

Motywy dramatu Jerzego Łukosza pt. *Śmierć puszczyka*



Mgr Karolina Mytkowska – DOKTORANTKA UJ KRAKÓW

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Jerzy Łukosz was born in 1958 in Wrocław. He is a Polish prose writer, playwright, essayist, literary critic and translator of German literature. His work stands out because of its tone of erudite and philosophical fun. From 1996 to 1997 he was a playwright-in-residence at the Słowacki Theatre in Krakow. In 1990 he got Stanisław Piętak's Award for essays *Języki prozy*. In the 90s he took a lot of trips, which gave him a lot of experience and enriched his experience.

When we talk about Jerzy Łukosz's drama entitled *Śmierć puszczyka* it is a good idea to initially mark the most important thematic motifs. There is a few of them: reflective and philosophical theme of transience, mysterious and ambiguous story about relationships between people, the loneliness of two women, about love, about waiting, about willing to live with someone and for someone. Although the language used by the characters may seem playful and not bound by any taboos, the drama has a pessimistic tone. It speaks of failure to comply with drama, played out in different

ways. The link between dialogue and action of the drama is loosened. Each time, it is something completely different. The settlement with the environment is carried out from a distance to the world. I mean such a distance that allows the characters to pass from the situation existing potentially into situations currently existing. In this way, waiting for the train is an excuse to raise some important questions of life.

The drama begins with a scene where two women - old Anna and young Ewa - are waiting for the arrival of the fiancé of one of them at a station. He is a forester. The choice of names is very significant. Ewa is associated with the mother of mankind, who was created from the rib of the man - Adam. Humans were created in the image and likeness of God. In the Paradise only one prohibition was enforced - they were not allowed to pick the fruit from the tree growing in the middle of the garden. Ewa tempted by the serpent - Satan - broke and gave the apple to Adam to taste. This disobedience was the cause of their exile from

Paradise. Ewa from Łukosz's drama is a character quite cynical, mature and nonchalant; sensitive to the words of an old woman. She is a figure with the characteristics of the symbol, which draws from the biblical woman, not only the name, but certain behaviors, too. She works as a nurse.

Anna is her interlocutor in the drama. It is quite a popular female name, the most famous bearer of which was Saint Anne - Mother of Mary of Nazareth. According to the old tale, holy Anna was born in Judea, where Bethlehem was her family home. When she was 24 she married her husband - Joachim. Both of them thought of their marriage as a sacred union, united by God. They behaved according to the Law of God, and properly walked in the way of piety. They divided their wealth into three parts: one sacrificed to maintain the house, the other for the poor and pilgrims, third left for themselves. Anna was a role model for all spouses. Although together with Joachim they were happily married, they were heavily experienced by the Lord by lack of offspring. Joachim realized that with no children he was not worthy of sacrifice to God. He was upset and decided not to go back to Anna. He left the house, the wife and went to the desert. He put up his tent in the mountains and fasted 40 days and 40 nights, waiting for the Lord to look at the grief. Anna, not knowing where Joachim was, mourned her widowhood. Her grief was even greater when the maid pointed out her childlessness. In the afternoon Anna went to the garden, where she planned to mourn for his life. When she raised her eyes to heaven and saw the sparrows' nest in a tree laurel, she said a supplica-

tion prayer to God. Then emerged an angel, which announced the birth of a child and the return of Joachim. And so, the forty-five year old Anna gave birth to a girl, which according to Jewish custom, on the 15th day was given the name Mary. In the story which I mentioned, some keywords appear, which we find in contemporary drama. There is for example: garden and sparrow. Anna in the Łukosz's drama had also a similar problem as the mother of Mary. At one point she laments to Ewa: „Zawsze chciałem mieć dziecko. A miałam tylko Kuleczkę. Wszystko w życiu miałam w zastępstwie czegoś¹”.

These words are said after she tells Ewa that she must have a husband and child. Waiting for Jan the women spend on talking on various topics. Anna initiates dialogues. It would seem that the words fit into the stereotypical “nagging”, complaining characteristic of older people. Because a woman says: „Kiedyś było inaczej. Lepiej było”.

You can see that she is dissatisfied with her present life. She recalls times of youth when she was waiting impatiently for clangor of cranes. The image recalled was not used accidentally. For cranes it is characteristic that during the flights they fly in flocks keys or oblique line and utter a loud voice called clangor, resembling a trumpet. It is heard within a radius of several kilometers. According to ancient beliefs, clangor crane was supposed to be a reflection of complaining about suffering souls. Perhaps she was in the state at the time when she eagerly looked forward to the desired view. Anna regrets that people destroy nature at the present time, cut down trees, which is depriving wildlife of their natural environment.

¹ Wszystkie cytaty pochodzą z dramatu: J. Łukosz, *Śmierć puszczyka*. [w:] tegoż, *Śmierć puszczyka i inne utwory*, Kraków 2000, s. 126-144.

Woman lists various species of birds: sparrows, tits, goldfinches. All are connected by the size and belonging to the same order of passerines. Ewa does not seem to listen to the companion. To the longer stories, she responds with a casual: „głęgor”, „głę głę”, but when Anna asks her: „Słuchasz mnie?”, she states without hesitation: „Jasne”. The elderly woman complains also about her fears: „Wiesz, czego bałam się w dzieciństwie? Że mnie wielki ptak porwie. Do dziś omijam w zoo klatkę z orłami. Jeszcze by się okazało, że to pocziwe ptaszyska”.

Ewa did not comment on the confessions and did not try to find out anything. Cited eagle is the air equivalent of the lion, the king of birds. It therefore symbolizes the majesty, power, pride and royalty, but also arrogance and pride. For now, however, is not entirely clear to the reader why Anna is afraid of it.

The Women are beginning to get impatient waiting for the train. They start planning what refreshments they will prepare for John. The first proposal is a soup - with a roux, which Ewa does not know how to prepare, with spices - basil and extra virgin olive oil, which gives each dish a royalty. An addition should be vegetables and fruit from the orchard - asparagus, apricots, artichaut. Anna draws attention to choosing the right wine. She lists several Italian proposals. Ewa, however, stops her, saying: „Mam smak na kartoflankę”.

Further considerations relate to attempts to fit the tastes of Jan. Ewa wonders if well cooked artichaut with spices will be tasty for him. The context which can be interesting in this moment is a picture of Giorgio de Chirico “The Conquest of the Philosopher”. In the picture,

we can feel the peace and quiet contemplation, even though in the distance, the train passes, the ship departs. A cannon which is ready to fire on the left, does not interfere with the order and makes no anxiety. Instead of cannon balls, heavy, hard and deadly, , delicious and healthy artichokes appear in the foreground. Moreover, they are also a symbol of fertility. It is an astonishing combination of all these elements, but I think that the picture would be a great illustration of what happens in Łukosz’s drama. The culinary topic is ended by Ewa with the words: „Jak ty nudzisz konia. Możemy nie mówić o jedzeniu? Podniecasz się niezdrowo”.

The young woman proposes to talk about the garden. It is no coincidence that the women have a conversation on this topic. The cultural context is of course the biblical Eden - earthly paradise inhabited by the first parents, symbolizing the original pure and innocent state before the original sin. The garden of the Bible – Eden - is an image, a symbol of innocence, life without sin, eternal life, virginity and sky. But the garden is also a place of isolation associated with mystery, reflections, thoughts and secrets of the soul. The fact that it occurs during the conversation at the train station can be read opposing the product of human culture with wild nature ordered in its own way.

Ewa reaches for an apple to her pocket. It seems obvious that the biblical context is recalled. Now, the biblical apple tree of knowledge of good and evil has become a symbol of the final and complete knowledge, wisdom and initiation into it. It is a symbol of sin as a forbidden fruit. Ewa peels the apple. This can be interpreted

as an attempt to reject the temptation - after all, the color association suggests tempting senses. Therefore, Ewa rejects, in a sense, that what is sinful. Later Ewa reaches for the second apple. This time, however, she eats it with skin. She will also want to treat it to Anna.

However, women do not dig topic proposed by Ewa. The garden is only a backdrop to the stage where apple will be consumed. Continuation of the conversation is also about food, too - potato soup. In the stage directions we read that: „Ewa kładzie ogryzek jabłka na kolanie Anny. Anna bierze ogryzek do ręki, wstaje, podchodzi do kosza, wyrzuca. Ewa przygląda się Annie”,

after that she comments: „Dziwnie się uczesałaś”.

Later in the conversation, which can be, in fact, a continuation of the theme of the garden another symbol is put - quince. In addition to using it as food it is grown primarily as a rootstock for pear and other fruit trees. Quince therefore creates the foundation for other plants. Anna says that the quince needs sun, or providence, the giver of life and life-giving source. This type of sun is also needed a philodendron. It is a plant that occurs in tropical America, from Mexico and the West Indies to Paraguay and Argentina. Anna uses the phrase: „Może jeszcze filodendron lubi słońce jak pigwa”

she gives Ewa an excuse to consider her love of John: „Kocha, lubi, szanuje...”

The older woman is constantly discusses various plants. She draws attention to the raspberries and roses, which are not developed. These plants can symbolize evil and anxiety - raspberries associated with “Balladyna”, sin, while the symbol

of flower surrounded by spikes became a sign of love, which is associated with overcoming adversity. These badges will have a solution in the rest of the Lukosz's drama: Anna during their deliberations, questions John's love for Ewa, who tries by all means to seek his favor.

Jerzy Łukosz greatly described the environment and people's drama, using the distinctive style of speech. As an example, the words of Ewa: „Jeden numererek i kimono, staruszko. Lud pracujący musi poczekać do soboty. Bo w piątek po fajrancie pijemy. To tylko państwo na okrągło niewyspane chodzi”. Or: „Dziwni ci twoi faceci. Mięśniak, psychopata i pedał”.

Following the build-up of emotional trend, the area of lexical changes. It is good to signal the scene of dialogue where the women say the longest speech in the whole drama. Here their true colors are shown. From considerations of Anna it can be seen that she does not like John: „On mi się od początku nie podobał. Kutwa. Brudas. Pijak. Mędrek.”; „Przyplątał się ten leśnik od siedmiu boleści. Ladaco. Bonvivant. Amator kartoflanki”.

Elsewhere she called him: „Ochlaptus. Krętacz. Kłusownik seksualny”.

Ewa responds her in an aggressive manner. She cannot let the portrait of good boyfriend be destroyed at all costs. She speaks evil and terrifying words in the direction of Anna, predicting her death and cursing her. A voice of the announcer, who is a witness to the fight, interrupts them. It warns Ewa, turning her attention to the apple core unlawfully thrown by her onto the tracks.

Here is a critical moment. Enraged and responding with monosyllables up till now Eva goes berserk. She screams at ev-

eryone and she is aggressive. She throws the track megaphone and bursts into tears. You can see that she is emotionally torn. This condition is caused by uncertainty about the feelings of John, which is incited by Anna, her old friend that she met in the “oral” office of dentist.

In the distance you can hear the voice of an owl. Important is the fact that it appears at the time of the argument of the women. After they uttered at each other probably the worst insults in the whole drama. The owl is a symbol of spiritual darkness in the culture. My association, however, went the other way. I paid attention to how in Wyspiański's drama *Wesele* Fool called Journalist “owl” handing him a clown stick and suggesting that he improperly affects the opinion of Poles, pulling them from thinking about the uprising and not shaping the consciousness of liberation. The journalist was from the Stańczyk's group, who criticized the uprisings. Łukosz's owl is met in an intimate situation. It can symbolize the old woman - as journalist is bad for Poles, Anna has a negative impact on Ewa, causing her to get mad. Instead of supporting her, she builds uncertainty.

Suddenly the station lights flash around the women, and in the distance you can hear the middle part of the first part of the concert of Haydn – an Austrian composer of the classical style. He is the oldest of the so-called. three Viennese classics, alongside with Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Ludwig van Beethoven. Joseph Haydn was one of the main representatives of classical music and one of those who defined the major forms of music of that era. Unusual chords sounded, rare and unexpected tones with mo-

lar mood swings were used in his music. There is hardly a composer who would be able to depict so well, what happens during the women's conversation. After a Haydn's chord Anna changes the tone of speaking. She starts to praise John, which calms Ewa down. She feels confident and accepted. Women praise a man for a change. The young, however, to everyone's surprise, returns at the end to her earlier opinion: „Brudas był z niego, sknerus i pijak, ale w końcu kto z nas jest idealny”.

She admits it herself that she had three husbands, but was happy with none of them. This theme has become a pretext for Ewa's discussion of erotic matters. She laughs when her older friend tells how her second husband woke in the night and she had to read in French. Ewa sings under his nose a piece of disco known as “Four times two times” trying to count the number of intercours mentioned in the song. The mature woman starts to utter moralizing sermons, and ends with: „Życie to jest, proszę ja ciebie, bogactwo”.

A few sentences later, Ewa responds to her: „Życie to jest, moja droga, pech. Życie to jest od początku przegrana sprawa”.

Is she right? Expected by her, Jan finally arrives . It turns out that he was going around the area and was looking for her. Ewa's boyfriend's situation is juxtaposed with flying birds. The man says: „Nie było cię na peronie to poszedłem do parku. Posłuchać ptaków”.

Why did John choose such an action? This can be interpreted in several ways. The bird is a symbol of volatility, movement, mobility, movement, and time passing. John wants to listen to the birds - according to folk tales and fairy tales

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birds communicate prophecies, warnings and advice to the initiates. Maybe he is not sure of his feelings?

Finally, the three of them go to the house. They come back through the forest. It is a place where you can easily lose track and lose your way. It also symbolizes the soul wandering in the darkness of sin. Not without reason cited earlier garden turns into impenetrable thickets, tangles, where you can get lost. Man and woman expelled from Paradise are stuck on a journey through a dark and dangerous place, where various mysterious and supernatural beings hide. Not coincidentally also the place of residence of heroes is grove, which is a small forest or group of trees, usually wild.

Tawny is not singing, but is referred to by Anna, who again complains that the world is going from bad to worse. Nocturnal owl meant that it became a symbol of sorrow, darkness, solitude on the sidelines, due to the mysterious and dark forces. Owl is a bird of death. In Greek myth it was associated with Atropos' parks who cuts the thread of human life. Hoot owl is a bad sign - often from the dead, but now they can not hear it.

Anna ridicules taste of John, when he says that he brought Grandma tincture. She talks to the man in this way she did before it with Ewa, so the young woman's drama ends with these words, with which she began: „Głę, głę”.

Anna seems to be an experienced and of-the-world woman. She knows well the current events in the world - repeatedly mentions Clinton. She also recalls his hobby - breeding pigeons. Anna changes the well-known saying: “Biedroneczko, leć do nieba, przynieś mi kawałek chleba” to “Gołębiczku, leć do Clintona, przynieś

mi, te, no... winogrona.” Not without reason is it at the end of the drama. Dove is the biblical symbol of peace and love marriage. It is possible that it may be a precursor compound of Ewa and Jan.

Anna lives according to her scheme, into which she wants to pull Ewa. She encourages her to play chess every day, together they drive to Corsica, watch Blind Date. She plans to sort out her life. She treats her like a daughter, but sometimes blurs the boundary parenthood between them. Ewa has her own plans. She imagines how physically she comes close to Jan, because she was missed him very much, and therefore asks Anna to leave them alone. The Mature friend is to bring them two bottles of water - a symbol of life, chaos, volatility. Water from the Lukosz's drama is a Heraklit's water that will never be the same as before. Both Ewa and Jan have changed since the last meeting.

To sum up, in the drama friendship relations are mentioned in a very interesting way. Anna mentioned at the beginning of the drama that she is afraid of the big bird. Its realization can be Ewa, who sometimes tries to bring the companion on the wrong side. And vice versa. Anna also wants to instill ideals on her colleague, telling her that she also thinks this way. Each of the characters uses other means of expression. Eve is restrained in words, but Anna says long speeches all the time.

In *Śmierć puszczyka* nature stays in the background, giving the function of the dominant motif of the drama to transience and solitude. This is connected with the creation of heroines - these confident women are masks hiding inner restlessness, a sense of loss of land, be-

ing lost and loneliness. Both are trying to get away from each other, but at the same time reassure one another. There is an element of tragedy, and sometimes overcoming it, in them.

Collection of problems and symbols, cultural references and reminiscences, fatalistic necessity and human involvement in the frame of life is very rich. Despite the melancholy and sadness that speak of the work, there is sometimes a longing for the simple things. Women choose to prepare potato soup, not seasoned with Artichaut rich spices. It is a desire to find inner silence, eternal *nunc stans* or "removal" from the passage of time, but also the experience of time. From the mouth of Anna come such sentences: „Mam wrażenie, że naprzód idą tylko moje lata. A ja stoję w miejscu. Może nawet się trochę cofam”.

In the metaphors of time and transience, in images, where each moment you can be a stranger of the past, loneliness is still touched and still demands the return of what has passed. The author often refers to nature. This trick is used to pass under the cover of a deeper truth, or to illustrate the emotional state. He selects from the natural world the elements that are known to designate sadness, melancholy, wealth or link to symbols rooted in the culture. Another feature that can be observed by careful reading of the drama is a subconscious desire in life, some Bergson's *elan vital* moments of optimism suitable forms strong features, ordering them to believe in survival, although they all walk in the shadow of death, not only his own, but also in the shadow of the mysterious death of the owl. Łukosz's characters go in vain attempts to free themselves

from the oppression of the earth and the world, to submit to the judgment of the inevitable fate.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this article is to analyze the major themes in the drama of Jerzy Łukosz *Śmierć puszczyka*, which could include among others: human loneliness, friendship and love. Sealed with them in broad interpretive contexts which are manifest on the background of the history of literature. It also presents portraits of heroes, comparing them with good-known once from earlier eras creations. Helpful proved to recall certain scenes symbolic fixed in the most famous texts of culture. Analysis title also opens a range of possibilities of interpretation.

STRESZCZENIE

Celem niniejszego artykułu było przeanalizowanie najważniejszych motywów w dramacie Jerzego Łukosza pt. *Śmierć puszczyka*, do których można zaliczyć między innymi: samotność człowieka, przyjaźń i miłość. Opatrzono je szerokimi kontekstami interpretacyjnymi, ukanymi na tle historii literatury. Zaprezentowano także portrety bohaterów, porównując je ze znanymi z wcześniejszych epok kreacjami, czy też archetypami biblijnymi. Pomocne okazało się przywołanie wybranych scen symbolicznych utrwalonych w najbardziej znanych tekstach kultury. Analiza tytułu otwiera także szereg możliwości interpretacyjnych.

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