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INTERTEXTUAL PARALLELS BETWEEN THOMAS HARDY'S *TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES* AND MARIA RODZIEWICZÓWNA'S *WRZOS*

Key words: Thomas Hardy, Maria Rodziewiczówna, *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, *Wrzos*, intertextuality

Introduction

Although written in two different cultural milieus, Thomas Hardy's 1891 novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and Maria Rodziewiczówna's 1903 novel *Wrzos* (literally "Heather", not translated into English) seem to share both thematic and structural elements. This is quite surprising given the writers' respective literary and aesthetic backgrounds. Hardy (1840-1928) was a late Victorian writer whose major novels are set in the fictitious region called Wessex, although this area closely resembles the late 19th-century West Country.¹ These works are known for their fierce criticism of the English moral standards of the period, particularly those related to religion, marriage and education [Cheshire 2010, v-viii]. Rodziewiczówna (1864-1944), in turn, whose works were created in the Young Poland period (Pl. *Młoda Polska*), was primarily interested in the Polish culture of *Kresy Wschodnie*.² Her books glorify patriotism, Christianity and local traditions. While it could be argued

¹ Hardy's Wessex, proudly named after the medieval Anglo-Saxon kingdom, is a fictitious area located in the south and southwest of England [Cheshire 2010, vi].

² *Kresy Wschodnie* was a historical region of the Second Polish Republic (1918-1939). It was inhabited by a variety of national and ethnic groups (Poles, Ukrainians, Belarusians, Lithuanians, Germans, Jews, Armenians, and some other), which contributed to a great cultural diversity and permeability within the province [Kolbuszewski 1999, 175].

that Hardy and Rodziewiczówna held diametrically opposed views,³ *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *Wrzos* feature a number of significant similarities. It appears that certain literary themes and practices are transnational, and thus contribute to the emergence of the so-called “intertextual parallels” between these novels.⁴

Characters and Plot Construction

Tess of the d'Urbervilles and *Wrzos* introduce a number of characters who are conspicuously alike. Hardy's Tess Durbeyfield and Rodziewiczówna's Kazia Szpanowska are intelligent and attractive young women born into poor rural families.⁵ Tess's parents live in a thatched cottage in the small village of Marlott. Nevertheless, they do not own the house and premises – Tess's father, John Durbeyfield, is a “livier”, i.e., he holds a lease for the period of his lifetime. A lazy peddler who often gets drunk, he is generally of very little use to the household, and the discovery of his noble ancestry (he is a descendant of the ancient and knightly family of the d'Urbervilles) makes him even more reluctant to work. Tess and her mother, Joan Durbeyfield, take care of the daily chores and the younger children. Although Joan loves her oldest daughter dearly, she is often unable to understand Tess's feelings and actions, which prevents them from developing a reciprocally genuine relationship.⁶

The lack of a proper emotional and financial support from Tess's parents is expressed in her involuntary resolve to claim kin with a wealthier branch of the d'Urberville family, which is, paradoxically, later revealed to have

³ As a matter of fact, these two authors are so different that, apart from this study, there seems to be no other scholarly research which juxtaposes them.

⁴ The term “intertextual parallels” should be understood here as the possibly unintended, yet inevitable connections between separate texts containing similar elements. The notion of intertextuality, which was first introduced by Julia Kristeva in her 1966 essay *Word, Dialogue and Novel*, refers to the phenomenon of shaping the meaning of a given text by prior texts. To put it simply, a person's perception of a new text relies heavily on the knowledge he or she gained from the previously studied texts. As a result, the correspondences between texts may emerge from the reader's experience, notwithstanding the writers' actions and intentions [Kristeva 1980, 69]. Apart from Kristeva, various other scholars have developed their own theories on intertextuality. For example, Gérard Genette [1992, 1-2] describes the phenomenon as the actual presence of one text within another text in the form of quotation, allusion or plagiarism, whereas Norman Fairclough [2003, 51] emphasises the inseparable connection between intertextuality and the so-called “recontextualisation,” i.e. the process of extracting the text from its original context in order to introduce it into another context, which may result in significant alterations of the initial meaning. The existence of these (and many other) distinct theories reflects the complexity of intertextuality.

⁵ In this sentence the main characters' families are deliberately referred to as “rural families” rather than “country families” in order to avoid ambiguity. The term “country families” carries connotations of country gentry and, as a result, it would suggest that both Tess's and Kazia's ancestors were landowners. While this is true in Tess's case, Kazia's progenitors are not described in *Wrzos*.

⁶ Joan Durbeyfield's parental ineptitude is directly addressed in Chapter LIV as she admits to Tess's husband, Angel Clare (“... I have never really known her (Tess)” [Hardy 2010, 444].

acquired the name by financial means – they simply bought it. The close encounter with the would-be d'Urbervilles takes its toll on Tess – she is raped/ seduced⁷ by Alec d'Urberville and gives birth to an illegitimate child. By the moral standards of the late 19th century meticulously delineated in the book, Tess's premarital loss of virginity is unthinkable, its inevitable outcome being a life of shame and insecurity. To make matters worse, a few years later, after John Durbeyfield's death, Tess's family loses the legal right to their only dwelling place, resulting in a grave housing instability. Tess, having no place to live in and abandoned by her unfair judgemental husband (whose name is, ironically, "Angel" Clare), is ultimately left with no other option than becoming Alec's mistress. In return, her despicable tormentor guarantees her relatives' domestic and economic security.

Eventually, Angel reunites with Tess, realising the error in deeming his wife impure and guilty of her inglorious past. In response to his desired return, Tess kills Alec, whom she blames for all the suffering she has experienced in her life. The story ends with the sorrowful Angel and Liza-Lu, Tess's younger sister, observing the black flag moving up the staff placed on the cornice of the Wintoncester jail tower, which marks the main character's execution for the crime she has committed.

Considering Tess's trials and tribulations, Kazia's life is filled with correspondingly harsh experiences. First of all, she lost her mother in early childhood. Her father, Szpanowski, is a former tenant who, blinded by the prospect of inheriting his late landlord's grange, married⁸ Mrs Tomkowska, the bad-tempered widow and rightful successor to the estate. A most adequate assessment of this undertaking can be found in the analysis offered by Prezes, Szpanowski's friend and Kazia's future father-in-law: "He (Szpanowski) is a fool, the paid clerk turned himself into the unpaid clerk (...). He moved from service to slavery" [Rodziewiczówna 1989, 10; translation mine]. As a husband, Szpanowski is obliged to tend the grange for free and endure his wife's fits of rage, not to mention her constant attempts at making Kazia's life miserable by intense humiliation.⁹

⁷ While many modern critics, such as Scott McEathron [2005, 132], classify Tess's fateful nightly encounter with Alec in the Chase as rape, Kristin Brady [1986, 127-145] asserts that the passage which describes the incident in the novel is ambiguous and may possibly depict seduction. As a matter of fact, these two different interpretations constitute the subject of an ongoing academic debate among scholars [McEathron 2005, 132]. Nevertheless, since Hardy quite often demonises Alec in the novel, the former alternative seems more probable.

⁸ The past tense of the verbs in this and the previous sentence is used intentionally to indicate that these events took place before the beginning of the action of the novel, and thus should be regarded as the so-called "Vorgeschichte".

⁹ Paradoxically, the situation presented in *Wrzos* may initially seem reminiscent of *Cinderella* rather than *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*. Nevertheless, contrary to the folk tale, Rodziewiczówna's novel illustrates the protagonist's gradual downfall and is devoid of a happy ending. Kazia, similarly to Hardy's Tess, is consistently portrayed as the victim of the morally decayed society.

Superficially, it may appear that the protagonists' fathers do not have much in common since Szpanowski, unlike John Durbeyfield, is hard-working and emotionally connected to his daughter. These differences, though intuitively significant, are overshadowed by the fact that the characters are, predominantly, egoists. Szpanowski's workaholicism and Durbeyfield's laziness merely serve as arbitrary pretexts for the characters' selfish behaviour. Both fathers ignore their daughters' needs and problems, which directly contributes to the development of the stories since the country girls are forced to seek help elsewhere.

Seeing her father's "grief" at the way she is treated (sic!) and assuming that her exiled fiancé, Stanisław Bogucki, is dead,¹⁰ Kazia decides to move out of her step-mother's house and marry Andrzej Sanicki, a complete stranger and cynical egoist who openly cheats on her with a young divorcee, Celina von Reuter.¹¹ Sanicki's unethical demeanour, along with the ubiquitous "juicy" gossip produced by it, has an adverse effect on Kazia, whose life becomes unbearable. Additionally, when Bogucki suddenly returns to Warsaw and blames Kazia for not keeping faith with him, her mental state rapidly deteriorates. Losing the will to live, she succumbs to the typhus she has become infected with while doing charity work in a highly pauperised district of the city.¹²

At this point it could be argued that the circumstances of Kazia's and Tess's deaths are different – Kazia dies of a disease, whereas Tess is executed as a murderess. However, both works present the country girls as morally innocent. Tess commits a crime of passion which has been provoked by Angel's and Alec's actions. Consequently, while the female protagonist is, in a legal sense, the convicted perpetrator, the male characters are responsible for her ultimate demise. Similarly, Kazia's death is caused by Bogucki and Sanicki, who have led her to a mental breakdown. It appears that the novels are primarily concentrated on depicting the victims as guiltless. As a result, a close connection between the two deaths may be established, if only in their moral dimension.

Tess's and Kazia's impoverished backgrounds and the deprivation of parental understanding fulfil exactly the same function in both novels. These factors act as starting points for chains of unfavourable events and circumstances, the climax of which is the main characters' imminent death,

¹⁰ The novel does not reveal any specific details of Bogucki's exile; yet, using history as a point of reference, it is safe to assume that he was among the "disloyal" Poles deported by the Russian authorities to Siberia in the late 1880s or early 1890s [See: Caban 2004, 101].

¹¹ Actually, Rodziewiczówna is very inconsistent in characterising Celina von Reuter: she calls her "a young divorcee" (Pl. "młoda rozwódka"), as well as "an old rowdy" (Pl. "stara awanturnica"). The discrepancy between these descriptions reveals the author's little concern for details in her novels [Tukalski-Nielubowicz 2014, 46].

¹² Comparing *Wrzos* with *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, it appears that Bogucki can be regarded as the counterpart of Angel, whereas Sanicki closely resembles Alec, but the intertextual parallels between these characters will be described later.

although in each case different. The stories are primarily driven by the aftermath of negative coincidences, such as the fateful collision involving Tess's wagon and a mail-cart which kills Prince (the Durbeyfield's only horse, upon which their welfare has depended), or the tragic disappearance of Stanisław Bogucki, who could have prevented Kazia's dreadful marriage to Andrzej Sanicki. Both Tess and Kazia experience misfortunes which occur independently of their actions – the grim fate that befalls the protagonists is often the product of missed or non-existent opportunities. Tess's profound sentiment on her unsophisticated life, which she expresses in a conversation with the cultivated Angel Clare, fully captures the idea:

My life looks as if it had been wasted for want of chances! When I see what you know, what you have read, and seen, and thought, I feel what a nothing I am! I'm like the poor Queen of Sheba who lived in the Bible. There is no more spirit in me [Hardy 2010, 150].¹³

Similarly to Tess, Kazia cannot develop her full personal potential because she does not have the means to avoid the consequences of the hardships which are imposed on her life. Besides, on most occasions neither of the characters is capable of rebelling against these difficulties – Tess and Kazia are, to a large extent, passive sufferers who do not take action even if such conduct could improve their position. As far as Tess is concerned, although she wants to support her family financially, her search for employment is careless and chaotic. The best indication of Tess's inefficiency is her stay at Flintcomb-Ash. Although she is regularly persecuted by the despotic Farmer Groby, she accepts harsh working conditions in the field in the vague hope that her situation will change for the better on its own, whereas some of her co-workers resign and manage to find much better occupations elsewhere. Curiously enough, some scholars, such as George Harvey [2003, 83], claim that the only instance of Tess's determined endeavour to fight for her happiness is the murder she commits by the end of the novel.

Kazia, though generally more reasonable than Tess, quite often remains equally submissive. Initially, she is subjugated by her step-mother, who allows her to live in the annexe to the estate on condition of serving as a paid maid. Kazia does not oppose her oppressor for the sake of Szpanowski's peace of mind. As a matter of fact, she loves her wayward father to such an extent that from her perspective he is beyond reproach. As mentioned earlier,

¹³ Tess's rudimentary knowledge of the Bible is revealed here. The unawareness of the context she is referencing creates an intriguing paradox. While the "rich" Queen of Sheba "has no spirit in her" (i.e., is shocked) after seeing the magnificent grandeur of King Salomon and his palace [*The Holy Bible*. King James Version, 1 Kings 10: 4-5], Tess "has no spirit in her" because she realises that she has been devoid of a chance to get to know many exceptional products of culture. The clumsy juxtaposition made by the protagonist has a symbolic quality – the Queen of Sheba's lofty appreciation of Salomon's wisdom and wealth makes Tess's grief over her restricted mundane life even more miserable.

not even a single word of criticism is uttered by Kazia against Szpanowski, the egoist who values the grange more than his daughter.¹⁴ Later on, when Kazia marries Sanicki, she takes pride in her moral superiority over her unfaithful husband and the vain *crème de la crème* of Warsaw, albeit the social pressure exerted by them gradually shatters her nerves. Kazia, with her acute sense of righteousness and strong inclination to selfless work for the greater good of the community, is an easy target for their contempt and alienation. The protagonist's helplessness lies in the conscious choice not to leave her abominable husband, regardless of his misdeeds and the torment he has wrought upon her.

One of the reasons why Kazia does not abandon Sanicki is her inner conviction that she is bound to her husband by the indissoluble sacrament of marriage, which provokes a commentary on a major difference between Kazia and Tess: their attitude towards religion. The analysis presented here is not focused on the contrast between Catholicism and Anglicanism, but rather on the main characters' spiritual lives as such. *Rodziewiczówna* and Hardy, whose beliefs were radically different, employed the protagonists of their novels as vehicles for expressing personal views. *Rodziewiczówna* was a devout Christian, and so is Kazia [Skirmunttówna 2012, 49]. While it is true that the character, bearing in mind the falsehood of her wedding vows to Sanicki, has a guilty conscience, she shows no other signs of religious misconduct throughout the novel. What is more, Kazia attends masses and does her best to instil her ideals into other people, especially the poor children whom she teaches prayers.

It is no surprise that *Rodziewiczówna* chose a different set of values for her main character than the atheistic Hardy, whose protagonist is not endowed with profound faith [Cheshire 2010, vii]. Instead, Tess demonstrates a very scarce interest in religion. While it is true that she enjoys going to church on Sundays, her perception of the service is not contemplative in the theological sense. The main character merely delights in superficial impressions of external reality. For example, she derives pleasure from listening to the chanting and old Psalms only because of her genuine affinity for music. Tess frequently sings along with the other followers, but despite her eager participation, she has no willingness to develop her spirituality, and thus her mind remains predominantly ignorant of the teachings of the Church.

Moving on to the main male characters of the novels, they can be divided into two separate groups according to the functions they fulfil in the plots. The representatives of the first group, Alec d'Urberville and Andrzej Sanicki, are both arrogant and influential never-do-wells. Their main objective is to satisfy their selfish urges at all costs, even if other people suffer because

¹⁴ In this particular respect, Szpanowski is very similar to John Durbeyfield, who values money and the name he inherited from his knightly ancestors more than Tess.

of their misdeeds. Alec is attracted to Tess from their very first meeting and, as the opportunity finally presents itself late at night in the woods, has sex with her. Irrespective of the interpretation, whether rape or seduction, the sexual intercourse does take place and has significant consequences for Tess. To Alec, the act is nothing but a trivial love conquest, yet he brings Tess into disrepute, which will be later his undoing. Similarly to Alec, Sanicki leads a dissipated lifestyle – he has virtually no sense of responsibility and indulges in leisure activities on an everyday basis. Given the fact that a considerable part of his late mother's fortune has been bequeathed to him with the stipulation that he needs to find a wife, Sanicki marries Kazia simply to gain access to the money. Being blindly enamoured of the supposedly refined divorcee, Celina, he despises his rural wife, whom he perceives as unsophisticated and blames for the tempestuous nature of his relationship with the mistress. Additionally, Sanicki's notorious public appearances with Celina have a detrimental impact on Kazia's reputation. Many members of the Varsovian elite perceive Kazia's silent acquiescence to her husband's brazen infidelity as a sign of frailty and, therefore, do not hold her in high esteem. Sanicki, shortly after being abandoned by Celina, begins to take a liking to his wife, but his newfound appreciation is by no means a commensurate atonement for the trouble he has caused. Besides, he becomes fascinated with Jarłowa, a rich widow, and it is implied that he would sooner or later fling himself into her arms.

While it is beyond all doubt that both Alec and Sanicki are unprincipled, take advantage of naive country girls and treat them instrumentally,¹⁵ the characters from the second group, namely Angel Clare and Stanisław Bogucki, are far more complex. Initially, they seem to constitute the moral counterweight to the aforementioned obvious antagonists. Both Angel and Bogucki are, in fact, intellectuals with a strong sense of decency, which is reflected in their genuine feelings for their respective indigent beloveds. Additionally, the gift of requited love is the primary source of Tess's and Kazia's motivation to withstand ordeals – the female protagonists endure persecution and mistreatment thanks to the strength they draw from the belief that they are loved (or, at least, used to be loved) by the true objects of their affection. If these circumstances are taken into consideration, Angel and Bogucki seem to be positive characters. However, this impression is successfully ruined and rendered false by their overall influence on Tess and Kazia, respectively. Using a metaphor for the sake of conveying a clear-cut comparison, the novels do

¹⁵ In order to objectify the evaluation of Alec and Sanicki, it is crucial to stress that, regardless of their moral decay, they sometimes act on a benevolent impulse seeing the female protagonists in trouble. For example, Alec wants to take care of Tess and her family after realising how much he has wronged her. Sanicki, in turn, saves Kazia from her stepmother's uncontrolled outbursts of anger, as well as supplies his wife with the funds required for charity work. Thanks to Sanicki's money, Kazia settles all the outstanding rents in a tenement house and prevents the confiscation of a poor seamstress's sewing machine. Alec and Sanicki, though generally demonised, offer practical help to the country girls, unlike Angel and Bogucki.

not idealise love as the ultimate weapon which miraculously vanquishes all evil, but rather present it as a double-edged sword. Since Tess's and Kazia's resistance to misfortunes relies so heavily on the warm memories of Angel and Bogucki, there exists an increased risk of submission caused by a breach of trust in these relationships. In other words, Tess and Kazia are unable to come to terms with an abrupt accusation of being faithless to the only men they truly love. Paradoxically, regardless of all inconveniences and hardships, it is the mental breakdown caused by the "decent" Angel and Bogucki which directly leads the female characters to their demise – a terrible feat which Alec and Sanicki would most likely never have achieved on their own.

Closing this section, it is necessary to clarify one more issue. It could be argued, quite rightly, that the similarities between Hardy's *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and Rodziewiczówna's *Wrzos* are stressed here at the expense of belittling the differences between them. The reason behind such a state of affairs is very simple: even the most discernible disparities between the stories, such as the distinctive use of rape/seduction and infidelity as the factors which lead to their victims' social ostracism, do not violate the general plot construction shared by the novels. After all, it is impossible to deny that both works feature a young pauperised country girl who, deprived of prospects and parental understanding, succumbs to a wealthy persecutor, is divested of her good name, becomes entangled in bad fortune and, in the end, is rejected by her true love, who turns out to be an incorrigible dreamer and, consequently, bears responsibility for her death.

Themes

As far as the literary themes are concerned, since Tess and Kazia cannot avoid their grim destinies, whether they try to fight against them or not, the novels are imbued with fatalism, which can be defined as the belief in predetermined, and thus impossible to change, fate [Lieber 1836, 56]. Fatalism, in turn, is inextricably intertwined with the so-called "injustice of existence" as the protagonists' innocence and kind-heartedness are constantly highlighted in both stories. After all, the characters fall prey to their male suitors' whims, as well as the demands of morally corrupt societies.

Considering Hardy's and Rodziewiczówna's novelistic *oeuvres*, a general fondness of the countryside, combined with a growing anxiety about the impending industrialism, often permeates their works [Cheshire 2010, vi; Tukalski-Nielubowicz 2014, 33, 78]. *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* and *Wrzos* touch upon a common 19th-century trend in Europe, namely migrations from villages to cities – the rural population started to relocate in great numbers in search of higher living standards. Both works concentrate mostly on the negative

aspects of this phenomenon, creating a clear-cut opposition between the idyllic countryside and the corrupt city. While it could be argued that such a rigid discrepancy between rural and urban areas was already a common reference point in the early 18th-century European literature, the novels illustrate the way the theme evolved after a period of nearly 200 years. By the end of the 19th-century, the city had gradually become the symbol of destructive wealth – in contrast to the impoverished, yet unblemished countryside [Seigneuret 1988, 257-264].

When it comes to *Tess of the d'Urbervilles*, it contains mainly picturesque descriptions of rural areas in the fictional Wessex, with very few exceptions, such as the neglected Flintcomb-Ash farm. Seemingly, the city of Sandbourne, where Tess moves with Alec, overshadows her former provincial whereabouts with its wealth and splendour. Nevertheless, this prosperity is meaningless as it symbolises the ultimate destruction of her hope for a reunion with Angel. Sandbourne epitomizes the fall of the illusory dream that happiness can be attained by financial means – while the city appeals to the materialistic Alec, people who do not seek riches, such as Tess and Angel, perceive it as repulsive.

Similarly to Hardy, Rodziewiczówna criticises the urban population for its pecuniary and mundane pursuits. Nevertheless, the moral discrepancy between the city and the countryside is even more profound in her novels. The Polish author examines these places in the context of the “unholy” and the “divine.” In *Wzros* the phenomenon is portrayed with great precision in a number of utterances produced by Staszek,¹⁶ Kazia's stableboy, the most noteworthy of them being:

'Tis true what my poor late mother told me: Jesus made the countryside and the estate, while the dark architect dragged stones and built the city, and dwells in it. 'Tis so that the stones feel at hwome (in the city), while God's poor creatures stay captive. 'Tis true: birds in cages, dogs in muzzles, horses in harnesses, trees behind wired fences, water in pipes, grain in sacks, flowers in pots, oxen in abat-toirs – 'tis true, there bain't any freedom here (in the city) [Rodziewiczówna 1989, 50; translation mine].

At this point it is of great importance to stress that Hardy, unlike Rodziewiczówna, wrote his novel with the intention to attack religious stereotypes [Vance 2007, 493]. Throughout the plot, Tess encounters a number of characters who embody the narrow dogmatism and inflexibility of the clergy, the most notable among them being the parson who refuses to give Tess's deceased illegitimate child a Christian burial. Even Reverend Clare and his wife, Angel's good-natured parents, subscribe to a strict idealistic notion of chastity which is incompatible with the main character's situation. Consequently, Tess, the victim of rape/seduction, is abandoned by Angel who misjudges her on account of cherishing the same rigid standards. Hardy

¹⁶ The character is also frequently referred to as “Stacho”.

also ridicules Angel's vain brothers, who use religion only for the purpose of sustaining their own welfare, as well as Alec d'Urberville, whose temporary (and, arguably, false) conversion makes him an even more perverse prowler. On the whole, these critical depictions of misapplications of faith seem mild in comparison with the suggestion, established *expressis verbis* in the final words of the novel, that God has been toying with Tess's life until its very end.¹⁷ On the basis of this statement, it is possible to surmise that Hardy's attitude towards religion (as expressed in this novel) ranged from negative to hostile. Considering Rodziewiczówna's deeply-rooted Christian beliefs, it is not surprising that her novel does not contain such negative comments on religion.

Conclusions

Tess of the d'Urbervilles and *Wrzos*, two seemingly unrelated novels created by drastically different writers, can be juxtaposed with each other on many levels thanks to a variety of intertextual parallels. The degree of similarity between these works is, in fact, so great that it may raise the question as to whether the Polish author used the English masterpiece as a source of inspiration. Unfortunately, it seems that there is very little biographical information concerning Rodziewiczówna's reading preferences;¹⁸ hence it is not possible to confirm whether she showed a particular interest in English literature or not.¹⁹ However, given the diachronic perspective, it is quite probable that the author might have had access to the 1893 anonymous Polish translation of Hardy's novel *Latorośl wielkiego rodu. Prawdziwe dzieje kobiety*, especially in view of the fact that it immediately gained popularity and was widely praised in the Polish press for its bold topic, poeticised realism and the artistry of bucolic descriptions [Krajewska 1972, 144-146].²⁰

¹⁷ The suggestion takes the form of the following sentence: "'Justice' was done, and the President of the Immortals, in Aeschylean phrase, had ended his sport with Tess" [Hardy 2010, 472].

¹⁸ According to Jadwiga Skirmuntówna, Rodziewiczówna's closest friend, the author cultivated the habit of reading novels and tried to promote it. As a matter of fact, Rodziewiczówna enjoyed seeking "worthwhile books" (Pl. wartościowe książki) and reading them out-loud with other people in the evenings, especially whenever she visited Skirmuntówna in Moladava [Skirmuntówna 2012, 12]. Sadly, the word "worthwhile" is not specified and none of the sources listed in the bibliography contains information on the author's attitude to English literature.

¹⁹ Kazimierz Czachowski [1935, 169] suspects that Rodziewiczówna's 1920 novel *Lato leśnych ludzi* (literally "Summer of the Forest People," not translated into English) might have been inspired by Rudyard Kipling's 1884 collection of stories *The Jungle Book* since the descriptions of the flora and fauna are surprisingly similar in these two works of fiction. Nevertheless, Anna Martuszevska [1989, 97] points out that nature in *Lato leśnych ludzi* is presented in such a way that there is virtually no struggle for survival, which is not the case in *The Jungle Book*.

²⁰ According to Wanda Krajewska, the translations of Hardy's works were generally well-received in Poland, while the original novels usually had mixed reviews in England due to the writer's unpopular opinions on the Victorian reality [Krajewska 1972, 144-146].

Such a suspicion seems to be justified in the light of a peculiar incident described by Hieronim Tukalski-Nielubowicz, Rodziewiczówna's godson and biographer. It appears that Rodziewiczówna used some of the themes and characters from Ursula Zöge von Manteuffel's²¹ 1883 work *Mark Albrecht* for the creation of her 1889 critically acclaimed novel *Devaytis* (Pl. *Dewajtis*), but failed to admit it in the preface to her book. This carelessness led to a series of plagiarism allegations, which were eventually refuted thanks to Maria Konopnicka's intervention. The fellow-writer asserted that the overall artistic value of *Devaytis* should not be undermined considering its positive influence on the promotion of national rebirth in the late period of partitions of Poland. Nevertheless, she openly criticised Rodziewiczówna for not mentioning the source material [Tukalski-Nielubowicz 2014, 44]. This documented instance of unmarked borrowing, although involving different novels, increases the probability of a similar direct transfer of ideas from *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* to *Wrzos*.

As a final remark, it should be noted that, apart from the evident intertextual parallels between the two works of fiction, the eponymous *wrzos* (Eng. heather) is endowed with a symbolic quality which is suitable for both Kazia and Tess. Rodziewiczówna describes the plant as a strong and subtle flower which, if left alone on the pavement, is swept into the gutter – a most adequate summation of the female protagonists' situation [Rodziewiczówna 1989, 30, 140].

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²¹ In Rodziewiczówna's biography, Tukalski-Nielubowicz by mistake uses the name "Katarzyna Manteuffel" instead of "Ursula Zöge von Manteuffel" to refer to the author of the novel *Mark Albrecht* [See: Tukalski-Nielubowicz 2014, 44].

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Summary

INTERTEXTUAL PARALLELS BETWEEN THOMAS HARDY'S *TESS OF THE D'URBERVILLES* AND MARIA RODZIEWICZÓWNA'S *WRZOS*

The aim of the article is to indicate that Maria Rodziewiczówna's 1903 novel *Wrzos* bears some resemblance to Thomas Hardy's 1891 novel *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* in terms of the characters, plot construction and literary themes. The intertextual parallels between the two works, along with the likelihood of a direct borrowing of the aforementioned elements, constitute the subject of this study.

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