct personal contact and Orzeszkowa's jubilee and death attracted everyone's attention, the time when the synthetic views of her achievements were being developed (Budrewicz, 2019, pp. 112–134). She treated the jubilee as a pretext to disseminate the idea of the construction work on the education system (Żmijewska 1906a, p. 2). Encapsulating four decades of Orzeszkowa's activity as a writer, she argued that as a whole – both as a "novelist" and a "good woman" – she represented the "cult of suffering" ["kult

A *Eli Makower*, a *Meir Ezofowicz* – toż to były nie powieści, lecz odkrycia, równe niemal Kopernikowemu. Pamiętam czasy, gdy się ukazały świeżo. Pani pierwsza nam powiedziała, że Żyd nie został stworzony dla szlachcica, żeby trzymać propinację, oszukiwać, ale dawać mu pieniądze. Pamiętam wrażenie. Byłam wtedy w kraju zacofanym, niezbyt przejętym poczuciami obywatelskimi – na Ukrainie. A jednak te słowa trafiły i do serca półpanków. A obecnie *Anastazja* ile wzbudziła dyskusji, ile zapału. […] Bo Panią czytają ci nawet, którzy nie lubią powieści w ogóle."

dla cierpienia"] (Żmijewska 1906b, p. 16). Żmijewska read Orzeszkowa's writings as a project of literature as a (civic, patriotic, humanitarian) act:

> She was the first to tell the woman, without any screaming, with calm, solemnity and prudence, […] you are a citizen. And to that citizen of the world and of her home country she pointed out first the duties and then the rights, fully aware that through the fulfilment of the loftily understood duties we would arrive at civil rights; that by working on ourselves and on our younger brethren, at a moral and social disadvantage, we would be granted a voice in matters of the general good, […]. In a word, she awakened our soul. (Żmijewska, 1907a, p. 17)[2]

She presented Orzeszkowa's words as a "civic deed;" at the same time, she spoke about the great works of Polish history, about the suffering in the "Siberian frosts" and the customs of former knights before battle. The meaning was clear – in the conditions of the period, the writer's deed was equivalent to a soldier's contribution to the national battle (Żmijewska, 1907b, p. 253). In the pathos-filled *Podzwonne* [*Knell*], Żmijewska made it clear that the deed, an active attitude, was now binding for everyone: "Orzeszkowa is dead. Her works are her heirs, her heirs are the entire Polish society" ["Orzeszkowa umarła. Spadkobiercami są jej dzieła, spadkobiercami jest całe społeczeństwo polskie"] (Żmijewska 1910b, p. 230). Żmijewska's critical and memoiristic publications about Orzeszkowa presented an ethical point of view; the critic consistently applied the metaphor of writing as ploughing (working with a view to secure the yields that only the future would bring); she pointed out the role of the writer as a caring and concerned mother (of individuals, societies, and the nation); she constantly supported her argumentation by concepts from the field of kinship (immediate and extended family), owing to which the category of nation and nationality as a tribal, bio-historical community was expressed in her language.

The dialogue of thoughts and ideas between Żmijewska and Orzeszkowa, despite the age difference, was possible thanks to the common premise of life experiences. Both became writers after the loss of the manor houses where they had been growing up. Żmijewska's trilogy about the fate of Adela Żalińska has an autobiographical background, we learn of this from their correspondence (Orzeszkowa, 1958, p. 409). On this basis, it is possible to point out the psychological experience of resentment towards their mothers shared by both authors, as they would keep emotionally distant from their daughters and ended up generating more fear than love (it is characteristic that mothers do not visit their daughters during their several

[2] "Ona pierwsza powiedziała kobiecie bez krzyku, ze spokojem, powagą i rozwagą […] jesteś obywatelem. I jako obywatelowi i świata, i rodzinnego kraju, wskazywała naprzód obowiązki, a potem prawa, wiedząc, że drogą spełniania górnie pojętych obowiązków dojdziemy do praw obywatelskich; że pracą nad samymi sobą i nad młodszą bracią, krzywdzoną umysłowo i społecznie, dojdziemy do głosu w sprawach dobra ogólnego, […]. Słowem, Ona budziła w nas duszę."

years' stay in the finishing school in Warsaw). Daughters could not count on the support of their mothers – even when a mother marries her daughter off, the only thing she says to her about the biological side of the marriage is that it is "an act of God" (*Serduszko* [*Little Heart*]). Their common experience is also the motif of competing with a sister for the attention of their parents, idealising the figures of their fathers and lowering the age at which they were orphaned by their fathers, which condemned them to a sense of loneliness and the creation of a "posthumous father" (Danek, 2012, p. 150) in their imaginations.

All publications about Żmijewska so far have been studies of a selected problem based on a single work (or narrative series). Such an ergocentric strategy did not allow for the recognition of the repeated thematic motifs in her writing. These repetitions give rise to the claim that autobiographical factors dominate in Żmijewska's prose. There is a scene in *Dola* when the heroine tries to engage in creative work, but every time she tries to make up a plot, she realises that she is once more writing about her own life. This is most likely a camouflaged personal confession. The themes of the experiences of the heroines as translators, beginner writers, and editors of a political daily are certainly autobiographical (*Dola*, *Z pamiętnika niedoszłej literatki* [*From the Diary of a Would-Be Writer*], as well as partially autobiographical *Z daleka i z bliska* [*From Far and Close*], *Książę pan* [*Prince Lord*]). On the basis of her own experience, she created the images of young women from landed gentry homes who are psychologically unable to enter the rhythm of everyday work (Dzikowski, 1909, p. 6). We have examples in *Płomyk*, *Dola*, and *Z pamiętnika niedoszłej literatki* (especially *Moje pierwsze dni* [*My First Days*]). Żmijewska often spoke about Siberia as a place of Polish martyrdom. She always used the expression "Nerchinsk mines" ["kopalnie nerczyńskie"] (*Płomyk*; *Car i unitka*, journalistic articles). She paid homage to her father, Eugeniusz Żmijewski (1816–1885), who was exiled in Siberia from 1840 to 1857, five of which he served in the gold mines near Nerchinsk. Particularly important is the motif of the heroines' stay at the Warsaw Marian Institute, where they are subjected to Russification and where, because of their exceptional beauty, they are selected to play a humiliating role in a recital in front of the Tsar (*Płomyk*; *Car i unitka*), which causes profound dilemmas for the patriotic girls. The motif of infatuation with a young, handsome, impeccably mannered Russian officer often recurs. On the one hand, there is a girl entering the world, dreaming of great love; on the other, a nobleman, dressed in the uniform of the enemy. It is a conflict between biology and ideology; a dramatic choice between the choice of the heart and the fulfilment of the duty of belonging to a national community (*Dola*, *Dwa spotkania*, *Car i unitka*). There is a particularly painful motif: mixed Polish-Russian marriages (conflict of nationality and religion) and the fate of the children from such unions (*Dola*, *Dozwolili* [*Allowed*],

Car i unitka). And finally, the motif of the church bell, which connects the memory of the fallen at Varna with those in the January Uprising (*W litewskim dworze* [*In a Lithuanian Manor*], *Serduszko*), directly taking up Orzeszkowa's message from *Gloria victis*: "Glory to the great failures! The corpses sleeping in the forest, no graves, no mounds, no cemetery crosses: *requiescat in pace*" ["Wielkim porażkom sława! Zwłokom śpiącym w borze, bez grobów, bez mogił, bez krzyżów cmentarnych: *requiescat in pace*"] (Żmijewska 1921, p. 264).

The second consequence of being limited to an ergocentric analyses is the omission of the issue of the transformation of texts. For the purpose of studying one work, it is sufficient to rely entirely on the text published ultimately during the author's lifetime. In order to make an overall interpretation, one should additionally consider the issue of revisions introduced by Żmijewska to subsequent versions of her works. It is important because even the well-known trilogy (*Płomyk*, *Dola*, *Serduszko*) was subject to changes. The version in *Bluszcz* of 1905–1906 and 1908 was first entitled *Płomyk: Urywek z większej całości* [*A Fragment of a Larger Whole*] (later *Płomyk: Ze wspomnień instytutki* [*From the Memoirs of a Pupil at a Girls Institute*]); it includes later parts of *Płomyk* and *Dola.* The author's revisions almost always concern the final parts of the texts. An exception – an important one at that – is *W litewskim dworze*, where the central place is reserved for Orzeszkowa. The first edition was published in *Słowo* no. 243 (1908, pp. 3–4). It constituted a combination of sorts of a reportage and a memoir that was a personal homage to Orzeszkowa. As an example of the writer's kindness towards everyone, Żmijewska included "her own" argument about a sick woman who in a letter asked Orzeszkowa, unknown to her, for instructions on collecting and drying herbs. The writer responded to the request and provided these, and the woman, touched by this act, had the letter from the famous writer put in her coffin when she was buried. This is an authentic fact, Żmijewska informed Orzeszkowa of it, and we know the details of the author of the letter (Orzeszkowa, 1958, p. 511). In the version of this text from the volume *Z daleka i z bliska*, all whole action takes place in Raków, there is no description of the meeting with Tadeusz Bochwic, the presentation of the Zdziechowski family has been eliminated, and Orzeszkowa's sad monologues about her loneliness as a woman and as an author are significantly limited.

ORZESZKOWA (ORACZOWA) AS A LITERARY CHARACTER

The short story titled *Dozwolili* from the collection *Dwa spotkania – Skończone – Dozwolili* (1914) tells the story of the mental tragedy of a Polish woman who is married to a Russian man and has a child with him. When the political situation

changes as a result of the announcement of a constitutional ukase, the family happiness is terminated as the spouses become aware of the tribal alienness and hostility. The end of the story is sad – the mother realises that her son will always be a stranger to her, not Stasio, but Szurka. In the first edition, this scene has a sharper, tragic meaning:

> She heard the baby screaming, but at that moment she did not experience any sympathy. That "Szurka" seemed a mere stranger to her. She was growing angry, not just with her husband, but also with her son. And he would probably never understand her heart's speech. – And when the screaming continued, she jumped to him and whispered, out of breath: – "Molchi!"* And the child understood that. He fell silent. (Żmijewska 1910a, p. 1)[3]

The story titled *Skończone* [*Finished*], which is an apotheosis of the heroism of the people of 1863, was published in print twice. The version from the volume *Dwa spotkania…*, published in Poznań, concludes with a scene showing an insurgent who has been wandering around Volhynian Polesia and goes mad at the news of the defeat of the Uprising. This text also appeared under the title of *Po wszystkim* [*After Everything*] in *Jednoodniówka*, published in Kiev. Here the ending is different – the mad insurgent runs out "into the darkness of the night." It is followed by a journalistic continuation, written from the perspective of the past half-century, summing up in a pathos-filled style all the Polish suffering and sacrifice, and expressing the conviction that these sacrifices had not been in vain and that the hour the Poles had been waiting a century and a half for had just arrived (Żmijewska, 1915, pp. 16–18).

The rewriting of the already published works as a permanent feature of Żmijewska's writings also concerns the most intriguing text, created as the fulfilment of Orzeszkowa's ideological and authorial will (*Dwa spotkania*). The first printed version was published in *Gazeta Lwowska* no. 31–61 (1914). The piece was divided into five parts, the final part ended with *Epilog. W dziesięć lat potem* [*Epilogue. Ten Years Later*] (*Gazeta Lwowska* no. 60–61 [1914]). The reprint in the volume *Dwa spotkania – Skończone – Dozwolili* (Poznań 1914) comprises five chapters, followed by *W dziesięć lat potem. Zakończenie* [*Ten Years Later. Conclusion*]. Of course, it may have been that these minor transformations were made at the request of the publisher, who had its own vision of the work's segmentation, taking into consideration the cognitive capabilities of the readers of the book. However, it was certainly the author's prerogative to extend the original text. In *Gazeta Lwowska* no. 58 (1914),

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[3] "Słyszała krzyk dziecka, ale w tej chwili nie budził w niej współczucia. Ten „Szurka" wydawał się jej obcym. Wzbierał w niej gniew nie tylko na męża, ale i na syna. I on zapewne nie zrozumie nigdy mowy jej serca. – A gdy krzyk nie ustawał, przyskoczyła i szeptem zdyszanym szepnęła: – Mołczi! A dziecko zrozumiało to. Umilkło." (*Rus. "Be quiet!")

Olenin finds "some poems" written in the heroine's handwriting. It is these poems that Zylejowa (no. 59) reads to him as proof that a "young and lovely" woman could in fact "above all love her homeland." The poems here are meant to further elevate the sacred idea of the love of one's native country. Having read the poems, Zylejowa begins to pray. That is the end of the chapter. In the book version, there are more poems, Zylejowa talks about "the homeland, which is no longer there," and when Olenin leaves, the old woman takes the papers from the drawer and–treating them like relics – reads them. What she reads is the National Government's manifesto on women's mourning costumes as an expression of patriotism (pp. 91–93). The text requires the manifesto to serve as an explanation for the reasons why, after a decade, the heroine continues wearing her mourning clothes, that she has to cover with a Turkish shawl during her audience with the Governor. The observed rewriting of the text forces one to reconsider the evaluation that "the motif of letters from the old secretary desk" is "tertiary" to the story, as it "does not play an important role in the decisions of the protagonist" ["nie odgrywa istotnej roli w decyzjach bohatera"] (Wiśniewska, 2014, p. 982). Olenin assumes that these are ordinary, typical poems of love, however, it turns out that they are unusual, situated beyond his understanding of the world – poems about the love of the Homeland. It is an outlook that will forever separate the two young people who are clearly interested in each other romantically. The second matter is that the reading of the National Government manifesto is done in secret from the enemy, as it is a transgression under the law; it is precisely the content of the manifesto that plays an important role in the decision taken by the young Polish woman, but not the Russian man.

Following the example of the collaudation of the texts, we can furnish the facts that are important for determining "Orzeszkowa's last artistic will" ["ostatniej woli artystycznej Orzeszkowej"] (Stępnik, 1998, p. 152). It is impossible to convincingly establish the relationship between the "prototype in a testamentary situation" ["prototypem w sytuacji testamentalnej"] and the work "made by an agreeable heir" ["wykonanym przez spolegliwego spadkobiercę"] (Stępnik, 1998, p. 152); however, we can at least draw general outlines. All authors writing about *Dwa spotkania* referred to Żmijewska's "Introduction" to this work as the only genetic key; however, there is more.

> She intended to continue her memoirs of the Uprising era, shrouded in love for the country without prejudice against the enemy. She wanted to introduce the son of a state dignitary, who, having received a majorat – confiscated Lithuanian property – from his father, reads the letters in an old secretary desk and moved by them, decides to renounce the fortune. (Żmijewska, 1910d, p. 2; emphasis – E.Ż.)[4]

[4] "Zamierzała snuć dalej swoje wspomnienia z epoki powstaniowej, owiane miłością dla kraju bez uprzedzenia do wroga. Pragnęła przedstawić syna dostojnika państwowego, który, dostawszy

These words were heard over the coffin of Orzeszkowa. Żmijewska's memoir was reprinted in numerous newspapers, and thousands (tens? hundreds of thousands?) of readers found out that the writer did not manage to write the planned text about a Russian who renounces his fortune appropriated from the Poles when he learns from documents discovered in a secretary desk who the legal owner of the fortune was. This is the continuation of *Gloria victis*, a new version of the plot of *Przy dochodzeniu śledczym* [*During an Investigative Inquiry*] (a young judge finds out that his father was the source of the crime he is to assess). Orzeszkowa was to describe the Russian moral dilemma without prejudice, the decisive argument was to be a historical document. Thus, the ethical discourse was to be completed by a legal one, the Russian sons were to redeem the guilt of their Russian fathers. The possible genesis of such a presentation of the case could be found in the *List otwarty do społeczeństwa rosyjskiego* [*Open Letter to the Russian Society*], which Orzeszkowa published in 1905, in the journal *Russkaya Mysl* (Wiśniewska, 2014, pp. 575–576).

Żmijewska's memory had failed her. In the "Introduction" to *Dwa spotkania*, she wrote about a conversation with Orzeszkowa regarding the planned piece: "Ten days later she was dead" ["W dziesięć dni potem już nie żyła"] (Żmijewska, 1914, p. VIII). This conversation would have taken place on 8 May, while Orzeszkowa came to Grodno after 5 April and stayed there "almost until the end of April" ["prawie do końca kwietnia"] (Wiśniewska, 2014, p. 981). If she was mistaken about the dates, how can we be sure that she presented the subject "with devotion" and took due care "not to distort the guiding thought, to convey it as it was given to me" ["myśli przewodniej nie skrzywić, by ją przekazać tak, jak była mi daną"]? (Żmijewska, 1914, p. 9). The writer was to convey the "content of this novella" and design its fate: "If I live, I will write it myself. If death hinders me, I will entrust this legacy to you" ["O ile żyć będę, napiszę ją sama. Jeśli śmierć mi przeszkodzi, tę spuściznę wam oddaję"] (Żmijewska, 1914, p. 8). Not a word about the content, plot, and the main idea, either in the version from *Gazeta Lwowska* no. 31 (1914) or in the book version. We are to believe that Żmijewska complemented Orzeszkowa's outline with her own episodes. We know this outline from Żmijewska's *Memoirs*, is probably closer to the truth, as they were written just after Orzeszkowa's death. All the more reason to remember the assumption of the author of *Gloria victis*: "shrouded in love for the country without prejudice against the enemy" ["owiane miłością do kraju bez uprzedzenia do wroga"] (Żmijewska, 1910d, p. 2). In the new version of this scene, along with Orzeszkowa's testament as a writer, we find a presentation of the tasks before the Polish literature:

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po ojcu majorat, – skonfiskowane dobra litewskie, rozczytuje się w listach, pozostałych w starym sekretarzyku i pod ich wpływem – zrzeka się fortuny."

She identified everything that the Polish author should notice and study throughout the entirety of life, which manifestations thereof should be preserved, and which should be omitted. She said above all that they should avoid crawling on the ground and wading through mud. (Żmijewska, 1914, pp. 7–8)[5]

Therefore, at this juncture, this "legacy" entrusted to the mysterious "you" seems to concern matters far broader than a single work – the programme for the Polish literature and the tasks of the Polish writer. The idea of the content of Orzeszkowa's final envisaged piece is limited to the information about the protagonist (the son of a Russian dignitary who comes into possession of the confiscated property in Lithuania and experiences a mental shock) and an element of the setting (a secretary desk, left by the former owners, still concealing their letters). Penned by Żmijewska, the original pivotal motif (the secretary desk) was preceded by a whole series of signs (people, nature, equipment, a gallery of family portraits), influencing the decision of the young Russian. The secretary desk itself has been made inferior, which makes us think that Żmijewska's interference in the elaboration of the subject was extensive. Orzeszkowa appears in the piece in person. Perhaps it is a coincidence that the surname of Lubosia's grandmother is Widacka (like the writer's mother). However, the local name of Ongród (Grodno; an onomastic procedure common in Orzeszkowa's works) is not a coincidence neither is the introduction of her character into the central scene of the piece – the confrontation of Poles with the tsarist administration. The date is indicated – it is 1875. During the audience with the governor, the heroine sees "the famous author, Oraczowa." Oraczowa had suffered hardships from the authorities – "for speaking Polish in a shop, he forbade her to leave the city for five years" ["za odezwanie się w sklepie po polsku zabronił jej opuszczać miasto przez pięć lat"] (Żmijewska, 1914, p. 102); meanwhile, the Polish populace treats her with respect. In 1875, the writer had already been well-recognised, although it was still too early to refer to her as "famous." Nevertheless, she was able to leave freely for Warsaw and benefitted from this opportunity. She was banned from leaving Grodno for three years and remained under weekly police supervision in 1882 (this decision was based on a much more serious matter than merely speaking Polish in public). Żmijewska used hyperbole to show the tsarist administration in the worst possible light. Lubomiła exchanges a handshake with Oraczowa, the governor is able to recognise Lubomiła's characteristics in the eyes and head movement of the "famous author" – a sign that the young heroine thinks and feels like her older colleague, they both embody pride and willpower. Oraczowa has to go to Warsaw to seek help

[5] "Wskazywała to wszystko, co polski autor winien dostrzegać i badać w całokształcie życia; jakie przejawy utrwalać, a jakie pomijać. Mówiła, że przede wszystkim strzec się winien pełzania po ziemi i brodzenia po błocie."

from a specialist doctor unavailable in Ongród. She proudly withdraws her request and leaves, "slightly inclining her head, as if she was the one who decided to end the audience" ["skłoniwszy lekko głową jak gdyby ona decydowała o skończeniu audiencji"] (Żmijewska, 1914, p. 106). It is – she the officially named "Elizaweta Oracz" – who says "no" to the Governor, she opposes the government at the price of her own suffering. Lubomiła follows her example. Oraczowa – Orzeszkowa humiliated the Russian governor with her sense of dignity thus giving the younger people a role model with a patriotic attitude.

The other work presenting Orzeszkowa as a literary figure is the novel *Jutro* [*Tomorrow*]. The plot is set in 1907 and 1908. The protagonist is a young girl, Tosia Różycka. She comes from a wealthy home and is a sensitive dreamer, opposing her father's intentions to put her to work and instil in her a sense of duty, for this is the path on which he sees the future of the nation, united by "language, faith, common love" ["językiem, wiarą, ukochaniem wspólnym"] (Żmijewska, 1912, p. 134). Tosia disregards the idea of work as a "blessing for humanity" ["dobrodziejstwa ludzkości"] (Żmijewska, 1912, p. 41). She harbours ambitions to become a writer but ignores the examples of contemporary authors involved in various works, among them Orzeszkowa (Żmijewska, 1912, p. 19). She represents the generation of individualists and self-admirers in life, reflecting only their own moods in their pursuit of aesthetics. As a counterbalance, the author introduces a whole gallery of women who follow positivist principles (of work, science, social solidarity, and philanthropy). The first part of the piece comprises a description of the carefree games of youth. Tosia meets a young poet who creates his poetry in the spirit of slogans of social awareness, but she declares herself to be an individualist. Unexpectedly, death and disease enter this carefree world. Różycki has to leave for Meran for treatment. He is accompanied by his daughter. While visiting Krakow, she experiences the awakening of patriotic feelings and dormant national consciousness within her. The ill father decides to take this opportunity to acquaint his daughter with the "greatest Polish woman, the author and educator of the nation" ["największą z Polek, autorką i wychowawczynią narodu"] – Oraczowa (Żmijewska, 1912, p. 230). Tosia is still under the influence of Chmurzyński, the selfish modernist "poet of darkness and depression" ["poety mroków i nizin"] (Żmijewska, 1912, p. 233), who considers Oraczowa to be a "pompous and boring" ["napuszoną i nudną"] old "governess of the nation" ["guwernantkę narodu"] (Żmijewska, 1912, p. 234). She is to change her mind when she meets the writer. This part of the novel is a textbook description of the impact that Orzeszkowa has had on society:

> Everyone felt free in the presence of the great Oraczowa. In her secluded home – there, far away, and here, in the bustling crowd of the world – everyone who encountered her felt as if they

were an important and significant person to her. And the more impoverished the world thought they were, the more she singled them out. From the sufferings of the meek, she created a halo over the heads of humble people. Regarding them all as brothers, she treated the disabled and the miserable as her closest family. (Żmijewska, 1912, p. 263)[6]

Oraczowa and Różycki help Tosia break out of the influence of anti-social modernism (Chmurzyński turns out to be a morphinist and a drunkard). In the final conversation, the father leaves his daughter with a message: "Remember, tomorrow is work, it is a hardship" ["Pamiętaj: jutro – to praca, to trud"] (Żmijewska, 1912, p. 295). After the death of Tosia's father, Oraczowa takes care of her. The girl has a chance to get to know the rhythm of her work (this corresponds directly to the accounts about Orzeszkowa) and see the author's human side. The reports of Tosia's conversations with Oraczowa (about life and literature) are most likely an echo of actual dialogues (for instance, the issue of the construction of the tragedies by Juliusz Słowacki and his *Mary Stuart*). There is no doubt, however, that at the same time Żmijewska puts her own observations, experiences and words in Oraczowa's mouth (the writing lessons are a paraphrase of relevant scenes from *Dola*, and the advice on matters of translation is a reiteration of the technical confessions of the author of *Płomyk* from a paper delivered at the Women's Congress [Żmijewska, 1907b, p. 577]). The culmination of the lesson on the art of writing is a publication of Tosia's translation, with a foreword by "Elżbieta Oraczowa" (an analogy to *Dola* with Orzeszkowa's introduction). In his will, made public after a long delay, Tosia's father left significant sums of money to the people whom he knew would allocate it for social purposes. He entrusted the care of his daughter to Oraczowa. Together, they would carry out the programme for Poland:

Our tomorrow lies in peaceful work. Shoulder to shoulder, heart to heart – no political conspiracies, no banking on foreign help! And I am happy to see that not only does the sad sobriety of the elders understand it, but that the fervent passion of the young is also beginning to come round to it. (Żmijewska, 1912, p. 382; emphasis – E.Ż.)[7]

Jutro can be considered the first novel about Orzeszkowa. Many of Oraczowa's words probably constitute a repetition of what Żmijewska had remembered from her

[6] "Każdy w obecności wielkiej Oraczowej czuł się swobodnym. W jej zacisznym domu – tam, daleko, i tutaj, w gwarnym zbiegowisku świata – każdy w obliczu jej odnosił takie wrażenie, jak gdyby był osobą dla niej ważną i znaczną. A im kto był pośledniejszym w mniemaniu świata, tym ona wyróżniała go bardziej. Z cierpień cichych tworzyła nad głowami ludzi pokornych aureolę. Wszystkich poczytując za braci, za najbliższą rodzinę uważała upośledzonych i nieszczęśliwych."

[7] "Nasze jutro jest w pracy pokojowej. Ramię przy ramieniu, serce przy sercu – bez konspiracji politycznych, bez liczenia na pomoc obcą! A z radością widzę, że rozumie to nie tylko smutna trzeźwość starszych, ale zaczyna rozumieć i gorące uczucie młodych."

conversations with Orzeszkowa. However, surely some of the judgements attributed to Oraczowa were authored by Żmijewska herself. The partial undermining of the credibility of her own message also affects the interpretation of *Dwa spotkania* as Orzeszkowa's "ultimate short story."

Translated into English: Lingua Lab

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