

## Introduction

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### *Aloisio Sajkowski in memoriam*

#### 1. FRANCISZKA URSZULA RADZIWIŁŁOWA AND *THE OTHER VOICE*

Until now, the work of Princess Radziwiłłowa has scarcely been given any attention from the viewpoint adopted by the *Other Voice* series.<sup>1</sup> In communist Poland, behind the iron curtain, the climate was unfavorable for women's studies. In the course of the last three decades those arrears have been made good to a certain extent, and there has been a substantial output of works published under the banner of feminism and gender studies. However, the latter focus in the main on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Research on earlier periods, up to the eighteenth century, is far less satisfactory. Some initial synopses have appeared, broadly surveying the position of women and their culture, as well as some specialized descriptive historical studies. However, the depth of analysis remains far from satisfactory, particularly with respect to cryptic adaptations of official (male) discourse by women or of their quest for adequate means to express inherent feminine sensibilities.<sup>2</sup>

Naturally, Princess Radziwiłłowa is mentioned in traditional literary history—the first Polish woman dramatist could hardly be ignored. However, her dramas were valued merely for their pioneering role. Hence, her Molière translations enjoy a particularly elevated status, set above that of her own idiosyncratic dramatic works by a canon imposing the classicist, constructional “discipline of the original.”<sup>3</sup> In the nineteenth century only a few individual, isolated voices drew attention to “the casting of women in theatrical roles,”<sup>4</sup> a particularly striking fact in the light of the then widespread model of the didactic drama, which eschewed

1. In addition to brief discussions in Borkowska et al.'s *Pisarki Polskie* (2000) and Phillips (2001), the author of this Introduction has undertaken reflective studies inspired by the translation of the works of Franciszka Urszula Radziwiłłowa in the present volume (see Judkowiak 2006, 2008, 2009, 2011c, 2013b); see also Maciejewska 2008, 2009.

2. In literary scholarship there is a clear lack of analytical tools and an objective, balanced, descriptive language, free of ideological entanglements.

3. Klimowicz 1998, 75.

4. Chomętowski 1870, 4, 112–135 (a quotation from an article in *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* 8/1903 popularizing his opinion under the cryptonym J.P.) Chomętowski considered this mainly a matter of convention, but in emphasizing “knowledge of the heart” and by his interest in characteristics of the heroines, he implied that the issue undoubtedly goes deeper, for, of course, it has deeper consequences for dramatic representation, legitimizing (initially in court theater circles) both the portrayal of women and, gradually, their alternative sensitivities and worldview.

female figures and erotic emotions. Since the publication in 1882 of Radziwiłłowa's love letters in verse to her husband, these intimate lyrics have been included in evaluations of Radziwiłłowa's works and are highly valued for their simplicity and "great sincerity in their outpouring of emotions on paper,"<sup>5</sup> its unsophisticated language of the heart.<sup>6</sup> Typically, in the twentieth century, the position allocated to Radziwiłłowa in synopses of the history of Polish literature was still predicated on a protective, paternalistic approach to evaluation. Considered a precursor of the literary era of the Enlightenment, simultaneously still leaning toward provincial Baroque culture, she can be summed up in the following words, written over a century ago: "The author had a natural talent, though she lacked any substantial literary background [...] Assessed, however, as a literary phenomenon, a woman writing with no clear association with contemporary literary trends and exerting no influence on them, she is deserving of attention."<sup>7</sup>

Franciszka Urszula Radziwiłłowa's works are of interest in the context of *The Other Voice* series principally in that they represent one of the few women's voices to make their mark within the literary culture of her time, as they attempted to break the monopoly that excluded women authors from that cultural life. The very fact that she expressed dissent, albeit mere expressions of doubt regarding the domination of the male voice in public life, is notable in itself, limited though it was in her case to the narrow sphere of private handwritten communications among her circle of family and friends.<sup>8</sup> Not only did she incorporate in many of her works polemics regarding the dominant male cultural model, but she also sought her "own voice"—a means for expressing the sphere of sensibility

5. Radziwiłłowa 1882, 368.

6. Which, moreover, had been excluded from literature, as it would not be capable of handling such frankness and simplicity! Wasylewski 1922, 4, 5: "exuberant flowering of sentiments without literary embellishment."

7. Chmielowski 1914, 457. The survey of the state of research in part 4 of the present Introduction confirms the exceptional tenacity of this interpretation: from a scholarly authority on the literary history of the late nineteenth century, as was Piotr Chmielowski, to Marek Prejs from the early twenty-first century: Prejs 2008. An earlier monograph devoted to the study of late Baroque poetry by the same author contained only one page on her dramas and their amorphous Baroque characteristics: Prejs 1989, 89.

8. Radziwiłłowa's works were published only thanks to the insistence of Józef Andrzej Załuski, publisher of the first Polish anthology of contemporary poetry. Having published the works of Elżbieta Drużbacka (1752), he wanted to include Radziwiłłowa's poems, which he had heard recited, in a second volume. In 1751, Bishop Załuski's proposal was rejected, and printing of the plays was begun in Nieśwież. The edition, of which only individual fragments survive today, was probably never completed, as it was noted in contemporary bibliographies as hearsay. It appears that Radziwiłłowa (bowing to conventional pressures relegating activities of women to the private sphere) may herself have considered her literary works unworthy of wider publication. In 1753, immediately after her death, her *Przestrogi córkom* [Admonitions to Daughters] (written in 1732) were published, as well as a full, illustrated edition of her dramas.

previously lacking in literature, of a specific worldview of her own as a woman. This applies both to direct lyrical expression and to genres expressing the author's opinions through literary structures and conventions, thereby shaping models of femininity in cautionary works (recommendations to daughters, polemics on matrimonial issues) and dramatic works (characters of heroines).

The otherness of Franciszka Urszula Radziwiłłowa's voice in the series is further highlighted by her belonging to a cultural borderland, as her voice is one of the first to be heard from east-central Europe. Emanating from a part of the continent where Western and Eastern influences mingle, giving rise to a specific cultural identity, this is bound to be a distinctive voice, particularly for Western readers. Whereas from the viewpoint of Paris or London (or Chicago or Toronto) Poland belongs to Eastern Europe, it must be noted that in Polish (as in Czech and Hungarian) cultural history, Western elements deriving from the impact of Latin civilization, and later of the Italian and French languages, have been more powerful than Eastern influences (e.g., Russian Orthodox religion).<sup>9</sup> Therefore, the specific cultural mix that was formed in the region between Germany and Russia, on the territory of the republic then known as Poland-Lithuania (in essence making up a multinational federal state with a common social structure, administration, and political institutions) is emphatically distinct from that of the Russian part of Europe. It is worth adding, regarding the cultural-historical image of gender in this region, that in early Polish culture, seen from a comparative viewpoint,<sup>10</sup> there was no real debate on women's rights, no counterpart of the French *querelles des femmes*, and echoes of the latter amounted to mere literary fragments, rather bland substitutes for discussions on the nature of the sexes, their rights, and obligations. There were few misogynistic works—rather there was benign, indulgent, albeit ribald, humor in satires and anecdotes. In the light of early documents, the model of marriage can be described here as based on partnership (as in England and Bohemia, by contrast with neighboring Germany or Italy). Paradoxically, economic backwardness by comparison with Western countries, and an agrarian socioeconomic structure, favored women, preserving the feudal basis for their independence in a fairly broad sense.

The characteristic otherness of the voice of Radziwiłłowa can also be appreciated from the perspective of cultural history. It arose from her need to discover a language of her own in the context of the conflict between the old and the new, in a phase of transition to a new era. This transitional phase, providing an opportunity for liberation from traditional patterns of thought and expression,

9. The Catholic Cult of the Virgin Mary in Poland (supported by the Mother of God concept of Eastern Christianity) was tempered in the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries by contact with the spirituality of numerous protestants of various denominations, Jews, Aryans, and followers of Islam. Characteristically, Radziwiłłowa's religiosity is not particularly associated with the Marian cult.

10. Cf., e.g., Charewiczowa 1938; Bogucka 1998; Malinowska 2008.

demanded independence and creativity, inspiring intuitive and imaginative ideas, rather than scientific thinking, and receptivity to presentiment and things as yet unknown. Therefore it favored the exploitation of feminine traits and gave women an opportunity to come into their own in the hiatus, as it were, between the old, moribund canon and the new, emergent cultural model, still in its formative phase. This is the source of Radziwiłłowa's *other voice*; classical critics considered her disregard for the constraints of the official literary norms, the "Aristotelian golden rules," inexcusable. In this respect she is distinctive in her bold selection and intermingling of diverse aesthetic traditions and models. The elements of Rococo feminization of form and style are also worth noting (e.g., the predilection for miniatures, represented in Radziwiłłowa's literary work by cycles of portraits and riddles and in the theater by one-act plays).

## 2. THE HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF THE LIFE AND WORK OF PRINCESS RADZIWIŁŁOWA

Princess Franciszka Urszula Radziwiłłowa was a citizen of the Commonwealth of Two Nations, a federation of the Polish Crown Lands and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania that was formed in the sixteenth century by the Union of Lublin (reinforced by the so-called coequality of rights declaration of 1697). The Commonwealth was effectively a multinational, multiconfessional, and consequently multicultural state, comprising, in addition to the crown territories of Greater Poland, Lesser Poland, and Mazovia; the strongly German-influenced western borderlands of Pomerania and Silesia; and beyond the Lithuanian heartland, Żmudź, Belarus, and Ukraine, which were consequently populated by Germans, Tatars, Jews, Armenians and others as well as by Poles, Lithuanians, and Russians. Her lifetime spanned the first half of the eighteenth century, which was for the Commonwealth a period of personal union with Saxony, that is, the rule of two successive elected kings of the Wettin dynasty (1697–1764) who mounted the throne of Poland in the wake of the traditional rivalry in Europe between France and the Habsburgs. This period incorporates the two-year civil war following the dual election in 1733 of Augustus III and Stanisław Leszczyński. The resulting second downfall of Leszczyński, following the dual monarchy during the Northern War (1704–1706), was evidence of the declining political influence of Louis XIV's state in this region of Europe. The French cultural and linguistic expansion that began in the mid-seventeenth century and that was accelerated by the influence of the royal courts of two queens coming from France (that of Louise Marie Gonzaga and that of Marie-Casimire d'Arquien Sobieska) was to last well into the eighteenth century, carrying newer Enlightenment trends.

The Saxon era in the history of Poland-Lithuania is marked by a crisis in its political and social structure and by the gradual decline of the institution of the

parliamentary monarchy governed by the nobility, which had for two centuries spelled the European distinctiveness of a country whose erstwhile position of power was actually linked in the consciousness of its population with this organizational structure. The Commonwealth, obstinately adhering to its democratic tradition, became progressively more defenseless in the face of absolutist powers, particularly the new neighboring militarized police states. A combination of internal<sup>11</sup> and external<sup>12</sup> factors led at the time to a deep crisis of sovereignty in the Commonwealth, which was no longer treated internationally as an independent political entity but as an object permanently vulnerable to interference by foreign states in its internal affairs. After 1717, the Russian protectorate increasingly paralyzed Polish politics. The Commonwealth found itself defenseless in the face of Russia's various manipulations as it masqueraded as the guarantor of the status quo. This historical appraisal emerges from an *ex post facto* inquiry into the causes of the partitions that erased the Commonwealth from the map of Europe at the end of the eighteenth century. Yet the then inhabitants of the Commonwealth, including the magnates<sup>13</sup> who played political games on a greater or lesser scale,<sup>14</sup> generally lacked the perspicacity to comprehend this state of affairs, and they could not imagine that the independent existence of their vast state might be under threat.

11. The most important of these is the erosion of the heterogeneous structure of the state, the decline of the *sejm* [parliament] and the impotence of the king vis-à-vis the nobility, and the rival magnate clans' idiosyncratic (dynastic) concept of the public interest.

12. Especially worthy of note is the new constellation of forces in eighteenth-century Europe—the union of the imperial courts of Petersburg and Vienna and the emergence of the new powers Russia and Prussia, immediate neighbors of the declining Commonwealth.

13. The highest stratum of the noble estate, having no separate legal identity. Membership was based on substantial landed property and political influence, at least on a provincial level, and the maintenance at their own expense of private armies and opulent residences. The exercise of patronage reinforced their status and prestige. The underdeveloped state of the middle classes enabled the wealthiest nobility and the magnates to build up a network of social connections on a national scale (marriages beyond their own provinces, appointments to national offices). The system under which the lesser aristocracy was in a relationship of patron-client dependency on the magnates led to the latter's taking control of the local state apparatus in the Saxon era. In the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, this process was furthered by the greater disparity of wealth (vast landed estates) and above all by the remnants of the pre-Union of Lublin legal code (distinguishing manorial and dependent aristocracy). Therefore, the coequality of rights reform represented a limitation of the earlier virtual impunity of the Lithuanian magnates: cf., e.g., Augustyniak 2008, 259–63.

14. The Radziwiłłs, supporters of the Wettins, were the object of various diplomatic endeavors by Russia. Without going into the details of this complex issue, it is worthy of note that, for example, in June 1742 Franciszka Urszula informed her absent husband that she was receiving a Russian courier who was seeking to find out whether she saw herself as a princess of Kurland. She gave the noncommittal reply that it was a matter for the Commonwealth and the king: AGAD AR, dział [section] V, teka [portfolio] 50, koperta [folder] 662.

In the Saxon era, during decades of political stabilization, the nobility attempted to revive the economy,<sup>15</sup> and there were local commercial initiatives (e.g., the Radziwiłłs' manufacturing workshops, which began to develop in the 1740s). Tentative reform proposals were mooted. They were actually of minor political significance, focusing markedly on education reforms and the raising of levels of learning and culture. The difficulties were compounded by the country's vast territorial extent, its agrarian structure and the consequently limited degree of urbanization, and poor communication routes. Culture tended to be provincialized by the wide dispersal of small cultural centers. No center of culture existed in the capital, for example. Warsaw was to become a powerful center of culture radiating out across the country only in the second half of the century. Toward the end of the 1740s, Józef Andrzej Załuski endeavored to provide an institutionalized focus for literary and academic life and cultural initiatives, founding a public library here and announcing literary competitions, periodical subscriptions, and the publication of an anthology of contemporary literature and bibliography. Naturally he was concerned with the Radziwiłłs and their writings, among others. However, there was no close-knit literary center to speak of; certain of Załuski's initiatives, and those of individual magnates—patrons and amateur artists—were ephemeral in nature. Because the magnates did not reside permanently in the capital, assembling there only for meetings of the parliament, and because the royal court was present only intermittently, no literary salons were established to be run by Polish ladies on the French model.

This general outline of the background to Radziwiłłowa's cultural and literary activity is based on her membership in the magnate elite of the Commonwealth. The culture of this social stratum is aristocratic, cosmopolitan, based on the European, Western model founded on *latinitas christiana*, and informed by the native variety of the chivalric-civic ideology of the nobility, which stood for equality within the framework of the estate, expressing an attachment to freedom.<sup>16</sup>

Franciszka Urszula née Wiśniowiecka was born into an influential family that traced its ancestry back to Dymitr Korybut, brother of Jogailo (Władysław II Jagiełło, fourteenth-century king of Poland). The Wiśniowiecki princes possessed vast landed estates in Ukraine, then part of the federal Commonwealth. On her mother's side she was a blood relation of the Leszczyński family from the crown

15. The involvement of Augustus II as King of Saxony in the Great Northern War of 1700–1721 contributed to the country's ruin, turning the Commonwealth into a sphere of military activity on the part of Sweden and Russia, invaded by their troops and by the Saxon army.

16. In her didactic admonishment to her daughter, Radziwiłłowa pointed out: "Be aware that you are brought up in a country that is free,/So you are the equal of any noble family," on which she based appropriate advice to the young princess regarding her behavior. The nobles' ideology of equality and freedom penetrated even into her drama *Z oczu się miłość rodzi* [Love is Born in the Eyes] (in this volume), based on the French romantic novel *Artamène* by M. de Scudéry (1972).

lands of Greater Poland. On both sides, therefore, she was related, among others, to Polish kings; Michał Wiśniowiecki was elective king from 1669 to 1673, Stanisław Leszczyński jointly from 1704 to 1709 and again for five months in 1733/34. After her marriage to Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, Franciszka Urszula contributed to the fame of his family (illustrious and princely like that of her father), the most influential in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. Her father was a serious candidate for the throne, but he declined it. Several of those close to her husband also had ambitions toward the throne, rivaling one another for prestige through their financial contributions and patronage and seeking to demonstrate to the kings the importance of the oligarchy of the magnates in the noblemen's Commonwealth.<sup>17</sup>

Male members of Princess Radziwiłłowa's family occupied the highest positions in the state, while the women at their side fulfilled representative (cultural) functions in so-called society, assisting them to enhance the family's status. They occasionally intervened in politics, devised their own intrigues, or simply advised their husbands.<sup>18</sup> Franciszka Urszula did so rather rarely and modestly<sup>19</sup> in her letters to her husband (not for any deficiency of intellect or political culture but rather for reasons of temperament, and also as a concession to the traditional division of roles and spheres of activity of the sexes, reserving public matters for men and according the private sphere to women).

Franciszka was the daughter of Janusz Wiśniowiecki and Teofila née Leszczyńska. She was born on February 13, 1705, in Czartorysk in Volhynia, in the Łuck district.<sup>20</sup> Franciszka's godfather at her baptism in Biała Krynica was Ivan Mazepa, the educated, intelligent Cossack hetman (commander) whom her grandmother Anna Wiśniowiecka, née Chodorowska, the wife of Konstanty Wiśniowiecki,<sup>21</sup> had sought to win over for Stanisław Leszczyński, since he had just ascended to the Polish throne under the patronage of Charles XII, King of Sweden. Franciszka was brought up by this grandmother, who died in 1711, bequeathing to her beloved granddaughter Białą Kamień and Żmigród. Her father was by then Provincial Governor of Kraków<sup>22</sup> and his six-year-old only daughter

17. For recent advances on the topic of the connection between these ambitions and patronage, see Bernatowicz 2011.

18. Discussed on the basis of correspondence by Popiołek 2003.

19. In the autumn of 1741 in a letter to her husband making political observations and expressing her opinion on the topic of his own involvement, she apologizes (significantly) for coming up with such ideas in the face of his genius (i.e., his discernment and shrewd intelligence).

20. The estates of Samuel Leszczyński (they had come into the Wiśniowiecki family through his wife Konstancja) were inherited by Teofila in 1695 from her grandfather Dymitr Wiśniowiecki (who had acquired them in 1676).

21. By her second marriage Janowa Karolowa Dolska, widowed in 1695: cf. Czamańska 2007, 357–63.

22. In the Senate of the day, this accorded him the highest position in the hierarchy of secular crown senators (the Provincial Governorship of Wilno (Vilnius) carried a similar status among the Lithuanian senators—this position would be occupied by her husband in 1744).



undoubtedly began her education at her parents' home. In his youth (from 1695 to 1697) her father undertook the typical educational grand tour in the West, studying in the military academy in Paris for a year and refining his manners in various seats of the aristocracy.<sup>23</sup> He had a good historical, later also legal, education and possessed a good knowledge of the French language and admirable oratorical skills. His occasional, frivolous writings were published under a pen name. His brother, Michał Serwacy, with whom he maintained close contacts, was the architect of the reconstruction of the family seat in Wiśniowiec in the style of French classicism; he also wrote poetry and translated from French. The daughter of the Provincial Governor of Kraków inherited certain literary ambitions, which were encouraged during her lifetime by various acquaintances, not only among aristocratic amateurs (such as the Jabłonowskis, Jan Fryderyk Sapieha, and Udalryk Radziwiłł), but also among aristocratic or monastic writers (Kazimierz Niesiołowski, Antonina Niemiryczowa, and Reverend Poszakowski). For her intellectual development Franciszka owed more to her education at court than at the convent, although a hypothesis regarding her education by Dominican nuns in Lwów<sup>24</sup> has been mentioned. In any case, she had above all a good command of the French language, essential to the European aristocracy.<sup>25</sup> Given the dearth of facts regarding her youth and her teachers, it is preferable to replace academic hypotheses of earlier scholars about a thorough education, which are difficult to support on the grounds of her accomplishments, with the view that insofar as she rose above the level of her intellectual milieu this was owing to many years of persistent self-study, that is, more to her extensive reading than to contacts with scholars. After her death, the publisher of her dramatic works, her former assistant Jakub Fryczyński, commandant of the Nieśwież cadet corps, actor, and

23. The guardian of the fatherless juvenile prince was King Jan III Sobieski, a friend of the deceased. In Paris the eighteen-year-old young prince and his brother were warmly welcomed by the sister of Queen Maria Kazimiera Sobieska, Maria Ludwika de Béthune. Her daughter Joanna had for several years been the daughter-in-law of Hetman Stanisław Jan Jabłonowski, another guardian of the young Wiśniowiecki children.

24. Czamańska 2007, 391.

25. Evidence of her education acquired from Visitationist nuns from France might be the fact that she was praying from a French book when her husband arrived, surprising her in her bedroom. In 1732 she copied, on her husband's recommendation, various French books and treatises, clearly for the improvement of her language skills (manuscripts in Biblioteka Czartoryskich w Krakowie [Czartoryski Library in Kraków], sygn. [ref.] 2268), imported French and German newspapers, and collected inter alia the *Journal de Sçavans*. Among library issue slips and among books donated from her private collection to the Castle library in Nieśwież, books in Polish were outnumbered by French books; at any rate, in the introduction to her dramatic works we read the testimony of her collaborator that she read several languages. She must have had some knowledge of Italian, since she taught the elements of the language to her daughter. We can also accept that we are not dealing with translations into French; the librarian's notes in French merely conceal the actual language of many items, mainly in fact written in romance languages—Italian and Spanish: cf. Judkowiak 1992a, 147–61; Judkowiak 1992c, 147–61.



director of performances at Nieśwież, praised the author for her “untiring reading of books published in various languages.”<sup>26</sup> The Jesuit Józef Katenbring likewise confirmed that her custom of reading every day was Princess Radziwiłłowa’s favorite occupation.<sup>27</sup> In his preface, Fryczyński wrote of Radziwiłłowa’s love of the liberal arts, of her exceptional knowledge of the holy scriptures, and of her familiarity with polemical issues in theology (“controversies on articles of the Catholic faith”), in canon and civil law, general history, geography, and politics,<sup>28</sup> that is, in traditionally male spheres of erudition (these interests may have developed under the influence of her father). Radziwiłłowa also took pleasure in conversation, eagerly engaged in “discourse” with men (as evidenced by her letter to her husband dated May 23, 1742), for example, with army officers about the Turks and other nationalities,<sup>29</sup> undoubtedly confronting their personal experience with her knowledge acquired through reading.<sup>30</sup> Evidence of her knowledge of the rules of the French art of salon conversation is found not only in relevant fragments of instructive reading in French transcribed by Radziwiłłowa<sup>31</sup> but also in her cycles of riddles and portraits.

As her parents’ only child and heir to a massive fortune, she was highly eligible. However, she did not marry as a young girl, nor did she do so under pressure from her parents without regard for her own inclinations. The first potential husband was Seweryn, the son of a friend of her father’s, a full crown hetman, Provincial Governor of Podlasie Stanisław Mateusz Rzewuski. The young couple may actually have been engaged, but Rzewuski could not win the heart of the young princess, so her parents, not persisting with their suggestion, put forward another candidate, the Hungarian count Aspremont Rockheim, evidently the nephew of Prince Franciszek II Rakoczy.<sup>32</sup> Meanwhile Anna Ogińska, niece of

26. Jakub Fryczyński, *Przemowa do czytelnika* [Address to the reader], in *Komedyje i tragedyje ...*, 1754, k. 1.

27. Katenbring 1755.

28. Jakub Fryczyński, *Przemowa do czytelnika* [Address to the reader], in *Komedyje i tragedyje* 1754, k. 1.

29. AGAD AR, dział [section] IV (Listy Radziwiłłów [Radziwiłł letters]), teka [portfolio] 50, koperta [folder] 663.

30. Cf. her letter dated May 23, 1742.

31. *Comment plaire dans la conversation*, manuscript of 1732, now in Biblioteka Czartoryskich w Krakowie [Czartoryski Library in Kraków], sygn. [ref.] 2268, pp. 65–67. A small fragment from a guide of a type popular since the Renaissance, like the famous book by Giovanni de La Casa, Archbishop of Benevento, of 1558, which was translated into many languages. Princess Radziwiłłowa could have had recourse to Duhamel’s French translation, published in Paris in 1674, *Galetée ou l’art de plaire dans la conversation* or Pierre d’Ortigie de Vaumorière’s *l’Art de plaire dans la conversation*, first published in 1688 and frequently reissued in the eighteenth century.

32. Czamańska 2007, 383, 391. Her father was friendly with Franciszek Rakoczy and in 1703 committed military divisions to the support of the latter’s efforts to liberate Hungary by armed insurrection.

Prince Janusz, decided to introduce her to Michał Radziwiłł (born 1702), who had been searching for a potential wife for several years without finding any of his mother's suggestions attractive or emotionally compatible.<sup>33</sup> Early in 1725 he went to a carnival in Czartorysk with his uncle, Paweł Sanguszko, his mother's brother. He found the young, beautiful princess ("like Diana") restrained and taciturn in company at the table. He was very taken by her and "fell terribly in love,"<sup>34</sup> *nota bene*, only after an opportunity arose to talk privately. He realized that the divine will had found him a match, discovering that while he had nothing to talk about with other women, he could maintain interesting conversations with Franciszka for hours on end on numerous topics, instead of eating and dancing. The young princess, whom he was already addressing, in accordance with the conventions of courtly love, as his angel and his queen, was well disposed toward him and accepted his proposal of marriage. They exchanged rings on the fifth day, when Michał first made an "impetuous advance"<sup>35</sup> as they kissed in a corner of the room. He announced to his highly disapproving mother that he would never abandon his beloved until his death and resisted all his mother's powerful emotional and economic blackmail, giving up the worldly goods that would have been his due. His resolute stance in the face of his mother's intransigence could be directly attributed to the widespread acceptance since the seventeenth century of the custom of *raptus puellae*, recognizing the free will of engaged couples, who frequently opposed arrangements made by their parents.<sup>36</sup> True, his uncle was supportive, and there was of course no question of actual abduction from the family home. Franciszka and Michał confirm the observations of historians of family and marriage that in the eighteenth century (by contrast with the preceding golden age of paternal authority and powerful family ties) more scope was gradually being admitted, even within the framework of family institutions, for individual freedom and the right to personal happiness, as was also expressed, albeit in formulaic or thematic form, in Princess Radziwiłłowa's writing.

The wedding ceremony and reception took place in Biała Krynica in April, and as can readily be concluded from the diary notes of M.K. Radziwiłł,<sup>37</sup> the newlyweds, for both of whom it had been virtually love at first sight, began their

33. Michał's father died at a young age in 1719.

34. Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł Rybeńko, *Diariusz ...*, 7 lutego 1725 [Diary ..., February 7, 1725], AGAD AR, dział [section] VI, sygn. [ref.] II-80a, 192-193.

35. Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł Rybeńko, *Diariusz ...*, 9 lutego 1725 [Diary ..., February 9, 1725], AGAD AR, dział [section] VI, sygn. [ref.] II-80a, 193.

36. Radziwiłłowa's later objection to such practices was perpetuated in the play *Igrzysko fortuny* [A contest of fortune]; in act 4, scene 4, Tymaretko opposes Sesotryx, who would "steal her and carry her off to another country," for "virtue and reason forbid it."

37. Sajkowski 1981, 225-32, discusses matches and matchmakers, quoting extensive extracts, including the Prince's expression of satisfaction that God had given him a "pure virgin."

married life. Their union was founded on strong emotions and tenderness, as demonstrated, for example, by revelations in their correspondence of rather bold allusions to erotic satisfaction and impassioned declarations of yearning at times of separation. This is particularly marked in Franciszka's letters, which recorded their marriage on the *amitié tendre* model.<sup>38</sup> The marriage lasted twenty-eight years (until her death in 1753), surviving various trials affecting their lives (the antagonism of her mother-in-law Anna Radziwiłłowa, the financial difficulties that beset them for the first dozen or so years and from which they were rescued by Franciszka's parents, the deaths of her children and their illnesses). Emotional upsets (certain suspicions on the part of Franciszka, complaints of neglect and indiscretions) were resolved thanks to the civilized nature of the partners' relationship within the framework of the traditional family model.<sup>39</sup> They both maintained warm relations with Franciszka's parents throughout their lives, and the experience of that harmonious relationship undoubtedly played a significant role. Prince Michał recorded the usually boisterous celebrations of their wedding anniversaries and her birthdays, singing the praises of Franciszka (e.g., my dear wife, a great, upright and sensible mother).

A married woman's most important social responsibility was motherhood; indeed for many women in those days it was also the only possible way of avoiding being "doomed to immanence"<sup>40</sup> and the only means of self-advancement. This was particularly true in the higher echelons, since the inheritance of enormous fortunes and political influence were at stake. Radziwiłłowa experienced some twenty-nine pregnancies,<sup>41</sup> and she was by no means an isolated exception. It was customary for aristocratic women to be pregnant with "chronic" frequency. In the medieval and early modern periods, by contrast with our own times, more children were born to women of higher social status, who did not engage in hard physical labor as breadwinners. At the time, infant mortality was very high, and after numerous miscarriages (including twins and triplets) and several live births (including twins Janusz and Karol), Franciszka succeeded in raising only three

38. Excerpts from private correspondence, preserved in AGAD AR, are found in Sajkowski 1981, 232–62; addenda in Judkowiak 1985.

39. It is difficult to agree with the view that Franciszka Urszula, "madly in love with the man of her heart," was "destined to love and wait [...] prepared to put up with anything, blindly subordinate to her husband" and "harassed"; it is worthy of note that she openly wrote, inter alia, of her own "dedication and folly" ([www.instytutksiazki.pl/literature/polska/o\\_literaturze\\_polskiej/o\\_literaturze/pisarki\\_polskie\\_rekonesans\\_na\\_koniec\\_stulecia](http://www.instytutksiazki.pl/literature/polska/o_literaturze_polskiej/o_literaturze/pisarki_polskie_rekonesans_na_koniec_stulecia)). This is an embellishment of a sentence in a survey of Polish women writers, Borkowska et al (2000, 26) referring to what is significant here, namely, the convention of Ovidian heroïdes adopted by Radziwiłłowa in her letters in verse to her husband: "like Penelope, she was condemned to pain and eternal waiting, but as a faithful and virtuous wife she accepted, her fate—at least she appeared to do so."

40. "condamnée à l'immanence"—Simone de Beauvoir 1949.

41. One contemporary researcher described her as a "baby factory": Sajkowski 1965, 153.

children to full maturity: two daughters, Katarzyna Karolina and Teofila Konstancja; and just one son, Karol Stanisław.<sup>42</sup> However, besides her own children, she was surrounded for many years by a number of orphaned children of her relations who were under her care. After the death of her first-born son, traditionally given over to a wet nurse in the grandmother's household, she became an advocate of breast-feeding by the mother and resolved to bring up the children herself, foreshadowing similar developments in France, for example. The adoption of these attitudes, familiar to her not only as a lady of higher social standing but as an intellectual, represented a further form of self-advancement. The role of a mother, involving continual, close, and direct contact with her children, although it was at times exhausting, represented a value complemented by artistic achievements and other forms of self-realization. Her educational concerns also involved a significant number of young noble ladies in her court entourage at Nieśwież acquiring the ways of the court at her side.<sup>43</sup>

Their training in housekeeping, entertainment, social life, cultural events, and ceremonies was organized in a mutually complementary fashion.

Before outlining the role of Franciszka Urszula's literary creativity in her life, let us add that the author supported her husband not merely for the purpose of enhancing the prestige of the Radziwiłł name.<sup>44</sup> During his absences she took over certain of his duties connected with the management of his estate, which was an especially difficult task during the civil war from 1733 to 1735. She supervised investments, including, in particular, her own glass manufacturing workshop in Urzecz, she oversaw building works and repairs or organized celebrations—for

42. The rather poor reputation of the prince nicknamed "Beloved Sir" (born 1734) did not speak well of the way his mother brought him up (considered too indulgent in the nineteenth century; this criticism should be directed equally toward his father, as the education of the sons was supposed to be his domain). Franciszka favored Karol's more talented and less recalcitrant twin brother Janusz, who unfortunately died in his youth (in 1750, following his first successful public speeches).

43. They were actresses in Nieśwież performances. The emotional turbulence of some of the latter was sufficient justification for the accompanying commentary preserved in the draft of the play *Wizerunek niestatecznych afektów* [*Portrait of Fickle Affections*]: AGAD AR, Rękopisy biblioteczne [Library manuscripts section], sygn. [ref.] 49, p. 90; also in Judkowiak 2013b, 382–387). Here they introduced the "altercations and adventures" and the "turns of happiness" of the couples, praising the bravery and innocence of the young girls and highlighting the young men's "tendency to unreliability, hypocrisy and fickle sentiments." In turn, Franciszka entertained her mother-in-law's court in Biała (no doubt during her stay there in February 1733) with epigrammatic portraits of the young ladies who belonged to it: manuscript in Biblioteka Polska w Paryżu, [Polish Library in Paris], sygn. [ref.] 127); cf. Judkowiak 1992a, 105, where attention is drawn to similarities with convivial games involving riddles originating in seventeenth-century French salons and psychological generalizations in the nature of moralizing maxims (Theophrastus, La Bruyère) and to forms of politeness and the implementation of rules of good taste. Formal miniaturization allowed these minutiae to be incorporated in Rococo aesthetics.

44. Górczyński 1997; also Chynczewska-Hennel 1993, 205–214.

example, the magnificent funeral on the death of her mother-in-law in 1747<sup>45</sup>— and represented her husband at their sons' side as they began to undertake public duties, for example, during sessions of the regional assembly (*sejmik*). When she eventually suffered a decline in her health, she did not abandon her cultural activities in Nieśwież. She died on May 23, 1753, near Nowogródek. At the time, despite her illness, she was on her way to meet her husband in Grodno.

Franciszka Radziwiłłowa's literary output before her marriage is unknown. Since the first love letter in verse to her husband Prince Michał is dated 1725, soon after their marriage, she had clearly become adept at writing poetry earlier than that. The next known poems bearing a date are further love letters to her husband from 1728. Michał Radziwiłł, moving in elite social circles in the capital and frequently taking his young wife with him, encouraged her to develop her knowledge of French and her literary creativity. Evidence of this is the eulogy to her son Mikołaj at his funeral in 1729, the declaration that she wrote poetry "out of obedience" (see *Response to a Response* 1732)<sup>46</sup> and most significantly the manuscript in French "written in my own hand at the behest of my beloved husband the Prince."<sup>47</sup> As in earlier letters, she adopts a sensitive tone and form of expression regarding their marriage, and here too one can observe the interplay with her beloved husband, calculated to reinforce their mutual obligations (her brief discourses entitled *Du mariage* and *Des devoirs réciproques de l'homme et de la femme*). Further works can be dated from the early 1730s (*Respons na list księżniczki krajczanki* [Izabeli Radziwiłłówny] [Response to a Letter from a

45. Besides her body, the remains of the first-born son of the Radziwiłłs and of the scion of the Kleck line, Jan Radziwiłł, Provincial Governor of Novgorod, were placed in the Nieśwież necropolis.

46. *Respons na Respons* [na „Wiersze księżnej Jejmi koniuszyny litewskiej <Radziwiłłowej> na weselu Im Pana wojewody kijowskiego Potockiego” kawalera pewnego, księżny <Radziwiłłowej> koniuszyny litewskiej z r. 1732 [Response to the Response (to “Poems by the Princess, Consort of the Lithuanian Master of the Horse at the wedding of His Excellency the Governor of Kyiv, Potocki”)] See all three texts: *Wiersze księżnej na weselu*, *Respons* [...] *kawalera pewnego* and *Respons* [...] *księżnej Radziwiłłowej* [A poem by the Princess at the wedding, Response [...] by a certain gentleman and the Response [...] by Princess Radziwiłłowa]—in the State Archive in Poznań (sygn. [ref.] MS 73, p. 348–355, line 5 on p. 352); according to a copy of the first two works in a MS in the Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Kórnik (sygn. [ref.] 513, p. 271), the *certain gentleman* was a nobleman [Józef Teodor] Mogilnicki, Mayor of Nieszawa, Secretary to His Highness the Prince Primate, i.e., Teodor Potocki, who officiated at the wedding on October 27, 1732; the wedding celebrations in Warsaw, attended by the Radziwiłłs, continued until October 29.

47. Biblioteka Czartoryskich w Krakowie [Czartoryski Library in Kraków] sygn. [ref.] 2268. For a long time the first part of the title, *Wiersze przeze mnie komponowane* [Verses I Have Composed], confused scholars, who repeatedly wrote that Franciszka wrote poetry and prose in French. Meanwhile, further items prove to be works by French poets (F. Malherbe, J.B. Rousseau, T. de Viau et al.) It is more difficult to establish the authorship of prose fragments. Franciszka herself dated the manuscript on the title page: 1732.

Princess (that is, Izabella Radziwiłłówna)],<sup>48</sup> *Wiersze na akcie weselnym Józefa Potockiego z Responsem na respons* [Poem on the Occasion of the Wedding of Józef Potocki with a Response to a Response] (in verse by Józef Teodor Mogilnicki),<sup>49</sup> and *Opisanie dam księżnej kanclerzyny* [Description of Ladies of the Princess's Chancellery] (Michał's mother, Anna Radziwiłłowa, née Sanguszko). Since in later years Józef A. Załuski, who knew the works of Radziwiłłowa as they were received in friendly circumstances "with applause from the audience"<sup>50</sup> in the late 1740s and early 1750s, unsuccessfully sought to have them included in a volume of contemporary poetry, it can be assumed that Prince Radziwiłł included inter alia his wife's works in the publication program of his renovated printing press at Nieśwież. From the mid-1740s she was writing plays for the amateur *théâtre de société* in Nieśwież. For unknown reasons, however, the publication of her dramatic works was delayed in 1751 (most extant fragments were included in a posthumous edition published several years later). In view of the fact that even her *Przestrogi córkom* [Advice to Daughters], written originally for Anna as early as 1732, went to press only after the death of Franciszka in 1753, it may be assumed that the author herself blocked their publication. She characterized her writings as "trivial,"<sup>51</sup> according them recognition merely as "minor works of feminine simplicity,"<sup>52</sup> justifying them to readers as "poor poetry" because they were "written by a woman."<sup>53</sup> Elsewhere, she emphasized their autotherapeutic purpose (in the role of confidant, writing for solace). Whether as a result of her submission to the persuasive male model of written culture or perhaps of excessive self-criticism, the woman's hand and pen are represented in Princess Radziwiłłowa's

48. At the time when Radziwiłłowa wrote this *Response* ... , she was "indisposed," most probably in the year 1732, when she nearly died giving birth to Anna, as confirmed by her *Admonitions to My Daughter* ... , the reference could only be to Izabella Radziwiłłówna (1711–1761), daughter of Michał Antoni Radziwiłł (1687–1721), Carver of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. The latest possible date of a response in verse indicates the date of her marriage: 1737, when she married Tadeusz Franciszek Ogiński, the great Lithuanian writer.

49. He complimented Franciszka as a poet, recalling the universal amazement at "the birth of a female Ovid."

50. *List J.A.Załuskiego* [Letter from J.A. Załuski], AGAD AR, dział [section] V, teka [portfolio] 466, pozycja [title] 18414, list [letter] dated 15 III 1752. Quoted in Judkowiak 1992a, 92.

51. A reference to the play *Miłość dowcipna* [Witty Love] in the introductory *Powinszowanie* [Congratulations], line 39.

52. *Waleta księżnej Imci hetmanowej wielkiej W.Ks.Lit. z księciem Imcią krajczycem odjeżdżającym w drogę* [Farewell to Her Highness the Princess Consort of the Grand Hetman of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania with His Highness the Prince, Carver of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, setting off on a journey]: manuscript in Biblioteka Czartoryskich w Krakowie [Czartoryski Library in Kraków], sygn. [ref.] 2332, s. 9.

53. See previous footnote.

poetry as dull, timid, shabby, and inept. But then, perhaps this was actually a kind of strange game she played.

### 3. THE WORKS OF FRANCISZKA URSZULA RADZIWIŁŁOWA— THE QUEST FOR HER OWN VOICE

Franciszka was born, as mentioned above, in Volhynia in the Polonized family of the Ukrainian Wiśniowiecki princes, and for half her lifetime she was associated with her husband's Belarusian and Lithuanian estates. Princess Franciszka Urszula's writings therefore bear witness to the European roots of the cosmopolitan culture of the aristocratic circles, simultaneously illustrating the strong individuality of a major nation on Europe's eastern fringe.

Until today, Princess Radziwiłłowa's wider contribution to Polish national culture has overshadowed her personal lyrical expression.<sup>54</sup> The virtually unknown poetic works of the first Polish woman dramatist are deserving of attention as evidence of the quest by women of past eras for their "own voice." In this Introduction, therefore, special consideration is given to analysis of forms of expression more direct than works of fiction.

When, twenty years ago, the brief monograph *Słowo inscenizowane. O Franciszce Urszuli Radziwiłłowej—poetce* [The word on stage: Franciszka Urszula Radziwiłłowa the poet]<sup>55</sup> appeared, the title itself suggested that it was in the author's unpublished legacy that the historical-cultural interpretation of her path to the theater and dramaturgy should be sought. In approaching her creative lyricism, in an attempt to read it from a different perspective—that is, as women's writing—it is worth briefly recalling why one of the first Polish women writers is mentioned condescendingly and merely tolerated on the cultural scene as a "blue stocking" and as the first Polish woman dramatist.

The contribution to cultural advance by the princess from Nieśwież was first acknowledged in the mid-eighteenth century when she founded a theater offering an established repertoire at the court of her husband Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł, who was by then Grand Hetman of Lithuania and Provincial Governor of Wilno (Vilnius). The dozen or so plays published posthumously in Żółkiew in 1754 in the volume entitled *Comedies and Tragedies*<sup>56</sup> were soon forgotten. However, as early as the beginning of the nineteenth century they were arousing consternation among antiquaries interested in monuments of Poland's past, because when they attempted to evaluate their literary worth, they found that they did not conform

54. In Belarus in the twenty-first century, thanks to the translation and research work undertaken by Natalia Rusiecka (*Vybranyia tvory* [Selected works] 2003; *Niasvižski album* [Nieśwież album] 2011), Princess Radziwiłłowa is also known as a poet (Rusiecka 2003, 2007, 2009).

55. Judkowiak 1992a.

56. Radziwiłłowa 1754.



to classical norms of drama, even if one took into account the way they had been adapted for the provincial stage, which was actually an amateur undertaking relying on the efforts of family and friends. If only Waclaw Borowy had not excluded her from his otherwise excellent book *O poezji polskiej w wieku XVIII* [On Polish Poetry in the eighteenth century]! His declaration that “there is not a trace of poetry in her plays,” referring to their “naivety, sheer banality, earthy language and mannerisms,”<sup>57</sup> effectively diverted scholars’ interest to the “Sarmatian Muse” and “Polish Sappho,” to whom he devoted an entire chapter, that is, Elżbieta Drużbacka. Hieronim Juszyński, who in 1820, in his *Dykcjonarz poetów polskich* [Dictionary of Polish poets], on the basis of her dramas [!], acknowledged a “poetic talent, for in many instances the poetry is admirable [...] mellifluent songs and unspoiled contemporary speech,”<sup>58</sup> perceived a certain poetic style in excerpts from the dramaturgy [*sic*] of “the lady of Nieśwież.”

Admittedly, this is also because Radziwiłłowa’s minor poetic works have never, with limited exceptions, appeared in print. At the end of the nineteenth century, Jerzy Mycielski published her love letters in verse to her husband.<sup>59</sup> In the end, only several poems have been made accessible, thanks to the editors of anthologies of Baroque and Enlightenment poetry,<sup>60</sup> and a few more are included in the appendix to a brief sketch of the author.<sup>61</sup> They are available in modern translations into Belarusian published in Minsk in 2003 in an edition of selected works.<sup>62</sup>

### *Beyond Conventions*

A further challenge regarding Radziwiłłowa’s lyrical confessions in the manuscripts lies in the fact that they do not adhere to known conventions, which we would be able to analyze and evaluate, for example, the anticipated Baroque. Radziwiłłowa speaks about herself in a strange, idiosyncratic way, devoid of poetic means recognizable to us and stripped of the trimmings. Therefore it is not the proficiency of the versification noted by Juszyński and Mycielski in the dramas and letters, but the “sincerity and simplicity” pointed out by the latter that we can

57. Borowy 1948, 20.

58. Juszyński 1820, 103.

59. Radziwiłłowa 1882, 368.

60. Sokołowska and Żukowska 1965; Libera 1983; Kostkiewiczowa and Goliński 1981; in this volume, unfortunately, under an erroneous title, once again confusing the reader.

61. Kostkiewiczowa and Goliński 1992.

62. *Vybranyia tvory* [Selected works] in Радзівіл 2003. This volume also addresses problems of the provenance of various works appearing in copy volumes alongside or among Radziwiłłowa’s works (and unknown in original manuscripts; see Judkowiak 2004). Poetry has been made accessible recently also online in a bilingual edition (original Polish with translations by N. Rusiecka: *Niasvižski album* [Nieśwież album], in Радзівіл 2011.

turn into tools to guide our reading and to use as criteria of assessment. Received means of emotional expression were rejected by Radziwiłłowa as inadequate for her experience, and she experimented with formerly unrecognized means of expression to verbalize her inner anguish. But she did, after all, prove her ability to apply rules of rhetoric and mythological imagery in her occasional poetry (in her rhyming congratulatory verse or in the case of her little son's gravestone).<sup>63</sup> She also won acclaim in her own lifetime through her satirical or didactic moralizing writing, as copies of her poems were read out on various occasions—this is how the noted bibliographer and publisher Józef A. Załuski, previously mentioned, became acquainted with them, on visiting the parents of the future King Stanisław August Poniatowski. This kind of literary activity by the “Minerva of Nieśwież” astounded her contemporaries (Józef Teodor Mogilnicki, secretary to primate Teodor Potocki, wrote, “The lady achieved so much”).<sup>64</sup> Today, however, nobody pays it any attention.

*“Minor works of feminine simplicity”<sup>65</sup>*

At least until the mid-eighteenth century, moral reservations abounded regarding women's writing as inappropriate. The equally universal conviction that bad poetry, in the words of the famous Baroque poet Waclaw Potocki, “was written only by women”<sup>66</sup> left traces in Radziwiłłowa's statements about herself justifying the “shoddy style of female language” (accusing herself of “getting into writing without having the skill”). Her request to “excuse the poor poetry, written by a woman” may of course be ascribed to modesty. However, there seems to be more to it than that. Radziwiłłowa's confession contains the conventional introductory formula, declaring that her “modest hand scarcely guides the pen.” In the following line she adds that her “lack of intelligence” precludes congratulations, whereas in fact that is exactly what would be in order here—“I am a woman, I am quite aware of my own capabilities.” These quotations from the occasional literature requested for social events<sup>67</sup> (Radziwiłłowa picked up her pen in those days “as

63. According to a modern scholar, “no Polish woman wept over her child in this manner. [...] Paradoxically, she adopted a male role, applying patterns developed by men. A woman's nature was subjugated here by art, i.e., literary convention and classical erudition. A woman deprived of a classical education would be unable to write such a work ...” Partyka 2004, 210.

64. *Respons na te wiersze kawalera pewnego* ..., [Response to that poem by a certain gentleman] lines 2–3. Cf. n46.

65. Judkowiak 1992a, 126–134.

66. Potocki 1987, vol. 3, 218.

67. *Wiersze na weselu* [...] [Józefa] Potockiego [Poem for the Wedding (of Józef) Potocki], 1732; *Respons na Respons* (cf. n46).

a matter of obedience” or “as she was ordered”)<sup>68</sup> tell us why writing for internal purposes in such a society had to remain hidden, out of modesty, as it was “minor” and “trivial.” They also emphasize the effective exclusion of women from creative writing as the “Road to Parnassus”<sup>69</sup> and immortal fame.

We must retrace our steps, returning to the question as to why the lyrical component of the author’s works has remained to this day consigned, at best, to manuscript copies for the family, while libraries binned some manuscripts after her death, along with other rough drafts. By some miracle, the bins have to this day not been completely emptied.<sup>70</sup>

It was only during the eighteenth century that a lack of classical erudition (i.e., male school education) began to be less of an inhibition to women’s writing activity. At that time Polish women began writing in a women’s style (not simply *as* women but *like* women). The ferment in those decades of a radical offensive by an ideology based on criticism, on slogans of progress or the “liberation” of nature, in short, the abandonment of the old cultural model with the dawn of the age of Enlightenment and modernity, opened the way for the promotion of feminine traits (for example, in a letter to her husband, Radziwiłłowa invokes the universal conviction that one of these traits is *sensibilité*—‘sensitivity’). Women wielding a pen “in their feeble hands” began more and more boldly to circumvent or transform the norms of the written word obligatory in the culture of their fathers, husbands, and sons. Radziwiłłowa’s disdain for official literary models is therefore of interest. Julian Krzyżanowski called it “her Grace’s freedom,”<sup>71</sup> ascribing to it a different, that is, a social, motivation.

Seeking to observe that specifically feminine tone of voice and the distinctions of psychic makeup that manifest themselves in manner of speech, which are referred to as ‘the spirit of difference’<sup>72</sup> that underlie feminine identity, one should be aware not only of her emotional experience in respect to specific interpersonal relationships but also of images relating to the individual and the organization of the powers of the soul, which today we would call her psychological profile.

Indeed, it is difficult to overlook the fact that the greater part of her work concerns women’s experience: questions of love, marriage, and motherhood. In the content of Radziwiłłowa’s *Przestrogi zbawienne dla córki* [Salutary admonitions for my daughter] and her translation of the French *Code for Married Women*,<sup>73</sup> to which she added her own *Response* addressed to husbands, some readers and scholars can recognize a common thread inspired by the life experiences of an

68. Cf. previous footnote.

69. A reference to Sarnowska-Temierusz 1974.

70. Judkowiak 1992a, 141–43.

71. *Teatr Urszuli Radziwiłłowej* 1961, 32.

72. A reference to Janion 2006.

73. The title of the original French code which Radziwiłłowa translated into Polish is unknown.

affectionate and caring mother and a faithful and happy wife. The latter inaccurate and overgeneralized characterization requires some refinement, however.<sup>74</sup>

### *Autobiographism as an Essential Hypothesis*

The topic of matrimonial love first appeared in the letters, several of them in verse, written by the perpetually pining, lonely young wife to the prince she had only just married but who was frequently absent on public duties for a considerable length of time.<sup>75</sup> When he appears also in the later personal lyrics such as *Wiersze narzekające na małżeństwo* [Poetry complaining about marriage] and complaints, laments, and regrets on a much more intimate level, the hypothesis of autobiographism must be considered valid.<sup>76</sup> In the lyrics of intimate confessions, this hypothesis would be strengthened by M. Foucault's statement about the European as a "confessional animal" and about the "discourse of truth," demanding exposure of the self on the confessional model, particularly the truth of internal feelings incompatible with the imposed norm, including the matrimonial.<sup>77</sup> So Radziwiłłowa shelved her lyrical confessions, conscious that their publication could carry a stigma.

It appears that a received interpretation of Radziwiłłowa's personal poetry (and possibly of her entire literary work) based on thoroughgoing autobiographism is also suggested by a handbook that would have us recognize that in her case the "motives for undertaking artistic work" and "the relation between life and creativity" are valid.<sup>78</sup> In the poetic correspondence, the focus is on "a gamut of intimate emotions, from unbelievable sadness to regret and envy:" the writer "condemned to pain and eternal waiting [...] accepted her fate—on the face of it, at least."<sup>79</sup> The supposition of an internal revolt, of a conflict between her subjective self and roles imposed on her (enforcing the concealment of the truth about herself, *dissimulatio*, sham, pretence) seems to be the key to the fascination of reading the old manuscripts.

It is certainly not insignificant that as the wealthiest unmarried woman in the region<sup>80</sup> she was highly eligible. However, she did not marry any of the can-

74. E.g., Kulesza-Woroniciecka 2003, 633–34.

75. Radziwiłłowa, Franciszka Urszula. 4 listy do męża wierszem [Four letters in verse to her husband] 1882, 369–71, 372–75, 376–80, 388–98; Judkowiak 1992a.

76. Ziomek 1975.

77. Foucault 1976–1984.

78. Borkowska, Czermińska and Phillips 2000, 24.

79. Borkowska, Czermińska and Phillips 2000, 24–27.

80. More important than royal kinship between their two houses was the fact that as the only child of her parents Franciszka inherited vast landed estates, since landed estates were not normally included in daughters' dowries. In general, it is also accepted that in Lithuania, unlike in the Polish

didates thrust upon her by her parents, not even Count Aspremont Rockheim or Seweryn Rzewuski. It is significant that she rejected these suitors at the time when Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł appeared on the scene. He had previously been hopelessly in love, and he had already been the object of matchmaking in line with the plans and wishes of his family on several occasions. The marriage of Franciszka to Radziwiłł was not the result of economic and political calculations on the part of his parents (indeed it aroused objections from the prince's domineering mother, Anna Radziwiłłowa, and his father had died many years previously). It resulted rather from an immediate infatuation on the part of Michał, who by then had rejected a variety of excellent potential brides. That year, 1725 (encouraged by his uncle, his mother's brother),<sup>81</sup> Prince Michał, only two years her senior, deflected the twenty-year-old Franciszka from her engagement to the son of Stanisław Rzewuski, Hetman of the Crown, and soon won her over. It should be remembered that courage to resist the will of the family was supported by the church's emphasis on a couple's autonomous decision to establish a family, by the fact that the mutual agreement of a man and a woman was sufficient for marriage to take place, and by the recognition of equality of the sexes in the making of this decision.<sup>82</sup> Their mutual love at first sight, actually after their first conversations, when they discovered that they were made for each other, was so strong that an early decision was made about the wedding, under pressure from the young couple. The details, interesting from a sociocultural point of view, but also engaging for the sincerity of their relationship, can be found in the thorough records of Radziwiłł's diary.<sup>83</sup>

At first, Franciszka and Michał did not receive a great deal from their parents and, however well-known it was that she was heiress to a vast fortune, they grappled for years with financial difficulties. The dowry, which was supposed to form the basis of Franciszka's financial independence, was relatively modest. As for Michał, in addition to his sisters he had a younger brother Hieronim, to whom after 1725 their mother transferred her chief designs and dynastic ambitions. It was not until later that Michał achieved the position of undisputed leader of his

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Crown lands, the receipt of a dowry excluded a woman outright from inheritance from blood relatives: Popiołek 2003, 212. However, the parents' wishes and the efforts of Michał led to the desired transfer of property—the final estate deeds were acquired by Radziwiłł from his long-lived mother-in-law three months before the death of Franciszka!

81. According to canon law, the young couple were already of so-called proficient age, enabling them to enter into a union with the consent of their parents or guardians (12 years for a girl and 14 for a boy) but underage in respect of regional law (at least in the part of the Commonwealth called Lands of the Polish Crown), which demanded that both be over twenty-four (when they became legally responsible, i.e., they were able to make decisions affecting themselves and were beyond their parents' jurisdiction).

82. Malinowska 2008, 18, 19, 27.

83. Sajkowski 1981, 225–32.