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Summary of PhD dissertation entitled: Eliza Orzeszkowa in the face of the question of faith

Keywords: Eliza Orzeszkowa, faith, religion, God, Christianity, love of neighbor, conscience, mercy, forgiveness, salvation, soul, anti-positivist breakthrough, Catholic modernism, values, ethics, morality

This PhD dissertation is devoted to the problem of faith, religion and God in the life and work of Eliza Orzeszkowa, a world-famous writer, twice nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature (in 1905 and 1909). The need to conduct such extensive research resulted from the hitherto non-exhaustive state of knowledge on the indicated topic, which was a consequence of the mere contextual existence of these issues in the writer's early work. My research shows the process of the evolution of the worldview of a mature woman in reaching God and her attitude towards matters of faith and religion, and present a turning point in the turn towards Christianity. Her own moral sensitivity became the driving force behind the work of the author of *The Days*, who directed her interests towards epistemological and ethical searches. Orzeszkowa's religious attitude is syncretic. Sources such as: antiquity (especially the Stoic and Epicurean schools), Manichaeism (St. Augustine), Franciscan philosophy, the Bible (biblical topics), Judaism (Judaic topics), the idea of returning to nature (Jean- Jacques Rousseau, John Ruskin), romantic historiography - mysticism, especially in the approach of Zygmunt Krasiński (providionalism) inspired by the religion of the East (Buddhist religion), the thought of Ernest Renan, the philosophy of Arthur Schopenhauer, the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche and Catholic modernism.

The PhD dissertation has been divided into two parts, each of which contains three chapters. The whole thing is preceded by an introduction and ends with the ending, list of illustrations and bibliography. In the introduction, I explain what religion is, which has become the subject of research in many scientific disciplines, incl. philosophy, theology or the humanities, and what role it played in the biography and literary output of Eliza Orzeszkowa. The dissertation covers the reconstruction and analysis of the writer's worldview transformations in the perspective of philosophical and religious systems exhibited in journalism, epistolography, intimate journal and literary works. The subject of the work made it possible to use the possibilities of decoding the writer's religious awareness also through psychological, historical, sociological and cultural contexts. When choosing research

methods, I used primarily cultural research, elements of biography, the method of history of ideas and methods of examining the sacred. Viewing literary works required hermeneutical proceedings and intertextual research aimed at revealing inter-textual relations conditioning the meanings of individual works.

The key problem of the dissertation was the issue of Eliza Orzeszkowa's choices related to crossing specific religious systems and presenting values common to many faiths. The writer does not accept or expose the idea of a single religion, but emphasizes universal values, although Christianity captivated her with the idea of love, suffering, forgiveness, mercy and salvation. The author of *Ad astra* promoted moral truths developed over generations. Against this background, she manifested (especially in her intimate journal) a strong and deep faith in a personal God, understood in accordance with her own conscience and reason. It is worth noting that Orzeszkowa was constantly looking for her way to faith from the position of a positivist, from the perspective of the positivist *episteme*.

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